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How I Use Tradition In Doing Theology

by Clark H. Pinnock

I have a dilemma. Given the challenge of religious liberalism, how do I remain evangelical without becoming Catholic? In the face of Catholicism, how do I remain evangelical without becoming liberal? This dilemma raises the important question of what role tradition plays in my theology.

Anyone's view of tradition fits into the pattern of his or her theology as a whole. Yet because I am a Baptist and conservative Protestant, tradition is a factor which affects me without my giving much attention to it. Therefore it is very important to make a point of examining it. Because I do theology as a conservative evangelical, I affirm a divine truth disclosure which culminated in the Christ event and became deposited in the Holy Scriptures. With Calvin I believe that the Bible possesses a unique authority and that it ought to rule the church and its theology. Although I would admit that the Bible is itself tradition in some sense, I would want to distinguish it from other traditions as being paradigmatic and foundational. For this reason I prefer to use "tradition" to refer to

extra-biblical material, such as the dogmatic formulations, catachesis, and liturgies of the churches. In my theology I want to do justice both to the supremacy of Scripture and to the heritage of Christian experience and reflection.

In essence, then, I take the Bible to be the divinely inspired and normative deposit of the truth of the Christian revelation, magisterial in its authority (*norma normans*), and tradition to be human interpretation in the historical process of transmission, ministerial in function (*norma normata*). Ideally the Bible and tradition are two complementary sides of Christian truth becoming effective in history. It would be wonderful if there could always be a perfect unity between them, if text and its interpretation were always to move along on the same lines. But it was not so in the days of our Lord, and it has not been so since then. Jesus found it necessary on occasion to contradict the tradition of the elders and appeal to the written Word of God. He seemed to make a distinction between the Scriptures, which are divine in origin, and tradition, which was not. When the ideal unity of Scripture and tradition breaks down, priority must be given to Scripture.

Two factors in our present theological context place pressure on this view of tradition in doing theology. First, the four-century-old challenge

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of Catholicism appears to subordinate Scripture to tradition as interpreted by the magisterium, robbing it of the freedom I think it ought to have. Second, the more recent challenge of religious liberalism presents us with a wave of novel conceptions often hostile to tradition but claiming to be in some way original and scriptural. The first challenge makes me want to emphasise the critical function of the Bible in preventing unsatisfactory accretions, while the second makes me warm up to tradition as never before. Thus my dilemma: how to remain evangelical without becoming Catholic or liberal.

How I try to deal with this dilemma will, I hope, become clear in what follows.

The Roman Catholic Challenge

It has always seemed to the Protestant theologian that the Catholic Church wishes to absolutize tradition and its own teaching authority as if it were the Word of God on a par with and even over the Bible. This suspicion, never wholly cleared up, accounts for what has been called the "sola scriptura" emphasis, or the belief in the supremacy of Scripture. In their opposition to traditionalism, Protestants have often spoken as if they had no positive appreciation for tradition. In fact, of course, we do (which is why I do not like the phrase "sola scriptura"). The Reformers themselves, for example, were close students of the fathers and were loyal to the ecumenical creeds. Aware that Scripture is never in fact "alone," they even drew up confessions of their own to guide the Bible reader and help him or her understand it aright. Although grateful for the work of people like Augustine and Jerome, the Reformers did not suppose such men were in total agreement with themselves nor consider them infallible. They made a sharp distinction between what Scripture taught and what these men said.¹ What worried them was the possible introduction of novel doctrines and corrupt traditions which were contrary to the Bible into the teaching of the church.² For example, Article 22 of the Thirty-nine Articles concludes that "the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well as of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God." A modern example would be the doctrine of the bodily assumption of Mary, which is not required by Scripture and thus not binding upon Christians.

Let Scripture be heard and never silenced, and let its word be accorded a respect granted no other source. Tradition deserves respect, but tradition does not speak with a single voice and all that it says is not of equal worth. In addition, tradition can be deadening and distorting, and needs the life and truth found in the canon of Scripture. The church always needs to be reformed, as Kung points out following the Reformers, by referring back to the apostolic foundations found in the New Testament. Only in this way will the church's mark of apostolicity be credible.³ In theology this means that I strive to achieve the fairest and purest testimony to the gospel that I can.

At this point Rahner finds a material difference between Catholic and Protestant theology.⁴ The living church which interprets the Bible is the authority Catholic theology must rely on in practice—not the Bible text apart from the context of the Catholic Church. Although admitting paradoxically the material sufficiency and normative authority of the Bible, Rahner finds the actual authority to reside nevertheless in the magisterium which infallibly interprets both Scripture and the developing tradition. Since the Bible and tradition are difficult to understand, it is left to the Roman teaching office to inform us about the content of faith. It would seem then that Protestants are mistaken to think that what divides us from Catholics is their placing tradition over Scripture; in fact what divides us is their putting the magisterium over both. The problem appears to boil down to the authority of the Petrine office. Small wonder that Rahner called Kung a Protestant as soon as the latter raised his voice against the infallibility of that office. To me, affirming the material sufficiency of Scripture means that the whole church, Catholic as well as Protestant, Roman magisterium as well as theological journal, ought to place itself beneath the judgment of the written Word of God. Creeds and tradition are not valid because the church teaches them but because they agree with Scripture. As Luther said of the Apostles' Creed, "This confession of faith we did not make or invent, neither did the fathers of the church before us. But as the bee gathers honey from many a beautiful and delectable flower, so this creed has been collected

in commendable brevity from the books of the beloved prophets and apostles, that is, from the entire Holy Scriptures."⁵ What practical meaning does it have to profess the material sufficiency of Scripture and then refuse to let it function?

It does not follow from this, however, that I have no appreciation for the usefulness of a teaching office. Did not Luther, who rejected the Roman teaching office, become the authoritative guide to a host of Lutherans since? Who shall decide what the true gospel is, and how shall it be decided? Obviously this cannot be left to the individual expert or persuasive leader, any more than it can be left to the Roman magisterium. What is needed is a voice which can gather together the insights of the fully ecumenical experience of the people of God and exercise an office clearly subservient to the Scriptures, relying upon a teaching charism in the churches which listens to the text in a responsible way. This teaching office would, for example, need to heed the various lines of the rich and complex scriptural teaching on particular themes and ensure that the resulting interpretations cohere with and complement the full range of data. Such an ecumenical teaching office does not now exist, of course. The Faith and Order section of the World Council of Churches is an attempt in embryo to achieve it, and may even be the seed from which such a ministry could grow.

I agree with the Catholic that the divorce between Scripture and tradition/church is a sad fact of life. It is tragic and unnatural, and ought never to have happened. Despite any reform it brought to the church, it sowed the seeds of division and of a sectarian spirit which is the infamy of Protestants. Yet the blame cannot be levelled only in one direction. The prophets cannot be blamed for sowing division when they indicted Old Testament Israel for forsaking the Law of God and the terms of the covenant. The answer to "sola scriptura" cannot be "sola ecclesia," thus silencing the critique and covering up the sin. The freedom of the Word of God cannot be bound simply because it might create division and opportunities to sin. It is the sin of the church, our sin, which causes Scripture to stand over against tradition on occasion. Jesus warned that his true word would divide people from one another. Precious though the unity of the church is, it is not worth much if it is based upon a sub-Christian version of what the gospel is. Because the church is not perfect it requires the check provided for us in the Bible. It cannot serve as a check unto itself. It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit would guide the

The recent challenge of religious liberalism makes me warm up to tradition as never before.

church back to the Scriptures, this time renewing not only segments but the whole. There are even times when I think I see it happening—in Geneva, in Lausanne, in ecumenical doctrinal agreements, and in charismatic renewal. I do not believe that God will allow his truth to be lost, but am confident that he will bring us all together beneath the Scriptures. Then Scripture and tradition will again be one.

The Loss of Tradition

The effect of this controversy upon my own theology has been to cause me to neglect tradition. The natural reaction to being pressed by traditionalism is to wash one's hands of tradition as well. Thus the Catholic charge of "sola scriptura" becomes true in a way it ought not to. It is as if bewitched by my own language and pressed by a sharp challenge, I respond by doing tradition a real injustice. It makes me tend to forget that the church is a pillar and ground of the truth, and that Protestant as well as Catholic beliefs are ecclesiastically shaped. It makes me tend to suppose that in my theology I go directly and immediately back to the Bible, unaware of the fact that I read the Word in the context of a Christian community through which the message has been transmitted to me. Particularly as a Baptist, I find I have to remind myself that tradition is the process of interpreting and transmitting the

Word. It is not simply the history of deformation, but more often it is the history of heroic hermeneutical achievement. Therefore, in a doctrine such as the person and work of Christ, it is fruitful to review the options which present themselves in creed and document, in liturgies and prayer, and let them shape my own understanding even while seeking to hear the Bible. As Chesterton remarked, tradition means giving my great-grandfather a vote. The richness of traditional wisdom can only deepen one's own reflections and serve as a corrective to false moves in interpretation which from time to time threaten the truth.⁶ (see Berkhof, pp. 91–100).

Related to this error of neglecting tradition is also a certain lack of appreciation for historicity in a broader sense. One cannot say that the Reformers, or many pre-moderns for that matter, were much aware of development of doctrine. Since they tended to think, as modern conservatives also do, that their convictions were pure distillations of scriptural teachings, they did not reflect upon the historical factors that entered into their interpretation. They thought they were simply reading the Bible, but in fact they were reading it with a view to answering various contemporary rivals. All doctrine is at least to some extent a historically conditioned response to the questions on the agendas of particular times and places. Recognising this now compels me to be more self-critical about my truth and to remain always open to re-evaluate my convictions in the light of fresh discovery and deeper insight. I do not believe that historicity relativises dogmatics, but it does make me aware that the work of theology can never be finished. Theology points forward to a future unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God.⁷

At this point I ought to admit that appealing to the Bible as check and arbiter has become more difficult in recent times due to a series of questions raised about the Bible by critical study. Even though they largely arose at first from the ranks of liberal Protestant theology, they have be-

The answer to “sola scriptura” cannot be “sola Ecclesia,” thus silencing the critique and covering up the sin.

come part of the Catholic case against the historic Protestant view. One can see this in Rahner. He points out that “sola scriptura” is self-contradictory because the old doctrine of verbal inspiration on which it rested has been shown to be untenable.⁸ Thus he uses liberal Protestant criticism to overturn classical Protestant method in theology by identifying with a modern view of the Bible which is as opposed to the traditional Catholic understanding as to our own. Perhaps this also indicates a certain common cause shared by the Catholic and liberal Protestant in wishing to undercut classical Protestant theology. I admit that it is unnerving to think of an alliance of the best Catholic and liberal Protestant theologians united against my own treasured evangelical beliefs. It is somewhat relieved by another alliance that is shaping up between classical Catholics and classical Protestants to meet precisely this new development. More about that later.

These are some of the questions which seem to make appealing to the Bible more difficult: do we not approach the Bible with a “discrimen” that determines how we appeal to it as an authority?⁹ Is there not a much greater diversity of teachings in it than conservative Protestants have been willing to admit? Does this not make it impossible to appeal to Scripture for a clear-cut doctrine of anything?¹⁰ Has higher criticism not discredited parts of the Bible, thus making it improper to appeal to them? While I think all such questions can be answered, I am aware how much harder it is to follow the method I espouse than it was for those who did not feel the burden of such questions. If we are to continue to follow a scriptural method in theology responsibly, and to make it seem feasible to those not yet convinced, harder work than has yet been done will be necessary.

At the beginning I posed the question, how does one remain evangelical without becoming liberal in the face of the Catholic challenge? My answer is the same one the Reformation nearly always gave: by maintaining the supremacy of Scripture in balance with a healthy respect for the interpretive transmission which is tradition; that is, by keeping the *norma normans* in proximity with the *norma normata*.

The Challenge of Religious Liberalism

At quite the opposite extreme from Catholicism, religious liberalism is characterised by a revolt against tradition. Far from absolutising it, religious liberals tend to minimise and depreciate tradition because they do not wish to be bound by it. Tradition, after all, embodies the old Christian way of thinking about God, Christ, the Bible, and so forth. Religious liberalism insists that we should not be constrained by such categories, but should be free to follow our own best human lights.

I do see in religious liberalism a marvelously creative hermeneutical and apologetic movement which has enriched theology. But it has enriched it the way all great heresies do, by stimulating orthodoxy to pursue questions it had left dormant and to come up with a more adequate presentation of its own truth.

In essence, religious liberalism represents a wholesale revision of practically the whole of traditional theology. Its rapprochement with modernity requires it to break with the classical Christian mind and reconceive theology in radically different ways. It is essentially the attempt to release modern people from tutelage to ecclesiastical dogma and authority. With Harnack¹¹ liberalism tries to see Christianity in non-doctrinal terms. It views the history of dogma as the history of the changing views of Christians, which are not binding upon us. The true identity of Christianity lies not in doctrinal continuity but in some continuity of spirit or attitude to life. Harnack wrote his history of dogma precisely to demonstrate that early dogma perverted the original simple faith of Jesus (which had nothing to do with the ontological mysteries of Greek theology). He hoped to free Christians from having to conform their thought to such dogmas, so that they could get back to the simple spiritual and ethical gospel he himself espoused.

I am aware, of course, that few now agree with Harnack about his supposedly original gospel, but I would still insist that his antipathy to traditional doctrinal standards is as alive as it ever was. It would be impossible to list all those who agree with him that traditional and scriptural beliefs today are incredible and outdated. It may, for example, be possible to honour Jesus in some dynamic or functional way, but it is not possible to see him the way Nicea did. On every hand we hear that such ideas are historically conditioned sentiments requiring constant modification and updating—almost as often from progressive Catholics as from liberal Protestants (the new alliance again). Of course not many follow Loisy's lead and announce their disbelief in all articles save the one referring to Jesus' crucifixion under Pontius Pilate; the current way is to affirm the ancient formulas but replace them with a quite different theory, calling it something like a “dynamic equivalence.” One can by this means deny the old formulation while claiming to uphold the truth of it.

Again, I am somewhat aware of the factors which have led to this revolution against tradition. These include the new view of the Bible as human tradition, the existentialist notion that truth is subjective in nature and not intellectually objectifiable, the cultural relativism which announces a great chasm between ancient convictions and modern possibilities of belief, and the superior importance of praxis over theory. But still the fact is that religious liberalism is basically a revolt against tradition and is very much alive today.

The Recovery of Tradition

This challenge influences my theology by reawakening in me a deep respect for tradition as an interpretive guide and doctrinal safeguard. Thus the catholic side of conservative Protestant thought comes into focus. In appealing for a return to the Bible, Protestants have never intended to forsake the great doctrinal traditions surrounding the nature of God, the person of Christ, human need, or the sacrifice on the cross. This is obvious from any reading of the Protestant confessions of faith, which reiterate the basic intellectual pillars of the classical Christian consensus. Protestants agreed with Catholics that the creeds were fixed landmarks of sound theology which would never be shaken or surpassed. “Sola scriptura” never did mean bypassing the tradition in this radical sense. Lutherans, Calvinists, and even Baptists drew up their confessional documents in order to prevent biblical and traditional convictions from being washed away in a flood of novel and private interpretation.¹²

Although the Baptists often make pretence of adhering to the Bible only, even they draw up such confessions with great regularity; when

they do not, they still operate with covert doctrinal standards, normally conservative. They do, however, open themselves unwittingly to religious liberalism in their position on believers' baptism, because at that point they reject a very broad and ancient tradition in the church of baptising infants. By not following Luther's example and accepting the practice because it was a firm tradition, they invite the question, why accept ancient traditions in other areas? If the tradition is deemed to be mistaken at this point, why not at others also? This may explain why Baptists have staffed the ranks of religious liberalism to an impressive degree.¹³ My own feeling as a conservative Baptist would be that the biblical evidence and the current consensus on infant baptism is so precarious that it bears little comparison to matters like the trinity of God or the theanthropic person of Christ. But I would grant that the more one critiques tradition the less one can then appeal to it to settle controverted points.

Today one can see in many places catholicising of evangelicalism as a result of liberal pressure. I recently received notice of a further con-vo-cation of Catholics and Evangelicals to discuss common concerns. There was the Chicago Call, and the founding of the Evangelical Orthodox Church. There are new journals starting like the *New Oxford Review*, and new confessional statements like the one on biblical inerrancy by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. It should be obvious to us all that we are seeing evangelicals returning to the idea of a rule of faith and to forms of ecclesiastical authority. They are doing this for the same reason the church did in the early centuries — in response to what is perceived as a menacing threat. Authors like Robert Webber and Thomas Oden are calling evangelicals to look to the early church for the resources with which to counter apostasy in the church. They are urging us to grasp the threefold cord of Scripture, rule of faith, and church authority in order to meet the challenges of today.

Recognising the historically conditioned nature of doctrine compels me to remain always open to re-evaluate my convictions in the light of fresh discovery and deeper insight.

Now it becomes apparent why I posed the second question: can one remain evangelical without becoming Catholic in light of the challenge of religious liberalism? To take an example, biblical criticism has uncovered such pluralism in the Bible's teaching that it is much harder to support the evangelical confession simply by appealing to it. James Dunn himself predicted that, as a result of seeing this, orthodoxy would have to look for a canon beyond the canon to support its stand.¹⁴ In order to have the Bible teach the "right things," it will be necessary to state those convictions in documents appended to it. (Consider the Scofield Bible and its notes which ensure the correct interpretation, or the function of the Watchtower publications among Jehovah's Witnesses.) Indeed it does appear that evangelicalism is very catholic.

But this is really not so surprising or innovative. Protestants have always had their confessions of faith in order to preserve the church from strange teachings. Today the church is being flooded by a strange new world of Bible theories. Each publishing season one is greeted with many novel interpretations which the ordinary believer is not able to assess. Tradition serves in this case to insulate the community from the fire storms of theological speculation, and gives her teachers time to de-

vis appropriate defensive strategies. Often these theories do not even last long enough to require refutation. But because Scripture can be twisted, it is important to protect the church from teachers who do so. Measures such as confessional statements are not infallible norms competing with the Bible in our estimation, but protective barriers to save the flock of God from undue stress while its overseers can work out their replies.

Obviously such replies will have to be made if the witness based on the supremacy of Scripture is to remain credible. Tradition can help protect the evangelical faith, but it cannot ground it. Eventually the specific challenges must be answered. For example, is Harnack right or wrong about the importance of doctrine to original Christianity? We must be able to make good our claim that true Christianity is a doctrinal religion based upon revealed truth. Is Dunn right or wrong that the New Testament teaches such a variety of contradictory theologies that an orthodox understanding becomes impossible? We must take up the challenge and show both that the message is much more unified than he allows and that it is in fact evangelical. Besides forcing us to do a lot of hard work, I think this task will nourish the catholic side of evangelicalism. For example, it will tend to make us more interested in church history than we used to be, and make us more respectful of traditions we had not thought much about. It will even result in a few crossing over to Rome, as Sheldon Vanauken did, but I suspect not in large numbers.

Conclusion

As a conservative Protestant I see essentially the same challenge coming from Roman Catholicism and religious liberalism, though from opposite sides. The challenge is to the supremacy of scriptural truth, to the apostolicity of the church. Both movements wish to replace the teaching of Scripture with human tradition, whether ancient or modern. The truth of Scripture must be protected in the face of Catholicism by opposing it to traditionalism, but in the face of religious liberalism with the aid of tradition. I myself take Scripture and tradition to be part of a dialectic, serving one another mutually, a dialectic in which the Bible is the paradigm and tradition the distillation of the church's reflections upon it. I do not think the Bible is a magic talisman which can be easily invoked to resolve deep issues of controversy in the church. But I do believe it has served as a source of truth and life in the church from the beginning, guiding, correcting and liberating us. I trust it will go on doing so until Christ returns.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹See Philip Hughes, *The Theology of the English Reformation* (Baker, 1980), pp. 30-38.
²For Luther, see Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Fortress, 1966), p. 6; and for Calvin see much polemic in the *Institutes*, book IV.
³Hans Kung, *The Church* (Doubleday, 1976), p. 46.
⁴Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith* (Crossroad, 1978), p. 361.
⁵Trinity Sunday sermon, 1535.
⁶See Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christian Faith* (Eerdmans, 1979), pp. 91-100.
⁷Peter Toon is an evangelical much more aware of such factors than most. See *The Development of Doctrine in the Church* (Eerdmans, 1979).
⁸Rahner, *Foundations*, p. 362.
⁹David Kelsey, *Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology* (Fortress, 1975).
¹⁰J. D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Westminster, 1977).
¹¹Adolph Harnack, *What is Christianity?* (Peter Smith, 1958).
¹²See John Skilton, *Scripture and Confession* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1973).
¹³See William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Harvard, 1976).
¹⁴Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, p. 380.

CORRECTION OF THEMELIOS ADDRESS CHANGE

In our May/June issue last spring we reported that the subscription address for *Themelios* was changing. This is incorrect. *Themelios* subscriptions will continue to be serviced by the TSF office in Madison. Although *TSF Bulletin* and *Themelios* can now be ordered separately, they both have the same address. Please send subscriptions and address changes to TSF Subscriptions, 233 Langdon, Madison, WI 53703.

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Nag Hammadi and the New Testament

by PHEME PERKINS

The other day a colleague approached me with the question: "This might be impossible, but could you tell me just what difference the Nag Hammadi discoveries make?" Surely that question remains the most important one we can ask about any discovery. This extensive library of Gnostic writings does make a fine addition to our corpus of ancient texts and archaeological remains, but why should the Christian care who is trying to understand the significance of Scripture for his or her life today? Should the preacher or theologian worry over the results that scholars may come up with? A suitable answer requires some evaluation of what is meant by the question.

Some of the publicity about the new discoveries assumes that their view of Christianity is a more pristine version than what became normative Christianity. It suggests that the orthodox bishops repressed Gnostic Christianity because it represented a threat to their power over Christian communities. Consequently, Christians from churches which also emphasize local organization and non-hierarchical patterns of ministry look to these writings to find sponsorship for their views. Or, as happened a few weeks ago, women who have heard that Gnostics have texts which speak of God as Mother-Father come rushing in to ask me where they can read about the Gnostics: as though this new movement would sponsor their demands for equality of women within their church.

Such approaches will not be acceptable to Christians who hold that the canonical Scriptures have a special place in determining our life and theology. They imply that writings which never enjoyed such status should suddenly acquire a normative claim on Christians. Nag Hammadi should not make this kind of difference. What is often overlooked by those who advance the views of the Gnostics is that the Gnostics themselves did not treat the writings we somewhat casually call "Gnostic gospels" as having the same authority as the canonical traditions. The Gnostics claimed they knew the secret, true, oral teaching which the risen Jesus gave his disciples and which had been handed down to them. They claimed they could use that insight to interpret both the Old Testament and the gospels as well as other traditions of Jesus' sayings which they preserved among themselves. Further, some Gnostics appear to have thought that they represented an elite group of Christians—not a mode of discipleship open to all people. (Though we must admit that such elitism may have been fostered by the rejection which their views received from other Christians.)

Why, then, should we bother about these writings? I would like to suggest that there are several areas in which they do contribute to our appreciation of Scripture and consequently should be of concern. First, they provide valuable information about traditions which either influenced or were rejected by the orthodox community. Second, they help us understand the significance of certain fateful choices that underlie the canonical traditions: the choice of faith over knowledge (*gnosis*), the choice of ethical over ascetical obligation, and the choice of narrative gospel over esoteric revelation. Third, they indicate the importance of the ecclesial structures—including the definition of the canon—that emerged in the second and third centuries in response to the "crises" in Christian life created by its quest for a proper self-understanding.

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Background Traditions

First, the traditions which make up the Nag Hammadi writings can be studied using methods similar to those that we use when analyzing the gospels. The most familiar are the traditions of Jesus' sayings such as we find in the Gospel of Thomas. Publication of all the Nag Hammadi codices has not produced another Gospel of Thomas, but we do find other similar sayings in this material. It seems clear that, while the Gnostic versions are not themselves primitive, they developed out of a tradition of Jesus' sayings which had emphasized the wisdom elements in his teaching and which was not dominated by the eschatological perspective that we find in Q. Scholars have recently been turning toward studying the wisdom traditions in the gospel sayings. They argue that we should not allow concern with the criterion of dissimilarity (for evaluating the authenticity of Jesus' sayings) to blind us to traditions in which Jesus uses wisdom material—even though wisdom material of its very nature is similar across broad areas of culture and not dissimilar. By studying the wisdom traditions behind the sayings preserved in Gnostic writings, we may hope to add to our knowledge of the wisdom material in the teaching of Jesus.

We also find another class of traditions embedded in the Gnostic writings which help us understand the milieu in which the New Testament developed: the traditions of heterodox Jewish exegesis. One of

***The Gnostic option produced elitist,
closed communities which could not
expand to reach out to all of humanity.***

the peculiarities of many Gnostic writings is an extreme hostility toward the god of the Old Testament—often pictured as the evil creator of the material world; a god whose covenant is slavery and whose hostility toward humanity is perceived in the Genesis stories by those who know how to interpret them.

However, much of the use of Jewish material in the Gnostic writings which make Seth the ancestor of the Gnostic race appears to derive from heterodox Jewish circles. Study of such materials suggests that some of the features of the Johannine and Pauline writings which used to be attributed to Gnostic or proto-Gnostic influence might also be examples of heterodox Jewish traditions in the Syro-palestine area. This observation has a further consequence for the way in which we speak about influences in the environment of the New Testament writings. Older commentaries commonly assumed that any motif, theme or image in the New Testament which could be traced to Jewish sources—say the Dead Sea Scrolls—was therefore not Gnostic. Now, we must ask whether we are not faced with two strains of development out of the same nurturing medium: one toward the canonical writings; another toward the rejection of the Jewish traditions in the development of Gnostic exegesis. The strength of such anti-Jewish sentiment in the Gnostic writings may also place our contemporary laments about the anti-semitism in early Christian writings in a new light. What is amazing is not the anti-Jewish sentiments which develop from such traditions, but the fact that Christians came to see it as a matter of faith that they had to retain that Jewish tradition and its Scripture.

Competing Religious Visions

What of the choices faced by early Christians? We have suggested that three crucial areas are at stake in the debate with Gnosticism: faith, ethics, and narrative gospel accounts. The Gnostic writings and the controversies reflected in them provide us with some sense of the alternatives that might have been selected. Further, variants of such options may well be embodied in alternative religious visions to which people turn today. We have already pointed out that the Gnostics rooted their claim to a superior form of religious insight in esoteric knowledge. One must become "wiser than" the god, gods or philosophies by which others attain truth. Such wisdom is accomplished only if one learns the code that unlocks the truth about the world. Consequently, the plain words of the biblical text have to be read through the glasses of Gnostic myth; read in a way which seems to make them tell quite a different story from the one which appears on the surface. Gnostic writings provide accounts of the myth which the Gnostic would apply to Scripture and to exegeses of some passages. They claim to be based on esoteric traditions which were handed down orally. However, the Gnostic does not produce a commentary such as we might expect—one which follows the narrative line of the text. That concern for narrative sequence has no importance for a religious experience which is grounded in claims of special insight.

Many scholars have hypothesized that the struggle in 1 Corinthians between wisdom and faith operating through a love which builds up the community represents our first example of such a struggle with Gnostic views. They point out that the Corinthians were infected with the severe asceticism and hostility to marriage which is typical of many of the Gnostic writings. For the Gnostic, the body and its passions were the final prison which the creator god designed to keep humanity from coming to know its destiny in a divine world beyond this one. However, others have pointed out that 1 Corinthians shows no evidence of Gnostic mythology; nor do any of the slogans which Paul attributes to his opponents reflect the ascetic slogans of the Gnostics in the second century. What we can suggest, therefore, is that both Paul's opponents in Corinth and later the Gnostic writers derived their norms for religious behavior from a hellenized Judaism which espoused ascetic separation from the passions of the body; viewing knowledge as esoteric interpretation and liturgical practice as experience of divinization through union with the divine.

Paul's vigorous opposition in the Corinthian situation may have played an important role in keeping mainstream Christianity from following that route. At the same time, the conflict with Gnosticism

showed the necessity to move beyond simply citing sayings attributed to the Lord—these could always be given a secret, Gnostic interpretation. It became necessary to insist on the narrative of the gospels as the authoritative context for interpretation. Jesus' teaching had to be understood within the historical context of his life. This step is one which Gnostics never took. There is no realistic narrative in their works. This development suggests that we should understand the canonization of the gospels and Acts in a special perspective. They provide an appropriate context for preserving the teaching of Jesus so that it is interpreted as oriented toward the everyday lives and actions of human beings; as a religious tradition which is to center around a faith and love open to all rather than a secret knowledge available only to a few.

The Impact of Church Structures

The concern for the inclusive nature of the Christian community can thus be seen as related to the choice of the configuration, faith—ethics (love commands)—narrative gospel. The Gnostic option produced elitist, closed communities which could not expand to reach out to all of humanity. Indeed, most Gnostic writings provide some account that suggests that not all humans belong to the Gnostic race. It is clear that the gospels and Acts provide a powerful example of the universal intent of Christianity.

What is less evident to people today is the role which the development of set ecclesiastical teaching offices within the orthodox community played in preserving precisely that universality and inclusiveness mandated in the gospel. Since many people today are suspicious of hierarchical or bureaucratic church structures which appear to preserve themselves by excluding others from power and decision-making, they presume that such structures had the same result in the second century. However, a different image emerges if the teaching offices are seen in contrast to Gnosticism. The elitist and sectarian impulses inherent in the Gnostic understanding of religion as insight and ascetic detachment would move in a more exclusive direction. A tradition based on esoteric enlightenment may provide "equality with the divine" for the few who are privileged to join the sect, but it cannot be addressed as a message of salvation to humanity at large. Consequently, we must learn to evaluate our church structures in terms of how well they are suited to the objectives of the gospel as a universal message of salvation; not how they are structured in an abstract sense. The lack of structure in the Gnostic communities may finally have contributed as much to their demise as any of the opposition mounted by the officials of the orthodox churches.

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The 1982 Annual Meetings of the AAR/SBL will be held in New York, December 19–22, 1982. In addition to the usual array of papers, discussions, panels and receptions, TSF subscribers may be interested in the three sessions sponsored by the Group on Evangelical Theology, which is chaired by Mark Lau Branson. The sessions will include as topics and participants: "The Use of the Bible in Theology" (Clark H. Pinnock, James I. Packer, Robert Webber, John Yoder, Gabriel Fackre, Donald Dayton, Robert Johnston); "New Approaches in Evangelical Biblical Criticism" (Raymond E. Brown, Robert A. Guelich, Robert H. Gundry, Richard N. Longenecker, John T. Meier, James A. Sanders); and "Narrative Hermeneutics in the Light of Recent Research," a roundtable discussion requiring advance registration and preparation (Grant R. Osborne, Gerald T. Sheppard, Anthony C. Thiselton). Inquiries about and registrations for these annual meetings should be sent to Scholars Press, P.O. Box 2268, Chico, CA 95927.

INSTITUTE FOR BIBLICAL RESEARCH

The IBR annual meeting will occur in New York on the afternoon of December 20, 1982. Following the members' luncheon and meeting, Bruce Waltke will present a lecture on "The Schoolmen: Hermeneutics Reconsidered." For more details, contact Carl Armerding, Regent College, 2130 Wesbrook Mall, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W6.

EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The ETS will hold its annual meeting December 16–18, 1982 (just prior to the AAR/SBL) at Northeastern Bible College in Essex Falls, NJ. The theme for the meetings is "Biblical Criticism and the Evangelical." Included among plenary sessions will be a reply to Robert Gundry's new commentary on Matthew (with response by Gundry), papers by Norman Geisler, Robert Stein, Edwin Yamauchi and John Jefferson Davis, and a panel discussion with Clark Pinnock, Robert Johnston and Ronald Nash. Also of interest will be a plenary panel on evangelicalism and anti-semitism, including J. Ramsay Michaels, Robert W. Roth, Belden Menkus and Richard V. Pierard. For more information write Simon Kistemaker, Reformed Theological Seminary, 5422 Clinton Blvd., Jackson, MS 39209.

SOCIETY FOR PENTECOSTAL STUDIES

"Gifts of the Spirit" will be the theme of the Society for Pentecostal Studies annual meeting, to be held at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, November 18–20, 1982. The diverse group of participants will include James D. G. Dunn, Donald Gelpi, J. Rodman Williams, Donald Dayton, Ralph P. Martin and others. For more information contact Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., Fuller Theological Seminary, 135 N. Oakland Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101.

Comments from Reader Surveys

"I am often frustrated by TSF Bulletin. Many of the articles are next to worthless. Seldom, if ever, does the Bulletin deal with social/corporate dimensions of sin. The Bulletin is not on the cutting edge of theology and its concrete impact, especially in the cities. You need to stop fighting 'liberals' and get on with the kingdom."

"It is too critical of those more conservative and not critical enough of those more liberal—the conservative/liberal dichotomy is valid if there is any truth. Not all who attend conservative schools are Pavlovian in nature—we think too."

"I like the teachable attitude toward a variety of sources. You haven't 'written off' any perspective. I appreciate the emphasis on social justice and spiritual life, too."

"The breathless preoccupation with popular theological issues is wearisome at times, but maybe it is necessary in a mag for students."

"Some of the issues of the seminary world are non-issues in the pastorate or in missions. I suspect the faddishness of theological currents."

"It gets me out of my own little rut and helps me see what is happening on the road. It forces me to think in realms that I would not normally be obligated to."

"[What I like least is the] news from TSF chapters."

"[What I like least are the] articles on spirituality, because I feel I can get material for spiritual life from other sources; focus on what you do best."

"Not enough practical and spiritual formation materials. Not enough on local chapters."

"Have a larger . . . section on spiritual formation, for this area seems to be the most difficult area for the seminarian to deal with—whether s/he knows it or not."

"Even in its intellectually stimulating articles, TSF pastors me, cutting through the murky waters of contemporary theology with refreshing affirmations of our living, self-revealing Lord."

"I found TSF Bulletin a shade too pedantic, a little cliqueish, and overall not interesting enough to do more than glance at a few articles, read some book reviews, and throw on a pile to read later."

"I appreciate the openness to other points of view, yet the solidly orthodox, evangelical stance of the Bulletin."

"I think the 'liberal leaning' stance I sense is appropriate to get all we can from what liberal brothers and sisters . . . have to share with the body of Christ—but the ignoring of more conservative evangelical elements is an emotional bias, I believe."

"The prideful arrogance which is traditional to evangelicals rears its ugly head."

"I would like to see more discussions of the substantive differences between 'evangelical,' 'neo-orthodox,' and 'liberal' theology (without repeating the biblical authority questions)."

"[I like least the] very spotty coverage by, about, for women and minorities. This is a constant irritant. Your commitment to this needs to be more obvious."

"Since you give so much space to feminist ax-grinding, why not challenge a reputable scholar who is not enamored of current views to ordain women to contribute an article on the subject?"

TSF Bulletin Readers

This summer TSF office staff were encouraged and overwhelmed by the reader surveys we received. The response rate was over ten percent, much higher than expected. Several readers complained that the survey was too complex; this summer we paid the penalty for our extravagance: we have had to analyze the complex results! We are not finished, but some of the preliminary results are certainly interesting enough to report.

We enjoyed reading and learning from the comments. These reminded us again what a diverse group of people we are. What one survey singled out for glowing praise would be roundly condemned by the next. One reader would be sure that we are erring in one direction, and another would accuse us of precisely the opposite heresy. We want to share with you the experience of seeing what other readers said, so we have provided here a sampling of the more interesting comments.

In spite of such contrasting reactions, there were still some areas of strong agreement. It is quite clear that most readers consider the bibliographic resources provided by the *Bulletin* to be of first importance. Book reviews were mentioned as a chief reason for reading the journal more frequently than any other. There was also a very definite preference for more tear-out bibliographies, more review articles, and more notes about worthwhile articles in other publications. These bibliographic materials have been a major emphasis for us because seminary students need help gaining access to the best resources. We will continue to work for improvement in this area.

We are now actively seeking a larger number of tear-out bibliographies and survey review articles to publish as the year proceeds. We welcome suggestions from you about what areas are most important to cover in this way. Providing leads on noteworthy articles in other publications will be a little more difficult. In past years we have not had a good system for compiling this information, and it seemed to be more trouble than it was worth. We were surprised to find in the reader surveys how strongly you want more of this, and so we will renew efforts to develop a good system for providing it.

Beginning last spring we have been evaluating our strategy for selecting and publishing book reviews. Since many readers seem somewhat dissatisfied with the short reviews, we should clarify our purpose for including both short and long reviews. By increasing the number of books which receive only short reviews, we are attempting to insure that there is plenty of space for the most important books to receive full reviews. As far as possible, only those books which are receiving wide attention in the seminary world, or which *should be* receiving wide attention but are not, will receive long reviews containing real analysis and critique. Shorter reviews will be given those books which are of narrower interest, and will provide only basic information and some positioning of the books within their fields. This way we can provide resources to a broader spectrum of interest while still focusing on the books of greater general interest. We also seek to be encouraging serious interaction with current literature by welcoming contributions from student reviewers.

The surveys indicated wide agreement among readers concerning the need for more articles "on recent scholarly developments in theology and biblical studies," more articles "describing aspects of the theological task," and "more analyses of theological issues currently being debated." These are important concerns for those trying to discern the role of theology in the church. We will try to provide more in these areas. Several of the articles in this current issue do fall into these categories: Pinnock's discussion of using tradition as one aspect of the theological task; Perkins discussion of the implications of recent developments in Gnostic research; and Branson's report on continuing debates within evangelical theology on the relationship between evangelism and social responsibility.

Several other trends in the reader survey have been thought-provoking for the editors. Although there was great variety in the issues being debated on campus (which reminds us again of the diversity

Unity and Diversity

within the church and within our own readership) there were some "big issues." Most frequently mentioned were concerns about nuclear war or militarism in general. This is a hot topic not only at mainline denominational seminaries, but also at evangelical schools. This change from earlier years indicates that students and church people are realizing their responsibility to be involved in the grave issues facing the world. We are planning a major article on the nuclear issue in one of the next few issues of the *Bulletin*. Both mainline and evangelical seminaries were also reported to be wrestling with questions of women in ministry. There are also some issues receiving attention at evangelical schools but not at mainline schools. These include inerrancy, a wide range of particular doctrinal debates, and issues in world missions. Apparently in spite of recent efforts by mainline seminaries to increase their emphasis on evangelism and missions, there is still not much active debate about what the church's mission is to be. Perhaps articles in *TSF Bulletin* can serve to stimulate more discussion in this area.

It was intriguing to note that the most read articles last year were the report on the Harvard/Gordon Conwell Dialogue, Branson's editorial on fundamentalism ("left and right") and Pinnock's editorial about a loss of focus in mainline theological education. Even though many readers are vocal in their concern that *TSF Bulletin* is either too liberal or too conservative, everybody seems interested in understanding what these labels and categories mean. What is going on in theology now that the old labels are wearing out and losing their usefulness? Today's students will become pastors who are products of this new transition period in church history. We need to be talking to one another. We need to begin dealing with our respective strengths and weaknesses. *TSF* can play an important role by serving students and seminaries who are facing these new questions. Students should be sponsoring more dialogues and discussions like the one reported last year. We would be delighted to receive tapes or accounts of these so a wider audience can listen in. *TSF Bulletin* can also continue to help interpret these developments through book reviews and articles. For instance, Pinnock's article on tradition, originally delivered as a paper to the American Theological Society, is one attempt to take a fresh look at an old issue in light of the current situation.

A final item of interest: after book reviews, the most frequently mentioned reason for reading the *TSF Bulletin* was its evangelical outlook. These readers were looking to the journal for resources in conservative biblical scholarship, for insights into the contributions of evangelical theology, or for a sense of fellowship with other evangelical students. This may be, therefore, the appropriate occasion to reaffirm our self-identity. *TSF Bulletin* is a journal of *evangelical* thought, *TSF* is a group committed to maintaining the essential vitality of classical orthodox Christian faith, as well as to integrating theology with spirituality and mission.

Nevertheless, there continues to be great diversity among our readers. The cutting edge issues of faithfulness can vary at different schools and in different denominations. The reader surveys show this very clearly. Therefore it would be foolish to believe that *TSF* can always be on those cutting edges for everyone. We do hope to provide resources to the various groups of people who are struggling in their own contexts to be faithful. We trust *TSF Bulletin* will be used by them. But, in the final analysis, it falls to each group of people to discern in its own place what are the central issues and the most faithful responses. This is why *TSF* chapters and similar groups are so important. Although organizational news is not the most popular feature of *TSF Bulletin*, we hope that groups can be an encouragement, inspiration, and example to each other through our pages. In this issue we are providing the first of a series of articles describing what groups (whether *TSF* or not) can do to be faithful servants where they are. We offer all this with the hope that bits and pieces of it can become nourishment for the kingdom.

—John Duff

"I like the international character of the various issues addressed; those have expanded my sense of evangelical theological fellowship worldwide."

*"A section for doctoral candidates would be very special, even if it were only one page. How do other Ph.D. candidates struggle with issues such as: narrowing their focus for teaching and research specialization; determining and choosing teaching possibilities; necessary 'compromise' between the need to get the degree as soon as possible and the ideal of obtaining the most thorough training and excelling in all aspects while a student?" "It would be helpful to know of thesis/dissertation work being done at various seminaries that could be shared with other students. *TSF* could be the means of communication between them."*

*"[*TSF Bulletin*] does not come as often or contain as many articles as I would like, but I understand your limitations." "Too few issues." "Not long enough! A thousand pages will do!" "Can it be published monthly?"*

"I appreciate the limited number of issues. I get swamped with weeklies and biweeklies, and even monthlies."

"Sometimes I detect a somewhat truncated or distorted understanding of (or view towards) those of the more conservative wing of evangelical scholarship. As a case in point, perhaps one could mention your scattered comments regarding the inerrancy debate, which seemed biased against (or smug towards) those who would endorse the ICBI position."

*"Sometimes [*TSF Bulletin* is] too arrogant in its affirmation of evangelical positions."*

*"[I like] the breadth of the issues it addresses. *TSF* is not an exegetical publication, a theological journal, a ministerial journal, a book review digest or a devotional magazine. But, to some extent, it is all of these and more."*

"To tell you the truth—while I have been provoked to thought by your articles, I would say they were not readily 'integratable.' It is nice to stay abreast, but I often find myself shaking my head in disbelief at what I am reading."

"You are a scholarly magazine, but that doesn't mean you have to be heavy and difficult to read. It's a myth that complicated ideas have to be clothed in complicated prose. Lighten up your language and you'll increase your readership without sacrificing academic content."

"It's a nice break from studies and cheaper than National Geographic."

"I enjoy the sense of keeping in touch with other evangelicals, of overcoming the tendency to isolation in a pluralistic school."

"[It] seems a little too 'liberal.' While I realize that this may be necessary to be effective at 'liberal' schools, I feel that too much is sacrificed in the process."

"You don't want to make any waves, I believe, or risk offending anyone. You need a more biblically prophetic voice. Nothing in your publication challenged me last year; it was all to keep me from being offended. Truly there must be something more you wish to say!!"

"It's usually provocative and it doesn't hesitate to attack sacred cows (right or left)."

"Actually I read Themelios more."

*"I did not grow up in an evangelical faith context—but am growing in that direction currently. I appreciate the respect *TSF* shows toward non-evangelical understandings. It gives me hope that bridges can be built—that I do not have to reject my past to remain faithful in theological reflection."*

Striving for Obedience, Haunted by Dualism

The Consultation on the Relationship Between Evangelism and Social Responsibility

by Mark Lau Branson

... the Kingdom of God is the present inner rule of God in the moral and spiritual dispositions of the soul with its seat in the heart. God does rule as King in the lives of those "born again." He is not present as Savior and King in the lives of the "world" who are already condemned because of unbelief. ... The mission of the church is primarily evangelism even though good works and social responsibilities are essential expressions of Christian life.

—Arthur P. Johnson, U.S.A.

Both evangelism and social responsibility can only be understood in the light of the fact that in Jesus Christ the Kingdom of God has invaded history. ... The Kingdom of God is ... God's redemptive power released in history and bringing good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, sight for the blind, liberation for the oppressed. ... In actual practice the question as to what comes first, evangelism or social action, is irrelevant. In every concrete situation the needs themselves provide the guidelines for the definition of priorities.

—Rene Padilla, Argentina

Conservative Christians have a tendency to combat one heresy with another. They confront the "Social Gospel" with an individualized and purely spiritual view of salvation. They oppose a "realized eschatology" with an other-worldly, futuristic eschatological emphasis. ... Such "reactionary theology" does no justice to the complexity and richness of biblical teaching. ...

Christian ethics as an ethics of change should not be understood only in terms of individual repentance. It must also be extended to the area of social relationships and societal structures.

—Peter Kuzmic, Yugoslavia

The ecumenical One World utopia is based on a monistic universalism: It does not take into account the forces of radical evil which are effective in this world, and which poison every human progress. ... [This] ecumenical vision ... builds on ideological premises which are completely unacceptable to biblical evangelical thinking.

—Peter Beyerhaus, West Germany

Beyerhaus immediately associated some Christian theologians with Marxist philosophy because they talk of human rights and human dignity. It should be clearly stated that liberation is not neo-Marxism,

Mark Lau Branson, editor of TSF Bulletin, attended the Consultation as one of ten invited representatives of the press.

but biblical truth. Its seeds lie not in Das Kapital, but in the Book of Exodus. God has heard the cry of the oppressed and set them free.

—Gordon Moyes, Australia

... [It] is false anthropology, sociology and biblical theology to divorce the personal sphere entirely from the social sphere. Men live in a series of integrated relationships. How is it possible to be a mature man in Christ if one is being mercilessly exploited by others? ... The Church's mission is summed up in the two commandments to love God and to love our neighbour, when these are understood as mutually integral, interdependent and interpretative of one another.

—Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, India

Those were the starting positions, developed in fourteen papers and responses. The Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility, meeting during June, brought together sixty evangelicals from around the world to listen, read, study, converse and write. Under the sponsorship of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Fellowship, the conference was chaired by Bong Rin Ro (Taiwan) and Gottfried Osei-Mensah (England). The geographic distribution of participants and consultants was notable—twenty-five from the Third World and twenty-three from the North Atlantic. The denominational spectrum was also widely varied.

Position papers examined issues raised within several major categories: church history and historical theology, contemporary theological formulations, eschatology and missiology. A number of ministry projects were presented as models which shed light on the discussions about evangelism and social action: John Perkins' Voice of Calvary Ministries (Mississippi), World Vision's "Precious Jewels" program (Philippines), a self-help development project among the B'laam sponsored by the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, and a health care practice in rural India which received awards from Hindu state authorities and was the subject of a BBC documentary. These "case studies" modeled a biblical integration of evangelism and social responsibility for which many of the week's deliberations failed to find a theoretical framework. Perhaps this occurred because biblical material, claimed as the basis for evangelical thought, focuses on concrete, historical activities of God and his people, and is thus more easily translatable into action than into systematic theology.

Although we did not witness any substantial evidence of repentance, changed minds, new theological formulations or new ministry partnerships, a certain amount of respect and increased understand-

ing were apparent. Maybe that is all that can occur in such times of study and conversation. Conversions (changed minds and behavior) probably come more from involvement in partnership than from theoretical discussions, no matter how sincere the effort. Yet the conceptual framework is important. The contributions, responses, and interaction at the consultation did help clarify the issues.

Arthur Johnson spoke of a *deja vu*—citing current parallels with earlier shifts in the YMCA and the Student Volunteer Movement. He contended that social action replaced evangelism, and that “there is a danger that evangelicals right now will lose the primacy of evangelism and repeat the cycle of 80 years ago.” Such a reading is a misinterpretation of history. These movements, along with much of the liberal church of that era, had gone through a world view change. They were living out an impoverished world view with decreasing vision and power. Having lost confidence in Scripture, faithfulness to church creeds, and belief in a personal God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, these people and organizations had no way to maintain a biblical mission. Social action did not displace evangelism; rather the loss of faith in Jesus Christ created a predictable result—proclamation decreased. If a people are faithful to Scripture, both evangelism and social action will increase.

Evangelical missions today *are* facing a crisis. But Johnson has drawn the wrong parallel with the earlier betrayal of the gospel. Evangelicals in the North Atlantic are now also often crippled by an impoverished world view. This world view splits thinking from acting and preaching from serving. This dualism is tacitly assumed in the current debate about the relationship between evangelism and social action. The case studies and papers at the consultation from Argentina, India, South Africa and elsewhere show that this dualism has not similarly affected other parts of the world. Historical studies, in fact, would probably show that the degree of North Atlantic influence on national churches corresponds to the severity of the problem. Where all or significant parts of a national church are indigenized, a more holistic framework for mission is possible.

Kefa Sempangi provided a perceptive analysis concerning the church in Uganda, a church still strongly influenced by the dualism of early missionary efforts. How could a nation that is at least 75% Christian allow Idi Amin to gain such power? That church has had a long history of avoiding issues of politics and economics. Only spiritual concerns and works of charity are encouraged. This history has left the church unequipped to deal with the terror of Amin or even the continuing political and economic crises. Are there parallels with pre-Nazi Germany? Klaus Boehmuel, a West German currently teaching in Canada, observed notable similarities, but did not want to emphasize the parallels because he believed the Christian faith of Germany

had been much more nominal. Except for the Confessing Church (which produced the Barmen Declaration), many Christians lacked both spiritual depth and political discernment. Yet Sempangi would argue that the same was true in Uganda. A form of religion was present in both situations. It was perhaps more traditional or orthodox in Uganda than in Germany, but the results were the same—the church

Evangelicals in the North Atlantic are crippled by an impoverished world view which splits thinking from acting and preaching from serving.

was unable to confront the forces of darkness. Therefore it seems that spiritual vitality, orthodox beliefs and faithful involvement of Christians in society are actually intimately related.

Peter Kuzmic of Yugoslavia provided insights into the church's mission under Communist rule. The church is not allowed to enter political spheres. Worship is allowed, but witnessing is illegal. The church is finally forced into a non-biblical position of social irrelevance. Thus Communism coerces the church to be what Marxism says: irrelevant, an opiate. The church must therefore seek new forms and strategies for expressing the work of the kingdom.

As Harold Lindsell discussed his belief that the church as an organization could become corporately involved in “acts of mercy” but not in causes of justice, he was questioned concerning specific examples. Would visiting prisoners (an act of mercy) be an allowable official activity of the church even in South Africa, where it easily becomes a political act? Would giving food to the hungry have been encouraged in the 1960s if those who were hungry lived in North Vietnam? Lindsell admitted that there is actually a continuum rather than clearly delineated categories.

Ironically, although Lindsell and others were confronting such “grey areas” in discussions all week, these were forgotten when it came time to produce a statement. Hardline positions began returning and energy for listening seemed to wane. Even so, the statement that emerged is an amazingly honest, faithful step forward. The drafting committee's diligent work and John Stott's ability to synthesize and capture nuances were remarkable. The entire statement and many of the papers will be published this spring. Some noteworthy paragraphs are included here which show how the creativity and hard work of such an international gathering can produce a valuable analysis and prescription for the church.

EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: AN EVANGELICAL COMMITMENT

These selections provide only a very small sampling from a forty-page report. Some final editing is yet to be completed prior to publishing this spring. Further information is available from LCWE, P.O. Box 1179, Wheaton, IL 60187 or from the WEF Unit on Ethics and Society, 312 W. Logan St., Philadelphia, PA 19144.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Historical Background

It appears to us that evangelism and social concern have been intimately related to one another throughout the history of the church, although the relationship has been expressed in a variety of ways. Christian people often have engaged in both activities quite unselfconsciously, without feeling any need to define what they were doing or why. So the problem of their relationship, which led to the convening of this Consultation, is comparatively new, and for historical reasons it is of particular importance to evangelical Christians.

The Great Awakening in North America, the Pietistic Movement in Germany, and the Evangelical Revival under the Wesleys in Britain, which all took place in the early part of the 18th century, proved a great stimulus to philanthropy as well as evangelism. The next generation of British evangelicals founded missionary societies and gave conspicuous service in public life, notably Wilberforce in the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery itself, and Shaftesbury in the improvement of conditions in the factories.

But at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the so-called

“social gospel” was developed by theological liberals. Some of them confused the Kingdom of God with Christian civilization in general, and with social democracy in particular, and they went on to imagine that by their social programs they could build God's Kingdom on earth. It seems to have been in over-reaction to this grave distortion of the Gospel that many evangelicals became suspicious of social involvement. And now that evangelicals are recovering a social conscience and rediscovering our evangelical social heritage, it is understandable that some of our brothers and sisters are looking askance at us and suspecting us of relapsing into the old heresy of the social gospel. But the responsible social action which the biblical Gospel lays upon us, and the liberal “social gospel” which was a perversion of the true Gospel, are two quite different things. . . .

Particular Situations and Gifts

In wanting to affirm that evangelism and social action belong to each other, we are not meaning that neither can ever exist in independence of the other. . . . There are . . . occasions when it is legitimate to concentrate on one or the other of these two Christian duties. It is no wrong to hold an evangelistic crusade without accompanying program of social service. Nor is it wrong to feed the hungry in a time of famine without first preaching to them, for, to quote an African proverb, “an empty belly has no ears.” It was similar in the days of Moses. He brought the Israelites in Egypt the good news of their liberation, “but they did not listen to him, because of their broken spirit and their cruel bondage” (Exod. 6:9).

There is another justification for sometimes separating evangelism and social ac-

tion, in addition to the existential demands of a particular situation: namely, the distribution of spiritual gifts. The church is a charismatic community, the Body of Christ, whose members are endowed by the Holy Spirit with different gifts for different forms of ministry. . . .

Three Kinds of Relationships

Having seen that both particular situations and specialist callings can legitimately separate our evangelistic and social responsibilities, we are now ready to consider how in general they relate to one another. . . .

First, social action is a *consequence* of evangelism. That is, evangelism is the means by which God brings people to new birth, and their new life manifests itself in the service of others. . . . We can go further than this, however. Social responsibility is more than the consequence of evangelism; it is also one of its principal aims. For Christ gave himself for us not only "to redeem us from all iniquity" but also "to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds" (Tit. 2:14). . . . In saying this, we are not claiming that compassionate service is an automatic consequence of evangelism or of conversion, however. Social responsibility, like evangelism, should therefore be included in the teaching ministry of the church. . . .

Secondly, social action can be a *bridge* to evangelism. It can break down prejudice and suspicion, open closed doors, and gain a hearing for the Gospel. Jesus himself performed works of mercy before proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom. . . . Further, by seeking to serve people, it is possible to move from their "felt needs" to their deeper need concerning their relationship with God. Whereas, as another participant put it, "if we turn a blind eye to the suffering, the social oppression, the alienation and loneliness of people, let us not be surprised if they turn a deaf ear to our message of eternal salvation." . . .

Thirdly, social action . . . accompanies [evangelism] as its *partner*. . . . This partnership is clearly seen in the public ministry of Jesus, who not only preached the Gospel but fed the hungry and healed the sick. In his ministry, *kerygma* (proclamation) and *diakonia* (service) went hand in hand. His words explained his works, and his works dramatized his words. Both were expressions of his compassion for people, and both should be of ours. Both also issue from the lordship of Jesus, for he sends us out into the world both to preach and to serve. . . .

The Question of Primacy

First, evangelism has a certain priority. We are not referring to an invariable *temporal* priority, because in some situations a social ministry will take precedence, but to a *logical* one. The very fact of Christian social responsibility presupposes socially responsible Christians, and it can only be by evangelism and discipling that they have become such. If social action is a consequence and aim of evangelism (as we have asserted), then evangelism must precede it. . . .

Secondly, evangelism relates to people's eternal destiny, and in bringing them Good News of salvation, Christians are doing what nobody else can do. Seldom if ever should we have to choose between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger, or between healing bodies and saving souls, since an authentic love for our neighbor will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person. Nevertheless, if we must choose, then we have to say that the supreme and ultimate need of all humankind is the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and that therefore a person's eternal, spiritual salvation is of greater importance than his or her temporal and material well-being (cf. II Cor. 4:16-18). . . . Yet this . . . must not make us indifferent to the degradations of human poverty and oppression. The choice, we believe, is largely conceptual. In practice, as in the public ministry of Jesus, the two are inseparable, at least in open societies, and we shall seldom if ever have to choose between them. Rather than competing with each other, they mutually support and strengthen each other in an upward spiral of increased concern for both. . . .

SALVATION

We all are agreed that salvation is a broad term in the sense that it embraces the totality of God's redemptive purpose. . . . Having agreed on . . . three dimensions of salvation (personal, social, and cosmic), we went on to pose a further question: is salvation experienced only by those who consciously confess Christ as Lord and Savior? Or is it right in addition to refer to the emergence of justice and peace in the wider community as "salvation," and to attribute to the grace of Christ every beneficial social transformation? Some of us do not find salvation-language inappropriate for such situations, even when Christ is not acknowledged in them. Most of us, however, consider that it is more prudent and biblical to reserve the vocabulary of salvation for the experience of reconciliation with God through Christ and its direct consequences. None of us would dream of following those who have portrayed Hitler's Germany or Mao's China or Castro's Cuba as having experienced "salvation." All of us are united in wishing to honor Christ as universal Lord. . . .

HISTORY AND ESCHATOLOGY

False Dreams

We have been conscious of the special need to distinguish between the social responsibility to which we as Christians are called, its reasons and its content, and that which modern ideologies have generated. Both dogmatic and Messianic Marxisms, for example, proclaim a bogus millennium which recognizes neither the Creator of the world, nor his Christ, and yet anticipates that by changing social structures, frequently by violent means, they will by human effort alone bring about a fully just and perfect society. A program for change such as this, because it denies the stubborn reality of evil and ignores our deepest human needs, is bound to end in failure, even in disaster.

We also reject the Messianic Western dream which aims at erecting a counterfeit materialistic Kingdom. We recognize, of course, the divine command to subdue the earth and harness its resources for the good of all. But selfish secular materialism pur-

sues its own economic growth irrespective of the need to conserve the environment and to serve the development of the poorer nations. It is characterized by self-absorbed individualism and insensitive affluence, which are incompatible with Christian—let alone truly human—values, and which unwittingly foster increasing inequality between the rich and the poor. . . .

It was, therefore, with relief that we turned from all ideological substitutes to the authentic Christian hope, to the vision of the triumphant return of Jesus, and of the Kingdom he will consummate, which God has revealed to us in his Word. Our concern was to relate this hope to history, and to our concrete duties within history. . . .

The Eschatological Vision

The eschatological vision . . . is a revelation of what God himself is going to do in the end. This vision can give both direction and inspiration to our present day. . . . The glimpses God has given us of the end disclose the kind of community life which is pleasing to him. . . .

GUIDELINES FOR ACTION

Much of our debate has been at a theological level, for we have felt the need to wrestle with the issues which relate to salvation and kingdom, history and eschatology. Nevertheless, our theologizing all has been with a view to determining what practical action we should take to forward the mission which God has given us. . . .

Forms of Evangelism and Social Responsibility

It may be easiest to divide our Christian social responsibility into two kinds, which for simplicity's sake we will call "social service" and "social action," and which can be distinguished from each other in several ways:

<i>Social Service</i>	<i>Social Action</i>
Relieving Human Need	Removing the Causes of Human Need
Philanthropic Activity	Political and Economic Activity
Seeking to Minister to Individuals and Families	Seeking to Transform the Structures of Society
Works of Mercy	The Quest for Justice

In making this necessary functional distinction, we recognize that in practice it is not as neat as it looks. On the one hand, social action of a political kind lacks integrity if it is not supported by a personal commitment to social service. On the other hand, some works of mercy have inescapably political implications. . . .

The Local Church in a Free Society

In spite of our differing theological and cultural backgrounds, on account of which some of us assign social action (of a political kind) to individuals and groups rather than to churches, all of us agree that the church has definite evangelistic and social responsibilities. This applies especially to the local church, which should be committed to the total well-being of the community in which it is permanently situated. . . .

So . . . whenever the Word of God speaks clearly, the church must speak clearly also, as for example did the German Confessing Church in the Barmen Declaration of 1934, and the Norwegian Church while Norway was under German occupation in World War II. If such speech is condemned as political, we need to remember that silence would be political, too. We cannot avoid taking sides. But when the teaching of Scripture seems unclear, and human reason has to seek to develop a position out of biblical principles, then the church should make a pronouncement only after thorough study and consultation. When the church cannot agree on an issue, then the issue cannot be dealt with in the name of the church; instead, Christian individuals and groups should handle it. . . .

All of us are agreed that a local church should not normally engage in partisan politics, either advocating a particular party or attempting to frame political programs. We also are agreed, however, that the local church has a prophetic ministry to proclaim the law of God and to teach justice, should seek to be the conscience of the nation, and has a duty to help the congregation develop a Christian mind, so that the people may learn to think Christianly even about controversial questions. . . .

The Church Under Repression

There are many settings in the world where today's church is like the early church, where it suffers from harassment or active persecution. We have thought particularly about churches repressed by Marxist, Muslim, or extreme rightist regimes, or by state-related churches. In such situations, it has been suggested to us, the church always has faced three temptations—to *conform* (tailoring the Gospel to the prevailing ideology), to *fight* (losing its identity by resorting to worldly weapons), or to *withdraw* (denying its mission, betraying its calling, and losing its relevance). . . . Our brothers and sisters in repressive situations have recommended that, resisting these three temptations, the church rather should develop a critical involvement in society, while preserving its primary allegiance to Christ. . . .

There are occasions of moral principle in which the church must take its stand, whatever the cost. For the church is the community of the Suffering Servant who is the Lord, and it is called to serve and suffer with him. It is not popularity which is the authentic mark of the Church, but the prophetic suffering, and even martyrdom. "Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (II Tim. 3:14). May we be given grace to stand firm! . . .

CONCLUSION: A CALL TO OBEDIENCE

We request the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Fellowship, who jointly sponsored our Consultation, and other bodies of like mind, to call Christians and churches around the world to a more costly commitment to the lost, the needy, and the oppressed, for the greater glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Formation in the Seminary Community: Signs of Renewed Concern

by Dick Daniels

A concern for the spiritual formation of seminary students has continually been addressed in recent years. This focus on the spiritual life of theological students is appropriate within any seminary seeking to prepare persons who are competent and ready for the task of ministry. The following comment by Doran McCarty is indicative of this concern:

It is important for students to shore up the interior aspects of their lives. They will be using many administrative procedures, counseling techniques and literary criticism just as their counterparts in secular disciplines do. This makes it important for them to learn that their own spirituality is a distinctive facet of their personal and professional identity, so that they are not tempted to rely only on secular techniques baptized into religious service.¹

Several projects during the last fifteen years have dealt with the spiritual formation of students within the seminary.

The Lilly Endowment Project on the Deepening of the Spiritual Life of the Seminary Faculty.

Harold Duling, a director of the Lilly Endowment, had a great concern for the spiritual development of seminary students. In a study of seminary catalogues from around the country, Duling found only a handful of schools that offered anything significant on the life of prayer. He attended a silent retreat in Indianapolis led by Charles F. Whiston. The impact of the retreat prompted him to ask Whiston to coordinate a project on the spiritual life of seminary faculty members. The proposal was made, and in the spring of 1964 a grant was received from the Lilly Endowment.

The one-year study involved a series of regional weekend conferences and retreats for faculty and students. This was followed up with personal visits to several seminaries. At the end of the first year the project was redirected from students to faculty members. The continuing project centered on finding a core of faculty members in schools who would be interested in helping seminarians become authentic people of prayer. Four regional conferences were held which led to two national conferences in January of 1968 and 1969.

As a result of the national conferences, a National Trysting Group was formed with thirty faculty members. Membership and vows were renewable yearly and included the following commitments:²

The National Trysting Group Rule of Prayer

1. I will daily keep a tryst with Jesus Christ, (at such and such a place, and at such and such a time). You may wish to omit this on Sundays, since you would then be worshipping in church with your-fellow Christians.

2. Content of the daily tryst with Jesus Christ:
 - a. A daily renewal of Covenant with Christ.
 - b. A daily reading devotionally of the New Testament, to expose oneself to Christ as Person of God, and to meet Him and hear Him through the Bible World.
 - c. Daily intercessory praying for:
 - 1) The other members of the Fellowship, who are also under the rule.
 - 2) For one's own seminary faculty colleagues and students—by name.
3. Periodic examination of how the Rule has been kept, with appropriate thanksgiving or confession. At the end of each semester or quarter to report to some other person, some colleague or to the Director.

Whiston's report expands on each of the following findings of this project in light of his contact with students and faculty members (pp. 7–14):

- a. A widespread ignorance among students of what true Christian praying really is.
- b. An expectation by students of this emphasis within the seminary curriculum . . . yet its not being provided.
- c. Faculty satire and ridicule in response to students asking for help in prayer.
- d. Failure of prayer fellowships due to a lack of understanding of the purpose, rationale, and methodology of such prayer groups.
- e. A resistance by students to come under this type of discipline.
- f. Lack of prayer life with students and their spouses or families.
- g. Student excuses including lack of time and academic pressures.
- h. Student desire for worshipful, not lecture-oriented chapels.
- i. Little prayer by students for faculty and peers.
- j. A spectrum of faculty reactions ranging from open acceptance to resentment and ridicule.
- k. Lack of disciplined spiritual life among most faculty.
- l. Faculty members feeling that the life of prayer necessarily would lead to pharisaic pride.
- m. Faculty expressing that the spiritual life of students is personal and private with each person needing to work it out individually.
- n. No regular habit of attending chapel services for a majority of faculty.

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Voyage Vision Venture.

Two major projects on spiritual formation have been initiated by the Association of Theological Schools in the last decade. The first project is summarized in *Voyage Vision Venture*, the 1972 report of the task force on spiritual development.³ This task force, funded through a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and headed by Rev. Eugene L. Van Antwerp, was instructed to "shape a set of concepts and principles that can guide a program of spiritual development" (p. 3).

A fundamental principle grew out of the task force discussion regarding definitions: "The spiritual formation and development of seminary students begins with, and is dependent upon, the spiritual formation and development of the faculty" (p. 9). This principle recognizes that the seminary is a community, and each faculty member lives out his/her own style of spiritual growth within that community. It is that dynamic of community which can foster or inhibit the spiritual life of seminarians.

Several observations about spiritual formation were gleaned from the report:

- a. Growth cannot be coerced or hurried (p. 20).
- b. One must accept the relation between a student's growth in the consciousness of his (her) own identity and the unevenness of his (her) spiritual growth. . . . Problems of spiritual development will always be corollary to problems of psychological development (p. 21).
- c. The spiritual practice of the presence of Christ . . . is bound up with the moral practice of the presence of man (woman) (p. 21).
- d. The heart of discipline is obedience (p. 23).
- e. Distancing from others is as important as nearness (p. 25).
- f. In a student's experience of the entire spectrum of seminary life, he (she) is being spiritually formed or malformed (p. 26).

The final section of the task force report ("Venture") reflected a number of dimensions of the seminary which impact on the unique approach to spiritual formation in that school (pp. 31-43):

a. *Community*. The work cannot be compartmentalized into a course, department, or position. "Only within the framework of community experience in seminary will the graduate find and retain some point of reference for his future ministry to the Christian community" (p. 32). The core of this community will be its involvement in worship, in community prayer, and in society as a total community or in smaller groups.

b. *Corporate Worship*. The student or faculty attitude of "competitive-ness" in leading worship (i.e., doing better than the previous worship leader) and the idea that "worship is only something you do to people, rather than also something people do Godward" (p. 33) have both contributed to the breakdown of corporate worship in the seminary.

c. *The Inner Life*. " . . . the inner spiritual development of seminarians is at least as important as the cultivation of the mind" (p. 35). In addition to planned programs, spontaneous groups interact with all levels of a seminary community and contribute to one another's inner life.

d. *Evaluation*. A three-step process for faculty to evaluate student spiritual growth includes: knowing the students, having an established set of standards for evaluation, and being able to evaluate the students in light of those standards.

e. *Guidance*. The idea is that some faculty will become spiritual mentors in a one-to-one relationship with students.

f. *Discipline*. Even with a decline in the use of rules and regulations, voluntary systems of discipline are being adopted by students.

g. *Field Education*. Since spiritual development is a continuing process, the field education involvement of students provides a context in which the spiritual life can be stimulated and experienced.

Spiritual Formation in Theological Schools: Ferment and Challenge

The task force in the preceding report concluded by suggesting the need for a follow-up to their work. In January, 1978, the Association of Theological Schools received a grant from the Rockefeller Brothers

Fund to carry out a two-year program on the preparation of faculty, clergy, and lay leaders as spiritual mentors for students. In May, 1978 another grant was given by the Fund to hold six regional conferences on spiritual formation for faculty members. The Shalem Institute in Washington, D.C., under the leadership of Tilden Edwards, Jr., led this project. As described in Edwards' report in *Theological Education*,⁴ two basic concerns were established by the national advisory committee:

1. A need to deal with fundamental underlying issues concerning the nature of spirituality and its relation to theology and other fields. In Protestant schools . . . a concern . . . how to approach this area concretely in terms of faculty preparation and method.
2. A need to forge a more integral and critical discipline of spirituality today that moves toward resolution of the centuries-old split between intellectual, affective, and intuitive approaches to religious knowledge. (pp. 12-13)

Three questions were sent to participants previous to the regional conferences (pp. 14-18). The first asked, "What is the most important concern you bring to this conference regarding spiritual formation?" The responses raised two concerns: (1) how to develop, model, and offer personal help for the spiritual life, and (2) an interest in other models for intentional spiritual formation. The second question asked, "Has your school developed an intentional, mutually explored set of assumptions and practices in this area?" Most schools indicated that these were not available. The final question asked, "What are some particular ongoing questions or difficulties that have been raised by these assumptions and practices?" The responses brought to light some tensions in the following areas: integrated vs. additional, mandatory vs. voluntary, level of student capacity, need for resources, use of chapel, use of small groups, and the evaluation of assumptions about spirituality.

Edwards' report summarizes the format of the regional and national conferences, the sources of concern for spiritual formation, distinctive emphases among various theological traditions, examples of what is being done on campuses, and a listing of what is needed in this area from publishers and the Association of Theological Schools. The end of his report includes a section on the preparation of spiritual mentors which is a reflection of his book, *Spiritual Friend* (Paulist Press, 1980). One of the important parts of the report is his summary of the major addresses given at the national conferences. Four principles essential to the viability of spiritual formation in theological education were given by Daniel Buechlein of St. Meinrad School of Theology (pp. 37-38):

1. Spiritual formation cannot be left to chance . . .
2. The role of faculty, staff, and students in spiritual formation is inevitable and reciprocal . . .
3. A careful distinction must be made between spiritual formation and spiritual transformation . . .
4. Intentional Christian community is the necessary context for spiritual formation . . .

It is my hope that this concern will continue to spread throughout the seminaries of this country. The forms will differ, to be sure. They may include a renewal of the classical disciplines of experiential Christianity (as in Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*) or finding new ways to create a climate which fosters the spiritual development of students. Whatever the forms, this emphasis must not get buried far below the academic pursuits of faculty and students alike.

FOOTNOTES

¹Doran McCarty, *The Supervision of Ministry Students* (Atlanta: Home Mission Board Southern Baptist Convention, 1978), p. 23.

²*The Lilly Endowment Project on the Deepening of the Spiritual Life of the Seminary Faculty: Final Report*, December, 1970, p. 6.

³*Voyage Vision Venture* (Dayton, Ohio: American Association of Theological Schools, Spring, 1972).

⁴Tilden Edwards, Jr., "Spiritual Formation in Theological Schools: Ferment and Challenge," *Theological Education* (Dayton, Ohio: Association of Theological Schools, Autumn, 1980), pp. 7-53.

working paper

Student Initiative: A Strategy for Service

by Mark Lau Branson

Students at seminary are confronted with opportunities to participate in a variety of student groups, from special interest caucuses and action groups to broader organizations such as student governments or TSF chapters. Why should a student spend the time to be involved in these activities? If one does choose to participate, what should one expect these groups to accomplish? What contributions might national organizations be able to make?

This working paper is intended to address such questions. It will consider the context in the church and seminary world which makes such student involvement important, and it will offer a framework for setting goals and planning activities. Although the suggestions are especially intended for groups affiliated or otherwise in partnership with TSF, they can also be of help to student governments or other groups. We hope students will tear this article out, copy it, pass it around, discuss it, and offer comments and suggestions. With further revision, we hope it can become a resource of continuing and widespread usefulness.

CHANGES IN CHURCH AND SEMINARY

Along with the wider secular culture, the Christian church finds itself in the midst of changes. Old assumptions about theology and the church's role in the world are being challenged by new crises and opportunities. As the church tries to respond to the rapid movements within society, it can easily experience a sense of chaos or malaise. A debilitating loss of focus can occur in the midst of many competing agendas. At the same time, out of this turmoil seems to be emerging an exciting convergence.

Martin Marty, in *The Public Church*, calls this convergence a new ecumenical coalition, a merging of certain forces within evangelical, mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. This new "community of communities" offers a vision that draws on helpful resources from all these traditions and then seeks to minister faithfully to the world. It presents members of each tradition with an opportunity to avoid partisanship and to seek renewed commitment for the whole church. For example, insofar as an increasingly strong evangelicalism calls the church and the world to authentic repentance and obedience, it is to be celebrated. But where it exhibits triumphalism, remains unbiblical in its lack of concern for neighbors near and far, and shuns thoughtful criticism and reform, it does not deserve a following. If the church can practice careful discernment, the present turmoil could produce movement in positive new directions.

Seminaries and seminary students cannot avoid participating in the church's pangs. The seminary quickly becomes a place where the changes hitting the church are focused. If the seminary can avoid

becoming paralyzed by the turmoil, it has the potential of helping the church in this task of discernment. It should not just follow the church, but with grace and wise initiative should nurture the church in its pilgrimage. Martin Marty sees hope in the fact that something new is happening in the church; the seminary should be an influence that helps the right things happen.

Yet seminaries themselves are in the midst of significant and challenging changes. There are more women, more ethnic minorities, more evangelicals, more older students, and more married students who are all seeking their own place in institutions not accustomed to accommodating them. For example, women and ethnic minorities are welcomed with recruitment offers but find that theology and church history are still dominated by the "white man's" agenda. Evangelicals in mainline seminaries sometimes find warm welcomes, but in other places face unvoiced skepticism. Additional uncertainty is caused as job placement becomes a major concern to all students, one which at times can even overshadow important theological and ethical issues.

The complex relationships between seminaries, students, denominations and theological traditions provide additional sources of tension. The movement toward ecumenical cooperation between seminaries has often been marred by underlying tensions caused by jealousy, competition for students and finances, and a lack of understanding the real needs of their varying constituencies. Mainline denominations are sometimes disturbed to find their own students choosing to attend evangelical schools and then gaining not only a

The seminary should not just follow the church, but with grace and wise initiative should nurture the church in its pilgrimage.

very satisfactory education, but also quite possibly a more solid grounding in their own particular historical and theological traditions. On the other hand, graduates of evangelical schools are not necessarily prepared to work within the pluralism of the mainline denominations, or they may find themselves excluded from positions of influence. Women, while hearing rumors of reverse discrimination that should be favoring them, are discovering a disheartening time lag between denominational affirmation and search committee enlightenment.

In the face of so many currents, it is difficult for the seminary to step forward in creative and faithful ways; instead it may become a confused victim. Sometimes it moves in particular directions without knowing clearly enough what changes are needed, thus being too strongly influenced by agendas from the secular culture. At other times it reacts as an embattled conservative, clinging to its traditional

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outlook and approach (whether liberal or evangelical). Yet if the seminary is to serve the church, denominational agendas must be expressed in service rather than in political clamoring; stereotypes that deny both history and present realities must be exposed; the Bible must be more than an object of a debate; and theology needs to become, rather than ammunition, a vibrant place where biblical studies, prayer and the needy world meet.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT INITIATIVE

Students live and study in the center of these pressures and opportunities. They bring with them perspectives that can help the seminary discover its servant role. Having roots in different traditions, they can see the impact of various theological and denominational forces. They arrive with high expectations, eager to gain tools, learn from scholars, experience ministry through practicums, and grow in the midst of a community. They seek truth and life in Scripture, clarity and guidance from theology, power and companionship from the Spirit, support and accountability from each other. Although administrators, professors and denominational leaders are rightly expected to provide some of these, they cannot be expected to furnish a fully adequate seminary experience.

Students must take initiative to help the seminary provide the most helpful environment and resources, not merely for themselves, but ultimately for the church. Student initiative in the seminary is being met with increasing approval. Formerly, administrators and denominational authorities often denigrated student initiative, especially when linked with organizations outside official channels. Perhaps such student groups side-tracked their agenda, or simply created defensiveness because their existence implied that seminary provi-

***It is the integration of these areas—
theology, spiritual formation and
mission—that presents the seminary
with an exacting and demanding
responsibility.***

sions were insufficient. But, more recently, such initiative is welcomed. As students take more responsibility for their own learning, personal growth and professional preparation, they reject the passive roles of simply being “company men” or inactive recipients. A more active approach stimulates learning, draws more from professors and creates a more positive seminary atmosphere.

It is in this kind of context that the Theological Students Fellowship seeks to serve. TSF is committed to the concept of student initiative. Although TSF does have distinctive insights and agendas to contribute, it is students who must join together to discern the needs on their campus and to plan appropriate ways to serve. The groups that result from student initiative can be of many kinds, including special interest groups as well as established student governments and other groups of general appeal. Both types have important contributions to make to the life of the seminary.

Special interest groups meet a variety of more narrowly focused needs. Caucuses provide a basis of fellowship and action for students who feel drawn together—women, ethnic minorities, or perhaps evangelicals. Action groups may form around important issues or ministries such as nuclear arms, world hunger, a local ministry, or child care for seminary families. These groups serve the important function of raising the seminary’s consciousness about particular needs, and provide a context for individuals to find the energy and support they need to work for change.

Yet such specialized groups may bring with them a tendency to splinter the campus community if deliberate efforts to form coalitions are not made. Such cooperation is likely only if individuals and groups make it a priority to empathize, learn, change and grow. Opportunities for friendship and the development of common agendas

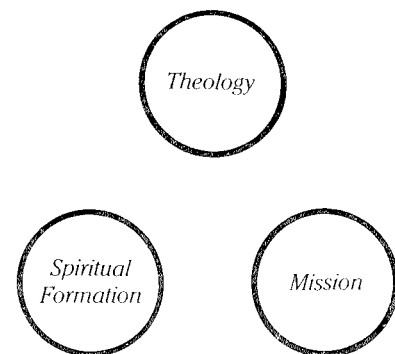
can emerge from time spent listening, studying, worshipping and planning together. When such efforts to build mutual respect and understanding do lead to shared agendas, caucuses and action groups can function even more powerfully because stereotypes are broken. Recent examples of such unexpected coalitions include the merging of “pro-life” and anti-nuclear advocates. The shared concerns for life and justice provide a powerful bond. Women’s groups have at times found true allies among evangelicals whose faithfulness to Scripture results in their calling for equality and new sensitivities in Bible study and ministry. Evangelicals, often dismissed as irrelevant to social issues during the past few decades, are now often joining actively in efforts to seek justice and peace.

While coalitions between special interest groups can make creative contributions, other groups are needed to serve the seminary as a whole. For example, student government organizations have certain defined responsibilities, often fulfilled through ongoing committees. These may produce a student newsletter, provide input on academics, coordinate worship, or attend to the rather all-encompassing issues of “student life.” But there is still a further need. Frequently the various elements of the seminary experience fail to harmonize in providing an integrated foundation for ministry. Academics, worship, fellowship, denominational involvement and social action threaten to exclude each other rather than cooperating together in theological education. By taking leadership in seeking greater integration and balance, TSF chapters and other groups have an opportunity to move beyond limited roles as special interest groups to serve the whole seminary community. By doing so, TSF chapters can also model the positive contributions an informed and faithful evangelicalism can make to the emerging “public church.”

A FRAMEWORK FOR APPRAISAL

The remainder of this working paper introduces a framework that can help TSF chapters and other groups develop strategies for serving in this way. It proposes a grid for viewing a school’s strengths and weaknesses so that appropriate activities can be developed. Careful evaluation and planning are important because groups often pursue agendas and activities without a prior analysis of the needs and milieu. Some plan conferences and meetings with little understanding of how an event’s helpfulness can be evaluated. Yet graduate students are painfully aware of the numerous demands on limited time and energy. In the midst of already overloaded schedules, additional options will attract attention and participation only if they meet real needs and promise to do so with distinction.

Our framework proposes considering three ingredients in a seminary education and participating in three recurring phases of student involvement. In order to accomplish its task, a seminary community needs to provide resources and guidance in the areas of theology, spiritual formation and mission. The phases of participation, retreat and initiation can provide the means for students’ serving. These categories can combine to form a grid helping students maintain a broad perspective on their school’s needs during all phases of their involvement. The categories will be explained here briefly, and then some useful activities for reaching particular goals will be mentioned. More detail on how, in practice, various groups have achieved their goals will be coming in future articles.



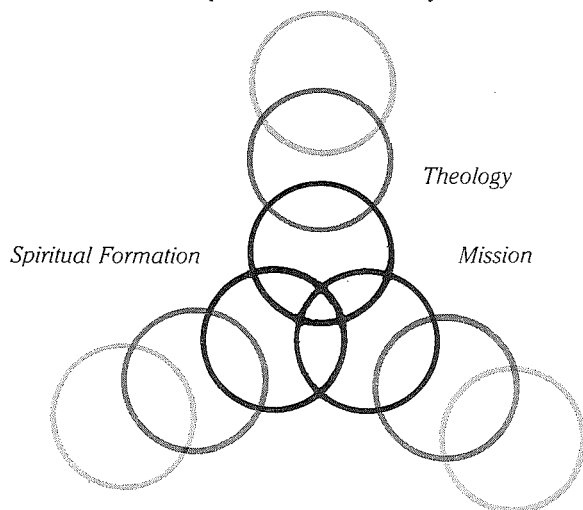
Three Elements of Seminary Education

Theology is the task of interpreting and communicating the Christian faith in a way that is both faithful and relevant to the contemporary world. If the seminary is going to equip its students for ministry in a church that is both threatened and revitalized by rapid changes, it must provide an abundant supply of theological resources. Most schools do offer at least some variety in theological traditions. Different approaches, both historical and contemporary, can usually be found. However, at mainline schools it is not uncommon for classical orthodoxy to receive careless exposition and deprecating evaluations. Liberalism, as developed during the last two centuries and apparent in various newer experiments, is not the only option. It should be discussed and evaluated as attention is also given to classical thought and more recent evangelical formulations. Similarly, conservative schools serve better if liberal options receive more than cursory dismissal. Also, biblical studies can benefit from the richness of alternative scholarly traditions. While a professor will probably work within the tradition personally deemed most helpful (whether Bultmannian, structuralist, dispensational or liberation) other resources should be available. Where the seminary environment does seem to restrict the options, students should take initiative in seeking alternatives.

In addition to assessing theological education, students should evaluate provisions for spiritual formation. These include all the resources which help students and professors grow in personal and corporate faithfulness, within the family, the church and the seminary community. Personal prayer, silent retreats, corporate worship and Bible study in the context of community are all needed. Spiritual directors and opportunities for instruction in the traditional disciplines of meditation, contemplation and fasting should also be available. The seminary community, with the proper resources for guidance, can provide the atmosphere of encouragement and accountability needed for spiritual growth.

Finally, the seminary is a place where attention is given to how the church fulfills its responsibilities in the world. Mission includes all the works of the kingdom—evangelism, church growth, social ethics, political reform, economic responsibilities and interreligious dialogue. These ministries may be located within a particular community (urban, suburban, rural) or reach across cultural or national boundaries. Mission activities are needed for exposure and hands-on experience. Pastors and seminarians too often lack contact with non-Christians. This lessens their ability to pastor lay people effectively. Community organizing, soup kitchens, beach evangelism, foreign missions, university ministry and neighborhood Bible studies all provide such opportunities. Seminarians can encounter other crucial issues of mission in the continuing dialogues about evangelism and social responsibilities, church growth agendas, contextualization and indigenization, the relationships between mission boards and national churches, and so forth.

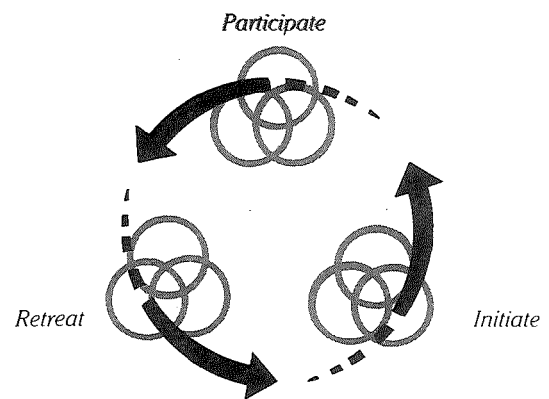
It is the integration of these areas—*theology*, *spiritual formation* and *mission*—that presents the seminary with an exciting and



demanding responsibility. While particular topics can be pursued independently at times, they must eventually merge. The areas of intersection between the three circles can suggest helpful questions in seeking integration. Does the study of theology remain a purely academic pursuit, or does it influence our prayer life and become the foundation for our political involvement? Do we allow the worship life of the church to influence what we pursue as legitimate questions in our courses? As academic and spiritual life are nurtured, do they properly push towards mission in the world? Does our involvement in ministry lead us deeply into prayer, or does it remain mere activism? A biblical wholeness must be our goal. Thinking, acting and praying belong together. Through activities it sponsors, a TSF chapter can be a catalyst not only for strengthening each of these concerns, but also for emphasizing the needed integration of all three areas.

Three Phases of Involvement

In order for a chapter to serve effectively, three phases of involvement are needed. These are initially sequential, but later may operate simultaneously. First students must actively *participate* in the life of the campus. This includes not only classes and chapel services, but also student government, academic councils, campus publications and various caucuses and organizations. This active identification with others and collaboration in activities must be the starting point. In that context, the strengths and weaknesses of the school are discerned, shared concerns are discovered, sensitivity to the hurts and joys of others is developed, and common agendas begin to form.



Individual or group *retreat* is then needed for reflection, meditation, prayer and planning. A day of silence, along with Bible reading and journaling, can provide a setting for clarifying impressions and hearing God's directions. Perhaps a retreat leader or a book by Richard Foster or Elizabeth O'Connor could help. Such a retreat is a step of faith. It puts into practice our confidence in a God who grants wisdom and honors our work of listening. Following silence, the chapter's leaders and participants can share what they have learned through participation, sensed as they prayed, discovered as they studied and envisioned as they looked for paths of ministry. Personal intuition, the guidance of Scripture, the comments of other students and the goals involved in professional preparation all coalesce at this point.

Only after participation and retreat is a group ready to *initiate*. In seeking to serve, a chapter must move beyond its own needs and minister in light of the needs of the whole seminary community. While a particular cluster of TSF concerns offers certain perimeters (theology that is faithful to Scripture, spirituality that is vital and foundational, missions that link proclamation with service), initiatives must be contextualized. Activities must be pursued in a manner that opens doors for cooperation, gains the respect of faculty and students and helps create an atmosphere of learning, growth and service. Events can be jointly sponsored with other campus organizations such as a women's center, mission groups, ethnic caucuses and worship committees. Connections with TSF groups at nearby seminaries or with national organizations such as the Evangelical Women's Caucus can also offer opportunities for cooperative efforts that draw students and faculty into more broadly based activities.

Possible Activities

To meet student needs for academic resources, a chapter can host visiting lecturers, sponsor sessions for reading and discussing student papers, encourage faculty dialogues, and promote *TSF Bulletin* and other bibliographic sources. Spiritual formation can be enhanced through support/prayer groups, Bible studies, evenings for fellowship and worship, retreats and seminars, and programs that link students with pastors, professors or lay people who are equipped to serve as spiritual directors. A chapter seeking to inform and encourage mission can do so through speakers, book studies, local projects, correspondence with missionaries, and short-term involvement in other states or nations. Also of value are classes co-sponsored by TSF during "January term" at the Overseas Ministries Study Center or during spring break at a seminar on "Proclamation Evangelism" in Ft. Lauderdale. A chapter can also draw on the resources of such groups as Evangelicals for Social Action, Bread for the World, and Clergy and Laity Concerned.

TSF Bulletin can serve all these concerns through its articles and reviews. The interaction with differing viewpoints, the appreciation for various church traditions, and what we hope is a helpfully self-critical approach to evangelicalism are means to encourage thinking, listening and creative faithfulness. The array of topics, working toward the integration mentioned earlier, can help prevent myopic approaches to education. *TSF Bulletin* can be a basis for group discussions, a source for discovering books, and a respected journal to share with other students and professors.

Although a chapter will be aware of many needs and options, in its planning it needs to decide on a few agenda items that reflect clearly-established goals and priorities. The demands for time and energy necessitate that extracurricular activities be kept few so that they can be done well. Such a ministry will be valued by others and create opportunities for respect and influence. Because the three phases of involvement—participation, retreat, initiation—are cyclical, the priorities can be revised as time goes on. Changing needs, new issues, different classes and varying denominational agendas will influence the campus, and therefore must affect the chapter's program.

To help implement these strategies, TSF editors and field staff are working to serve seminarians. We have learned that a chapter becomes better focused and works more intentionally when a written document is created to serve as a purpose statement and constitution. The doctrinal basis and the recently-revised ministry objectives of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship are provided here. Perhaps they can be helpful not only in formulating such a statement but also in clarifying one's long-range goals in ministry. A statement from Professor Paul Mickey has been included to offer reflections on the advantages of affiliating with Theological Students Fellowship as a national organization. Charter applications and sample constitutions are available from the TSF office. As the year progresses, we will publish reports of chapter activities. (We prefer to receive these from chapters so that we don't have to make them up!) There are over 1000 student readers of *TSF Bulletin*, and we estimate that an additional 350 are active in local groups. Through prayerful, well-planned service, students will have an increasingly helpful and powerful role in graduate education and in the continuing renewal of the church.

THE WHOLE GOSPEL FOR THE WHOLE WORLD OMSC JANUARY MISSION SEMINARS FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS.

This year Theological Students Fellowship is joining twenty-nine seminaries in co-sponsoring the January term for seminarians at the Overseas Ministries Study Center. Each of the four-week courses is an independent unit, but together they give a comprehensive survey. Students may register for any week or combination of weeks, and one may receive academic credit at one's own school if prior arrangement is made with the seminary administration. The topics for the four weeks are "Crucial Dimensions in Mission" (Jan. 3-7); "Points of Tension in Mission" (Jan. 10-14); "The Universal Scope and Scandal of the Gospel: Tribal Gods and the Triune God," with Kosuke Koyama (Jan. 17-21); and "Evangelism and Liberation in Mission: The Latin American Experience," with Jose Miguez Bonino (Jan. 24-28). For more information write the Overseas Ministries Study Center, P.O. Box 2057, Ventnor, NJ 08406.

IVCF Doctrinal Basis

1. The unique divine inspiration, entire trustworthiness and authority of the Bible.
2. The Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The necessity and efficacy of the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ for the redemption of the world, and the historic fact of His bodily resurrection.
4. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the work of regeneration.
5. The expectation of the personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IVCF Campus Ministry Objectives

We desire to establish, assist and encourage groups of students and faculty who give witness to Jesus Christ as God Incarnate, who are in agreement with our basis of faith and who:

- I. *Evangelize their academic community by*
 - A. demonstrating commitment to penetrate their entire campus with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - B. knowing how to verbalize the Gospel and how to respond to questions people ask concerning the Gospel.
 - C. living a life of compassion and justice.
 - D. leading others to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
 - E. incorporating new believers into the Christian community.
- II. *Join the world mission of the church by*
 - A. knowing the call of God and their role in the world mission of the church.
 - B. praying for the needs of the world.
 - C. giving financially to world missionary endeavors.
 - D. participating in cross-cultural ministry projects.
 - E. reaching out to International students.
- III. *Grow as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ by*
 - A. studying and obeying the Bible.
 - B. praying individually and with others.
 - C. participating in a local church.
 - D. exercising biblical leadership and community.
 - E. demonstrating Christ's Lordship in relationships, possessions, academics, vocation and all other aspects of life.

WHY GO NATIONAL?

As seminary students convene in groups at first loosely known as TSF, the inevitable question arises: "Why should we belong to TSF as a national organization? Can't we do the same thing without identifying with an off-campus organization?"

The principal advantage of relating the local "chapter" to the national organization is *continuity*. Students are necessarily a highly transient group, lacking relatively enduring organizational and theological structures. A group may quickly disintegrate into a personality cult or a less effective, defensive clique. While some autonomy is surrendered by affiliating, the gains are greater. Because the agenda and invitation of TSF are stated forthrightly for all, expectations can be clearer, especially for the slow reactors who need a year or so to make a final decision. Potential speakers, too, want to know what kind of group is inviting them when invitations are offered. People want and anticipate stability in an organization before making a substantial commitment.

A second issue invariably arises: not every individual wants to be fully allied with the national organization. Does pressing for the local group to claim a corporate identity exclude those not in a position personally to affiliate with TSF? In my mind there are three types of people in TSF. First is the *hard core* student, who personally accepts TSF beliefs and embraces its purposes. Second is the *living room visitor*, who actively participates in some TSF-sponsored activities, but is unwilling to buy into the whole package. Third is the *window shopper* with modest and tentative involvement, a reluctance to get too close, but a continuing, tangential interest. All three types are on campus, and all are welcome to relate to TSF at the level of their respective commitments. But a strong continuity of organizational value is needed for all three types. This is why it seems wise to me for TSF groups to relate to TSF nationally.

—Paul A. Mickey
Duke Divinity School

The Gospel According to Matthew
by F. W. Beare (Harper & Row, 1981, 558 pp., \$29.95). Reviewed by Robert H. Gundry, Professor of New Testament and Greek, Westmont College.

Just enough Greek peppers this commentary to give the first impression it is a commentary on the Greek text of Matthew; but a closer reading shows that there is not enough for the commentary to earn that description. Beare has, however, provided his own translation of Matthew's Greek text. Therefore the pages devoted to his own comments are so much the fewer. One index covers topics and cited authors.

Beare does not deal in source criticism, but assumes the Mark-Q hypothesis. Nor does he deal in form criticism; but the results of form criticism abound in his commentary. The stated purpose of the commentary has to do with redaction criticism. Unfortunately, Beare falls short of his purpose. The redaction criticism is neither thorough nor up-to-date. Following A. Descamps, for example, he regards most of Matthew's changes in the passion account as "trifling" and "pointless" in apparent ignorance, certainly in neglect, of D. Senior's demonstration to the contrary. The careful study of word statistics, which forms an important part of the redaction critical method, does not come into the discussion often enough; and evidence of reflection on the multitude of recent redaction critical articles and monographs is largely missing. Rather, it is the names of W. D. Davies, J. Jeremias, C. H. Dodd, V. Taylor, R. Bultmann, and M. Dibelius that Beare keeps citing. One therefore gets the impression that the commentary was out of date before its publication.

Beare adheres to critical orthodoxy on questions of date (late first century or early second century), authorship (non-apostolic and scribal), provenance (urban and Syrian or Phoenician), and genre ("a manual of instruction in the Christian way of life"). Sometimes there is little or no reworking of the evidence for these points; Beare rests content on the work of earlier scholars. For example, his statement, "Not many take Papias seriously, and those who do interpret him in different ways," masks a host of possibilities that ought to be explored in a commentary that would truly merit description as "the first major, truly comprehensive study of Matthew in decades" (so the dust jacket).

Despite a positively pastoral statement now and then, hardline antiscapularism characterizes this commentary. Demonic possession is no more than mental derangement. The miracles of feeding the five thousand and four thousand are "two versions of what is essentially a single legend, or cult-myth." The scene of the transfiguration is "obviously a creation of mythopoetic imagination." Jesus' rooting his teaching on marriage and divorce in "the crude legend" of Genesis 2:21-22 "is far removed from any range of thinking that is possible for ourselves."

Such antiscapularism broadens out to a general negativism. Beare holds up to ridicule any possibility that Jesus could have performed so large a task as cleansing the temple. The parable of the marriage feast is "full of incongruities" and "absurdities." The story of Jesus' trial "appears to be nothing but a fabrication." "It is doubtful if Jesus received any more distinguished burial than . . . [being] put in a trench and covered with earth by soldiers." Thumbs down, therefore, on the story of the empty tomb and on its implication of Jesus' physical resurrection.

With few exceptions (in which, whether or not one agrees with him, Beare fires some of his best

shots) dogmatism accompanies this antiscapularism and negativism. Words such as "incredible," "absurd," "atrocious," "obviously," and "completely out of keeping" do not leave much room for disputation with those who might disagree with the author's views. Especially when these words take the place of careful argument, as often happens, the reader may wonder whether a disputation would be worth the effort.

To Beare, the center of gravity for Matthew's gospel lies in the five great discourses, not in the narratives. In those discourses, Beare sees something he does not like: a legalism or near legalism that makes the gospel "a grim book" and the Christ it portrays "a terrifying figure." There naturally follows "a sombre pall" of emphasis on "the terrors of the Day of Judgement," with which Matthew "seems to have had a morbid fascination." Beare admits that "Jesus himself may have shared popu-

lar conceptions of the fate of the wicked," but avers that "if this were so, it would not make them binding upon us." In short, Matthew finds an unsympathetic commentator in Beare, who makes his evaluations from the standpoint of a twentieth-century liberal instead of trying to step into Matthew's time, place, and circumstances.

Beare thinks that the term "kingdom" is generally spatial rather than dynamic and that "kingdom of heaven" in Matthew represents Jesus' phrase, which the other evangelists changed to "kingdom of God" for Gentile readers who would not understand "heaven" as a substitute for "God." *Kyrie* means more than "Sir" in Matthew; it carries the connotation of deity. Strange, then, that Beare denies that "Immanuel . . . God with us" (1:23) points to Jesus' deity. On the whole, however, Beare's interpretations are predictable rather than new or provocative. Lest it be thought that my dis-

October, 1982

To: TSF Bulletin Subscribers

Re: TSF Bulletin Promotional Strategies

TSF Theological
Students
Fellowship

Mark Lau Branson, General Secretary

Last spring we wrote you about TSF Bulletin's budget deficit. We are very grateful to those of you who helped by contributing. Unfortunately, the problem has not gone away, so we have begun cutting the budget.

Our promotional budget has suffered most. It is the easiest area to cut immediately, but this will undermine long-range efforts to increase circulation enough to cover basic costs. This fall we can distribute a few brochures at selected schools, but without your help these efforts will be insufficient. We believe many more students, faculty and pastors would find TSF Bulletin useful if we could introduce them to it.

As subscribers you could serve as an important communication link with some of these people. After all, the recommendation of a friend is probably the most effective promotion there is. Will you help us increase our circulation by telling your friends about TSF Bulletin and encouraging them to subscribe?

As an expression of our appreciation, we will extend your subscription by one free issue for each new paid subscriber you recruit.

There are two ways to receive credit. (1) Have your friend write clearly "recruited by..." with your name and address when sending his or her paid subscription (by letter or using the subscription card bound in this issue). (2) Send us payment directly yourself, with a name and address for each new subscriber. Be sure to mention this offer and to include your own name and address (or mailing label). If you give gift subscriptions, please tell us whether to send renewal notices to you or the gift recipients. The subscription rate for one year (five issues) is \$9, or \$7 for students.

If you appreciate what you receive in TSF Bulletin, I hope you will share it with others. TSF chapter members can encourage others in their fellowships to subscribe. Faculty can make students and other faculty aware of the benefits of the journal. By recruiting new subscribers you will be helping establish the journal financially. Your partnership will be much appreciated.

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appointment in his commentary grows out of any desire to advance the sale of my own commentary on Matthew, I add that if theological students want to learn the current consensus in critical scholarship, they would do better to purchase any of the three recent commentaries on Matthew by J. P. Meier, H. B. Green, or E. Schweizer and supplement it with the section on Matthew in W. G. Kummel's New Testament introduction.

The Gospel According to Luke I-IX

by Joseph A. Fitzmyer (*Anchor Bible, Doubleday, 1981, 837 pp., \$14.00*). Reviewed by Walter L. Liefeld, Professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

In magnitude, Fitzmyer's work is comparable to the *Anchor Bible* commentaries on John (Brown) and on Ephesians (Barth); in quality it is at least their equal; in usability and value to the theological student or minister, perhaps superior. One feature which may contribute significantly to the apparent improvement in this volume is that the Comment now precedes the Notes. Perhaps because of this, Fitzmyer can lead the reader from a general introduction to each pericope, through historical, literary and theological paths, to the significance of the passage. The detailed exegesis then follows appropriately in the Notes.

The linguistic, literary and historical scholarship we expect and appreciate from Fitzmyer is all there. He is cautious, not faddish, in such matters. At ease in using source, form, tradition, and redaction criticism, he is not under the bondage of any. Thus the temptation story, as he sees it, starts with the Markan context, draws on Q, includes redactional terminology, incorporates Palestinian tradition (Bultmann is "partly correct" in his analysis), but its historicity cannot be established. Nevertheless, Fitzmyer asks, "Would early Christians, who had come to venerate Jesus as the Son of God, concoct such fantasies about him, fabricating them out of whole cloth?" At the same time, "naïve literalism" is to be rejected; the scenes' "theological import is of greater importance than any salvaging of their historicity." The comment on the narrative goes on to view each temptation against the background of Deuteronomy. The notes give a concise, helpful exegesis, which includes interaction with such different scholars as H. Conzelmann, U. Mauser, S. Brown, and deals with issues ranging from the identity of Satan to textual variants. All of this, which is typical of the entire commentary, is done in a remarkably compact and readable style.

The comments which introduce the various sections of the infancy narrative, to take another example, are presented in such a way as to help the beginning exegete and informed lay person. These include a concise introduction to Midrash, a brief, careful discussion of the uncertain Qumran data pertaining to the ideas of Messiah and Son of God, and some cautious comments on the virginal conception. Though evangelical readers would have preferred Fitzmyer to go further than he does, his discussion is certainly candid. He had formerly questioned whether Luke's account, taken by itself, could not be taken to describe an ordinary birth. He now agrees with R. E. Brown that the account as it is structured in Luke requires "a more extraordinary conception, hence, virginal." He is not prepared, however, to trace the origin of this idea.

The exegetical portions in the notes are rich, though not as detailed exegetically as in I. Howard Marshall's commentary, which is based directly on the Greek text. The literature surveyed is vast, though one misses certain works which perhaps

had not reached Fitzmyer's attention by the time he wrote on the passage in question (every commentator fears missing something which a reviewer will proudly point out!).

I have saved the Introduction until last. In contrast to Marshall, who let his previous work, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, serve as part of the introduction to his commentary, Fitzmyer has a full 283 pages of introduction. One might mention especially the following: the section on "The Current State of Lucan Studies" (in which Fitzmyer warns against imposing one's scheme of theological understanding on Luke), the data-filled section on "Composition," the treatment of Luke's style, especially his Semiticisms (where Fitzmyer's expertise in Semitic languages leads him to see a familiarity with the Septuagint as the dominant influence), and a "Sketch" (128 pp.!) of Lucan theology. Luke was a Gentile, though not a Greek, who came from Antioch. He wrote Luke-Acts between A.D. 80 and 85. Each section of the Introduction, as well as of the commentary proper, ends with a fine bibliography.

With the scholarship of Schurmann, the exegetical contribution of Marshall, the perceptions of others, such as Ellis, and now the clarity and comprehensiveness of Fitzmyer, Luke will be understood, and, we trust, preached, as never before in our day.

Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to Professor F. F. Bruce on his 70th Birthday

edited by Donald A. Hagner and Murray J. Harris (Eerdmans, 1980, 293 pp., \$19.95). Reviewed by James R. Edwards, Professor of Religion, Jamestown College, Jamestown, ND.

This volume of essays on Paul is quite fittingly presented to F. F. Bruce, a remarkably prolific biblical scholar with a great love for the Apostle. Bruce's extensive writing commitments (some 330 books, articles and reviews in the last decade) have been in addition to his full-time teaching and his involvement with journals and learned societies. The *Festschrift* does well to call attention to Bruce as an example of a first-rate scholar and servant of the church.

The first 10 articles in this *Festschrift* are thematic studies of "The Life and Theology of Paul," and the last six are "Literary and Exegetical Studies Within the Pauline Corpus." The titles and contributors of the essays are as follows: "Observations on Pauline Chronology," Colin J. Hemer; "Qumran Light on Pauline Soteriology," Paul Garnet; "Interpretations of Paul in *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*," E. Margaret Howe; "Thanksgiving Within the Structure of Pauline Theology," Peter T. O'Brien; "Adam and Christ According to Paul," Swee-Hwa Quek; "The Christian Life: A Life of Tension?—A Consideration of the Nature of Christian Experience in Paul," David Wenham; "The Christ-Christian Relationship in Paul and John," Stephen S. Smalley; "'A Remnant Chosen by Grace'" (Romans 11:5), Ronald E. Clements; "Process Theology and the Pauline Doctrine of the Incarnation," Bruce A. Demarest; "Paul in Modern Jewish Thought," Donald A. Hagner; "Colossians 1:15-20: An Early Christian Hymn Celebrating the Lordship of Christ," Paul Beasley-Murray; "The Pauline Style as Lexical Choice: *GINOSKEIN* and Related Verbs," Moises Silva; "Why Did Paul Write Romans?," John W. Drane; "The Moral Frustration of Paul Before His Conversion: Sexual Lust in Romans 7:7-25," Robert H. Gundry; "Justification by Faith in 1 & 2 Corinthians," Ronald Y.-K. Fung; "Titus 2:13 and the Deity of Christ," Murray J. Harris. "Two Appreciations" commence the volume, one by C. F. D.

Moule and the other by the editors. "A Select Bibliography of the Writings of F. F. Bruce, 1970-1979" was prepared by W. Ward Gasque.

The volume is intended for a scholarly readership, so includes very extensive footnotes, untranslated Greek, and seven indices. The essays, as might be expected of students of F. F. Bruce, display a high regard for the biblical text and are written with scholarly care. It is also encouraging, however, to see in some of the essays careful interpreters of Paul venture beyond the concerns of the specialist and discuss Paul's theology with reference to contemporary thought and issues. One senses that the Apostle to the Gentiles would be gratified with these latter efforts to mount the Mars' Hills of today.

Interpreting Biblical Texts

edited by Lloyd R. Bailey and Victor P. Furish (Abingdon, 1981, each vol. 160 pp., \$6.95):

The Pentateuch, by Lloyd R. Bailey;
The Gospels, by Fred B. Craddock;
New Testament Apocalyptic, by Paul S. Minear.

Reviewed by Grant R. Osborne, Professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

These three volumes are the first of an important new series focusing upon problems of interpreting biblical texts. As such they address the two related aspects of the hermeneutical enterprise: the original meaning of the text and its significance for our day. They concentrate not so much upon either aspect as upon the bridge between the two sides, utilizing the various texts as concrete examples. The editors assign three tasks to the author of each volume: 1) to describe the basic features of the assigned portion; 2) to describe the assumptions guiding one's approach to the text; and 3) to use representative sections to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of those assumptions.

Bailey begins by discussing the genre of the Pentateuch. First, he discusses it as "story," arguing that it is Torah in the sense of teaching, not law. He basically accepts the documentary hypothesis, while admitting the many problems, such as sub-collections and overlap, and noting the possibility that a "complex-of-traditions" model should clarify the traditional view. In his second section Bailey discusses the barriers created by language, manuscript differences, information and culture. In addition, the interpreter may be guilty of hasty decisions, preconceived opinions, psychological needs, generalizations about social custom, or identification with the wrong actors. Yet since the text as Scripture is a community enterprise, it must be interpreted not so much in terms of what it meant as what it means. While critical study is necessary, multiple meanings will always result. These levels (he counts ten in all) of meaning move from text to interpreter, from the original meaning to the modern application. Bailey finally provides six passages to illustrate these principles, i.e. how one can move from past to present.

The other two studies are quite different in format. In both, the hermeneutical discussion is more compressed and the textual studies hold center stage. Craddock moves from the problems of interpretation in general to interpreting Scripture and the Gospels specifically. Taking a canonical approach similar to Sanders, he argues for the importance for the final canonical form of the historical development of the genre "Gospel" and of the traditions themselves. The passages he chooses are

geared to illustrate both internal meaning (teaching the individual Gospel's basic features yet showing the relationships between them) and external meaning (providing a message for the church today). Craddock then provides four important studies from each Gospel, such as of the women at the tomb (Mk. 16:1-8, stressing that the time between Jesus' death and Parousia is characterized by tension between his absence and the presence of the Word), the baptism of Jesus (Mt. 3:13-17, centering upon Jesus' obedience as his triumph), the Emmaus road (Lk. 24:13-35, fusing Jesus' mission with table fellowship to present the Gospel as word and sacrament), and the farewell discourse (Jn. 14-16, with its mixture of present and future promising a continuity of the divine presence between Jesus and the Spirit). Craddock's study focuses more proportionately upon the original theology than upon the current relevance but is still an impressive work.

Finally, Minear's study begins with a discussion of charismatic gifts and the NT apocalyptic prophecy. He argues that the NT charismata provide the key for understanding this world which is so foreign to our modern mind. This explains the difficulty a non-charismatic interpreter has interpreting a spontaneous charismatic work. The solution is for the interpreter to belong to a community which is aligned with the prophetic purpose and to be sensitive to the heavenly conflict behind apocalyptic literature. Apocalyptic assumed that since God both created and sustains the heavenly bodies, worship of these solar bodies is idolatry. As the interpreter studies the symbols is drawn by them into that world, understanding dawn. Minear then uses passages from the various NT apocalyptic writings to illustrate this, first from the vision of heaven in Revelation 4-8 and then in other NT books like 1 Peter, Hebrews 2-4 and 12-13, and even Romans 8. In the latter case he argues that while Romans is not apocalyptic in form, Paul's argument proceeds "from an apocalyptic conception of the conflicts inherent" in the human dilemma.

These three books are not written from an evangelical perspective but have an important message for the evangelical. Their concern to bridge the gap from the ancient world to our day is commendable, and each of the three, in my judgment, provides a good model for that task. In many cases their "contextualization" itself is abstract, but that may be forgiven in academicians. We are indeed a strange lot to the outsider! More importantly, these books are an important step forward in the hermeneutical task, combining theoretical principles with very concrete examples for putting those principles into practice. Certainly not all will agree with such points as the documentary approach to the Pentateuch, but all can learn from the obvious attempts to wrestle with the "hard" issues of our day. This is a series well worth following.

The Theme of the Pentateuch

by David J. A. Clines (JSOT Press, 1978, 152 pp., \$16.95 paper). Reviewed by James C. Moyer, Professor of Religious Studies, Southwest Missouri State University.

In the past century Old Testament studies have been dominated by two approaches which Clines calls "atomism" and "geneticism." By "atomism" he means a concentration on the smallest and least significant points, and by "geneticism" he means "the study of the origins and development of the extant Biblical text." Though Clines believes these approaches have their place, in this book he joins a growing chorus of scholars who are concentrating on the literature of the Bible in the form we have it

today. Assuming the Pentateuch to be a unity in its final shape (but not origin), he seeks to show what the theme of the Pentateuch is.

Clines proceeds logically and develops his argument with great care. He asks a series of helpful questions that serve for any unit of literature to contribute to an understanding of the theme. In the case of the Pentateuch, he proposes that "the theme of the Pentateuch is the partial fulfillment—which implies also the partial non-fulfillment—of the promise to or blessing of the patriarchs." He suggests three elements to the promise: the posterity element (especially in Gen. 12-50), the divine-human relationship element in Exodus and Leviticus, and the land element in Numbers and Deuteronomy. His support comes from a substantial list of biblical quotations relating to these elements of the promise. He goes on to flesh out his position by examining the various units of the Pentateuch, and then evaluates other formulations of the theme of the Pentateuch. After engaging in the "genetic" approach to demonstrate how his approach *might* be integrated into the traditional understanding of the documentary hypothesis, he concludes with a general discussion of the function of the Pentateuch.

This is an important book. Because so little has been done previously on the theme of the Pentateuch, it is essential reading for all theological students (although its high price will place it beyond the budget of most). Clines often states the obvious and self-evident, but someone needed to say these kinds of things. Students will find the series of biblical quotations on the promise (pp. 32-43) particularly helpful. Clines is at home with the latest Pentateuchal scholarship, and certainly is not writing from a defensive posture. He has succeeded in making a convincing case for his formulation of the theme of the Pentateuch.

Joel and Amos

by Hans Walter Wolff, tr. by Waldemar Janzen, S. Dean McBride, Jr., and Charles A. Muenchow (Fortress, 1977, 416 pp., \$22.95). Reviewed by Robert Alden, Denver Seminary.

This addition to the Hermeneia commentary series edited by Frank M. Cross, Jr. and others is an English translation of a German volume in the influential BKAT series. Like its predecessors in the series, its format consists of five parts plus copious footnotes: Text, Form, Setting, Interpretation, and Aim. The text is a fresh translation appearing in the left column with notes on textual matters appearing on the right. The notes usually take more space than the text.

After a substantial introduction the commentary proceeds section by section through the two books. "Interpretation" is generally the longest of the five parts, dealing in a verse by verse fashion with virtually every word of the text. There is an enormous emphasis on form criticism—especially in Amos. "Aim," the most practical section, is also the shortest. It is here that preachers will get ideas for sermons from these prophets. Scholars will relish the volume's copious footnotes and extensive bibliography. There are also a number of digressions for readers interested in more detail on subjects like "The designation for the locusts" or "Comparison of Isaiah 13 with Joel 2:1-11."

Wolff dates Joel in the first half of the fourth century, based on the picture of a stable cultic community corresponding to the era which followed Ezra and Nehemiah. Joel also serves as a link between the prophetic and apocalyptic books. The book is a unity, Joel himself being the one who blended three tradition complexes: Day of the LORD prophecies,

Amos, the longer book, takes up about 75% of the volume. While Wolff places Amos' ministry at 760 B.C., the final form of the book comes from a time well into the post-exilic period.

Wolff seems to exert the greatest effort in determining to which strata a given word, verse, or paragraph belongs. Wolff finds six layers in the prophecy: (1) "The Words of Amos from Tekoa" (including much of chapters 3-6), (2) "The literary fixation of the cycles" (here come the vision reports), (3) "The Old School of Amos" (these are scattered expressions, e.g., attached to the visions), (4) "The Bethel-Exposition of the Josianic Age" (in this strata are the hymns of 4:13, 5:8-9, and 9:5-6), (5) "The Deuteronomistic Redaction" (most typical of this is the oracle against Judah in 2:4-5), and (6) "The Post-exilic Eschatology of Salvation" (with 9:11-15 as the clearest example).

A few sentences from Lawrence Boadt's review of Zimmerli's commentary on Ezekiel in this same series also fit Wolff's commentary on Amos: "The overall impression is that much of the text derives from secondary development. The chosen procedure actually accents the diversity of the material and not its unity . . . his method replaces the M. T. with his own recreated text as the basis for discussion and does not do justice to the dynamism of the final canonical book. The BKAT arrangement strengthens this impression" (*CBQ* 43:4, Oct. 1981, p. 633).

Despite the composite view of the text which Wolff has taken, there is in the "Aim" section of each pericope a certain noteworthy piety as well as a succinct and pertinent application to a modern audience. In the discussion of 5:21-27 Wolff includes an extended quotation from Karl Barth to the effect that it is a terrible thing when head and heart are divorced. This can and does happen in the very places where the Bible and theology are the focus of attention.

Both the Joel and Amos commentaries are very, very thorough. No stone is left unturned. No word or phrase is passed by unexamined. The commentary is a wealth of detailed information. A student might well use it as a reference book to examine a particular passage. For its merits I recommend it. About its questionable presuppositions, particularly regarding the growth of the book of Amos, I have serious reservations.

Images of Man and God: Old Testament Short Stories in Literary Focus

Edited by Burke O. Long (The Almond Press, 1981, 127 pp., \$19.95 cloth, \$6.95 paper). Reviewed by Leland Ryken, Professor of English, Wheaton College.

For more than a decade, professional biblical scholars have been making claims about moving away from various forms of higher criticism toward literary analysis of the Bible. Despite the claims, biblical scholars have remained enamored of their traditional approaches to the Bible.

Images of Man and God is a welcome move toward a genuinely literary approach. The aim of the essays by six scholars is impeccable: "to lay aside or de-emphasize the more usual philological and historical concerns so as to highlight the Old Testament as story, that is as a rich, human world created in the meeting of author and reader." The essays do not achieve that aim in a uniformly high

manner, but to me this is less significant than to see a book with the right literary theory after a number of recent books that have made false claims to be literary.

The best essays among the six are the ones that focus on whole stories. The story of Joseph emerges as a single action built around such patterns as the father-son relationship, the quest, the initiation, and the U-shaped story with a happy ending. Moses and Samson are portrayed as richly complex heroes whose qualities are conveyed to the reader in biblical stories replete with literary technique. Saul lives for us as a man born to trouble, though the author's interpretation of him as the victim of God undercuts the credibility of the essay (for a better literary interpretation of Saul as a tragic leader, one can consult Edwin M. Good's book *Irony in the Old Testament*, which remains one of the best examples of literary analysis of the Bible).

Because of the literary focus of the discussions, the theological biases of the writers do not become a major issue. The essays are good illustrations of what it means to read the Bible as literature. They are not the best literary analyses of the stories that I have read, but I recommend the book to readers of the *TSF Bulletin* as an example of an approach to the Bible that should have gained a foothold in evangelical circles long ago.

A History of Israel

by John Bright (3rd ed., Westminster, 1981, 511 pp., 16 maps, \$18.95). Reviewed by David M. Howard, Jr., Ph.D. candidate in Ancient and Biblical Studies, University of Michigan.

In this third edition of his standard work, Professor Bright continues to defend the territory staked out in the 1959 and 1972 editions. His approach is one which holds biblical and archaeological evidence roughly in equal esteem. At different times, he will favor first the one, then the other when they conflict; but the overall attitude is that there are very few serious differences, since most of the biblical evidence is ultimately rooted in history.

His approach furthermore maintains that "Israel's history is a subject inseparable from the history of Israel's religion." Accordingly, there is a unifying thread in the attention to the theological significance of Israel's history and religion, both for ancient Israel and for modern men and women. Believing Christians will appreciate the affirmation (also found in the earlier editions) that Israel's longing for redemption "found fulfillment—so Christians say—only when after many a weary mile there came 'in the fullness of time' one 'of the house and lineage of David' whom faith hails as 'the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the living God.'" This affirmation is exemplified as well in the Epilogue. "Toward the Fullness of Time."

The third edition is thoroughly updated through early 1979, especially in the areas where scholarship has been most volatile recently: the patriarchal and formative periods. Bright's debt to other members of the "Albright school" is evident throughout, although they often disagree among themselves (e.g., his fusion of Wright's and Mendenhall's models in chs. 2 and 3 will likely leave both sides unhappy, to say nothing of the literary critics). The material on the patriarchal period is especially cautious and helpful. (Fuller discussion of the Thompson and van Seters positions, however, will be found in Dever's treatment in *Israelite and Judaean History* or in *Essays on the Patriarchal Narratives*, edited by Millard and Wiseman.) Professor Bright has especially concentrated upon the period of the monarchies in his career, and his mastery and love

of this era, especially in dealing with the prophets, is evident in his treatment.

Evangelical students will certainly welcome this edition, as they have the first two. Bright follows higher critical orthodoxy at many points, but he is convinced about the basic historicity of biblical events and about the basic truth of the biblical message. Study of Israel's history for him is no mere secular pursuit (a position for which he has been criticized), but rather a means of understanding God's redemptive purpose in history. Those who believe that God does work in history—past, present, and future—will find much to agree with here.

In sum, the book maintains the high standards and cautious approach of the earlier editions. It will repay careful study, especially to those without advanced degrees in the field, and it can be recommended with pleasure.

The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture
by William J. Abraham (Oxford University Press, 1981, 126 pp., \$27.95). Reviewed by Donald W. Dayton, Assistant Professor of Historical Theology, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.

I consider this book one of the most significant, if not *the* most significant, of recent "evangelical" books on the inspiration of the Scriptures and the ongoing debates about the authority of the Bible. I may be doing little more than revealing my own prejudices in saying so, but this is the first book I have read that sees the issues largely as I do.

William Abraham, an Irish Methodist minister currently teaching Theology and Philosophy of Religion at Seattle Pacific University, launches in this thin and over-priced volume a broadside attack on the understanding of biblical authority and inerrancy that has dominated modern fundamentalism and evangelicalism since the writings of B. B. Warfield at the turn of the century. Controversy is sure to follow such blunt statements as "there must be no blurring of the fact that evangelicals cannot remain satisfied with the views of such key figures as Warfield and Packer;" or "we must either abandon the theology of inerrancy or we must abandon a natural and honest study of the Bible."

The case for this position is made in summary fashion in five short chapters. Chapter one examines the recent "evangelical" doctrines of scripture, which follow the thought of B. B. Warfield and Louis Gaussen. It argues (1) that these positions, despite all protests to the contrary, finally reduce to "divine dictation" views of the production of Scripture, and (2) that they cannot adequately account for the phenomena of the biblical text itself. In a parallel chapter on more "inductive" or "liberal" accounts of inspiration, Abraham examines and critiques the views of James Barr, William Sanday and H. Wheeler Robinson. He concludes that they fail to articulate a strong and adequate conception of inspiration.

Chapter three contains the book's own proposed paradigm by which "inspiration" should be understood. Abraham suggests the analogy of a "good teacher inspiring his students." This allows him to account for several features of inspiration that he finds necessary, but that are impossible in the older "dictation" models: (1) the existence of "degrees" of inspiration, (2) the fact that "inspiration is a polymorphous concept in that it is achieved in, with, and through other acts that an agent performs," and (3) the fact that there is an ongoing "inspiring" activity of God, one that goes beyond the canonical Scriptures without denying the appropriateness of a closed canon.

Chapters three and four together make perhaps the most important point of the book — one that I

have been convinced of since my own seminary work on Warfield almost twenty years ago: the fundamental flaw of dominant evangelical doctrines of Scripture is that they confuse "inspiration" and "revelation" (again, despite protestations to the contrary!), making the former do the work of the latter. Abraham's analysis depends on his D.Phil. dissertation at Oxford, which is a philosophical study of the concepts of "divine speaking" and "divine acting." This soon-to-be-published Oxford book, summarized in chapter four, defends a strong (and "supernatural") view of "revelation" and the "speech of God," as well as a qualified doctrine of "propositional revelation."

A final chapter (five) argues that Abraham's account of inspiration squares with the biblical data at least as well as Warfield's. A postscript defends the position as an "evangelical" proposal by appealing to non-fundamentalist evangelical traditions, especially his own Methodism.

This book is not without its weaknesses. Its brevity precludes full treatment of some issues. The exegetical and historical issues are probably not as easily resolved as Abraham seems to suggest. Although much is gained by shifting attention from inspiration to divine "speech/acts," it is not clear to me that this speaks fully to the underlying theological problem of how we hear the speech of God in human (fallible?) words. I am less inclined than the author to refurbish the concept of inspiration as a key to biblical authority. Also, his proposals will appear to many quite traditional and insufficiently informed by the redaction critical and modern literary critical considerations that shape much contemporary biblical studies. But overall, the book is in my view largely "right-on" and a most important contribution to the evangelical discussions.

To Change the World: Christology and Criticism

by Rosemary Radford Ruether (Crossroad, 1981, 85 pp., \$8.95 cloth). Reviewed by Clark H. Pinnock, Professor of Theology, McMaster Divinity College.

Given the steep price and the small number of pages, I doubt if many students are going to buy this book. Nevertheless, Rosemary Ruether is a very lucid and determined writer who rewards her readers. Fully aware of the hermeneutical circle, she brings some heavy agenda items to her exegesis of the Bible: with the help of a little content-criticism she manages to find them all there. These presuppositions include socialism, feminism, and a deep sympathy toward Jews. She is quite honest in admitting that in order to interpret the Bible in these ways it is necessary to distinguish between liberating insights and biblical lapses, and that it is quite impossible to take the Bible as an infallible prescriptive norm. The great irony is that she first delivered these lectures as the Kuyper Lectures at the Free University of Amsterdam. Tell it not in Gath—oh, how the mighty are fallen! Reading the book is a wonderful lesson in using the latest critical tools to have one's way with the Bible and change Christianity into something else.

Not to make too long a review of a short book, let me offer you just a few samples of what Ruether does. In chapter one she proves to my satisfaction that Jesus had a political message in the sense that he wanted God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, arguing cogently against those who would make him politically irrelevant. The only difficulty I have is that the politics of Jesus turn out to be the politics of Ruether—socialism and anarchism. I would have thought that the social order Jesus wished to see is the social order of the Law of God, to which he, like every true prophet in Israel, called

people back. Why turn to Marx when Moses is so handy? In terms of today, why turn to Marx when no just order has ever yet emerged from his insights?

In chapter three she goes on to deplore the left-hand of Christology, which is the effect of our belief in Jesus as Messiah and potentate upon our assessment of religions like Judaism. If we are going to be able to regard Jewish faith as every bit as valid as our own (something Ruether is determined in advance to do) we will have to reconstruct Christology so that Jesus is more provisional and tentative. Presto, it is done! A good deal of the New Testament, of course, suffers under her negative judgment and has to be set aside. Similarly, her assumptions about feminism and ecology require us to bring the Bible into line with our deep contemporary concerns.

Evangelicals need to read writers like Ruether for two reasons: first, because she is a brilliant scholar who always stimulates fruitful thinking; and second, because she illustrates the theological method we must be careful to avoid as evangelicals. Our own presuppositions must not be permitted to obscure the Word of God.

The Shattered Spectrum, A Survey of Contemporary Theology

by **Lonnie D. Kliever (John Knox, 1981, 240 pp., \$9.95).** Reviewed by **Clark H. Pinnock, professor of theology, McMaster Divinity College.**

Contemporary American theology is a kaleidoscope of competing options especially on the liberal side. The reason is plain: if a theology is cut loose from the controls of Scripture and tradition, and if it orients itself to trends in the contemporary culture, a culture which is itself highly pluralistic, only a rainbow of shades and colours is possible. The resulting cafeteria of alternatives then becomes very difficult to analyse. Lonnie Kliever, professor at Southern Methodist University, has come to our rescue with a finely written and reasoned analysis of contemporary liberal theology. It brings a great deal of order into an otherwise confusing situation.

Kliever finds six themes around which most of the work can be situated. First, secularity as threat and opportunity, where he introduces J. A. T. Robinson, Harvey Cox, and Paul Van Buren. Second, process as critique and construct, where he discusses J. Cobb, Teilhard, and Altizer. Third, liberation as challenge and response, where he looks at Cone, Daly, and Gutierrez. Fourth, hope as ground and goal, where attention is focussed on Moltmann, Braaten, and Vahanian. Fifth, play as clue and catalyst, where Hugo, Rahner, Cox again, and Robert Neale are discussed. Sixth, story as medium and message, where he talks about John Dunne, James McLendon, and Sallie McFague. In this way Kliever makes both the unity and the diversity plain. The unity consists in the fact that all liberal theologies strive above all for relevance, and the diversity arises from the fact that they select different themes in the context to relate to. In each case, Kliever presents the various positions lucidly and fairly, and offers some critical comment at the end of each chapter. The book begins with a theory about how we got to this point and ends with a prediction about the future. I do not think one can put one's hands on a book which better gives the feel of the current trends in North American liberal theology. Kliever does not reveal his own hand in the discussion, but one can guess where he stands by reading his article in the *JAAR* 49:4. He thinks religion is like play. Feuerbach can pray "provided that he does it playfully and rhetorically." Kliever is not one to pay a lot of attention to evangelical theology!

I am greatly impressed by the book and recommend it heartily. Here are a few of my reactions. The current rise of evangelical theology and relative decline of liberal religion must represent a surprising and disturbing phenomenon to Kliever's mind. According to his predictions, it really ought to be the other way around. Being reminded by Kliever of all this radical theology, I am appalled and saddened by the palpable spirit of unbelief in the Word of God which runs through the book, and by willingness of so many to bow and scrape before the altar of autonomous man. Kliever's discussion not only focuses on theologies which reflect the spirit of the age rather than the biblical faith, but also actually serves as an agent to further its effectiveness in the church setting. I hear a word of severe judgment thundering on the horizon. I would think that it should be possible for conservative theologies to pick upon these same six themes and speak to some of these concerns without sacrificing so much biblical substance. It also occurred to me that we could use a book which laid out the evangelical options in theology as neatly as Kliever lays out the liberal ones. Finally a point to ponder: is relevance in theology what we ought to seek for, or is it the gift of God to us after we have proved faithful to his Word? I rather think that if we seek relevance first of all we shall be rewarded only with irrelevance in the end.

Introduction to Philosophy: A Case Method Approach

by **Jack B. Rogers and Forrest Baird (Harper & Row, 1981, 226 pp., \$8.95).** Reviewed by **Keith Cooper, Ph.D. student in Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison.**

This book seeks to apply the "case study" approach in education, already popular in law, business, and theology classrooms, to philosophy. The rationale seems to be that presenting an issue or problem in a form comparable to "a well-written but condensed mystery story" will increase the student's interest and involvement in discussion, enable the instructor to communicate the historical and biographical factors needed to understand the issue, and facilitate both parties' development of intellectual and interpersonal skills.

Rogers and Baird present twelve case studies from the history of Western philosophy. For each philosopher they provide philosophical and personal background, a summary of the thinker's overall philosophy, and a "life situation" requiring a specific response. Following each case is a brief commentary written by a "leading contemporary philosopher," interacting with the philosopher and sketching a personal response to the main question posed by the case. There are study questions and a brief bibliography at the end of each case.

The cases themselves are uneven in quality, and, being so brief, suffer from superficiality. The problem is heightened by the approach taken: since each case tells a story, there is background and character development to which space must be devoted. Unfortunately, this often appears superfluous to the central question. Moreover, the crucial question with which five of the twelve cases close is hardly a philosophical one: "Given the social and intellectual climate of the time, dare I publish my ideas?" The whole tenor of the case study method detracts from the philosophical issues which it purports to provide an introduction.

It is worth mentioning the "Christian connection" of the book, lest the title and publisher lead one astray. This is not an introductory philosophy book *per se*, as there is no treatment (save in a handful of the responses) of philosophical methodology at all. Nor is it a straightforward supplementary text, as

every one of the cases is closely tied to ethics or philosophy of religion. In fact, the authors, series editor, and members of its "National Advisory Board" are all theologians or philosophers of religion, as are all twelve commentators. Some of the latter are indeed "major" contemporary philosophers," (Alvin Plantinga, Marilyn Adams, George Mavrodes); some are well-known and respected within evangelical circles (Stephen Davis, Jerry Gill, and Arthur Holmes); but others seem just to have been the friend of one of the authors.

I do not think that the book will be used as a classroom text, due to its somewhat parochial nature and its lack of sustained exposition. And I do not recommend it for individual study either. Philosophy ought to be at once the most critically self-conscious and consciously self-critical of disciplines, and the case study method with its tacit and narrative manner of teaching seems ill-suited to the task.

The Christian Imagination: Essays on Literature and the Arts

Edited by **Leland Ryken (Baker, 1981, 448 pp., \$10.95).** Reviewed by **Robert K. Johnston, Dean, North Park Theological Seminary.**

Ten years ago, Giles Gunn edited an important collection of essays on the relationship of *Literature and Religion* (the title of his book). Intended for an academic market, the book assumed no theological stance and approached the discussion chiefly from the perspective of literature. Five years ago, G. B. Tennyson and Edward Ericson, Jr. edited a second such volume entitled *Religion and Modern Literature*. The book, however, might better have been labeled "Christianity and Literature." Written with students in mind, it accepted a Christian base for its evaluations. Now, Leland Ryken has provided us a third collection. His book should have been titled "Evangelical Christianity and the Arts," for the volume has a biblical base, accepting Scripture as the final authority on aesthetics as well as on more traditional areas of Christian doctrine.

Ryken has collected over three dozen essays on Christianity and the arts (in particular, literature). Twenty-two of these first appeared in *Christianity Today*. A number of others are by his colleagues on the Wheaton College faculty. A few articles are classics in the field by those who, while not evangelicals themselves, have been widely quoted by evangelicals (e.g., T. S. Eliot's "Religion and Literature," Flannery O'Connor's "Novelist and Believer"). Those few evangelicals who have traditionally argued for a more serious engagement with the arts are well represented here, often with several essays: Frank Gaebelein, Thomas Howard, Francis Schaeffer, C. S. Lewis, Nancy Tischler, H. R. Rookmaaker, Calvin Seerveld. If one is looking for an overview of evangelical attitudes toward the arts, one cannot do better than this volume.

After reading the collection, several observations suggest themselves. First, while certain essays betray an unfortunate provincialism, others are urbane and insightful. Tom Howard and Frank Gaebelein are deserving of their reputations as men of letters if their essays in this volume are any indication. Second, evangelicals have their "heroes" in the field of art criticism, writers whose authority is repeatedly appealed to in making a point. The volume has a certain *deja vu* quality to it, as C. S. Lewis, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Dorothy Sayers, and Chad Walsh are repeatedly quoted. In fact, a cynic might argue that the volume might have been helpfully shortened by including the primary essays by these writers and eliminating most of the other evangelical duplications.

Third, evangelicals who are committed to the arts (if these authors are a representative sampling) tend to center in the Anglican and Reformed traditions. The one (e.g., Howard, Lewis) has perhaps been helped by its rich liturgical heritage; the other (e.g., Seerveld, Schaeffer), by its theological commitment to the "cultural mandate." Fourth, there remains within sections of evangelicalism a commitment to "propositional" truth which is difficult to reconcile with a proper appreciation of the arts. Although Ryken's overarching thesis for this volume is that "imagination is a way we can know the truth," several of his essayists compromise such a perspective. For example, Margaret Clarkson would have us believe that "words, rather than music, decide the worth of a hymn." Nancy Tischler would have us "take bits and pieces out of our reading to enrich our life and our faith." Francis Schaeffer would understand the best art, whether literature, painting, or sculpture to use "normal grammar and syntax," or a "common symbolic vocabulary." Otherwise, "communication is impossible." Such concern for "communication" over "communion" and for an exterior criterion of truth stands in marked contrast with Gaebelein's proposed "marks of truth in art"—durability, unity, integrity and inevitability. It also is opposed to Rod Jellema's proposal that "Poems Should Stay Across the Street from the Church" (the title of his essay).

Fifth, in its concern for clarifying that "truth" which is embodied by the artist-writer and received by the audience-reader, the book gives surprisingly scant attention to the work of art itself. Ryken's essay on the Bible as literature is an exception, but then the topic is the Bible, not, for example, modern fiction. There is an overwhelming interest throughout the collection in "mimetic" theories of art (cf. Howard, Lewis, Gaebelein, Ryken). In an era when other writers are finding such a critical perspective increasingly problematic (cf., Tom Driver, Nathan Scott), here is perhaps an "evangelical" distinctive.

Sixth and lastly, Ryken's volume evidences evangelicalism's commitment to a biblical agenda. If there is a major difference between Ryken's collection and the others, it is the preponderance of biblical citation and support which is rallied by the authors. Because God is portrayed as a Creator and Imaginer, so we who are in his image should be also. Because the world is fallen, art remains problematic. Because of the incarnation, "the Word made flesh," we are both encouraged to enfold our "words" and to work for the redemption and restoration of creation itself. Such biblical perspectives are repeatedly echoed and serve as a unifying perspective for the entire volume.

The book has its weaknesses. Chief perhaps is its ambivalence as to whether it should function as an *apologetic* for the arts or an introduction to the arts. Many of the essays seem intent on demonstrating that biblical Christianity is not incompatible with the arts. (The double-negative is consistent with the tenor of these articles.) There are eight essays in the center of the volume, however, which function to introduce their readers to myth, tragedy, satire, comedy, the novel, poetry, drama, and film. One senses a different tone for these articles. There is also a different intended audience, the apologetic essays having a more popular cast. The dual focus of this volume contributes to other problems as well. Most will find the book too lengthy. After repeatedly reading similar ideas, the reader wishes that Ryken had extended his introductory comments and then forced himself to make difficult, but necessary, selections.

Despite its cumbersomeness, however, the volume has real strengths. Important issues concerning Christianity and culture are raised: (1) How is art to be described? (2) Should a Christian be involved with art? (3) What if that art is "evil"? (4) What integrity does contemporary art have? (5) Can

form and content be separated in evaluating art? (6) Is there a specifically Christian literary criticism? (7) Is art "religious"? (8) What is the biblical basis for involvement in the arts? Such questions have too rarely been raised, particularly by evangelicals. Ryken's book is a helpful beginning point for further necessary exploration.

A Bonhoeffer Legacy: Essays in Understanding
 edited by A. J. Klassen (Eerdmans, 1981, 322 pp., \$18.95 cloth). Reviewed by Mike Fargo, Pastor, Knollbrook Covenant Church, Fargo, North Dakota.

It is true that books are always more out-of-date than are journals — but this is ridiculous! This is clearly a book from and for the early seventies and thus, with its 1981 publication date, tells us as much about the history of Bonhoeffer studies as about Bonhoeffer himself. Mayer, for example, helps us to disentangle Bonhoeffer from the Death of God theologies of the early sixties, a disentanglement which time has long since performed for us.

With proper editorial introductions and perspectives, the book even today could have been of real significance. Unfortunately, the editor has seemingly made no contribution at all to our understanding of the book: the essays are not put into any context, themes are not related, basic terms whose common knowledge is assumed by many authors are not explained. The essays are not dated nor the authors introduced except by name.

Such failings by editor and publisher ought not to blind us, however, to the high quality of a number of the essays. Ruth Zerner examines Bonhoeffer on "The State and History" in a clear and thoughtful analysis. She contextualizes what is obviously a critical area both in Bonhoeffer and in our own relationship to the political and social structures of which we are a part. Rasmussen's challenge to learn and enact Bonhoeffer's understanding of worship needs to be accepted, as does Bethge's challenge to get on with the business of becoming truly religionless Christians.

With these and other fine essays the book is clearly of value for many of us. It is, however, not at all suitable as an introduction to Bonhoeffer: neither editor nor authors speak to those new to the man. (Bethge's *Costly Grace* would be an excellent starting point for getting into the world of Bonhoeffer.) On the other hand, the book is so dated that most serious students of Bonhoeffer will already have found the ideas expressed through other channels. Rather, the book will be of greatest value for the non-specialist who already has a basic foundation in the life and writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

The Fatherhood of God and the Victorian Family: The Social Gospel in America
 by Janet Forsythe Fishburn (Fortress, 1981, 208 pp., \$19.95). Reviewed by Alan Padgett, San Jacinto United Methodist Church, California.

Janet Fishburn, professor of Christian Education at Drew University, offers a good examination and critique of the Social Gospel movement in America, specifically looking at Lyman Abbott, Washington Gladden, Josiah Strong, William N. Clarke, F. G. Peabody, and especially Walter Rauschenbusch. Rather than examine each one of them as an individual, she considers them as a group, with Rauschenbusch at the center.

While there have been several other studies of

the Social Gospel, notably Richard Niebuhr (1937) and Robert Handy (1966), Fishburn has placed the movement in its socio-cultural background. She offers us an interdisciplinary approach to the history of religion, rather than focusing on theology alone. For this reason, the book is important as a model for American church history. She examines the intellectual atmosphere, national crises, cultural assumptions, social problems, life styles, and family relationships in light of their interaction with religious thought. This approach has much to recommend it, as a corrective to the usual emphasis on intellectual history.

The first part of the work provides an excellent survey of the Victorian social and intellectual revolution: the impact of industrialization, the Civil War, labor unrest, urbanization and the break-up of the close-knit community and church, Social Darwinism, phrenology, and the like. The reader gets a feel for what it might have been like to grow up in such a world. Fishburn might have drawn further the impact of the Civil War and the freeing of the slaves, but in general this is a first class vignette.

The second part of the book consists of an examination of the social and religious thought of the Social Gospel men, in light of the first part's conclusions. Fishburn points out how these men bought into the ideologies of the day, at least in the beginning, hampering their message of love and equality for all. The second-generation Social Gospel men (Clarke, Peabody, Rauschenbusch) differed from the "pioneers" in some respects, and especially the German-American Rauschenbusch did not swallow all of America's cultural mythology. In general, however, Fishburn explodes the usual view of the Social Gospel "radicals," pointing out that they were fundamentally *defenders* of Victorian middle-class values and world view.

In the penultimate chapter, Fishburn briefly describes the theology of the Social Gospel men, focusing on Rauschenbusch. In the last chapter of the book, she points out the paradoxes, shortcomings, and problems in the Social Gospel theology and social theory. This last chapter, at least, should be required reading for all modern American Christians. More than we know or are willing to admit, the Social Gospel has penetrated our praxis. Moreover, Fishburn raises questions having far-reaching implications for all those who devise plans for social change from a Christian perspective, whether they be liberation theologians or Moral Majority enthusiasts.

Least we evangelicals feel too smug at this critique of Social Gospel liberalism, it seems to me that much evangelical social theory possesses similar problems. How easily we are co-opted by the right or the left! Fishburn's book merits careful attention, not only as an analysis of the past but as a warning for the future.

Mainline Churches and the Evangelicals: A Challenging Crisis?
 by Richard G. Hutcheson, Jr. (John Knox, 1981, 194 pp., \$8.95). Reviewed by Richard J. Coleman, teaching minister, Community Church of Durham, New Hampshire.

Richard G. Hutcheson, Jr., former Chairperson of the Office of Review and Evaluation of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, has several well-defined theses, and his book develops them quite well. First, because of the recent surge of the evangelical movement, mainline churches have become the arena of confrontation and challenge; for their own good, as well as the health of the Church as a whole, they must recognize the challenge and rise to it in a positive and affirming way. The second

thesis concerns the way mainline churches can react. Hutcheson outlines three ways: battle for control, planned pluralism, and search for a consensus middle.

What are the crisis points which lie behind the challenge? In analyzing the present situation, the author devotes a chapter to each: the exodus of youth from mainline churches to successful evangelical organizations (Youth for Christ, Young Life, etc.); the rise of independent parachurch groups both within and without denominational structures (e.g., PTL Club, Moral Majority, Presbyterians United for Biblical Concerns, World Vision International); the crisis in overseas missions; the charismatic renewal; the church growth movement as an evangelical methodology; and the fragmentation of denominational life.

Perhaps the most interesting and significant aspect of this analysis is the distinction between mission and missions. When mainline liberal-ecumenicals moved to define the mission of the Church as *everything* the Church is sent into the world to do—preaching the gospel, healing the sick, improving international and interracial relations, and so forth—evangelicals stood firm in their reluctance to displace missions to the unchurched by this broader definition. From this basic distinction arise two different styles of doing mission. Mainliners tend to define overseas missions in terms of *partnerships* and *interchurch* aid to those who request it. Evangelicals have learned to separate the Christian message from Western dress, but their style is still to develop new churches wherever there are none, and to do so with a concentration on preaching and Bible study. Hutcheson also notes the economic repercussion: namely, the flow of benevolence giving away from denominational structures to designated projects and independent groups. I appreciated the author's references to how this evangelical-mainline challenge is taking shape in other countries, especially Africa and Latin America. In the former the usual American polarities are not very important, while in the latter they are most definitely present.

The last part of the book is concerned with possible responses by liberal mainliners. It is noteworthy that the response is seen as a one-way avenue. Hutcheson is unaware of or chooses not to mention the various debates going on among evangelicals pertaining to their new status as the new mainliners, as well as the dissatisfactions commonly associated with independent churches and strong personalities. I found this section to be the weakest but nevertheless helpful.

The author dismisses fairly quickly the win-lose alternative of fighting it out for control. The second alternative of planned pluralism calls for a shift from de facto diversity, which presently characterizes mainline Protestant churches, to an effort which consciously seeks and encourages the *legitimacy* of diversity. The negative direction such planned pluralism can take is evident when a church becomes a consensus congregation. As Hutcheson points out, government by majority vote serves to handle dissenters by getting rid of them. I would concur that most mainline churches strive toward consensus by subtly excommunicating their nonconformists. While being open to cultural pluralism, liberal ecumenicals are not very tolerant of a conservative-liberal pluralism. The more positive option is for voice and legitimacy to be given to internal consensus groups. The best example of how this can happen is our recent history of charismatics within both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. By and large their presence within their home churches has been inspiring rather than divisive.

Hutcheson's greatest hope is for a planned pluralism where there exists a substantial core of unity or balance so that leadership can be shared and the work of the church can be carried out under a ban-

ner of shared commitment. Hutcheson understands the many reasons why this is a hopeful possibility. Yet whether operating with a consensus or a middle ground, there remain the dangers caused by indifference and lukewarm Christians, by a diluted sense of mission because the goals are pluralistic, and by the inevitable tendency of evangelicals to define that middle in terms of orthodoxy and liberals in terms of cultural transformation.

A certain pessimistic current runs through Hutcheson's hope for the future. When he asks whether there is a sufficiently substantial core of unity underlying the diversity within mainline churches, Hutcheson is dubious. Perhaps he is correct, but I think he might have reason to be more optimistic if more attention had been paid to what this middle balance would look like theologically. Repeatedly he asks if anyone knows where the middle is. It may seem arrogant, but I think I have a sense of how to define a middle ground theologically and have known more than a few churches where a balance is lived out. Hutcheson is correct in his emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in leading us where we do not necessarily want to go, but let us not use this as an excuse for not doing some goal-setting and theological dialogue.

Richard Hutcheson's book will be most helpful to mainline liberals who need a better picture of what is happening and why it is happening. I applaud his fine effort not only accurately to point out where the challenge is, but, then, to challenge us.

The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium
edited by Don McCurry (Monrovia, California: MARC, 1979, 638 pp., \$6.00).
Reviewed by Callum Beck, M.A. student, Emmanuel School of Religion.

There is no more difficult task or greater challenge facing Christians today than that of bringing the good news of Jesus the Christ to our Muslim neighbors. This book emerges from a meeting of concerned evangelicals in October of 1978 to discuss how we could better fulfill this task. It offers the Christian community a chance for further thought and discussion, and encourages us to take up the large task before us.

The book consists of forty fundamental papers, with helpful critical responses and less helpful rejoinders. The papers can be grouped into three categories: (1) conceptual, including articles on the gospel and culture (Paul Hiebert), contextualization (Charles Taber), and several on culturally congenial forms of worship for converted Muslims; (2) descriptive, including articles on Islamic theology, the comparative status of Christianity and Islam in the world, and the current status of certain aspects of the present missionary effort; and (3) practical, including articles on the role of local churches in Muslim evangelization (Frank S. Khair Ullah), dialogue (Daniel Brewster), and the development of various tools to aid in our task. Also included are Stanley Mooneyham's keynote address and two articles describing the background of the conference.

One of the major emphases of the book is that "the Muslim world is no more a monolithic whole than is the Christian world." There may be many Muslims who follow the traditional Quranic beliefs and practices, but there are more yet who are animistic and superstitious. This, however, does not excuse us from coming to grips with pure Islam, for we will never really understand the popular form if we do not understand the ideal; as Kenneth Cragg notes, "the popular reaches back into the ultimate."

Also stressed is the need to repent of our harsh and unfair criticisms of Islamic culture and religion, our deficiency in sacrificial and caring love, the cul-

tural baggage we have carried with the gospel, and the wrongs that we as a people have continued to commit against the Islamic people. This need does not exist just because we as individuals may have done wrong, nor is it suggested that Muslims are without sin. Rather, it is because "Muslims have an understanding of solidarity and corporate responsibility that makes us partakers of the deeds of our predecessors, associates, and fellow-countrymen, unless we explicitly and concretely denounce them and act differently." We, therefore, must denounce, both in word and deed, the past and present sinful actions of our people.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the book is not its discussion of conceptual matters or practical methodologies, nor even its broad-minded scholarly approach, but its insistence on the centrality of prayer in mission work and planning. Many books on missions today, though excellent on methodology, technique or proper conceptualization of missions, seem to take prayer for granted, as if we don't need to be reminded of its importance. But Paul says, "pray that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly" and rarely discusses technique or concepts. Our conceptualization of mission is sure to go amiss if our books on missions are not pervaded with the sense that without God we can do nothing. This book refreshingly has that sense.

McCurry has assembled an excellent introduction for anyone interested in Muslim evangelization, but it is also essential reading for anyone presently involved in this work. The task ahead of the Christian world is great, but this book has given us much new insight into how we can achieve it.

BOOK COMMENTS

Testaments of Love: A Study of Love in the Bible

by Leon Morris (Eerdmans, 1981, 232 pp., \$7.95).

Leon Morris reacts with amazement to the lack of literature he finds on the meaning of "love" in the Bible. Since love is central in Scripture, and since we can easily read our own ideas of "love" (as sentimentality or romance) into the text, we surely need a clear idea of Scripture's own intent. So, Morris examines both testaments, focusing on the various words which they use for "love." From this study, a number of intriguing ideas emerge, notably the importance of the cross to the Bible's view of love and the assertion that the "answering love" prompted by God's unconditional love is directed fundamentally not back towards God, but out towards other people.

Testaments of Love is well indexed (by topic, author, and Scripture text) making it a useful reference, and it is broad in scope, interacting with the previous authors on the subject such as A. Nygren, C. S. Lewis, and C. Spicq. The only major tragedy is Morris' failure to attend to Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*, especially since he and the Dane struggle with many of the same questions (e.g., how can love be commanded?). Even so, Morris is helpful in a number of ways and his conclusions are both sound and profound, for he sees that love—God's love for the undeserving—is central to Scripture, and the cross is central to love.

—Hal Miller

The Westminster Concise Bible Dictionary
by Barbara Smith (Westminster, 1981, 161 pp., \$5.95).

This very simple Bible dictionary is an unchanged reprint of a 1965 work entitled *Young People's Bible Dictionary*. Although such a volume undoubtedly has some value, it is debatable whether such an elementary and older dictionary ought to be reprinted. It is hardly a volume for readers of this journal to consult. Especially regrettable is the fact that the one-page bibliography is reprinted without any updating.

The entries are clearly written and provide numerous references to biblical texts, both good traits. The coverage is generally adequate, but with some surprising omissions (e.g., Noah; Phoebe). The *Dictionary* does not contain entries on subjects related to biblical study such as Ugarit, Qumran, gnosticism, apocalyptic or hermeneutics. Different types of potentially sensitive entries (e.g., Pharisees; resurrection) are simply statements of data found in the biblical texts with no evaluative comments. Opinions are expressed, however, on some authorship questions (e.g., Pastorals are not by Paul; 2 Peter not by Peter; three sections of Isaiah). At the end of the *Dictionary* the sixteen colored maps from G. E. Wright and F. V. Filson's *Westminster Historical Maps of Bible Lands* are printed.

Probably young people should be encouraged to use the more recent Bible dictionaries produced for children by Eerdmans and David C. Cook. Adult beginners should probably be introduced to one of the larger and newer Bible dictionaries available.

—David M. Scholer

The Atonement
by Martin Hengel (Fortress, 1981, 112 pp., \$6.95).

The author's thesis is that in the Graeco-Roman world of thought myths concerning the apotheosis of dying heroes, who sacrificed themselves for cities, friends, the law and truth, created a context for the message of Christ's atonement. This does not mean, however, that the doctrine of the atonement is the product of Hellenistic speculation. Rather, beginning with the letters of Paul, the author makes a convincing case for the thesis that such Pauline formulae as "Christ died for our sins" and "Christ was given up for our trespasses" rest upon an earlier Jewish-Christian understanding of Christ's death. This "tradition" goes back to the original disciples who became convinced by the resurrection not only that Jesus was the Messiah but also that his death had an expiatory quality as a sacrifice for their sins. They came to this understanding not only because of the influence of the Temple Cult and such prophecies as Isaiah 53, but also, in the last analysis, because of what Jesus himself said and did. Mark 10:45 ("The Son of Man came . . . to minister and to give his life a ransom for many") was in all probability used to interpret Jesus' symbolic acts at the Last Supper which he celebrated with his disciples on the night of his betrayal. In these acts he represented his immanent death as the eschatological (once-for-all) saving event which brought reconciliation with God. Hence his death, thus interpreted, was at the heart of the Christian kerygma from the beginning. I highly recommend this book—which the author modestly calls a "fragment"—for its careful exegesis and theological balance.

—Paul K. Jewett

Early Arianism—A View of Salvation
by Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh (Fortress, 1981, 223 pp., \$24.95 cloth).

The authors of this book, in an attempt to rethink the whole Arian controversy, approach the subject by asking questions such as what sort of salvation Jesus models, what the relationship is between the Savior and the saved, how humanity may achieve holiness (perfection), and how the answers to these and other questions affect our understanding of the relationship between human action and divine initiative. Gregg and Groh contend that current scholarship, in its portrayal of the early Arians as philosophical cosmologists and logicians interested only in preserving the bulwark of monotheism, is at a stalemate. Rather, the authors argue that what is sometimes known as the Trinitarian controversy is actually a controversy rooted in two very different conceptions of how we are to be saved. The Arians understand salvation as the reward for a life of progress and arrival at perfect holiness. Humanity's problem is one of disobedient *will*, and our "pioneer," Jesus, has demonstrated the possibility of being perfectly obedient, and thereby has been redeemed himself. The authors maintain that the early Arians are influenced by current Stoic anthropology in their soteriological analysis.

This book will be a watershed in fourth-century scholarship. The average seminarian will find it a model of clear and careful scholarship. Gregg and Groh have a pleasing facility of expression which almost justifies the rather steep price.

—Steven Odom

The Christian View of Man
by H. D. McDonald (Crossway, 1981, 149 pp., \$6.95).

We need good introductions to basic Christian doctrines. Unfortunately, *The Christian View of Man* misses. The book does not lack assets: brevity; essential conservative orthodoxy; a large, interesting, evangelically-weighted bibliography; contents that touch upon most of the key issues of Christian anthropology. By and large the author is willing to state his own views without making the book a simple apology for them; and he heroically avoids the temptation of straying into other doctrinal loci.

The problem with the book is its style. The jargon and allusions—not to mention the untranslated Latin, Greek, and Hebrew—are far too obscure for the layperson for whom the piece is allegedly designed; and the assertions are far too imprecise for the scholar. Add non sequiturs; vague, unidentified references to thinkers or schools of thought; lists of little-known supporters of points of view; and ill-fitting Scripture references. Mix with a pastiche of quotations of dubious relevance to the specific issues at hand. Here is a recipe for unedited lecture notes.

Do not sit down to read *The Christian View of Man*. Use the bibliography. Get ideas from the outline, and reminders of how debates developed and who was involved. But do not submit yourself to the exasperating task of trying to read and follow the book. It is not worth it.

—Marguerite Shuster

Is God GOD?
edited by Axel D. Steuer and James McClen-
don, Jr. (Abingdon, 1981, 288 pp., \$9.95).

In this volume of essays leading American theologians express themselves on what they take God to be and to mean. Each piece is accompanied by an explanatory preface, and some cross-referencing is attempted. "Death of God" theologian Altizer is

still talking about the anonymous God who cannot be identified by us but who still matters and is working in universal human culture. Charles Davis sees God-talk as a way of expressing one's trust in reality, and feels we are in need of new symbols for God in our time. Van Buren is no atheist these days, but is heavily into thinking about God in the context of Auschwitz. He wants to think of God as having limited himself and left responsibility for history to us. Axel Steuer, one of the editors, does a nice job of refuting the objection to theism that the concept of God is meaningless. For Kaufman, God is a key point in a person's world picture and is the construct of the human imagination. It is hard to see how this differs much from atheism. Robert Neville gives us more of his peculiar brand of process theism focussing on the Spirit as the world's ongoing creator, while Whiteheadian John Cobb attempts to show how there is embedded in the Buddhist faith a witness to God despite the apparent disinterest in the topic. There are some noticeable similarities between Christian thinkers who are near-atheists and Buddhist thinkers who are near-theists. They meet in the twilight of faint assertions.

—Clark H. Pinnock

Life in All its Fullness
by Philip Potter (World Council of Churches, 1981, 173 pp., \$7.50).

This is a collection of eight representative pieces selected from an abundance of occasional addresses and articles by the Secretary General of the World Council of Churches since 1972. For its publication we have the author's friends to thank; they have provided us here with a faithful mirror to the mind and heart of a self-styled "Caribbean person" who is also the most prominent of our ecumenical leaders from the Third World.

Dr. Potter's theological orientation can rightly be labelled "liberation," but with interesting nuances of its own. Its focus is more "soteriological" than "ideological"; its rhetoric is more openly dialogical than adversarial. More importantly, its emphatic appeal to Scripture as primary and final authority helps to base Dr. Potter's discussion on a common ground with "evangelicals." Indeed, he claims for himself John Wesley's slogan—*homo unius libri* ("a man of one book—the Bible!"). The reiterated themes in every piece are "salvation," "justice," and "unity."

He tells us that he was bred up to work with the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. The result makes for a lively dialectic, but it also tends to ignore what lies between: viz., whatever Christian wisdom that may have accrued along the way from the Apostolic Age to any given *here* and *now*. And yet the Christian *future* has always turned, in part at least, upon its linkage with the Christian *past*. On this score, many "modern" Christians ("ecumenicals" and "evangelicals") have some lessons to learn, *together*.

—Albert C. Outler

The Justification of Religious Belief
by Basil Mitchell (Oxford University Press, 1981, 180 pp., \$4.95).

Basil Mitchell is an Oriol College, Oxford, moral philosopher of religion. In this brief but incisive book, Mitchell argues that Christianity, like other world views, cannot be proved or disproved. What we must look to is the cumulative weight of the various arguments pro and con, some of them infor-

mal and probabilistic. Mitchell shows that such a pattern of argument is common in such other fields as history, hermeneutics, political science, and especially science. He argues that a judicious look at the situation shows that a rational case can be made for religious belief and for Christian theism.

Mitchell also discusses in an illuminating manner the notion of a theistic proof and the nature of religious faith. He also provides sensible replies to objections that have been recently raised against religious faith by such "empirical" critics as Antony Flew, Kai Nielsen, and Terence Penelhum. Most importantly and helpfully, he discusses Kuhn's concept of paradigms and conceptual schemes, especially as they relate to the rationality of theism versus naturalism.

This is an excellent book, profound but not overly technical.

—Stephen T. Davis

***A Loving God and a Suffering World*
by JonTal Murphree. (IVP, 1981, 126 pp., \$4.50).**

Murphree has given us a popular, easy to read book on the urgent problem of evil for Christianity, written (I would suppose) for the early college student. He details the importance of the problem for Christians, and outlines his response. Murphree discusses the nature of omnipotence, freedom, moral and physical evil, goodness, and divine intervention as these impact upon his thesis. The book does a good job of presenting ideas in a clear, understandable manner. Murphree combines the free will defense with the Irenaean type of soul-making theodicy. While critical readers will find several questionable statements, in general the book will be helpful for beginning students at the college level. The seminarian may find it useful to give, but probably not to read, unless as one's first book on the problem. An index and a bibliography would have improved the book.

—Alan Padgett

***Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*
by Joseph A. Conforti (Eerdmans, 1981, 241 pp., \$16.95).**

Joseph Conforti's monograph is a lucid and balanced blend of intellectual biography and social history. The central focus is on Congregationalist pastor-theologian Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803). Although the prized student of Jonathan Edwards, Hopkins made a significant modification in Edwards' definition of "true virtue" (essentially from "right affections" to "right actions"—i.e., radical "disinterested benevolence"). Conforti insightfully shows how this renewed Calvinism of Hopkins was a theologically solid base for Christian social action, including Hopkins' own fight against the slave trade in eighteenth-century Newport, Rhode Island.

The book is also a concise analysis of changing New England society from the First to the Second Great Awakening. Moving beyond an autonomous intellectual history methodology, Conforti delineates in social detail how Hopkins and like-minded associates (e.g., Joseph Bellamy and Nathaniel Emmons) shaped a New Divinity movement ("the first indigenous American school of Calvinism") which captured the minds and hearts of many young Con-

gregationalist ministerial candidates of "modest to obscure social backgrounds" in the decades succeeding the First Awakening.

This book, pleasant reading as well as an outstanding model of historical analysis, is worth the time of all evangelicals who are interested in understanding and reappropriating a key part of their multifaceted tradition.

—Douglas Firth Anderson

***Anabaptism in Outline*
edited by Walter Klaassen (Herald Press, 1981, 424 pp., \$17.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper).**

Although the book title is not as helpful as it could be, this volume is our one best access to the primary documents of sixteenth-century Anabaptism, particularly for those who read only English. Collected by topic, here are generous excerpts from all the major works of the total spectrum of Anabaptist writers. The apparatus of introductions, notes, indices, bibliographies, and biographical information is full and competent. One additional helpful feature could have been "maps" that would enable the reader to string excerpts together so as at least partially to reconstruct the particular work of a given author. Even where there is sufficient material, its present arrangement makes it difficult to get a feel of the thought or style of individual writers.

Yet, beyond doubt—whether for present-day Anabaptists, curious readers, or scholarly researchers—this book is our best entree to the heart of Anabaptist thought and tradition.

—Vernard Eller

***Born Againism: Perspectives on a Movement*
by Eric W. Gritsch (Fortress, 1982, 112 pp., \$5.95).**

Several dozen books are reportedly now appearing concerning recent American evangelicalism and fundamentalism. *Born Againism*, while not without merit, is not one of the best. While Professor Gritsch, a Luther scholar, in attempting to provide a historical perspective, presents some important background on fundamentalism and the charismatic movement, his account is too filled with partial truths and ambiguities to be of much use. By emphasizing that the born-again movement is rooted in the millennialism in England of the 1790s, Gritsch subordinates the vast impact of earlier pietism and says too little about the central role of the Great Awakenings and American revivalism. Moreover, Gritsch conflates post-millennialism and premillennialism, and so obscures the significance of the millennial background for understanding fundamentalism today.

Professor Gritsch does offer some valuable insights in a theological critique from his perspective of "ecumenical Christianity" tempered by Lutheranism. Particularly, he points out that evangelicals' neglect of the sacraments reflects a weak view of the church as community. Billy Graham's *How to be Born Again*, for instance, does not mention baptism. Moreover, some born againism mixes a great deal of "ego power" with "gospel power." On such questions, Gritsch suggests, the Lutheran tradition has some insights concerning God's grace that evangelicals should consider.

—George Marsden

***Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865*
by Mary P. Ryan (Cambridge University Press, 1981, 321 pp., \$24.95).**

Ryan's work is a helpful supplement to other in-depth studies on revivalism and its social effects, particularly in the early nineteenth century, including Paul Johnson's *A Shopkeeper's Millenium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*; John Hammond's *The Politics of Benevolence: Revival Religion and American Voting Behavior*; and Barbara Epstein's *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America*.

These works are beginning to show very concretely how revivalism interacted with the change from a domestic and market economy to industrialization, and how the new economic patterns radically altered family structures and allowed some women to emerge into leadership in social reform. Ryan traces these changes through church and civic records. Contrary to eighteenth-century patterns, women increasingly took on alone the job of molding the children through childhood and schooling.

While Ryan is more concerned about sociology than theology, her careful study will be invaluable to anyone studying American revivalism. Also, because she shows clearly how a "woman's sphere" evolved in response to the industrial economy and the growth of the leisured middle class, her book offers a necessary word of caution to those who think the nuclear family is "the way God ordained it."

—Nancy A. Hardesty

***Women and Religion in America*
edited by Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller (Harper & Row, 1981, 353 pp., \$14.95).**

This volume on the nineteenth century is the first in a "documentary history" which Ruether and Keller have planned. Volumes on later and earlier periods will be forthcoming. In this volume Ruether covers women in utopian movements and Keller writes on Protestant lay women. Roman Catholic nuns and Jewish women also have chapters. Of particular interest to evangelicals will be Martha Blauvelt's chapter on women and revivalism (Blauvelt has done particular work on Presbyterians), Barbara Brown Zikmund's essay on "The Struggle for the Right to Preach," and Carolyn Gifford's work on social reform movements. Each author gives a short introduction to her topic and follows it with a few photos and from eight to seventeen documents. Those in Zikmund's list should be familiar: Frances Willard, AME leader Jarena Lee, Phoebe Palmer, Antoinette Brown and Luther Lee. She also includes selections from those opposed to women's preaching. In the Ruether tradition, this book is well-conceived and carefully executed, an excellent text for a course on women in church history, or as a supplement to other "male" texts.

—Nancy A. Hardesty

Womanhood in Radical Protestantism, 1525-1675

by Joyce L. Irwin (The Edwin Mellen Press, 1979, 258 pp., \$24.95).

Joyce Irwin's book opens new vistas to historians, especially those interested in the radical reformation and in the place of women in the church. She begins with a general introduction delineating the scope of her work. She includes the early Anabaptists who emphasized the authority of Scripture, and

the Spiritualists, including Quakers, who relied on the Spirit. She includes radical Puritans but excludes Pietists, who emerged after 1675.

The book is divided into four sections on women as wives, women and learning, women in the church, and women as preachers and prophets. Irwin's most significant contribution is her collecting, translating and editing of original sources. She makes available here a wealth of material previously inaccessible to most people. The work is especially enhanced by succinct and helpful introductions to each chapter and selection.

Irwin is also to be commended for her objectivity and restraint. Similar books tend in one of two directions. Some, either ardently seeking proto-feminists or attempting to redeem a hopelessly patriarchal tradition, exaggerate all glimmers of "enlightenment." Others, embittered by or hostile to the tradition, exaggerate the patriarchalism of the sources. Irwin is helpfully and wisely matter-of-fact. She has given readers a range of good sources from which to draw their own conclusions.

—Nancy A. Hardesty

Limits: A Search for New Values
by Maxine Schnall (Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1981, 340 pp., \$12.95).

Limits is one of those books, like Fromm's classic *Escape from Freedom* or Lasch's more recent *The Culture of Narcissism*, which attempts to assess, critique, and expound upon where we are as a culture. Schnall takes us from the "Depressing Thirties" through the "Selfish Seventies" in a pop-cultural documentation of the loss of our "inner compass." And, true to the genre, Schnall finds us now standing at a fork in the road: will we be able to set for ourselves new limits in love and work, or will we continue to be duped by the false prophets of the feminine (or feminist) mystique, success, careerism, selfishness, etc.?

As inviting as such discussions sound, *Limits* is a disappointing book. The problem is that Schnall does not really say anything that has not already been said before. To put this criticism bluntly, *Limits* could have been written with materials available in any shopping mall, adding only a purse-full of psychiatric journals. Moreover, Schnall provides no novel answers. Instead, for example, when it comes to relationships with parents, we are uncreatively admonished to "work through" them. Finally, *Limits* has next to nothing to say about religion, theology, or faith—so even if it were good, it would be of only peripheral concern for those seeking a Christian critique of contemporary culture.

—Kenneth E. Morris

Freedom of Simplicity
by Richard J. Foster (Harper & Row, 1981, 200 pp., \$9.95).

In an increasingly complex and complicated world, characterized by a gnawing sense of individual impotence and global uncontrollability, it is marvelously energizing and hope-filling to be shown in a comprehensive and practical way the power and freedom to which we are called. This is precisely what *Freedom of Simplicity* does.

Simplicity as Foster speaks of it does not mean simplistic solutions to problems or a fanatical single-viewpointedness that leads to intolerance. Rather, it concerns the lived conclusions that follow naturally and logically from having a single heart which belongs to God. Those lived conclusions are

the mass of inner and outward thoughts, words and deeds which, without simplicity, remain knotted and snarled threads, but with simplicity become a tapestry of integrated life—at once spiritual and secular, private and corporate, active and contemplative, intimately one's own and connected to every-one else's life.

Foster's work is solid, graceful, balanced, sensitive, and joyful; consistently, these are the traits of a life lived in simplicity. *Freedom of Simplicity* is a wonderful perspective, not only in theory as Foster has written it, but more so in practice as he invites us to live it. Of the many books on the spiritual life which appear each year now, few are more worth having, reading, sharing, giving away, and giving oneself over to in earnest practice than *Freedom of Simplicity*. It is not merely a "must read" book; it is a "must live" one.

—Gregory A. Youngchild

Ways to the Center: An Introduction to World Religions

by Denise L. Carmody and John T. Carmody (Wadsworth, 1981, 408 pp., \$17.95).

This is an interesting, accurate, and readable introductory text that is clearly geared for the college market. Each chapter has key dates at the beginning; a section on the chronological development of the religion; a structural analysis in terms of nature, society, self, and divinity; and some study questions. The glossary, notes, bibliography, and indexes are helpful. This book goes into more depth than the just released *Eerdman's Handbook to the World's Religions*, but lacks some of that book's breadth (e.g., the section on primal religions is much more extensive in Eerdman's). If you need a book for group or church study, I would recommend the Eerdman's text. If you are teaching a course in upper division world religions to students with some background in religions, I highly recommend *Ways to the Center*. If you want to get more than a "once over lightly" book for a personal study of world religions, I would recommend either book with the hint that Carmody has more depth. If you are interested in comparisons, the structural analysis sections of the chapters will help immensely. The book could stand to be redesigned graphically. The double columns with only a few black and white photographs is very dulling. The text deserves better.

—Charles O. Ellenbaum

Interreligious Dialogue: Facing the Next Frontier

edited by Richard W. Rousseau, S. J. (Ridge Row Press, 1981, 234 pp., \$13.50).

The pressing question of interreligious dialogue has resulted in the production of a new collection of interesting essays. Like the earlier collections on this subject edited by Stanley Samartha, John Hick, Herbert Jai Singh, Donald Dawe and John Carman, this one reflects high scholarly standards and a sense of the crucial importance of the topic. The chief issue is still the relation of mission to dialogue, and, except for the contribution by Leslie Newbigin which has already been published in his book, *The Open Secret*, there do not appear here any new ways of resolving that issue. Perhaps the most useful essay is the one by Lucien Richard analyzing the Christologies of ten contemporary theologians, for

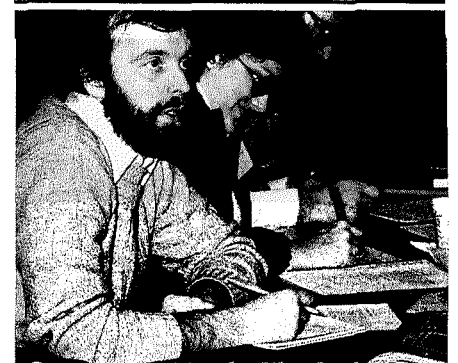
the problems of interreligious dialogue all focus on Christology. Nearly all of the ten try to develop a Christology which sees Christ in other religions. Supplementing this essay are four others which provide fuller critiques of the thought of Kramer, Hick, Rahner and Kung as they deal with other religions. None of these giants comes through unscathed.

—Charles W. Forman

BOOK COMMENT CONTRIBUTORS

In addition to regular *TSF Bulletin* editors and contributors (listed on the outside and inside front covers), the following reviewers have contributed book comments in this issue: **Charles W. Forman** (Professor of Missions, Yale University Divinity School); **Paul K. Jewett** (Professor of Systematic Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary); **George Marsden** (Professor of History, Calvin College); **Hal Miller** (Ph.D. candidate, Boston College); **Kenneth E. Morris** (Ph.D. candidate, University of Georgia); **Steven Odum** (Campus Minister, Madison Christian Student Foundation, University of Wisconsin); **Albert C. Outler** (Emeritus Professor of Theology, Perkins School of Theology); **Alan Padgett** (Pastor, San Jacinto United Methodist Church, California); **David M. Scholer** (Dean and Professor of New Testament, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary); **Marguerite Shuster** (Associate Pastor, Arcadia Presbyterian Church, California).

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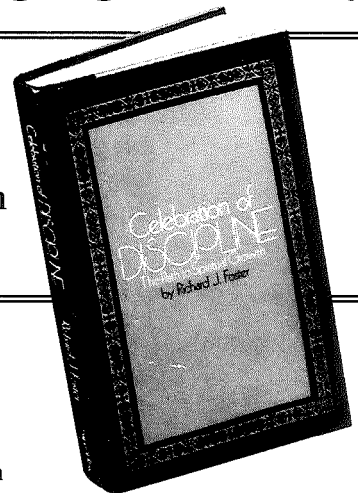
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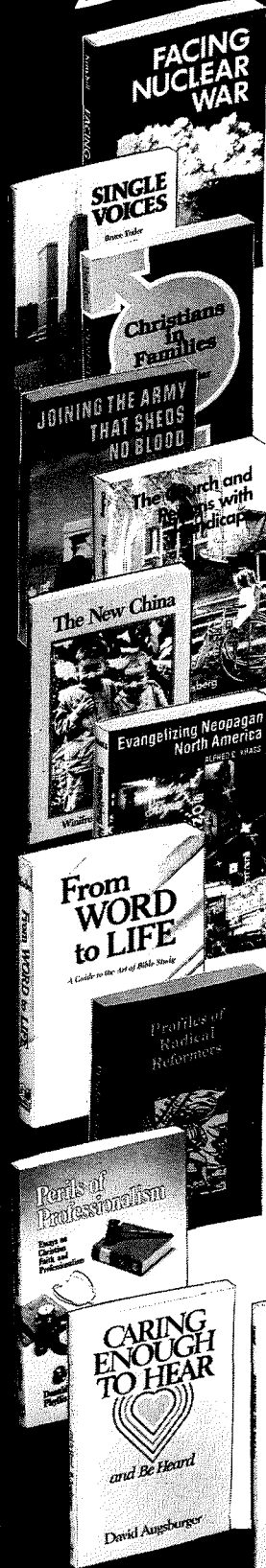
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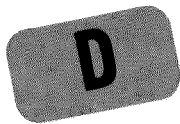
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