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TSF BULLETIN
THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS FELLOWSHIP

JANUARY–FEBRUARY 1986

Vol. 9, No. 3 $3.50

Introducing This Issue

Nothing intrigues me more than to trace the footsteps of a fellow pilgrim, imaginatively reliving his journey, and thus attempting empathically to see the world through his eyes and even feel it with his nerves. When the fellow pilgrim is an esteemed friend like Gordon MacDonald, eagerness to understand the dynamics of his development displaces a mere curiosity. So I hope Bill Mangrum's interview with the new president of Inter-Varsity will stimulate your mind and heart as it has my own.

Ray Anderson has a deserved reputation as a theologian who deals creatively with the weightiest problems of our faith. The second part of his essay on hermeneutics will be published in the next issue of the *Bulletin*. Then in a forthcoming issue there will be several responses including, justly, Dr. Anderson's response to his respondents.

Edward John Carnell, until his death a stellar faculty member at Fuller Theological Seminary, was one of the thinkers who helped spearhead a sort of intellectual renaissance among American evangelicals in the late 1940s and into the '50s and '60s. His approach to ethics is discussed by Kenneth Wozniak, a former student of mine, who did a Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Southern California on "Ethics in the Thought of Edward John Carnell." Dr. Wozniak shares with us the fruit of his academic labor.

Central to our faith is the doctrine of the Trinity. How to formulate our belief has always been a problem for theologians, as we are reminded once again by Thomas Finger's critique of Donald Bloesch's recent book on this profound mystery.

We are including reports on two important conferences that dealt with matters of intense concern to all of us who realize that justice and racism are inextricably intertwined. I urge, therefore, that we read carefully the document produced by the consultation of Black Christians which met at Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia, December 14-15, 1984. The reading of that document will underscore the relevance of Wheaton College's 32nd Annual Philosophy Conference which had as its theme, "Applied Ethics: Doing Justice." *Bulletin* book reviews invariably alert us to the appearance of significant works in theology and other disciplines. Yet I think the longer reviews which you will find in this issue do more than mention books we ought to be acquainted with: they enter into provocative dialogue with authors who are having a decisive impact on the late 20th century Church.

Let me mention some matters of interest to you who comprise our readership. First, with sincere regret I announce that Roberta Hestenes will be unable to continue as an associate editor because of her more than demanding responsibilities. We are most grateful for the help and support she has given to the *Bulletin*. Her replacement will be announced in the near future.

Second, subscriptions to *TSF Bulletin* cover less than half of its publication cost. While Bill Mangrum and I raise funds to defray our own expenses, all of our colleagues whose names appear on the masthead of the *Bulletin* are unpaid volunteers. Obviously they believe in the ministry of TSF and this journal. If you wish to become a sustaining subscriber or a donor (yes, such contributions are tax-deductible!), we will be most grateful. Please write or call the TSF office for details.

Third, we invite your reactions to the articles and reviews which appear in the *Bulletin*. Occasionally we will print a selection of your letters, taking the liberty of abbreviating (hopefully not eviscerating) those which are too long. For example, an author, feeling that a reviewer has unfairly criticized or seriously misunderstood his book, may be motivated to engage in rebuttal or clarification. In the same way the contributor of an article may advance ideas and interpretations which you think fallacious, or he may in your opinion be erring factually. Share your corrective comments with our readership.

Fourth, we solicit top quality articles, pointing out regretfully that no remuneration can be provided for them. But if you likewise believe in the value of this ministry, send us those essays which ought not remain unpublished. Only bear in mind, please, that editorial judgment must be exercised in deciding what material is appropriate (or otherwise) for the *Bulletin*.

Have a productive and enjoyable 1986.

Christian Leadership: An Interview with Gordon MacDonald

Gordon MacDonald has twenty years experience pastoring churches. He is a graduate of Denver Seminary, and in January 1985 he was appointed President of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. Among other books, he is the author of Ordering Your Private World *and* If Those Who Reach Could Touch *(with Gail MacDonald). Bill Mangrum recently interviewed him on a wide range of topics, including leadership, preparing for the ministry, mentoring, and doubt.*

TSFB: When did you graduate from seminary?
GM: I graduated in 1966. I took four years to do a three year course, which is by no means unusual these days. I took the four years because during the time I was in seminary, I pastored a church some 175 miles east of Denver and combined practical experience with my theological education.
TSFB: Was seminary a positive experience for you?
GM: I struggled in my earliest days of seminary, trying—like many students—to mix the theoretical and academic with the practical experience that I craved. I sometimes found it frustrating to study under professors who had no pastoral experience and who weren't always able to show me the practical application of the material they were teaching. But I was married when I was in seminary and my wife, Gail, helped me make it a very happy time; and the ministry more than occupied my experience.
TSFB: When you graduated, did you feel you were prepared to assume a pastoral position?
GM: The question is a bit tilted for me because, having grown up in a pastor's home, I knew quite a lot about how to lead a church before I even went to seminary. But was I prepared? I thought I was, but looking back, I see that I wasn't. I'm not sure that seminary can really prepare a student for the ministry. It's one part of a process, and then there are the years that follow. I look back now and realize that the four or five years after seminary were part of the preparation process through which I made a series of classic errors in judgment and leadership as I grew and matured. I'm reminded that in the old, traditional days, a Jew didn't become a spiritual leader until he was in mid-life. I realize that at the age of 26 or 27, I was trying to pastor people of all generations and I had very little insight or experience which enabled me to speak to the needs of mid-life or older people. I don't mean to discourage young pastors, but I think you have to accept the fact that the process of training is much longer than just seminary. It takes a lot of years to understand the nature of ministry.
TSFB: What about the difficulty of some students who feel called to the ministry? They go to seminary, graduate, and then they have to find jobs. The people who have encouraged them to pursue ministry are often not helpful in placing seminary graduates—especially in a mentoring position where they are free to make mistakes and grow under the guidance of one seasoned in the ministry.
GM: If I had a gripe about seminary education as it is today, it would be that it is built too much upon a purely academic model and not upon what I perceive to be the mentoring model in the New Testament. Then there was the notion of the older person leading the younger, not only through a training process, but into the performance of ministry itself. Today we have the view that seminary gives you the degree which opens the doors for ordination. In this system, students receive all the certification they're going to need for a lifetime of ministry before they have really performed. They are certified and ordained in most places simply on the basis of their ability to give a doctrinal defense of their knowledge. We haven't made the young student wait the requisite amount of time to show that he or she is fully experienced in the performance of ministry.

We who come from the Baptistic or Free church tradition are particularly vulnerable to what you stated. We don't have a system that will adequately shepherd us up through the ranks. The process may become political, and often it's connectional. Sometimes I long for the more formal system of the high churches where one is brought through a curacy, then through the process of ministry, deacons, curates, and finally into the priesthood.
TSFB: What do you see when you look at today's seminarians? Are you pleased with the students preparing for ministry?
GM: My answer is probably not going to be helpful, because we who are older always look on the younger generation with a little bit of horror. It's just part of being an older person that you're not quite sure the younger generation is ever going to be ready for all the rigors of life. So it would be easy for me to say that I sometimes wonder whether the seminary generation today really has what it takes for ministry. When I look on the bright side, I rejoice that the education seminary students receive today is deeper and broader than it was 20-25 years ago, especially in the study of Scripture and in the field of practical training. I rejoice that seminary students appear to be brighter and have more knowledge.

But I am worried about today's seminarians. I fear they look at the ministry more as a career than a calling. There is a tendency to think of the ministry as a profession rather than a call to spiritual leadership and suffering. I wonder whether many young seminarians are prepared to pay the real price that deep ministry demands or if they think of it as some kind of vocation very parallel to being a lawyer or doctor. I get disturbed when I ask a student, "What do you want to do in Christian service?" and he or she says, "Well, my spouse and I want to go to a particular state and we want to be in a community of such and such a size and we want to do this and that . . ." I say to myself (now I sound like the grand old man), "That's not the way *we* used to think!" I remember feeling I was very lucky to preach. I would pay to preach. My first preaching was done 300-400 miles away from home. Gail and I would drive all night to get there to preach to thirty people. For three years I preached every Sunday in a tiny church with 28-30 in attendance, and I felt very fortunate to do it. I was amazed when they paid me. Gail and I never thought of a place in the country that we might pick to do ministry. We were just hopeful that somebody, somewhere, would want us. I think that now there is a tendency to pick and choose your own location, to be guaranteed a certain salary level, to make sure the home you're going to be offered is adequate, the insurance policy is nice, the retirement aspects are good, and the right schools are near by. It smacks of a career orientation to me, and an expectation of certain kinds of remuneration that we in our generation knew nothing about. We were just glad that anybody would be willing to accept our leadership.

I also am a little concerned—and I'll get into trouble for saying this—that I don't see married couples as committed to

ministering together. I sense this new emergence of thought that suggests each is an individual, free to pursue his or her own destiny and vocation. There will be many people who violently disagree with me on this, but I believe that in a world with so many broken relationships, we've never needed the pastoral marriage—as a model lived before the parish—more than we need it today. I'm not sure that we will continue to see the powerful modeling in ministry that we've seen previously, when husbands and wives were equally committed to the ministry. They lived on one salary and viewed the modeling of their marriage before the congregation and the community to be as important as the pulpit ministry and the administration of the church.

the church a modeling ministry if both people are pursuing independent careers. I wonder whether in such a marriage there can be the strength and support needed when a pastor is engaged in spiritual warfare. If I hadn't had Gail at my side to help me see my errors in judgment and to critique me when I was up front and with people, if I hadn't had her to encourage me when I was consumed and empty, I don't know what I would have done. If I came home at the end of the day at the time she was arriving home as exhausted from her job as I was from mine, I don't know how we would have helped each other. I'm scared to think of whether I would have cut it in ministry. I don't know whether we could have ministered the way we did if she had her set of friends and her vocation and I had my set of friends and my vocation. I wonder about the modern couple who tries to pursue a bi-vocational marriage, and whether or not they can do the job that I believe ministry is going to demand in the 1980s and '90s.

I'm not sure that seminary can really prepare a student for the ministry. It's one part of a process, and then there are the years that follow. I don't mean to discourage young pastors, but . . . the process of training is much longer than just seminary.

TSFB: Let's pursue this complex issue of pastoral marriages. There is tremendous pressure from outside the church, and growing pressure from within, for women to develop their own greatest potential through careers apart from their husbands' careers. The stage is set for marital conflict. Regarding these difficult issues that face the young couple headed into ministry, do you have any advice?

GM: I struggle with the answer to your question. When you talk about pastoral ministry, you're talking about something that is unlike any other vocation in modern society. You're not talking simply about functioning in administration, or preaching, or Christian education. You're talking about literally laying a life on the line and saying, "Here's how life with Christ at the center is lived"—individually and, if one is married, relationally as well. I believe that if you're going to lay your life out as a model of discipleship, you can't give yourself to two careers. I know there are many who disagree with me. But a congregation needs to see a husband and wife who are living before them in the fulness of pursuing a marriage, a family, intersecting with each other in friendships and relationships. They need to see the pastoral couple under stress. They need to see them in all phases of life. That's discouraging to some younger couples who don't want to put their lives in a fish bowl, but that's how discipleship happens. If a congregation is going to see the wholeness of life in Christ, somebody must willingly pay the price to show that life. I'm an advocate of a pastoral couple hearing the call together. Now, I don't want to put a trip on women, if we are talking about a male as the pastor. There are some women who wouldn't have the kind of vocal or visible ministry that my wife has experienced. She has a certain set of gifts and an aspect of the call that put her out in front of the congregation, especially after our children grew up. There are many spouses, if it's a woman we're talking about, whose ministry of modeling will be in the home—through hospitality and one-on-one relationships.

What worries me is whether or not we can adequately offer

TSFB: How are students today different from when you were in seminary?

GM: I think the male student is a little less macho than we were. We were captivated by that typical American male image of the past, which demanded that you show strength. Leadership was very authoritarian. We didn't show gentleness, tenderness, and other emotions which are positive traits and necessary for the whole person. We were not taught to come to grips with our feelings and the wholeness of life. This is the good side of today's seminary student. He or she is much more of a whole person. I envy the young man or woman today who has these opportunities and can deal with their wholeness in life.

The down side may be that the seminary student today, on the average, tends to come from a non-Christian home background. There are more and more students entering seminary who were converted to Christ in the college years. It's my judgment that they tend to lack the basic Bible knowledge that many of us had who grew up in the church. They don't have the years of buildup in basic Christian instincts and framework of thinking. They are at a little bit of a disadvantage in this area. I also wonder if today's student has as much leadership orientation. It could be my imagination, but I don't see as many students in seminary who seem to have a full, personal, confident grasp on what it means to be a leader. There is a tendency to want to retreat more into the group and not take the authoritative position that groups sometimes need. I question whether we're going to see a dearth of leadership in the coming years or whether we're really seeing the inception of a new leadership model. I'm open to both possibilities.

TSF BULLETIN (ISSN 0272–3913) is published bimonthly during the academic year (September–June). Editorial address is Theological Students Fellowship, 233 Langdon, Madison, WI 53703). **Subscriptions:** $15 per year ($25/year for institutions) for five issues. Add $2.00 per year for postage to addresses outside the U.S. U.S. currency only. Send subscriptions and address changes to TSF Subscriptions, 233 Langdon, Madison, WI 53703. Allow six weeks for address changes to become effective. **Manuscripts:** Although unsolicited material is welcomed, editors cannot assure response in less than three months. Please enclose a self-addressed envelope and return postage.

TSF BULLETIN is a member of the Associated Church Press and of the Evangelical Press Association, and is indexed with abstracts in *Religion Index One: Periodicals*, American Theological Library Association, Chicago available online through BRS (Bibliographic Retrieval Services), Latham, New York and DIALOG, Palo Alto, California. Back issues are available from TSF, and are available on microfiche from Vision Press, 15781 Sherbeck, Huntington Beach, CA 92647. An annual index is published in the May/June issue. TSF BULLETIN does not necessarily speak for Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in its articles and reviews. Although editors personally sign the IVCF basis of faith, our purpose is to provide resources for biblical *thinking* and *living* rather than to formulate "final" answers. Second-class postage paid at Madison, Wisconsin. POSTMASTER: send address changes to 233 Langdon, Madison, WI 53703.

TSFB: Doesn't this lack of Christian instincts and the dearth of leadership potential underscore the importance of seminarians coming under a mentor, either during seminary or upon graduation, before they assume a position of senior leadership?

GM: I can't underscore enough the importance of mentors. I have studied the mentors in my own life and have traced mentoring relationships from the age of eight to aproximately thirty-five. I've charted the impact of each one upon my personal experience and thinking. Also, I have some close relationships with men who resisted mentorship because they were suspicious or didn't want to be controlled or guided; they wanted to do it their own way. It's very clear to me that these men suffered greatly and lost out on a tremendous dimension of the whole learning experience. Mentorship is especially important for those who come to the faith later in life and plan to enter the ministry. For those who had good father and mother relationships, who came out of vital churches, who had models both in family and social relationships, having a mentor later in life is not as important. I don't know that the studies are in, but I would be willing to wager they would demonstrate that those who come to faith later in life and then go into the ministry probably have a greater fallout average than those who came from long term Christian backgrounds. The longer term Christian doesn't appear to be as enthusiastic or energetic about faith, but often has greater staying power.

TSFB: Who were your mentors?

GM: The first mentor I had was a man who served as an assistant to my father in his congregation. He was a man who had a great sense of humor, a great spirit, understood children, and was one of the very first adults I remember who believed in me. At the age of eight or nine, he treated me as a special person, not to be looked down upon, not to be ignored and neglected. There was a sense whenever I came into his world or he into mine that I was an important person.

The second mentor I remember was my track coach at Sunnybrook School. Marvin Goldberg shared my athletic world of competition, stress and pressure. He was a man who taught me the quality of excellence, to push myself toward goals, to compete against opponents, and, at the highest level, to compete against myself. He was a man who taught me that excellence is a better objective than winning. In the middle of all that he showed me the spirit of Christ in his life in a way that I never forgot.

My third mentor was a single man who, during my early college days, welcomed me into his apartment, and I lived with him for two years. He imparted some personal living habits and habits of the Spirit which I hadn't been able to gain until that time.

A fourth mentor was a Presbyterian pastor and his wife, who showed me the qualities of a good marriage. I ate supper in their home night after night and watched them at the table with their children. I became impressed with how great a home could be.

My final mentor is Dr. Vernon Grounds. He showed me pastoral traits and how to perform under fire. He showed me the relational traits of gentleness, tenderness, accepting people, consistency of character and a lot of other things. I just shamelessly copied him in what ever way I could. I see him in myself on many occasions.

TSFB: Let's talk about books. What are some of the most significant books in your life?

GM: I would rather talk about authors than books. I am deeply marked by Dr. A. W. Tozer. He did more than anyone to introduce me to the reality of a great God. Through Tozer I saw for the first time the splendor and majesty of God. Paul Tournier gave me a whole view of human beings that I had never gotten from any other source. From him I began to become aware of how deep and hidden a person I am and how much of myself I had to master. A third author was Elton Trueblood, who impressed me with the essence of commitment and a gospel that targeted the whole person. Beyond those three authors, I have been deeply marked by my pursuit of biographies. Charles Simeon has been a model. I have been deeply impressed by the ministry of the great leader of the Salvation Army, William Booth. I also have been marked in more recent years by Oswald Sanders' *Spiritual Leadership*. So I would say that this handful of books and authors really has shaped a lot of my present thinking.

TSFB: Your choice of favorite authors suggests that it is possible to be mentored through books by studying the writings of one or two individuals. Instead of reading a selection of books and acquiring various skills from separate authors, you're suggesting that we pick an author or two and learn as they learn, and grow as they grow.

GM: Yes. Tozer was the man who gave me my view of heaven and God. Trueblood gave me a view of the call to minister. Tournier gave me a view of human beings. I chose to follow authors rather than subjects and allow those authors to rub off on me. When I do my own writing, I often find myself adapting to their own writing skills and viewpoints on truth.

TSFB: You've written several books. Which is your favorite, and why?

GM: My personal favorite is the one that probably no one ever read (laughter) and that's *Facing Turbulent Times*. It was my attempt at a very serious book, in which I described some styles of leadership that I really believed in. I don't think the book did very well because it was rather poorly written. I'm looking forward to doing a revision of it this next year and publishing it with Inter-Varsity Press. The book that has brought me the most acceptance in terms of readership has been the most recent one. Apparently *Ordering Your Private World* has struck a vein of thought in a lot of Christians.

TSFB: *Ordering Your Private World* is really about developing spiritual rhythms. How can the seminarian develop his or her spiritual life and the practice of Sabbath rest while in seminary?

GM: It's hard for a seminarian. I remember the frustrations I felt in playing so many different roles. As a student at seminary, I sometimes felt that I was demeaned and belittled because there was this hierarchy—the professor and the student—and I was frequently reminded of how little I knew and how small I was. But I was also pastoring. I would go from seminary to my church, and suddenly I was the guru of the congregation. There, I was heralded as the spiritual director

The world is much more competitive and it's much less forgiving of mistakes; so today's seminarian is going to have to be tougher, more rigorous, more disciplined, more alert and more flexible.

and leader, and everything I said was essentially accepted and trusted. But I also went to graduate school at the University of Colorado. There I had peer relationships with scholars in a very competitive environment. So I wasn't always sure who I was. In the middle of all this I was expected to maintain spiritual discipline and, frankly, it didn't work out very well. I wish now I had then had the benefit of some of the thinking of Richard Foster, Henri Nouwen and others. It would have helped me to understand some better ways of spiritual discipline and given me an appreciation of the significance and importance of it.

I can only say to a seminarian today that the sooner you begin to develop the spiritual discipline dimension of your life, the better off you're going to be late in life. I discovered spiritual discipline as a force in my life in my mid-thirties, and until then I was running on natural talent. I believe that today's seminarian has to decide that spiritual discipline must be budgeted into the calendar and pursued with vigor, sometimes at the expense of other priorities. Perhaps this means getting up early in the morning to meet the Lord for a period of time and to engage in whatever pursuits refresh the spirit.

The sooner you begin to develop spiritual discipline in your life, the better off you're going to be later in life.

TSFB: What are the issues that today's students face that you and your peers could not have foreseen twenty years ago?

GM: The student today has to face a much broader spectrum of knowledge than we did. He or she has to measure the gospel against so many questions that we didn't even know existed. The information age has gone wild, and the ethics and moral systems that students have to wrestle with today boggle my mind. Life was so much simpler in the early sixties than it is in the eighties. They said times were going to change with the information explosion, but I never realized what they meant until I saw it.

The seminary student today has a much bigger world. He or she knows a hundred times more people. There are connections with more disciplines, more books are available, and more choices must be made. The selection process is just wild, and I am not sure how the seminary student is going to make all the choices. For the twenty-five year old person, the world is very harsh. It's much more competitive and it's much less forgiving of mistakes; so today's seminarian is going to have to be tougher, more rigorous, more disciplined, more alert, and more flexible.

TSFB: Given this information explosion and the better education that students receive, do you think that the churches are ready for seminarians who address complex moral issues?

GM: No, I really don't. Most Christian lay people today look at the church more as a haven away from the issues of the marketplace rather than a place to be challenged by them. The seminarian is going to face a tough time when he or she tries to raise questions of some of the modern issues and hears one lay person after another say, "I didn't come to church to think about and discuss those things." There are too many Christians who look at the church as a place of comfort, rest and withdrawal—a place for banding together with others of a fortress mentality, rather than a place of invigoration for both mind and spirit. I feel badly for the young man or woman who goes into the pulpit today thinking that the congregation is hungry to hear both the challenges and the answers offered in sermons, and then discovers that lay people don't want to deal with those issues. I'm not being very complimentary to the present lay public, and I don't mean to put everyone down, but there are many disillusioned young pastors who discover the hard way that you have to be very careful how you raise some of the real issues of today. Here and there are some wonderful, thinking lay people who really want to hear the pastor discuss matters like this, but they are not in the majority.

Let me be fair and address another aspect of this issue. I sometimes worry about the failure of seminary students to communicate with language, thought forms and illustrations pertinent to the pew. I am concerned about how many I sermons I hear that have no discernible structure; they are filled with ideological observations but lack applications or illustrations of relevant value. I often suspect that lay people leave the church having had a counterproductive experience, discouraged about the gospel rather than encouraged, because the person in the pulpit did not know how to put the gospel in plain English. So it's a two-way street. I'm not always sure the laity is ready to hear the harsh realities that the gospel addresses today, but neither am I sure that the seminarian always knows how to put the gospel into terms with which the lay person is conversant. I often think that before we let a person preach, we ought to force that person to get out into the real world for at least a few months and thereby understand something of what the lay person experiences six days a week. As a young student I spent a couple of years as a dispatch agent in a major trucking company. I learned a whole vocabulary that the truckers loved to use, and became acquainted with the pressures and realities of life. It was an experience I never forgot. Every Sunday when I went into the pulpit, I imagined myself preaching to one of those Teamsters, with the knowledge of the way they thought and lived and the pressures they faced. That discipline of imagination forced me to present the gospel in a way the people in the pew could understand it.

TSFB: Are today's students lacking this ability to think imaginatively and creatively?

GM: I see some attempts these days to awaken the imagination in a way that I don't think was done in my generation. We were brought up in a fundamentalist/evangelical perspective which was not extremely rational or ideologically oriented. We were not encouraged to appreciate an imaginative view of the gospel. We were not forced to look at it from the perspective of the creative arts, or to see how the whole person could be involved in the perception of the gospel. But I do think seminaries today are becoming quite vigorous about encouraging students to think along these lines.

TSFB: You've been a senior pastor at both large and small churches. Now you are president of Inter-Varsity. What qualities are you looking for in seminary graduates who come to you applying for a ministry position?

GM: Among the qualities that I would be looking for are: Is the woman or man a listening person? Is he or she a teachable person? Strange as it may seem, does he or she like the sorts of people a pastor encounters in a congregation? Sometimes I have a suspicion that some of the seminarians are critical of the people to whom they minister. They don't like their lifestyle or their values and so, unfortunately, this is translated

into a negative attitude: "Since you're not the kind of person I think you ought to be, I don't like you." You can't serve people you don't like. You can't lovingly minister to people that you don't respect. And for all the talk we have these days about contextualization and identification with other cultural groups, we've never realized that it means identification with the rich, the middle-class, the educated, and the suburbanite as well as the person who is in a minority or another culture or lower economic class. But the principle is the same. Jesus was very much able to move in and out of all of these groups, calling the shots as they were, being critical when necessary.

So I would look for a student who is capable of adjusting to whatever subculture he or she is walking into, and who is willing to demonstrate a keen interest in those people, accepting them for who they are. I would look for a seminary student who isn't ambitious and impatient in seeking power or position but is ready to do anything in a servanthood model that would advance the Kingdom. I would like to see the traits of tenderness and gentleness.

TSFB: Power seems to be a key issue in today's evangelical milieu. How does the pastor guard against becoming power hungry? Are seminary students adequately prepared for the battle over power that they will face not only with their board of elders and deacons but also within themselves?

GM: I don't know how you prepare a person for that battle. Power is very seductive. Those of us who struggled with unresolved relationships in our childhood or adolescence often are tempted to pursue power as a way of vindicating ourselves or putting value upon ourselves that somebody else didn't give to us. There are many of us who are not comfortable in groups or relationships unless we can control the situation. So we are always pursuing control. When we spot that in ourselves or others spot it in us, we need to renounce it. I know only one way to deal with power in terms of keeping it under control. For me it begins with a good marriage. My wife could spot those things in me quickly, and she's never been afraid to rebuke it in me. She wouldn't let me off the hook if I tried to excuse myself. I thank God for a wife who saw that kind of ambition in me and helped me to understand it and control it.

I think the mentor helps us understand the problem of power and how to renounce it. But even beyond a mentor, I think the wise young pastor submits him or herself to those who are older and wiser in the congregation and allows an accountability relationship to develop. He or she listens to older and wiser people when they spot those faults. The most dangerous person in the ministry is the man or woman who doesn't know how to listen, refuses to listen, or resists rebuke. One of the greatest pieces of advice anybody ever gave me was that there was a kernel of truth in every criticism and rebuke. Even the most unjustified criticism ought to be taken on one's knees before the Lord and accompanied with the prayer: "Father, if there is any truth in this criticism whatsoever, help me to see it and apply it."

As the years went by, I really worked hard on that one. Whenever anyone wrote me a criticism or gave me a verbal criticism, before defending myself I always tried to ask myself, "What is the kernel of truth?" Ironically, some of your best friends may be your worst critics and, if you make your critic your friend, you may grow faster and renounce the power trip before it really gets a grip on you. I think there are many people in leadership today who are on a power trip, and, to a considerable extent, nullify the great things that God could do through them because power is more important than serving.

TSFB: The cancerous effects of power don't show up for a long time, either, do they?

GM: They sure don't. It takes years sometimes for them to begin to show. Unfortunately, the effects tend to drip over into other peoples' lives and patterns of performance, and are often visited upon the second and third generations of an organization or church.

TSFB: Let's go back to the subject of excellence. How do you keep the balance between striving for excellence and maintaining humility in ministry? Today's seminary graduate has to market himself as an excellent people helper. But how do you market yourself as a people helper in a vocation where traditionally the premium has been placed on humility?

GM: That's a good question, and I'm not sure I can answer it. Excellence is not perfection. The person who pursues perfection is going to be very miserable. The person who pursues excellence understands that it is simply a standard for which you strive, realizing that you can always do better as you grow. It also implies that one accepts one's growth process each day in its forward movement. There is a certain ruthlessness with one's self while, at the same time, one is patient with others. I have always been a bit ruthless with myself, and in looking back on each performance, whether it be a preaching situation or a meeting, I ask the question, "How could I have done it better?" When you pursue excellence in the most healthy way, humility takes care of itself. Although you're creating high standards for yourself, you are at the same time very much aware of how far short you have fallen from the standard; and in recognizing that, humility becomes the reality. When you realize how far you have to go, you're not as prone to brag about yourself.

It seems to me that humility does not imply the unwillingness to put yourself forward for opportunities. I find that in Christian service you don't have to keep talking about yourself. You don't have to keep impressing people deliberately with what you have accomplished. The man or woman who is content to walk into every situation and ask, "How can I serve here?" is going to get ahead, humanly speaking, probably very quickly. And that is a person who is going to be recognized as an exceptional representative of the Lord. I'm thankful to the Lord that I have a wife who taught me to go into every situation and try to think of how I could enlarge the atmosphere in a way that would help other people grow. How can I affirm them? How can I encourage them? How can I support them? Looking back, I would say that the more I tried to be a servant the more I ended being a leader. It just seems to be an inviolable law that men and women who go into a situation with the mind of a servant end up being propelled forward into leadership. Those who go into situations making leadership the first issue, always pressing themselves ahead, often don't get the thing they want the most. People don't extend leadership to those who are out to grab it. People love to follow a servant.

I think there are many people in leadership today who are on a power trip, and, to a considerable extent, nullify the great things that God could do through them . . .

TSFB: Do you think the evangelical church in the 21st century will be reaping some ill-effects of misguided notions of power and leadership?
GM: It would be easy for me to say yes. I believe that the evangelical church of the 21st century is going to reap a lot of the effects of the current good ol' American entrepreneurial system of leadership which tends to exalt a personality more than the servant of the living God. I sometimes wonder if, as a pastor, I haven't participated in that. For all the good things it's offered us, I think the present, over-programmed, highly organized church portends some side effects that we're going to live with for a long, long time.

TSFB: Typically seminarians struggle with doubt at some time in their development. What about the place of doubt in your life? Have you ever doubted? Do you believe all the orthodox doctrines 100% of the time?
GM: Ha, ha! I am a doubter by nature and always have been. I have memories of doubting certain basic truths as a child, certainly as an adolescent. To this day doubt is a real thing to me. I do not believe easily. I do not commit easily, and that has caused me much anguish on many occasions.

When I was younger I used to envy those of my peers who seemed able to embrace certain truths and ideas very quickly—and not only embrace them, but evangelize them. I would go out and try to fill in the blanks as they were doing, only to come away deeply discouraged over my inability to be quite as enthusiastic as they were. I discovered as time went by that enthusiasts of that sort often were hot, then cold, only to drop by the wayside not to far down the path. This is where Tournier began to help me understand my own temperament. I was a person who didn't take on the whole truth unless I examined it piece by piece, in little, bite-size chunks. So, while it took me longer to come to a point of commitment and belief about certain cardinal ideas in theology, once I did embrace them, I stuck with them. I wasn't buzzing like a bee from flower to flower.

TSFB: How long did this piecing together of the truth take? Were you already a pastor when some of those ideas finally settled in?
GM: Oh, yes! You ask as though it's over. I struggle today with what are the non-negotiable truths for the believer. I have never had a struggle over my personal relationship with and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. I've never struggled with the authority of God's Word. But I have wrestled with many other issues, trying to find better definition, to appreciate the meaning of the various issues, trying to separate truth from cultural biases that may have been forced upon me in my world.

I'm always thinking and wrestling. I guess that's one of the freedoms that comes from strong faith in the person of Christ. I don't see that God minds. I believe that Christians ought to have the freedom to take their ideas from the laboratory of debate, to think out loud with other people and not always have to say the *right* thing every time they open their mouths. Many of my present beliefs started out as half-baked ideas which I shared with my wiser and smarter friends. They took my ideas, smashed them apart and gave me back the purer part. They helped me purge away the dross.

I am impatient with Christians who won't allow younger and more thoughtful people to think out loud, even at the risk of sometimes being wrong. It's only when we're allowed to debate and discuss in our writing and conversations that we get closer to the truth. Today I see an oppressive atmosphere in some aspects of evangelicalism in which people are all too ready to hop upon a person who says a slightly off-line thing as he is trying to wrestle through an idea. I have decided that I'm not going to evangelize my doubts, but I am going to accept myself as one who struggles in a very arduous way to believe.

TSFB: But, it's part of the illusion that is marketed among seminary students and the laity that these successful pastors, who write books and make films and fly across the country speaking at conferences, don't doubt; and, if they do, they certainly don't talk about it!
GM: My friend Chuck Swindoll has been unafraid to make himself vulnerable and to share where he has struggled. There are others who seem to give the impression that everything is put together, every idea perfectly categorized and boxed. And there is a certain kind of person who gravitates toward that kind of *seeming* confidence. But a long time ago I decided that I was going to be a real person, and, while I wasn't going to drag myself through the mud, I was going to be as honest as I possibly could with people so they would see the process of my pilgrimage as a pastor, spiritual director and leader.

For all the talk about contextralization and identification with other cultural groups, we've never realized that it means identification with the rich, the middle class, the educated and the suburbanite, as well as the person who is in a minority or another culture or lower economic class.

TSFB: You've recently made a mid-life career change from pastor of a large church to president of a large para-church ministry. You've experienced the mid-life struggles and you've written a book, *Living At High Noon*, about these difficult stages of life. From your experience, will you address some comments to the large numbers of older students who are returning to seminary, having left successful careers elsewhere?
GM: There are a number of people at mid-life who have tried the career trip for ten or fifteen years, and have discovered, even if they were successful, that the experience was essentially an empty one. Upon turning 38 to 40 years of age, they realize that their real love is to build into people's lives and to serve people rather than to make money and acquire goods. So they want to make a break and enter for a "second life" the pursuit of some form of ministry. The good news is that they will bring to the church a realistic appraisal of the marketplace and how the gospel speaks to it. They understand what it's like to face the pressures and stresses of real life in the world, and they will preach the gospel in that light when they get their chance.

The downside is that, having made the change so late in life, some of them are probably going to struggle to acquire the strong disciplines that are needed to go back into the seminary world to study and learn. A few of them will not make it. Sometimes when you make a mid-life change like that, you also drag with you a spouse and children who have been living at one standard of life and who have enjoyed a certain anonymity and privacy that the ministry doesn't give.

So people who go into the ministry at mid-life may discover that the spouse didn't bargain for this change. They may have made an initial attempt to adjust; but, over the long haul, they may have a bigger struggle than anybody ever imagined. This puts stress on a marriage and on individual lifestyle.

Also, the mid-life person going into ministry may discover that he or she is very frustrated by not starting in the younger years when one was more flexible and had time to fail. I find that men and women in their late forties who are going into the ministry are a lot more impatient because they don't feel they have the time to make mistakes. They want everything to go right the first try. They want everyone to respond the best way the first time because they're counting the years they have left. When we were 27 or 28 and going into the ministry, we looked at life as virtually unending. So we had plenty of time to learn, to make our mistakes, and we kept saying, "Well, when I get older, I'll do it right." The older person entering the ministry doesn't have that attitude, and he fights impatience all the time. This can be a debilitating experience.

TSFB: Any closing remarks?

GM: There are three or four things that come to mind. One is that I hear very few seminary students say they love to lead people to personal faith in Jesus Christ. I worry about whether or not the seminarian today has a zeal for evangelism and for bringing people into the Kingdom. It seems to me that I see too many young people who are content to herd sheep but don't want to give birth to them. I feel as if evangelistic zeal is rapidly dropping out of the bottom of the evangelical world.

Second, I would like to say to seminarians, "Be willing to pay the price of the call of ministry." No ministry of great effectiveness is ever born in a life free from suffering. There are many times when God permits us to face situations of stress and pain which serve to build us. That pain may come not only in a physical or financial sense but also in opposition and criticism from people around us. I don't see many great spirits who haven't faced the press of pain.

Third, I'm worried that a lot of young pastors stop reading and stop studying. They do just enough acquisition of information each week to get a new sermon, but they're so busy that they don't keep their minds fresh and raw. I would like to think that *TSF Bulletin* makes a contribution towards the mental and spiritual growth of young pastors and leaders.

I suspect that one finds it hard, unless he has a very inquiring mind, to keep reading theology throughout the ministry because the questions of ministry are more immediate. What do you do with this girl who wants an abortion? How do you solve the problem of a couple on the verge of a marital split? How do you help this fellow who has a drinking problem? How do you counsel this young couple with a sexual problem? How do you lead a guy to a personal faith in Christ? These are the more immediate questions with which we're wrestling, and theology serves as an underpinning to those things. For example, just about the time you're tempted to give in to the persuasive cries of a young woman who thinks she has an open-and-shut case for an abortion, you go back to the depth of theology and once again reread those notations on the sanctity of life and the sovereign and providential work of God in time and space. That creates order out of chaos, and where a more practical side of you would have given into the momentary persuasions on an issue like abortion, your theological persuasions overcome that temptation and cause you to stand firm in the advice that you give.

In a moment when it seems easy to surrender to temporary persuasions, whether it's materialism, hedonism or whatever, theology reminds you of the splendor and majesty and everlastingness of God. I can remember many times as a young pastor driving down Nestoral Drive in Boston, tempted to be intellectually intimidated by the great office buildings and the feeling that real power was there. Or, looking at the sculptures at MIT on the quadrangle, and saying, "Real brilliance is here." Then I would go back to theology and be reminded of the fact that our God has no beginning nor does he have an end; that the heavenly Father possesses all truth, all knowledge and all wisdom; that God has never been instructed or advised or counseled. So, through my continual reading and study of theology, my sights are recalibrated and my sense of what is truly important is remeasured. Then neither the office buildings nor the sculptures at MIT become intimidating.

The Resurrection of Jesus as Hermeneutical Criterion (Part I)

by Ray S. Anderson

"Is Jesus not only the author of inspired Scripture, but, as the resurrected and living Lord of the church, also a contemporary reader and interpreter of Scripture?" I recently asked this question of a class of pastors in a Doctor of Ministry seminar, with dramatic results!

Some, who said they had not thought of that before, were carried away with possible implications for hermeneutical method. Others, apprehensive and troubled, suggested that this could be dangerous, for it would tend to undermine the place of Scripture as an objective revelation of God's truth for us, and as the "sole rule of faith and practice."

But if it is true that the living Lord Jesus is present in the hermeneutical task of reading and interpreting Scripture, what would this mean for the task of hermeneutics? In this article I will probe that question further, and theoretically and practically explore its implications.

As a foray into the thicket of contemporary hermeneutics, this project is more of a probe than a pronouncement. It is meant to be a programmatic essay rather than a monograph. My purpose is to stimulate discussion and to elicit a response.

I write with a sense of conviction that hermeneutics belongs high on the agenda of the contemporary theological task, particularly for those of us who hold the Scriptures to be the inspired and infallible Word of God. Whatever we mean by hermeneutics, the task is unavoidable. As F. D. E. Schleiermacher once said, "Every child arrives at the meaning of a word only through hermeneutics."[1]

But seriously, the responsibility to interpret faithfully and accurately the Word of God as given in Holy Scripture is more than child's play. It is a task that demands both rigor of method and the wonder of a child. Interpreting Scripture is always

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akin to standing where Moses stood on the holy ground in the presence of the burning bush, where his first meaningful act was to remove his shoes.

As a theologian, I assume that my task is a hermeneutical one. I agree with David Tracy when he says that "systematic theologies are principally hermeneutical in character," and that it is "imperative for each theologian to render explicit her/his general method of interpretation."[2] My own commitment to the theological task as a hermeneutical one is represented by what one might call a "praxis hermeneutic." This follows closely the direction suggested by Peter Stuhlmacher in his "hermeneutics of consent." We are concerned to find a method of interpretation of Scripture which seeks conformity to the biblical text, while at the same time seeks authenticity with regard to the "praxis of faith." However, as Willard Swartley rightly cautions,

> The incorporation of understanding (interpretation) into our lives through meditation, through worship, and through living accordingly functions as an empirical, validating criterion. But while this validates the claim to understanding, the incarnation of interpretation in life and praxis of itself does not validate the *rightness* of the interpretation. For this reason the call to praxis—living it out—must be put into critical and creative tension with the other aspects of the validating process.[3]

I have argued elsewhere that "Christopraxis," as the act of God in Christ, is one way of understanding how the authority and the presence of truth can be located in the creative tension between the Word of God written as inspired and the Word of God living as inspiring. This act of God in Christ may now be understood as the present working of the risen Lord in the Church by the Holy Spirit. Understood in this way, Christopraxis as a criterion for biblical interpretation seems preferable to the concept of the "praxis of faith."[4]

. . .Hermeneutics belong high on the agenda of the contemporary theological task, particularly for those of us who hold the Scriptures to be the inspired and infallible Word of God.

The Resurrection of Jesus as Hermeneutical Criterion

This brings us directly to the thesis of this essay: *the resurrection of Jesus to be the living Lord of the church constitutes a continuing hermeneutical criterion for the church's understanding of itself as under the authority of Scripture.* It is the risen Lord himself who is the criterion, not the event or idea of resurrection. For this essay, the expression "resurrection of Jesus" is to be taken as meaning "the resurrected Jesus."

First, we will explore the way in which the resurrection of Jesus served as a hermeneutical criterion for apostolic authority, the experience of salvation, and the "rule of faith." I will argue that the resurrection as hermeneutical criterion was not totally replaced by other criteria, following the inspiration of the New Testament documents and the reception of the canon by the church. Rather, the resurrection of Jesus continues to function as a criterion within the process of interpreting Scripture as a "rule of faith." I will then conclude this article by suggesting several areas where the resurrected Jesus as hermeneutical criterion may be helpful.

I will select three areas to demonstrate how the criterion was applied—the question of what constituted genuine apostolic authority, the question of what constituted legitimate grounds for saving relation to God, and the question of what constituted a new understanding of what it meant to live by the will of Christ as a "rule of faith." I will not treat these areas exhaustively, but only enough to demonstrate how, in each case, the resurrection served as a criterion.

The Resurrection as a Criterion for Apostleship

With regard to apostolic authority, the critical issue centered on historical continuity, coupled with witness to the resurrection. At first it seemed simple. The criteria for selecting a replacement for Judas included the necessity of having shared in the pre-resurrection witness to Jesus of Nazareth, as well as having witnessed his resurrection from the dead and his ascension (Acts 1:22). The early apostolic preaching centered on the announcement of the resurrection as an interpretation of the life and death of Jesus as both providential and salvific (Acts 2:32).

It was not so simple in the case of Saul of Tarsus. Not only was he not a witness to Jesus of Nazareth prior to his crucifixion and resurrection, but he was in active opposition to the testimony of the early Christians that Jesus had been raised. Yet Saul, now presenting himself as Paul the Apostle, made the claim to apostolic authority based solely on his encounter with the risen Jesus (Acts 9:1-9; 1 Cor. 9:1). In his argument to the church at Galatia, against those who impugned his credentials as an apostle, he stated that he was an apostle "not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead" (Gal. 1:1). Paul argued that he had not received his gospel from man, but "through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12).

Against those who appear to have questioned Paul's apostolic authority on the grounds that he was not a follower of Jesus from the baptism of John to the ascension (Acts 1:21-22), Paul counters with the claim that it is the living Jesus who constitutes the source of apostolic authority. If having been among the followers of Jesus prior to his crucifixion is an indispensable criterion for apostolic authority, Paul has no case. But Paul could well have argued: How can one's history of following Jesus prior to his resurrection become a criterion when the chief apostle himself has died? The crucifixion put an end to the history of human actions as a criterion. The risen Lord, who is also the incarnate Word, is the new criterion. And, as Paul makes quite clear, the resurrected Jesus has appeared to him as well as to the others (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8). Paul does not deny that the disciples, who were commissioned by Jesus to follow him, also have grounds to be apostles through the new commission of the resurrected Jesus; but he refuses to allow historical precedent to be the determining criterion.

For the Apostle Paul, there is discontinuity at the level of a claim for apostolic authority "from below," so to speak, as a historical precedent or criterion. But there is continuity "from above," because the resurrected Jesus is the same Jesus who lived, taught, died and was raised by the power of God. Paul did not reinterpret apostleship in terms of his own experience. This is not a "praxis of faith" as hermeneutical criterion. Rather, it was Jesus himself who became the criterion for Paul. Thus he did not argue that his claim to apostleship was the *only* valid claim, but that his apostleship was constituted by the *only paradigm* for apostleship—that which is based on encounter with the risen Jesus as its criterion. It is the living Christ present and at work through the power of the Spirit who constitutes the criterion. This is, if you please, Christopraxis. It was the power of God in the resurrected Christ which seized Paul and constituted for him the criterion for inter-

preting the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth as the "gospel."

The Resurrection as a Criterion for Salvation

A second crucial issue for the early Christian community was that of the legitimate grounds for salvation as relation to God. For the Jews, circumcision had been established as a sign of the "everlasting covenant" between Abraham and God (Gen. 17:7, 10-14). It seems quite clear that this was meant to serve as a decisive and normative "hermeneutical criterion." Paul argued, to the consternation of the Jewish Christians, that circumcision was no longer necessary as a sign of salvation and covenant relation. Paul could have argued that the Gentiles were excused from circumcision because they were not true descendants of Abraham. But on the contrary, he argued that the Gentiles were descendants of Abraham through their relation to Jesus Christ, who was the true "seed" of Abraham (Gal. 3:23-29), and yet not required to be circumcised! The Gentiles do not constitute the criterion; the crucified and risen Christ is the criterion for both Jew and Gentile.

As in the case of apostolic credentials, the issue of continuity with a historical criterion again appeared to be at stake. But, as the early Christian community came to see, Jesus was the "end of the law" for those who have faith in the resurrected one (Rom. 10:4). Jesus was circumcised in the flesh as a sign of the everlasting convenant (Luke 2:21). Yet his circumcision did not save him. The circumcised man died on the cross. This calls into question the validity of circumcision as a continuing criterion and covenant sign. Yet, in being raised from the dead, this same Jesus was regenerated in the flesh. Thus, his regenerated flesh as the new humanity became the criterion of covenant relation, a point that even the Old Testament prophets anticipated (Ezekiel 36:26-27; Jer. 31:31-34). It is in this sense that one can say that the cross is the "end of circumcision" as a criterion (Gal. 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor. 7:17-19).

If this can be said about the attempt to continue circumcision as a necessary criterion for salvation, would not the same apply to every attempt to circumvent Jesus' death and resurrection by imposing a criterion which is lodged in a natural or even a religious law? If Jesus the Jew died, does not Jewishness as a racial criterion for understanding election to salvation also have to surrender its exclusive claim as a criterion of covenant, and give way to the criterion of the resurrected Christ in whom there is "neither Jew nor Gentile"? If Jesus the male died, does not the male prerogative as a sexist criterion also surrender its exclusive claim for role status and authority in the Kingdom of God to the new criterion of the resurrected Christ, in whom there is "neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28)? Or, to put it another way, can the work of the resurrected Jesus in the church, by the power of his Spirit, be set aside in favor of another criterion or principle which has not also been "crucified with him?" Hardly. Paul's hermeneutical criterion at this critical point seems clear enough.

The Resurrection as a Criterion for the Rule of Faith

If there was a third critical issue in the New Testament church, surely it was the question of what constituted a valid interpretation of the will of God for the community of believers. What constitutes appropriate behavior, life style, and the practice of faith in personal, social and civic life? If Jesus is the "end of the law," can there be any criteria left by which to determine a "rule of faith"?

Again, the criterion for Paul was the resurrected Christ as an experienced presence. As the new criterion, the living Lord does not displace the Old Testament nor the apostolic witness as criteria, but he establishes the hermeneutical criterion for these witnesses.

Here too, however, this new criterion of the resurrection of Jesus as an experienced presence represents both a discontinuity as well as a continuity with respect to the ethical demands of the Kingdom of God. "The kingdom of God is not food and drink," wrote Paul to the Roman church, "but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (14:17). This reminds us of Jesus' teaching that it was not what entered a person that constituted uncleanness, but what came out of a person (Mark 7:14-23).

In this regard it is interesting that this teaching of Jesus seemed to have no real effect as a criterion until after his resurrection and appearance to Peter, and after a personal vision in which the Lord spoke to him in preparation for his visit to the Gentile centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:9-16). Also instructive is the mention of the fact that Peter was still uncertain as to what the vision meant until there was a knock at the door with the invitation from Cornelius to come and preach to him.

This is a fine example of Christopraxis as a hermeneutical criterion. There was the remembered teaching of Jesus; there was the mystical vision in which the Lord spoke to him; but the interpretation actually came when Peter went to the house of Cornelius and preached the gospel of Jesus to him. Only then, when the Spirit of Jesus came upon the Gentile gathering with convincing power and effect, did Peter grasp the full implications of the command of the Lord, and he baptized them in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:44-48). This event was a "preparing of the way of the Lord" to the Gentiles, an incredibly radical and difficult hermeneutical decision—but this is how Christopraxis becomes a hermeneutical criterion.

One cannot forbid a work of the risen Christ through the Holy Spirit for the sake of a law or principle which itself points to this work. The interpretation of the law comes through its fulfillment; but Christ himself is the fulfillment of the law, not another principle or law. The law always was meant to point to the grace of Yahweh as the sole criterion for salvation. It was the *use* of the law as a criterion that wrongly led the Jews to reject the new criterion of the living Lord. Thus, the cultic law, even though it was enshrined in the sacred writings as the very word of God, gave way to the new criterion of the living Word through whom the kingdom of God is present in power.

Freedom from the law is not the new ethical criterion, but rather "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" which sets us free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2). To live according to the flesh is to live by the old criterion which is to reject the Spirit of the resurrected Lord as the new criterion. To live according to the flesh is not only to surrender to licentiousness, but to seek to achieve righteousness by conformity to a criterion lodged in the flesh. Only a wrong in-

. . . No confusion must blur the sharp line between revelation which has taken the form of the inspired writings of Holy Scripture, and the interpretation which depends upon that revelation for its infallible source and norm.

terpretation of the Old Testament law could see the regulation of the "flesh" as being the criterion for righteousness. Now that the criterion *himself* is present, Paul argues in his letter to the Galatians that the regulations "written in the book of the law" have their true interpretation, which is "freedom from the works of the law" (Gal. 3:10,13). Paul argues that the law of God is not against the promise of God. But when that promise is present in the form of Christ, these regulations no longer have their "custodial" function (Gal. 3:23-29).

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection put an end to these old regulations and established a new basis and a new criterion for the ethics of the kingdom of God in the experienced presence of the resurrected one (Rom. 8:3-11).

us that the presence and authority of the resurrected Jesus served as a hermeneutical criterion for the early church. That is, Jesus himself continues to instruct Christians as to the will of God in practical matters of the life of faith. Jesus has not simply left us a set of teachings. He has done that. But in addition, he continues to teach. Discerning this teaching is itself a hermeneutical task, not merely an exercise in historical memory.

Through sound principles of literary and historical criticism, one can examine more accurately the *syntactical* or structural relation and meaning of words in the inspired texts. But if there is also a *semantical* or referential relation between the words of Scripture and the living Lord of the church, is this

The resurrection as hermeneutical criterion points forward to the coming Christ as well as backward to the historical Christ.

Of course, Christians still live in this world with its roles, structures and relationships, even though they have been "raised with Christ" (Col. 3:1). But these existing relationships are not to be the place for Christopraxis—"Christ's practice," if you please. Thus, Paul's epistles are pastoral in tone, and generally include a "domestic code," or *Haustafel*, in which existing cultural and domestic relationships are to be brought within the sphere of Christ that he may be revealed (see Eph. 5:21-33; Col. 3:18-4:1).

In these situations and social structures, there is a "command of Christ," too. Often the command is expressed in such a way that the person who receives it is expected to glory Christ through an existing order, even though that order has already "come to an end" in the death and resurrection of Christ. Thus, Paul can say as a direct consequence of the command, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16): "Wives, be subject to your husbands, . . . Children, obey your parents in everything, . . . Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, . . . Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly" (3:18-4:1). The criterion in each of these cases is not a "chain of command" which functions as a legalistic principle, but rather the "command of the risen Lord" which functions as a spirit of peace and freedom.

There is, then, a "pastoral hermeneutic" which Paul applies in dealing with the practical matters of determining the rule of faith. In deciding issues for the churches, Paul based his rulings on the claim that he has the "command of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37). "I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you," wrote Paul (1 Cor. 11:23). In certain cases, he appears to distinguish between having a direct teaching of Jesus to impart and a word which he himself speaks which is meant to have the same effect. "To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord . . . To the rest I say, not the Lord . . . " (1 Cor. 7:10,12). He concludes by embracing both what he feels has been a direct teaching by Jesus (concerning the marriage vows) and a teaching which Jesus has communicated through Paul's pastoral words (concerning living with an unbelieving spouse) by saying, "I think that I have the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 7:40). In this case we have the interesting situation of a teaching by Jesus while on earth prior to his crucifixion and resurrection placed alongside of a teaching of Jesus which comes through his presence in the life of the Apostle Paul.

This shows us two things: first, there is continuity with the historical Jesus in determining the rule of faith for the post-resurrection Christian community; second, there is also equal authority claimed for the pastoral ruling made by Paul out of the experienced presence of the risen Christ. The fact that Paul's pastoral rule has the authority of Christ himself informs

relation not a proper area of hermeneutical concern?[5] And if so, is it not the living and present Lord who upholds that referential relation for the sake of the inspired word accomplishing its purpose? And if this is so, then Christopraxis will continue to lead us into his Word, and Jesus' prayer will be completed: "Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

The Eschatological Nature of a Hermeneutical Criterion

One further comment needs to be made before we leave this issue. Because faith as experience of the risen Christ is not the criterion, but the resurrected Lord himself, there is an eschatological tension in the pastoral hermeneutic of Paul. Christopraxis as a hermeneutical criterion never surrenders the inherent infallibility and authority of the living Word as the resurrected, ascended, and present Lord to a human experience, teaching, regulation, or tradition. Paul is quite explicit about this regarding his own teaching:

> This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then every man will receive his commendation from God. (1 Cor. 4:1-5)

According to this caution from Paul, there is a hermeneutical criterion which is anchored in the eschatological event of the final parousia of Christ. This does not evacuate the present Word of God of its authority, for "the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17). On this basis, Paul equates the word which he teaches and writes with the Word of the Lord himself (1 Cor. 14:37). Yet, even as the inspired words of Moses and the prophets are interpreted by the hermeneutical criterion of the incarnate Word, and even as the human and historical life of Jesus is interpreted by the hermeneutical criterion of the resurrected Jesus, so the words taught by the Spirit and inspired by the Spirit will be interpreted in the end by the hermeneutical criterion of the risen and coming Jesus Christ. Does this diminish the authority of the apostolic and inspired scripture? Paul does not think so.

However, it does mean that the resurrection as hermeneutical criterion points forward to the coming Christ as well as backward to the historical Christ. In this present age, meanwhile, there is a tension between the ever-present demands of the former criteria and the already-present criterion of the resurrected Lord. The Word of the Lord came through cultural, social, and religious forms which persisted in spite of the radical new criterion of the resurrected humanity of Christ.

Where these forms were not a direct threat to the existence of the freedom of the Lord to form a new humanity, they were permitted to exist by the pastoral hermeneutic of the apostle. "Were you a slave when called?" asked Paul. "Never mind. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity" (1 Cor. 7:21). Thus, Onesimus is sent back to Philemon not only as a Christian, but also as a fugitive slave. Paul leaves it to Philemon to apply the hermeneutical criterion of the resurrection in this situation (cf. Philemon 8-10). From this we can infer that Paul's letter to Philemon, which is the inspired Word of God, has authority not merely by virtue of what it said but in its effect to produce a modification of the behavior and life of Philemon (the interpreter).[6] Paul did not "liberate" Onesimus by command of the divine Word. Rather, he sought the liberation of Philemon from his old ways of thinking as a slave owner, so he could be free to receive Onesimus as a full Christian partner and brother. In the same way, the authority of Scripture is evidenced by its effect in producing the intention and purpose of Christ in the liberation of men and women to become full partners in every aspect of the life and work of God's kingdom.

There ought to be general agreement as to the essential thrust of the argument thus far. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the hermeneutical criterion for determining the content of the apostolic gospel, for establishing the ground for salvation as relation to God, and for giving direction to the church in living out the life of Christ in this present age. The resurrected Jesus has usually been seen as the decisive criterion which marked the emergence of the early Christian church as a distinct community of faith in which both Jew and Gentile found unity in Christ. Our purpose has not been to develop a new criterion but to demonstrate the resurrection of Jesus as the criterion. Before we continue, it might be helpful to list the steps we have taken in demonstrating this criterion as a foundation upon which we can build our case:

1) To say that Jesus died and was raised up by the power of God is to say that the law, tradition, nature, culture, and history must give way to the new criterion of his presence as Lord in the world;
2) To say that Jesus is Lord is to bring the old order, which is passing away, under the sphere of the healing and liberating power of the command of God;
3) To say that "the Lord commands" in the context of a pastoral ruling on Christian faith and practice is to unite the teaching of Christ with the presence of Christ for the purpose of modifying the direction of Christian behavior toward maturity in Christ, whatever one's situation is at the beginning;
4) To say that one is obedient to Christ and moving toward maturity in him is to interpret Christ's teaching and will through faith and practice which looks toward commendation at his coming;
5) To say that Scripture is the Word of God is to bind the interpreters of Scripture to Jesus Christ as the living Lord, who is the infallible One;
6) To say that the resurrected Jesus is the hermeneutical criterion for understanding the Word of God is to give Holy Scripture the unique status of being the Word of God without making the authority of Scripture dependent upon literary, historical or confessional criteria alone.
7) To say that the responsibility of the contemporary church is to exercise this pastoral hermeneutic in the power of the Holy Spirit is to recognize Christopraxis as the sign of "preparing the way of the Lord" in every sphere of domestic, social, political and religious life; this is to say, "For freedom Christ has set us free . . . " (Gal. 5:1).

The Living Lord: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Criterion

We now have come to the critical task in the development of the thesis: *The resurrected Jesus as the living Lord is a continuing hermeneutical criterion for interpreting the Word of God.*

Once Holy Scripture is written and the canon closed, is it still possible to say that Jesus Christ as risen Lord is the hermeneutical criterion for interpretation of Scripture?

Or, to put it another way, having the living Lord in the church through the Holy Spirit, does the church today stand in the same hermeneutical relation to the New Testament Scriptures as did the New Testament church with respect to the Old Testament Scriptures?

I would answer no, for two reasons. First, the coming into being of the church following Pentecost was an absolutely unique event. In a sense, one could say that the emergence of the church was a divinely inspired interpretation of the Old Testament Scripture with respect to God's redemptive purpose. The first church did not so much interpret the Old Testament using the resurrected Jesus as hermeneutical criterion as it was the result of this interpretation through the "acts of the Spirit" and the faithful work and witness of the apostles. Second, the apostolic foundation for the church is itself unique and no other foundation can one lay but that which is built upon the cornerstone, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

At the outset, it must be clearly stated that we are not talking about adding to the canon of Scripture, or suggesting a new canon, but merely interpreting rightly the canonical Scriptures, given the assumption that interpretation is a two-edged sword. One edge is the truth of *God's Holy Word* which is "living and active . . . piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). The other edge is the truth of *Christ's Holy Work* by which he is active to do God's will in setting captives free and breaking down barriers which divide, preparing in his church, his body, a people who are and will be his brothers and sisters. "Examine yourselves," wrote the Apostle Paul, ". . . do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test! . . . For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth" (2 Cor. 13:5,8).

Can we say that Jesus is not only the living Word who inspires the New Testament and thus insures its trustworthiness, but that he is also present in the contemporary reading and interpretation of the New Testament?

Can we affirm that the living, glorified Jesus Christ, even now preparing to come out of glory to this world and for his church, to consummate all things, is the already-present Lord who upholds his Word in Scripture as true, and directs its purpose to his own creative ends? And, can we affirm that the very words of Scripture, inspired as they are, continue to speak to us out of the very being of the One who is present with us? Can we dare to say with Ricoeur, though with a different point of reference, "I believe that being can still speak to me"?[7]

I think we can and we must. For if we cannot, we will find ourselves in the position of the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoy-

evsky's classic story, who, surprised to confront Jesus himself in the roundup of heretics to be condemned, refused to allow him to contribute to what had been written. "The old man has told him He hasn't the right to add anything to what He has said of old," said Ivan, in telling the story.[8]

Certainly there are dangers here! We are well aware of the final words of warning in the New Testament about taking away from or adding to the inspired prophecy (Rev. 22:18-19). But it must also not be forgotten that the very next words contain the promise, "Surely I am coming soon" (22:20).

Let it be clearly understood that no confusion must blur the sharp line between revelation which has taken the form of the inspired writings of Holy Scripture, and interpretation which depends upon that revelation for its infallible source and norm.

The first century horizon, which is the occasion for the Scripture text in the New Testament, cannot be fused with our contemporary horizon to make revelation dependent on our self understanding (such as R. Bultmann tended to do). This would confuse hermeneutics with revealed truth itself. Nor should we attempt to push our contemporary horizon back into the first century, for we cannot do this. We can only create an abstraction of this first horizon which, if used as the sole criterion for revealed truth, makes out of divine Logos an impersonal and abstract logos as a criterion for the truth of God himself (such as C. Henry tends to do).

What we are suggesting here—if we wish to continue to speak of the hermeneutical task in this way—is that the two horizons are not resolved into a single, contemporary meaning, nor into a principle of abstract reason. As the criterion for both the original and contemporary meaning of the text, the Lord himself sustains these two points in a creative and positive tension. In this way, the horizon of the original occasion of the text and the horizon of the contemporary interpreter are not really fused at all, but remain quite distinct. Paul is permitted to say what he said as the command of the Lord in his pastoral hermeneutic, without forcing the text to be read in a way which is quite alien to the original context.

When we take seriously the fact that the resurrection of Jesus Christ continues to be the criterion for our hermeneutical task, we do not fuse the present horizon of our experience to the text as an abstract law, nor do we fuse the text to our present horizon as a relativization of revelation to culture. Rather, we submit our present horizon of experience as well as the horizon of the text to the Lord himself, who is the living and coming One, before whom all of our understanding and actions must be judged. Only in this way can obedience to Scripture uphold both the truth and the purpose of Scripture.[9]

And to those who protest that the reality of the living Lord cannot be objectively discerned and known in the context of our own subjective experience, we must in turn protest that this is a denial of the sheer objective reality of the being of the risen Lord who presents himself to us both as an object of knowledge and as experience through the Holy Spirit's encounter of us. To be sure, this objective reality of Christ does not dissolve into our experience as the criterion of truth, for Christ has bound himself to Scripture and to its propositional form of revelation. But neither is the living Lord dissolved into the impersonal abstractness of revelation as the objectification of truth, with our own logic (logos) as the hermeneutical criterion.

Because the criterion of the living Lord in the church is not a different criterion from the same Lord who inspired the apostolic teaching, and not different from the same Lord who taught his disciples while on earth, this hermeneutical criterion does not stand in contradiction to, or in opposition to, Scripture itself. There is a tension, but it is the creative and redemptive tension between the "now" and the "not yet." It is the tension between the new humanity and new order, which is always and already present through the Holy Spirit, and the old order, in which we have received the command of God but which must give way to the new.

While the entire Scriptures are subject to the resurrected Jesus as a hermeneutical criterion, there appear to be areas within the New Testament where this tension between the "now" and the "not yet" is more pronounced than in other areas. These areas are noted by the fact that a particular text or passage can be used to support a practice or teaching which appears to be quite different from a teaching derived from another set of texts, using in both cases sound principles of historical and grammatical exegesis.

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Where a New Testament teaching appears unanimous and consistent in every pastoral situation, we are not suggesting that the presence of the living Lord in the church can be understood in such a way that this "single voice" can be silenced or "made to sing a different tune." But where apostolic teaching and practice is clearly governed by the readiness or openness of the situation to experience full freedom in Christ, the hermeneutical criterion of the resurrected Christ as a continuing presence in the church is, in my judgment, indispensable. For it is here that the tension between the "now" and the "not yet" is most evident. This is not to suggest that we have here a kind of "God of the exegetical gaps"! All exegesis of Scripture must finally be accountable to the resurrected, always present, and already coming Lord. For the purpose of this discussion, we are focusing on those areas which are most clearly in this eschatological tension, and which require unusual sensitivity to the hermeneutical criterion we are advocating.

It is not difficult to find instances within the New Testament Scriptures where such a hermeneutical criterion is especially relevant. For example, consider the matter of the Christian's relation and responsibility to the state. In certain situations we are encouraged to "obey God rather than man." In other situations, we are reminded that we are to be subject to the governing authorities—as instituted by God himself (Rom. 13:1-7)! Or consider the issue of the Scriptures' teaching on divorce and remarriage when viewed in the context of a personal failure and confession of sin in this area. Does the living Lord offer grace and forgiveness when it is sought on the basis of the promise and teaching of Scripture?

One contemporary issue for the church is the proper role of women in positions of pastoral leadership and service. Are Christian women who testify to God's calling to receive ordination and serve as pastors of the church in disobedience to the teaching of Scripture, or are they in obedience to the

Spirit of the resurrected Christ at work in the church? This issue is surely one which requires a patient and careful hermeneutical approach which honors the Word of God and which makes manifest the will and power of Christ in his church in our present situation. Part II of this two-part article will take up the issue of sexual parity in pastoral ministry as a case in which the resurrection of Jesus might serve as a hermeneutical criterion.

Part II will appear in the March/April issue.

[1] H. Kimmerlie, ed.,*Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, translated by J. Duke and J. Forstman (Scholars Press, 1977), p. 52. For a discussion of contemporary issues in hermeneutics see: Anthony C. Thistleton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980). The theme of the "two horizons" has been set forth by Hans-Georg Gadamer in *Truth and Method*, trans. by Garrett Borden and John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1975). One might mention also Paul Ricoeur's "hermeneutics of suspicion" (*Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. by Denis Savage; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, p. 32); or Peter Stuhlmacher's "hermeneutics of consent" *Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Towards a Hermeneutic of Consent*, trans. by Roy A. Harrisville; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); or Geoffrey Wainwright's suggestion that hermeneutics be considered as doxology (*Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 175ff.); or David Tracy's "paradigmatic hermeneutic" following Mircea Eliade's contention that "only the paradigmatic is the real" (*The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*, New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1981, pp. 193ff.).

[2] *The Analogical Imagination*, pp. 58-59.

[3] Willard M. Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1983), p. 223.

[4] See my essay, "Christopraxis: Competence as a Criterion for Preparation for Ministry," *TSF Bulletin*, January/February 1984. Paul D. Hanson suggests something quite similar when he says, ". . . in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a new breakthrough occurred in God's activity which in its uniqueness still serves as the master paradigm in the Christian's understanding of Dynamic Transcendence." *The Diversity of Scripture: A Theological Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), pp. 66-67.

[5] T.F. Torrance likes to say, "No syntactics contains its own semantics." *Reality and Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 116. "It is in the semantic relation between the human word and the divine Word that the basic clues to understanding will be found, for the higher level of God's Word comprehends the operation of the human word at the lower level and forms its meaningful reference to itself" (Ibid., p. 117).

[6] Cf. Scott Bartchy, who says, "The authority of a New Testament text dealing with human behavior lies first of all in the *direction* in which any aspect of first century behavior is being modified by the text in question (i.e., *from* wherever Christ encountered the new behavior *toward* maturity in Christ)." "Jesus, Power, and Gender Roles," *TSF Bulletin*, January/February 1984, p. 3.

[7] Emerson Buchanan, trans., *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 352.

[8] F. Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (New York: Random House, Modern Library Paperback, 1950), p. 297.

[9] See the helpful suggestion by Geoffrey Bromiley, to the effect that God is not identical with the Bible, though God teaches what the Bible teaches. *God and Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), preface. In this same connection, T.F. Torrance helpfully comments: "In order to think out the relation of the Church in history to Christ we must put both these together—*mediate horizontal relation* through history to the historical Jesus Christ, and *immediate vertical relation* through the Spirit to the risen and ascended Jesus Christ. It is the former that supplies the material content, while it is the latter that supplies the immediacy of actual encounter." *Space, Time, and Resurrection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), p. 147.

Love As a Moral Norm: The Ethical Thought of E. J. Carnell

by Kenneth W. M. Wozniak

Edward John Carnell was Professor of Ethics and Philosophy of Religion in the 1950s and '60s at Fuller Theological Seminary. From 1954 to 1959 he served as the Seminary's president. He was an evangelical; yet, unlike many of his evangelical contemporaries, he had an ever-present interest in the process by which we make decisions in the realm of what he called the "imperative essence," that is, the realm which comprehends what we *ought* to be. His interest was based upon his conviction that moral decision cannot be shunned without deteriorating character. That interest was matured through his Ph.D. and Th.D. studies at Boston and Harvard Universities. His own moral theory was most fully developed in his 1957 book, *Christian Commitment: An Apologetic* (Macmillan).

It has been nearly thirty years since Carnell finished his ethical theory, but it is at least as applicable today as when it first appeared. It continues to offer to the serious believer both a framework for self-understanding and a basis for forming ethical convictions and commitments.

Central to Carnell's moral thought was the concept of love, the basic moral norm which serves to guide the individual. However, prior to his adoption of love as the primary moral norm, Carnell entertained two other candidates: justice and consideration. He quickly rejected justice, for he realized that when a person receives justice he or she is treated as a member of *humanity*, that is, as one who is just like billions of others. The implementation of justice neglects the person's individuality and uniqueness; thus, while justice may be a practical tool in the effort to establish and maintain a workable social order, it certainly does not define the primary moral norm in its pristine form. That form, he surmised, must include more than justice; it must also include consideration.

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Consideration, for Carnell, meant to take into account the feelings and particular point of view of another. To treat another with consideration is to treat the person as more than just a member of the human race; it is to treat him or her as a *unique* person. Individual desires, talents, likes, and personality traits influence the treatment someone receives.

Although, for Carnell, consideration more accurately characterized the moral decisions of an upright person than did justice, it was not long until he realized the shortcoming of consideration as a candidate for what he termed the "law of life." Consideration only takes into account the elements of an individual's dignity which he or she reveals. "But," asked Carnell, "what about the scores of mysteries that lie unrevealed? A moral acceptance of our person must include an acceptance of these mysteries" (*C.C.*, p. 205). It must include not only the elements of dignity which are possessed by a person by virtue of the fact that he or she participates in humanity, and the elements of dignity which display his or her uniqueness as an *individual*, but it must also include all hidden aspects of his or her person. Only the norm which provided for an acceptance of the entire person could be affirmed as the law of life, and thus, as the primary moral norm. Justice and consideration, to Carnell, appeared to be consequences of the law of life, but not the law itself. No action had moral value unless it was done in the right spirit. That "right spirit," he concluded, must be the law of life.

Near the beginning of the development of his moral system, Carnell succinctly stated his goal:

> We are attempting to discover the content of the imperative essence, in order that we might clarify the moral and spiritual environment. A clarification of this environment, in turn, will clarify our relation to God. (*C.C.*, p. 56)

It was only after having developed his entire system that he was willing to assert that he had discovered the pith and

marrow of the imperative essence—love. It is only love which confronts us with an eternal task. When the individual turns from love, he or she gives up existence. This is nothing short of affirming that love is the law of life. It and only it is the standard by which those who enter our presence should be judged. When Carnell perceived that love is the pith and marrow of the imperative essence and that it is the standard by which we judge others, he had effectively summed up his entire ethical theory in one concept—the concept of love.

We need to understand clearly Carnell's idea of love if we are to understand the heart of his moral system. However, at the point of definition, Carnell became resistant, introducing an existential element. He felt that we know what love is from existence itself. "Since we look for others to love us, we already know what love is; and knowing it, we should acknowledge it" (*C.C.*, p. 210). At places in his writing, though, he did yield elements of a definition. In general, he held love to mean all that the Apostle Paul meant in I Corinthians 13:4-7. In addition, we know from Carnell's idea of the relation of law and love that love is a fruit, not a work, for love fulfills the law without any conscious effort to do so. Love is thus "an affection which carries its own compulsion" (*C.C.*, p. 260).

Central to Carnell's moral thought was the concept of love, the basic moral norm which serves to guide the individual.

At the heart of Carnell's understanding of love is the notion of the interaction of persons, that is, "a vital sharing of natures" (*K.L.*, p. 126). In a sentence, "Love is simply spirit entering spirit in fellowship" (*P.C.R.*, p. 238). With approval, Carnell borrowed from Reinhold Niebuhr, understanding the lover to be one who changes the person-object relationship into a person-person fellowship. In quoting Niebuhr he related the working of love to that of his concepts of justice and consideration, concluding that "real love between person and person is . . . a relationship in which spirit meets spirit in a dimension in which both the uniformities and the differences of nature, which bind men together and separate them, are transcended" (*T.R.N.*, quoting *Human Nature*, pp. 135-136).

It must be stressed, and it should be clear by now, that justice, consideration, and love are not three different moral responses, the one chosen being dependent upon the situation at hand. Carnell does not permit justice to be a sufficient moral response in some situations, consideration in others, and love in still others. Rather, in all situations, the morally-upright person will respond with love, for only love fulfills the demands of the moral environment in which we all live. As the law of life, "love enjoins an equal obligation on all" (*C.O.T.*, p. 63). For Carnell, that obligation is outward evidence of love, specifically, self-sacrifice.

If a person fulfills only the demands of justice or consideration when he or she enters our presence, and does not regard our whole person, we automatically judge him or her guilty; for such a judgment is inherent in human nature. We demand a love response from anyone who enters our presence. Justice and consideration do not suffice. "If we are not viewed through the eyes of love, we are being treated as a thing" (*C.C.*, p. 209). It was with approval, then, that Carnell quoted Niebuhr: "Love is thus the end term of any system of morals. It is the moral requirement in which all schemes of justice are fulfilled and negated" ("N.C.V.," quoting *Human Destiny*, p. 385).

Justice and consideration are not eliminated as moral responses, just because we are offended when only justice and consideration are present. It is true that only a love response fulfills the demand we make upon a person, but a love response is not present if justice and consideration are absent. The three must be present as concentric circles: the smallest is justice, then consideration, then love. Love is the only response we expect from another, and it cannot be present if justice and consideration are not. Yet justice and consideration, without love, do not fulfill the expectation. Love was not everything for Carnell, but where there is no love, he felt there is no value. "The law of love is the *greatest* of the laws, but it is certainly not the *only* law. I simply say that nothing has moral value unless it is done out of love" (*C.C.*, p. 210).

It is at this point that Carnell's existential approach to love comes to bear, and it is at this point that his theory impinges upon normative questions. For Carnell, talk about love was insufficient to secure moral worth. That talk had to be converted into action. In his later writing he openly affirmed Kierkegaard's thought at this point, when he wrote:

> The ethical self falls short of its duties until it performs works of love. . . . Love and true existence are the same thing, for love is the law of life. . . . An existing individual is *not* an existing individual unless he engages in works of love. (*B.S.K.*, p. 167-168)

Carnell then appealed to his exemplary moral authority, Jesus Christ. In him truth in the form of personal rectitude was flawlessly actuated. Jesus did not say, "I *have* the truth," but "I *am* the truth" (John 14:6). In him we see all of the claims of our moral environment fulfilled, for "he loved God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself" (*C.C.*, p. 250). This is precisely what Carnell held that a good person should do. Christ is the incarnation of rectitude, and thus is the incarnation of love. "If one wants to know how to regulate himself among men," Carnell asserted, "he should bring his life to the touchstone" (*C.C.*, p. 250). With this conclusion reached, Carnell had completed his moral theory.

Carnell made no attempt to hide the fact that he was impressed with Soren Kierkegaard's development of the concept of love. He wrote, "Kierkegaard developed the meaning of Christian love with a profundity, thoroughness, and biblical accuracy which, it is no exaggeration to say, surpassed all previous efforts" (*B.S.K.*, p. 166). In another place he wrote, "When he examines the stuff of decision itself, Kierkegaard's insights reach heights of magnificence. He employs the New Testament concept of *agape* love. . . . Love is the very content of truth itself, for to be inwardly truthful is to love" (*P.C.R.*, p. 464). Throughout his treatment of love, Carnell appears to have been especially swayed by the Dane's thinking. The existential element in the definition of love has already been pointed out, as has Carnell's insistence that love be converted from verbiage to action. These ideas were borrowed by Carnell from Kierkegaard's *Works of Love* (Princeton). He affirmed the Kierkegaardian element of love, which he felt expressed Kierkegaard's highest understanding of the nature of love, by asserting that "the ethical self falls short of its duties until it performs works of love" (*B.S.K.*, p. 167). Kierkegaard had expressed the same idea regarding Christian duty and the need to love through action, not mere verbal expression. Carnell, then, held that we know love not by a definition of love, but by either loving or by being loved. Love's nature and its im-

plementation, for Carnell, were inseparable. In Kierkegaard's words, "What love does, that it is; what it is, that it does—and at one and the same time" (*Works of Love*, p. 227).

In Carnell's estimation, the morally upright person must accept anyone who enters his or her presence as he or she is. The task is not to look for a person who is worthy of love, but rather to see *anyone* as worthy of that love. Love does not calculate, for calculation is the response of a person who is not morally upright. This idea appears to have been taken from Kierkegaard also, for Kierkegaard taught that love does not entertain wishes of how the beloved might be changed to be more lovable in the eyes of the one who loves. "It is important," he wrote, "that in loving the individual, actual man, we do not slip in an imagined conception of how we believe or might wish this man should be" (*Works of Love*, p. 133).

Kierkegaard related law and love in much the same way that Carnell later did. "Love," wrote Kierkegaard, "is the fulfilling of the law, for the law is, despite its many provisions, still somewhat indeterminate, but love is its fulfillment" (*Works of Love*, p. 85). Love is thus the greatest commandment. Carnell repeated this notion in the way he related law and love. For Carnell, love does not negate all law, and all law is not included in love. Rather, love is the greatest commandment, and love, because of its all-encompassing nature, fulfills and completes all other laws.

As was the case with Kierkegaard, Carnell made no attempt to hide Niebuhrian influence on the topic of love. The opposite, in fact, was the case. In the preface to his book on Niebuhr he commented more specifically on Niebuhr's development of love: "his excellent expression of *agape* love as the final definition of the law of life [is], as a whole, both profound and convincing" (*T.R.N.*, p. 5). In particular, it was the way Niebuhr related love to human experience which impressed Carnell.

> One can only draw back and admire the magnificent way Niebuhr has succeeded in relating the Christian doctrine of love to some of the most complex facets of the human situation. It is a rare individual who manages to remain true to so exalted a moral imperative throughout an entire system of thought. (*T.R.N.*, pp. 136-137)

That system asserted that love is the law of life, one which is inherent in human nature and best obeyed when there is an absence of conscious effort to obey it. For Carnell, love was the ultimate law of life, for only love takes the entire person into account. Love is learned experientially, not by intellect. For Carnell, love is a fruit. Efforts to obey the law, however, are works. This concept of fruit and works is the same idea Niebuhr was conveying when he spoke of unconscious obedience as a prime characteristic of love.

Carnell's understanding of love as sacrifice came primarily from Niebuhr. For Carnell life is love, and perfect love is found only through living self-sacrificially for others. The model of such love was Jesus Christ—incarnate love. If one wants to know what perfect love is, one should look to Christ. Years before Carnell wrote, Niebuhr had developed the concept of the ultimate norm for ethics as the perfect love seen in Christ. The highest human possibility, wrote Niebuhr, is the "disinterested and sacrificial *agape*" of Christ. The life of Christ was, for Niebuhr, the prototype of the ultimate virtue—sacrificial love—and was to serve as a model for all people. Carnell acknowledged Niebuhrian influence on this point of Jesus being the model of love, when he wrote: "Niebuhr rightly grounds the motive of love in Jesus Christ" ("N.C.V.," p. 368).

Niebuhr recognized that sacrificial love, in its perfection, could not be fully implemented in history, and was therefore an impossible possibility in life. Justice, then, must be substituted as a workable approximation of love. Love does not do away with justice, but rather is "the fulfillment and highest form of the spirit of justice" (Niebuhr, "The Spirit of Justice," p. 25). Carnell, as Niebuhr, did not forego the need for justice and consideration, but saw them as necessary responses if love was ever to be approximated. When approaching social issues,

Prior to his adoption of love as the primary moral norm, Carnell entertained two other candidates: justice and consideration. He quickly rejected justice, for he realized that when a person receives justice he or she is treated . . . as one who is just like billions of others.

Carnell, following Niebuhr, realized that justice had to be supported as an approximation of love. "Justice," wrote Carnell, "is a child of love. . . . Concern for justice is a clear sign that the love of Christ is actively at work within the heart of a believer . . ." ("A.C.S.E.," pp. 979-980).

It appears odd that Carnell would choose Kierkegaard and Niebuhr for his mentors. As evangelicals, we would expect him to select from within his own theological persuasion, rather than that of existentialism and neo-orthodoxy. However, Carnell's choice reveals one of his basic convictions, one which is key to an understanding of his significance. At the time Carnell was writing, an evangelical was characterized primarily as one who subscribed to the basic beliefs of fundamentalism: the verbal inerrancy of the Scriptures, the deity of Jesus, the virgin birth of Christ, the substitutionary atonement of Christ, and the physical resurrection and bodily return of Christ. Yet to be accepted within the evangelical community one had to do more than just affirm the fundamentals. He or she had to affirm certain individuals and repudiate others. Not only did evangelicalism's content have to be embraced, but so did its community. It was this dual embrace which Carnell felt was wrong. For him the only test for religious orthodoxy was submission to biblical authority. It was because of this conviction regarding Scripture's authority that he felt free to criticize not only theologians such as Karl Barth, but also conservatives such as Billy Graham and J. Gresham Machen. It was because of this same conviction that he felt free to draw from Kierkegaard and Niebuhr; for at the points where he used them he felt they were more true to the teaching of Scripture than was anyone else. Their general association with existentialism and neo-orthodoxy did not prevent Carnell from using the portions of their thought which he felt to be compatible with orthodoxy.

Although most of evangelicalism called for a general rejection of existentialism and neo-orthodoxy, it is clear that the majority of evangelicalism's criticisms revolved around the five fundamentals. What Carnell did was to reject Niebuhr and Kierkegaard at the same points where the rest of evangelicalism rejected them—where their writings denied the fundamentals. Where Carnell did not follow most of evangelicalism was in the fact that he did not reject all of Niebuhr and Kierkegaard for denying the content of the fundamentals. He was astute enough to realize that not all moral and theological

truth is based upon the fundamentals; in fact, much of it is not.

Carnell chose Kierkegaard and Niebuhr partially because he felt their developments of love as an ethical norm were absolutely true to the biblical concept of *agape*. Yet in choosing them, his ethic went beyond the technical meaning of the word to the incorporation of existentialism into orthodoxy. Carnell did not deny the confessional aspect of orthodoxy, but rather affirmed it. However, he realized that an individual moral decision could not be replaced by an affirmation of the creed, but itself needed expression within orthodoxy. By introducing existentialism he attempted to create that expression, and to challenge evangelicals to become passionately involved in the work of loving others. It is by accepting that challenge, more relevant today than ever before, that we demonstrate that our lives have been touched by the grace of God.

Abbreviations

C.C.—Christian Commitment: An Apologetic
K.L.—The Kingdom of Love and the Pride of Life
P.C.R.—A Philosophy of the Christian Religion
T.R.N.—The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr
C.O.T.—The Case for Orthodox Theology
"N.C.V."—"Niebuhr's Criteria of Verification," *Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social and Political Thought*
B.S.K.—The Burden of Soren Kierkegaard
"A.C.S.E."—"A Christian Social Ethics," *The Christian Century*

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Donald Bloesch on the Trinity: Right Battle, Wrong Battle Lines

by Thomas Finger

Donald Bloesch's latest book, *The Battle for the Trinity: The Debate over Inclusive God-Language* (Servant, 1985), warns its readers that a battle over God's transcendence is now being fought in the Church.

Is God the radically Other, a trinitarian fellowship of love distinct from the world, or is God simply the deepest force, energizing nature and history? Does salvation consist of this radically Other One coming to us in self-sacrificing love, despite our resistance, or does salvation involve nothing more than the actualization of our latent potentialities?

Bloesch feels that many forms of feminist theology show panentheistic tendencies that threaten the church. Feminine imagery for God can express them with especial force. Consequently, Bloesch feels today's crucial battle is often fought in "the debate over inclusive God-language," to quote the subtitle of his book.

Nonetheless, the issues involved are subtle and complex. Bloesch does not wholly reject feminine God-imagery, but to some extent acknowledges its importance and appropriateness. Moreover, the battle ranges over a very broad territory. Bloesch acknowledges that "feminist theology is just the tip of the iceberg."[1] I affirm Bloesch's basic concern. In a day when rising widespread and destructive tensions threaten humanity's existence, the Church and the world deeply need the affirmation that a Love and a Strength far greater than human resources still governs all things. Because evangelicals are now taking sociological and psychological tensions seriously, we need to guard against reducing all problems to humanistic dimensions, and we need to remember that human reality is best understood and healed in light of that which radically transcends it.

I also agree that "feminists" have raised, in acute form, issues central to the "battle" over God's relationship to humankind. But I cannot agree that Bloesch has always drawn his specific battle lines at the right places. In a book which emphasizes linguistic precision, his terminology often blurs. In a book which focuses on the Trinity, he misapprehends one crucial dimension of its significance.

Linguistic Imprecision

"Feminism." Bloesch often acknowledges that different forms of feminist theology exist. He appreciatively quotes some feminist thinkers. Nevertheless, not infrequently he employs the term *feminist* for all those on the opposite side of his battle line.

For instance, he claims that "feminists locate authority in the self" (p. 64); "the norms for feminism are therefore cultural rather than ecclesiastical, experiential rather than biblical" (p. 58). Even while seeking to counter the impression that his perspective is totally negative, Bloesch refers to "feminist theology" as "this new adversary to traditional Christian faith" (p. xvii).

More seriously, Bloesch draws numerous comparisons between "feminism" and "the German Christians" who, in the 1930s, eventually sided with Hitler. To his credit, he seeks to support his thesis by numerous parallels: as did the German Christians, "radical feminists" advocate the revival of pagan religious themes, an immanent instead of a transcendent deity,

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etc. Yet his comparison fails at a crucial point: whereas "German Christian" ideology justified a narrow, racist nationalism, feminism is, generally, the most racially and nationally inclusive of all the modern "isms."[2] While some feminist theologies may lend support to humanistic ideologies, it is unfair to link "feminism" with the programs and the death camps spawned by Nazi ideology.

To be sure, Bloesch qualifies the word *feminist* often enough to show that, for him, it is not wholly negative. Nonetheless, his indiscriminately unfavorable uses of the term might well alienate many who use it with pride. Like labels for other modern movements, "feminism" may legitimately denote a wide variety of things. For many biblical Christians, "feminism" means a general emphasis on the value of women; and it functions as a symbol of self-identity.[3] Though these persons may deeply disagree on certain issues with others who call themselves feminists, it is difficult for them to hear "feminism" in general denounced without reacting personally.

I am a white male, and I read books which repeatedly use "white" and "male" negatively. Even if the author has formally defined such terms so that they need not include me, it often takes great effort to remind myself of that. Yet my sex has not played an insignificant or an unnoticed role throughout Church history, nor have I almost always heard God, humankind and even myself designated as pronouns for the opposite sex. Thus, I suspect that many women, who wish to be "biblical" and "evangelical" and at the same time "feminist," feel themselves pushed away from the former labels when they are set in opposition to the latter. For this reason, I wish that Bloesch had consistently used some precise term to indicate the viewpoint he is opposing. And I wish he had affirmed more loudly that all who are concerned about God's transcendence, including those who with pride call themselves "feminist," are on his side of the battle line.

I suspect that many women, who wish to be "biblical" and "evangelical" and at the same time "feminist," feel themselves pushed away from the former labels when they are set in opposition to the latter.

Theological Terminology. If Bloesch were imprecise only in using the word *feminism,* he would commit no more than a strategic—though very important—mistake. But linguistic imprecision affects a central task of his book: that of providing guidelines for and a rational use of God-language in the Church.

The Bible uses different words and images to speak of God: God is called "Lord" and "Father," but also "Fortress" and "Rock." Some such terms indicate more directly what God is really like: most people would agree that God is more like a "father" than a "rock." But are there any guidelines for determining which terms refer more directly to God? If there were, the Church could discern whether feminine imagery is less, more, or equally appropriate for God as masculine imagery.

In his efforts to clarify God-language, Bloesch's language is often unclear. At the beginning of his chapter on this theme, he announces: "The crucial question concerning God-language is whether such language gives a *true knowledge* or *merely symbolic awareness* of the ultimate reality we call God" (p. 13, italics mine). In other important passages, Bloesch unfavorably compares symbols with concepts. For instance, "A symbol points beyond itself to a reality that can only be dimly perceived by the senses or faintly understood by reason. A symbol is a graphic image that brokenly reflects what it purports to describe."[4] But in other places, Bloesch ascribes a priority to symbols. For instance: "Our conceptual language about God may be said to be further from the truth than our symbolic language, since the symbolic language is at one with the original language of the prophets and apostles" (p. 21). Accordingly, the symbol has "normative authority to which conceptual thinking is subordinate." In the same breath, however, Bloesch apparently grants the ultimate authority to "conceptual thinking," for it "enables us to determine which symbols are really germane to the faith and which are inauthentic or peripheral" (p. 17).

What kind of language tells us more directly what God is like? Symbols? Concepts? Or perhaps metaphors or analogies, words that Bloesch sometimes employs with similar ambiguity.[5] As in his use of "feminism," some consistency can be ferreted out of Bloesch's various uses of these terms. And no doubt his apparently discordant remarks reflect an effort to do justice to all sides of a complex problem. Yet, by using his key terms in imprecise ways, Bloesch opens himself not only to being misunderstood, but also to being misquoted and misrepresented with ease. A book written to stress the crucial importance of "God-language" needs to use language with extreme care.

Imagery for God. For Bloesch, masculine terminology more directly expresses what God is like than does feminine terminology. Yet sometimes his reasons for asserting this are not clear. For instance, Bloesch claims: "To switch from the masculine to the feminine in our descriptions of God in a service of worship is inevitably to present . . . a deity who is bisexual or androgynous rather than one who transcends the polarity of the sexes" (p. 54). But what preserves masculine terminology from the same flaw?

More specifically, Bloesch objects to Susan Thistlethwaite's suggestion that we speak of the Son as "begotten or born out of the Father's womb," for "this is patently metaphorical rather than literal language, and to press this metaphor is to sexualize the relationship between God and Christ."[6] Yet orthodox Christology has always spoken of the Son as "begotten" by the Father.[7] Why should "begotten" be any less open to "literal" misinterpretation than "womb"? In fact, might not just such a paradoxical combination of both terms underline the point that this relationship could not possibly be sexual?[8]

Bloesch insists that when applied to God, words like "Father" are "transformational images" which "drastically alter the ordinary cultural understanding of these terms. . . . [I]n calling him Father the Bible challenges the human view of what a father should be" (p. 35). Precisely speaking, then, "when we call God Father we do not ascribe to him masculine attributes."[9] Yet Bloesch does not tell us why feminine terminology should not be capable of such transformations.

Nevertheless, despite such apparently groundless depreciations of feminine imagery, Bloesch wants "to be alive to the concern of women for wider acknowledgement of the feminine dimension of the sacred" (p. 53). While he insists that calling God Mother, at least as practiced by "radical feminists," "in effect transmutes God into a goddess" (pp. 44-45), he also says that God is "not only Father and Brother but also Mother and Sister" (p. 53). He acknowledges that Julian of Norwich and Nicholas Zinzendorf, respectively, spoke of Christ and the Spirit as "Mother" (p. 47). Bloesch presses for a limited

use of feminine imagery in worship and also in theology.[10] As in his use of feminism and terms like symbol, concept, analogy, and metaphor, Bloesch employs and evaluates feminine God-imagery in ways that sometimes seem inconsistent and unsupported. Once again, one may applaud him for considering many sides of these complex issues, yet he does so in ways which often blur his battle lines.

The Trinitarian Foundation

Despite the ambiguities just mentioned, might Bloesch's preference for masculine God-language rest on an identifiable theological foundation? I think it does. As far as I can see, it is rooted in his understanding of God's historical saving work, which flows from trinitarian foundations. Male imagery more directly indicates what God is like because God, "for the most part . . . chooses to relate himself to us as masculine" (p. 33). God "has addressed us only as his beloved, only as feminine co-respondent to his own masculinity."[11] Masculine imagery best expresses that God takes the initiative, and that God does the new and unexpected, which is so central to the biblical history of salvation. It expresses "'the aggressive surprise of time as against the repetition of nature'" which, in ancient times, would be expressed by feminine imagery of the primordial womb or matrix.[12] Largely for this reason, Bloesch insists that

> Femininity is grounded in masculinity in the Bible (Eve came out of Adam) just as motherhood is grounded in fatherhood. The masculine is the ground of the feminine, but the feminine is the goal and glory of the masculine (1 Cor. 11:7). (pp. 34-35)

Properly understood, however, this last, seemingly passing acknowledgement—"the feminine is the goal and glory of the masculine"—calls for significant revision of Bloesch's trinitarian understanding.

Theology largely consists of reflecting on relationships among the various events and truths presented in Scripture. As Juergen Moltmann has shown, this reflection can be protological, tracing events back to their source; or eschatological, showing how they are ordered toward God's goal and glory.[13] Trinitarian theology has almost always been protological. Beginning from the Spirit, who is now active in the Church, theology has traced this activity back to the Son who sends the Spirit (Ac 2:33; Jn 15:26) and finally to the Father who sent the Son. Viewed from the perspective of its primal source and ground, the Father appears as "the origin of the Trinity" who sends the Son, while the Son sends the Spirit.[14] Viewed this way, God's saving activity appears primarily as something new and surprising, and as something initiated from the awesome otherness of the transcendent, sovereign God. I agree with Bloesch that, over against modern panentheistic tendencies, this transcendent initiation must be emphasized, and that masculine terminology very often expresses it well.

However, it is just as important for theology to reflect eschatologically; just as important to show where things are headed as to show where they have come from; and just as important to reflect on their goal and glory as on their source. Yet theological tradition has seldom emphasized the eschatological orientation of trinitarian activity. When one does so, one finds that the Spirit, rather than the Father, appears as the primary initiator. The Spirit witnesses to the Son (Jn 16:13-15), who is presently subduing every rule and power and authority. But when the Son has accomplished this, he will deliver all things back to the Father (1 Cor 15:24-28). And then God will be all in all, and dwell in the midst of creation (Hab 2:14; Rev 21:2-4).

Viewed protologically, the Father is the initiator of the activity whose goal is the Spirit's dwelling amidst the Church; viewed eschatologically, the Spirit initiates the activity whose goal is the glorification of the Father. Regarded protologically, God appears primarily as transcendent, distinct from the world, and can best be symbolized as masculine. But regarded eschatologically, God will primarily be immanent, dwelling amidst creation, and the goal and glory of the divine work can best be symbolized as feminine.

In his efforts to clarify God-language, Bloesch's language is often unclear . . . A book written to stress the crucial importance of "God-language" needs to use language with extreme care.

In trinitarian theology, both modes of reflection are equally legitimate and important. When both are combined, the Father appears neither as more important nor more fully divine than does the Spirit or the Son, nor does the Spirit appear as more important or more truly Godlike than do the Son and Father. In fact, the uniqueness of the doctrine of the trinity consists not in affirming that God is transcendent; Judaism and Islam affirm this as well. Neither, of course, is the uniqueness found in affirming that God is immanent, which mdoern panentheisms also do. Rather, the uniqueness of the doctrine that Donald Bloesch so emphasizes consists in affirming this equality among the trinitarian persons and the importance of their activities.

This assertion takes on great significance when one realizes that approximately as many features of the Son's saving work can be well described in traditionally feminine terminology as can be in masculine terms. For Bloesch himself, "the essence of femininity in the biblical sense" consists of "fidelity, servanthood, meekness" (p. 38). And elsewhere, Bloesch affirms that Christ transformed patriarchal ideas of fatherhood and lordship when he "chose to realize his lordship in the role of a servant."[15] Although he does not adequately draw out the implications of such statements, they point to the fact that in the Son, God is revealed not only as initiating, commanding and judging, but also as responding, serving and faithfully suffering.[16]

The equality of the trinitarian persons becomes even more significant when one realizes that the Spirit's activity is best described in terms that are mostly "feminine." The Spirit bears, brings to birth, groans within us, nurtures, comforts, encompasses, caresses. Bloesch recognizes this, but he seeks to account for it by stressing that "the motherhood of God is mirrored in the Church." "If we are to follow the Biblical way," he writes, "we will designate God as our Father and the Church as our Mother. We refer to the motherhood of God indirectly when we call the church 'our Holy Mother'" (p. 38).

But for one whose theology is grounded in the trinity, this does not go far enough. Surely the Church is our mother only derivatively and indirectly, whereas God is our Mother originatively and directly. Without downgrading the role of the Church, any fully trinitarian theology must insist that the Church is a channel, a means, and an expression of the Motherhood of God. If one does not do so, one risks not only losing sight of the life-giving and nurturing characteristics of the divine, but also of deifying the Church.

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Conclusions

Biblical images and pronouns for God are mostly masculine. Theology and the Church must take this seriously. But theology's main task cannot be to count the occurrences of pronouns or images, but to inquire into the overall direction and significance of God's saving work. When it does, it finds that many symbols that were originally masculine become markedly qualified by characteristics which most people regard as feminine. The Lord becomes a servant. The judge is revealed as the compassionate one. When contrasted with the patriarchal cultures of biblical times, these transformations stand out as even more central to the Scriptures' deepest message.

However, theology usually has been more concerned with tracing things back toward their original sources than with following them forward toward their goal. It has been more concerned with rooting present reality in something firm, fixed and certain, than with being challenged by reality's openness to change, growth and the partially unknown. In the process, theology has usually failed to see that while masculine symbols are appropriate to God's initiating activity, the goal of God's work is the divine indwelling, which can best by symbolized in feminine terms. Protological and eschatological thinking should become equally important in theology. If they are, masculine and feminine imagery for God may come to be employed with similar frequency in the Church.

Besides reflecting on the deepest intention of the Bible's saving history, theology must also consider how pronouns and images function in non-biblical cultures. Bloesch is indeed correct that in Scripture, words like *Father* and *Son* operate in ways which "drastically alter the ordinary or cultural understanding" (p. 35). As I understand it, "Father-Son" language, when used for Jesus and the One who sent him, primarily expresses not sexuality, but faithfulness, love and intimacy. Quite early, however, ancient, then medieval, and then modern culture took back these symbols to support their own patriarchal structures. Because God is Father and Son, people said males are the rulers in society (the Spirit was often forgotten).

When culture has twisted or forgotten the meanings of biblical terminology, theology must often coin words to convey what Scripture initially intended. "Trinity" is a good example. It is not in the Bible. Yet Bloesch rightly insists that Christianity stands or falls with the fundamental truth it intends to signify.[17] Similarly, if culture and even the Church have distorted the intentionality behind the Bible's masculine God-symbols, theology and liturgy may need to stress others, or even develop new ones to redress the balance. In order to express what Scripture is truly saying, theology and liturgy may need to call God "She" even if the Bible does not. This need be no more damaging than discussing and praising the Holy Trinity.

What will happen if God is spoken of as feminine as often as he is spoken of as masculine? Will the fatal battle line between transcendence and panentheism be crossed, and the decisiveness of biblical salvation be submerged in a vague, vitalistic mysticism? Not necessarily. Not if theology can think both protologically and eschatologically. Not if Christians can both praise the transcendent Origin of all things and eagerly long for the indwelling which is its goal. Not if Christians can act in light of the stable, transcendent Source of all things and work toward their transformation.

If feminine God-language comes to be used within the Church in a balanced way, the Trinity can remain at the center of things, and its fundamental character may well become far better understood. The battle with panentheism need not be lost; but traditional Christianity may be able to incorporate those truths which panentheism so one-sidedly and distortedly expresses. Added to the crucial insistence that God is other than and sovereign over this world will be the crucial awareness that God longs to dwell among us and to comfort and energize us with her presence. And in our crisis-torn world, an anxious and weary humanity needs to hear that.

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[1] Donald Bloesch, *The Battle for the Trinity: the Debate over Inclusive God-Language* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1985), p. 12. All page references in the article are to this volume.

[2] Though Bloesch recognizes the force of this objection (p. 78), he does not directly answer it. However, he does argue that "the new religious right in our country is closer to the political and social concerns of the ... German Christians than the left-wing movements, including feminism" (p. 81). Nevertheless, parallels between "feminism" and "the German Christians" are the main focus of the relevant chapter.

[3] For instance, the following statement always appears prominently in the magazine *Daughters of Sarah*: "We are Christians; we are also feminists. Some say we cannot be both, but Christianity and feminism are inseparable."

[4] pp. 20-21; or, "A concept is an abstract term that roughly corresponds to what it purports to signify; a symbol is a pictorial term that brokenly reflects what it is intended to signify" (p. 17).

[5] Bloesch finds little value in metaphors, because they are "dissimilar to what is described, and while there may be a suggested likeness between the sign and what it signifies, there is no conceptual knowledge" (p. 14). In contrast, he favors analogical language, for it "presupposes an underlying similarity or congruity in the midst of real difference." Hence, "analogical knowledge is real knowledge, whereas metaphorical knowledge is only intuitive awareness or tacit knowledge" (p. 21). Yet Bloesch frequently intertwines these apparently well-defined terms in ways that are difficult to unravel. For instance: "concepts ... partake of the analogical or symbolic"; "symbols may be either metaphors or analogies"; theologians may speak of God "in symbolic or imagistic terms, by way of analogy" (p. 21); or, God as the "Wholly Other" is "a conceptual metaphor in that it should be taken not literally but symbolically" (p. 29).

[6] The language proposed by Thistlethwaite was originally suggested at the Council of Toledo in the third century. See her "God-Language and the Trinity," *EKU-UCC Newsletter*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (February, 1984), p. 21.

[7] In view of the centrality of this term in classical Christology, including its appearance in the Nicene and Chalcedonian Creeds, it hardly seems to be a "metaphor" in Bloesch's sense (note 5 above).

[8] Similarly, Bloesch objects to referring to the Holy Spirit as feminine, for "to posit an abiding feminine principle within a basically masculine Godhead is to bifurcate the trinity and to make God bisexual" (p. 47). But perhaps some such combination of terms could better express the truth that God is beyond sexuality than does this reference to the Godhead as "masculine."

[9] p. 36; a quotation from Robert Roth, "The Problem of How to Speak of God," *Interpretation*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (January 1984), p. 79.

[10] Bloesch has no trouble with a prayer such as the following proposed by Gail Ramshaw-Schmidt, so long as it is used in private devotions: " 'O God, you are a nursing mother to all your faithful people. Nourish us with the milk of your word that we may live and grow in you, through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.' " In public worship, however, feminine terminology may be used only when the masculine remains "the controlling symbol" (p. 53). Bloesch does not want prayers addressed to God primarily as feminine brought into public worship until broad church councils, including Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic representatives, approve of them (in practice, of course, this stipulation might well prohibit such changes forever).

[11] p. 33; this quotation is from Vernard Eller, *The Language of Canaan and the Grammar of Feminism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 46.

[12] p. 36; this quotation is again from Roth, p. 79.

[13] see Moltmann, *The Future of Creation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), pp. 80-96. Bloesch charges Moltmann with panentheism, teaching that "there is no supernatural Trinity but only the self-realization of divinity in world history" (Bloesch, p. 91; cf. pp. 6-7). Such an impression might be conveyed by phrases such as that God is not "a person projected in heaven" which Bloesch quotes from Moltmann's *The Crucified God* (New York: Harper, 1974, p. 247; quoted in Bloesch, p. 92). In his more recent book on the subject, however, Moltmann clearly indicates that "the divine relationship to the world is primarily determined by that inner relationship" of the trinitarian persons to each other (*The Trinity and the Kingdom* [San Francisco: Harper, 1981], p. 161).

[14] Scripture also speaks of the Father sending the Spirit (e.g., Jn 14:16, cf. 26). Traditionally, while western churches have spoken of the Spirit proceeding "from the Father and the Son," eastern ones have insisted that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone.

[15] p. 40; Bloesch acknowledges that "Christ in his role of Wisdom who nurtures and guides the people of God can be thought of as feminine" (p. 40), and that this "feminine dimension of the Son is to be located in the Godhead itself" (p. 50). Yet Bloesch insists that "Christ in his role as Lord and Savior of the world ... must always be envisaged as masculine" (p. 47). But if Christ redefined lordship through servanthood, and if his saving work involved compassion and humility, why should the distinction be drawn in this way?

[16] In this article, we use "feminine" or "masculine" to designate those characteristics which have been traditionally regarded as such. Fuller discussion of the issue, of course, would need to ask to what extent activities like "responding" or "commanding" ought to be called "feminine" or "masculine."

[17] Precisely speaking, intellectual comprehension and affirmation of this doctrine can hardly be indispensable to Christian faith. Many sound Christians have difficulty grasping its complexity, and may understandably even question its validity.

Introduction to "Black North American Perspective"

by Jeffrey Gros

For many Christians, the full witness of the incarnation of Jesus Christ is incomplete when the biblical doctrine of the church is not realized. As they look closely at the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's letters (especially First Corinthians), many Christians feel the divisions of denominationalism and sectarianism are an affront to the biblical faith.

For seventy-five years, Christians with this evangelical conviction have been in dialogue with one another through the Faith and Order movement. When the World Council of Churches was formed in 1948, this movement of evangelical Christians joined in that Council to foster biblical and historical studies so that a common understanding of the mission of the church and the relationships of Christians could be found.

Through careful biblical and historical research and dialogue among evangelical, Catholic and Orthodox Christians, the World Council of Churches has proposed a vision of the unity of the church grounded in the Bible:

> We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people. (New Delhi, 1961).

In the Upsalla Assembly (1968) the World Council proposed to Christians the vision of the churches in Acts 15, a genuinely ecumenical council, as the hoped-for unity of the church. This vision of Conciliar Fellowship was elaborated on at the Nairobi Assembly (1975), and three basic marks of this biblical doctrine of the church were held out at the Vancouver Assembly (1983):

1) The churches would share a common understanding of the Apostolic Faith, and be able to confess this message together in ways understandable, reconciling and liberating to their contemporaries. Living this Apostolic Faith together, the churches would help the world to realize God's design for creation.

2) Confessing the Apostolic Faith together, the churches would share a full mutual recognition of baptism, the eucharist and ministry, and be able through their visible communion to let the healing and uniting power of these gifts become more evident amid the visions of humankind.

3) The churches would agree on common ways of decision making and ways of teaching authoritatively, and be able to demonstrate qualities of communion, participation and corporate responsibility which could shed healing light in a world of conflict.

The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council has presented a document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Lima 1982), to help the churches explore the second of these three marks of the biblical doctrine of the church. At the present time, study is underway on the first of these marks: a common understanding of the biblical faith handed down from the apostles and confessed in the churches in worship, creed and life. Drawing on the early confessions of the faith, particularly that promulgated at Constantinople in 381, this study will focus on a common expression of the biblical faith of the apostles today. This early creed, commonly called the Nicene Creed, is a profession of faith in the trinity and in the incarnation, often part of the worship of the majority of Christians each Sunday morning.

For many Christians, the full witness of the incarnation of Jesus Christ is incomplete when the biblical doctrine of the church is not realized.

However, there are many churches with deep evangelical convictions, who do not deny the trinity or the incarnation of Jesus Christ, or for that matter any article of the Nicene Creed, but who do not share this particular expression of faith in their ordinary worship and confessional life. For this reason, the World Council is proposing a study not only of the creed as a testimony to the faith of the apostles, but of those churches whose contemporary and historical modes of confessing the faith differ from this classical creed. Among these faithful evangelical Christians in the U.S. context are the historic black Baptists, Methodists and Pentecostal churches.

In preparation for a World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order meeting in Stavanger, Norway in August, 1985, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States sponsored a consultation in Richmond, Virginia in December 1984, in order that the Black churches might relate to this very important Christian dialogue about the biblical faith. The text of this report follows and was presented to the World Council Commission along with consultations from other parts of the world, focussing on the common basis for confessing Jesus Christ today. The study does not intend to be a full blown treatment of the faith of the Black churches, but rather a testimony to unique elements which the Black churches hope will be included in the common explication of this biblical faith in our times. It is a witness to the vitality and the spiritual integrity of the Black churches on the one hand, and a challenge to the orthodox Christian to see that the implications of doctrinal fidelity are often costly in real human life.

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Toward a Common Expression of Faith: A Black North American Perspective

Introduction

A special consultation on one common expression of the Apostolic faith from the perspective of Black Christians in the U.S. brought together representatives of several Black denominations at Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia, December 14-15, 1984. The consultation included representatives of the Black constituencies of several predominantly White denominations. In some cases the participants were delegated by denominational administrative headquarters; others were representatives of their communions without official appointment. Therefore, the content of this document stands upon the authority of the consultation alone and does not purport to convey the agreements of an ecclesiastical council of Black churches.

This document, moreover, does not pretend to be an exhaustive response to the Apostolic Faith Study or a formal statement of the major themes of the Black theology movement that has evolved in North America in recent years. The Richmond Consultation, sponsored by the Commission on Faith and Order of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A., attempted to convey to the World Council of Churches and to other interested organizations what we, a group of Black theologians and church leaders from across the United States perceive as a general consensus among us concerning a common expression of the faith of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. In the several working papers we discussed and in this report we seek to add to the worldwide ecumenical study of a common expression of Apostolic Faith the distinctive perceptions and insights that come out of the historic experience of Black Christians in North America.

As Black academics, denominational officials, pastors and lay leaders, we speak out of more than two hundred years of suffering and struggle as "the step-children of church history" who have been ridiculed, ignored and scorned by the White churches of both Europe and North America. The truth of the gospel among our people, that some have sought to suppress or disregard, burns like fire in our bones. In any discussion of one common expression of faith we have no alternative other than to make certain clear affirmations to those churches that directly or indirectly participated in and benefited from the rape of Africa that resulted in the exploitation and oppression of an African Diaspora wherever Black people are found.

We speak, however, from our own particular locus in the so-called First World, where we are less than twelve percent of the population of what is the richest and most powerful nation in the world. But inasmuch as our churches and people have never truly shared that wealth and power, we speak as a marginated Black community with a unique understanding of White racism and with strong affinities with the so-called Third World.

In this document, from an historic consultation in Richmond, Virginia, we make bold to declare that God, our Creator, has condescended through Jesus Christ, our Liberator, by the power of the Holy Spirit, our Advocate and Comforter, to convey, preserve and enhance the faith of the Apostles among the despised and alienated African American people of the United States. We commend to all who may be concerned the fruit of our prayerful reflection on the themes of the Unity, Holiness, Catholicity and Apostolicity of the Church of Jesus Christ as we join with you in search of a common expression of the faith.

I. UNITY

We affirm that the unity of the Church not only expresses the unity of the Triune God, but is also a sign of the unity of humankind that holds the diversity of all races and cultures together in one family. In the economy of God, each "tribe", each ethnic group and culture, has its own vocation to bring its gift to the full household of faith. Notwithstanding the effort of some White Christians to disdain the contribution of Black folk to the faith and to its impact upon the institutions of the American Church and society, we declare that the meaning of Blackness as cultural and religious experience edifies and enriches the universal message of the Christian faith. Blackness, in the religions of the African Diaspora, is a profound and complex symbol of a diversified yet united experience: servitude and oppression, faithfulness through suffering, identification with the exclusion, martyrdom and exaltation of Jesus as the Oppressed One of God who triumphs over enemies, a passion for justice and liberation, the exuberance of Black faith and life, rejoicing in the Risen Lord in Pentecostal fervor and in service to the "least" of Christ's brothers and sisters.

White Christians have too often treated unity as if it were only a spiritual reality. We believe that unity must not be spiritualized, but manifested in concrete behavior, by doing justice and loving service to one another. The cost of unity in the Church is repentance and affirmative discipleship (i.e., action). Therefore, we have a profound hermeneutical suspicion about any movement for unity that is dominated by North Atlantic attitudes and assumptions. We have observed that when our White brothers and sisters speak of unity, they often mean being together on terms that carefully maintain their political, economic and cultural hegemony. Unity is frequently confused with "Anglo-conformity"—strict adherence to premises and perspectives based upon the worldview and ethos of the North Atlantic community with its history of racial oppression. However, Christian unity is based on the worship of a common Creator who is no respecter of persons, obedience to a common lawgiver and Judge whose commandment to break every yoke is not abrogated by the gracious justification of sinners, and upon participation in the earthly mission of a common Redeemer, the sharing of whose suffering and ordeal makes us truly one, though of many races and cultures.

Blackness is one of God's gifts for the realization of the unity of the Church and humankind at this critical stage of history. It has been preserved by God as a cultural and religious inheritance of the Black churches of Africa, the Caribbean, and North and South America since the mission of the Ethiopian eunuch to the upper Nile Valley after his baptism by the Evangelist. It is rooted in the divine revelation to our African ancestors who lived before the Christian era. It has traditionally celebrated the goodness of the Almighty Sovereign God and the goodness of creation. It has emphasized the humanity of the historical Jesus, i.e., his earthly life, example, teaching, suffering, death and resurrection. It confesses belief in the humanity of Jesus together with the oneness with God, the Creator, and the Holy Spirit, but understands that humanity in non-sexist terms rather than being exclusively of the male gender. It identifies with the shadow of death that

falls upon the Cross as a symbol of suffering and shame, yet crowned with light inexpressible in the victory of the resurrection.

Thus, the meaning of unity is related to the meaning of Blackness for the Afro-American Church and points to its vocation as a church of the poor and oppressed who claim liberation in the Black Messiah of God and want to share the humanizing experience of suffering and joy in struggle with others who want to work for a world of justice and equality for all. Unity is possible only when there is acceptance of suffering under Christ's work of liberation and when there is commitment to his mission.

II. HOLINESS

The Black churches of North America made a unique contribution to the Holiness and Pentecostal movements of world Christianity at the beginning of this century. The Black Pentecostal obsession with the text of Hebrews 12:14: "strive. . .for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (RSV), and Black leadership of the interracial Azusa Street Revival of 1906–1908 in Los Angeles, created the groundwork for modern Pentecostalism—the most remarkable religious movement among the oppressed communities of the world since the Awakenings of the 18th and 19th centuries. Although most African American churches did not originate from Pentecostalism or the Azusa Street Revival, most of them have been influenced by the Pentecostal emphasis upon the *ruach/pneuma* of God in their conception of the Person and Work of the Holy Ghost. Their understanding of holiness as a process of moral perfection is rooted in the necessity of a personal encounter with God that is manifested in both the ecstasy of congregational worship and the praxis of social justice.

Afro-American spirituality has to do with self-transcendence and is unembarrassed by displays of sincere emotion, but it is also related to faith and action in the world. The Holy Spirit moves, therefore, in the real world of everyday life, in the sanctuary and the realm of secular affairs. The Holy Spirit is not an abstraction of Trinitarian theology but participates dynamically in what it means to be a human being and to suffer and struggle with the assurance of victory in this world as in the world to come. The distinctiveness of the Black religious experience is that theology is experienced before it is thought. Moreover, holiness in the paradoxical sense of transcendence and existential involvement in the world, must accompany the act of "doing theology". Holiness is a criterion of the Church's theological authenticity. It creates a theology that is "hummed, sung and shouted" in Black churches, and contrary to White fundamentalism, has more to do with how Christians treat one another than how strictly they hold to Biblical literalism or ascetic life styles.

On the other hand, holiness in the Black Church is not coterminous, as in some expressions of White liberalism, with frenetic social activism. Personal encounter with God as a prerequisite of sanctification and commitment to social transformation are both necessary, but the obligation to "give glory to God," and to "glorify the holiness of God" is an essential corollary of the obligation to be engaged in "building the Kingdom" that continues to be frustrated by racism and oppression. The Black Church is sustained by prayer and praise. It exists in and for the glory of God and not the glorification of human institutions. We know that to struggle in the midst of the world is to experience the glory of God that is thwarted by racism and oppression, but we also know that we need to praise God in the sanctuary in order to struggle! One of our Spirituals has the refrain: "Have you got good religion?" The response is, "Certainly, certainly, certainly, Lord!" *Good* religion is, therefore, understood to make worldly things that were formerly dubious better, and *bad* religion ruins the best of all possible worlds where there is no acknowledgement of God's presence. Without holiness no one shall see the Lord.

Ultimately, the holiness of the Church is a work of the Holy Spirit. We affirm that the One, Holy Church cannot exist apart from ministries of justice and liberation. We also affirm that true liberation is inseparable from deep spirituality. The intimate involvement of Christians with the Holy Spirit is expressed first in worship that celebrates the manifest presence, goodness and glory of God and moves from the sanctuary to the streets where it empowers the world to goodness, transfigures its wretchedness and need, and creates the quality of life that is symbolized by the nimbus that encircles the throne of God.

III. CATHOLICITY

Although Afro-American Christians have customarily been denied equal partnership in the *koinonia* of Christ, we nevertheless affirm the universality of the Christian faith. Universality in the Black religious experience has to do with the particular reality of people in concrete situations that are dissimilar but inseparable. Afro-American churches share with all who confess Jesus Christ the conviction of the universality of God's love "from each to all in every place. . .". We recognize solidarity in creation, sin and redemption with all human beings and seek with them to make catholicity visible by overcoming humanly erected barriers between people.

We deplore the fact that the profession of universality has actually meant that the norms of what is considered acceptable to the Church had to originate in the West. For years anything that White Christians in Europe and North America did not interpret as catholic lay outside the realm of true faith and proper order. Such assumptions distorted the truth about Jesus Christ and permitted the gospel to be used to divide people rather than free them to express the fullness of the faith in their own cultural styles and traditions. It also robbed the White churches of the opportunity to correct their own deficiencies.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Black preachers were refused ordination and their congregations were not considered in good order. Not until rebellious White Methodist and separatist Baptist clergy defied custom and accepted them as duly constituted ministers and churches did Black Christianity become legitimate in the eyes of Whites. To this day Black churches have protested any semblance of alienation or exclusion on account of race, class or discriminatory educational qualifications. Unfortunately the struggle for sexual equality has lagged behind in many Black churches and Black women need greater support in their resistance to subordination.

From the perspective of the Richmond consultation, catholicity has to do with faith in Jesus Christ, baptism, and continuing in "the apostles' teaching and fellowship" and in "the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). No person, group or institution that meets these requirements should be excluded from the visible Church or relegated to an inferior status by human authority, ecclesiastical or secular. The sin of racism, sexism and classism that refuses or discourages the fellowship of African Independent church or Black Holiness and Pentecostal denominations, among others in various parts of the world, must be repudiated as denying the catholicity of the Body of Christ.

Catholicity, in our view, also demands a persistent critique of and challenge to the economic and political status quo; for those churches that benefit from the existing international or-

der too easily assume its normative character and become self-appointed guardians of what is supposedly good for all. Thus, many North American conservatives and fundamentalists speak of American democracy as "Christian" and oppose Christian socialists as irregular at best and heretical at worst.

Similarly, the "Moral Majority" in the U.S. supports "constructive engagement" with apartheid in South Africa as consistent with universal reason and the welfare of "all people of good will". In this view anti-communism becomes the test of universal Christian ethics and those who do not fall into line are considered sectarian, ignorant and contrary to the mainstream White American tradition which is regarded as the universal faith of the Church.

Jesus Christ challenged the assumption that faith in God or salvation was limited to the scribes and the Pharisees, or the rich and powerful. Instead he empowered sinners, the poor, strangers and women. His demonstration of catholicity was to open his arms to all who would be saved. His Church today can do no more or less.

IV. APOSTOLICITY

We affirm the Apostolic tradition that recognizes the transmission of authentic faith down the centuries by all those who have faithfully lived it, whether or not they have been officially designated as apostles. We believe that "What does not teach Christ is not Apostolic, even if it was taught by Peter or Paul; again what preaches Christ, this is Apostolic, even when preached by Judas, Annas, Pilate and Herod." We recognize, therefore, the apostolicity of what we have received from our slave ancestors who, though "unlearned and ignorant" men and women, reinterpreted the distorted Christianity they received from the slavemasters and passed down to succeeding generations of Black believers the story of Jesus who was "the strong Deliverer", "the rose of Sharon, the bright and morning star," "the king who rides on a milk-white horse," "the dying lamb," "the Lord who's done just what he said", "the Balm in Gilead," and "the help of the poor and needy, in this lan'. . .". But we acknowledge the importance of the Apostolic tradition being engaged and not merely passed on. Apostolicity must be lived out in the context of contemporary events. It is not the recitation of past formulations, but the living of the present commandments of the Risen Lord.

In the final analysis the test of apostolicity is the experiencing of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in our daily struggle against demonic powers that seek to rob us of our inheritance as children of God redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Our deeds, more than our creeds, determine whether we have fully received and acted upon the faith of the apostles.

Jesus said, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31, 32). Afro-American Christians look to the words and acts of the Jesus of history for the Apostolic teaching as well as to the mystery of the Christ of faith. We take seriously the life, ministry and teaching of Jesus as the One who identified with the marginated of society and continues to identify with them. It is in the Black Church's historic identification with marginality that Jesus is appropriated as the Black Messiah, the paradigm of our existential reality as an oppressed people and the affirmation of our survival and liberation.

Finally, for Black Christians, the search for an expression of the Apostolic faith must be multi-racial and multi-cultural rather than captive to any one race, sex, class or political ideology. The Church and the ecumenical movement must no longer submit to domination by social, economic or intellectual elites. The faith once delivered to the apostles by Jesus Christ is for the whole world and must be capable of being transmitted and responded to by all.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Afro-American Christian tradition, embodied particularly in Black Baptist, Methodist and Pentecostal Churches, but continuing also in other Black-led Protestant and Roman Catholic congregations, has been and continues to be an indigenous expression of the faith of the apostles in North America.

2. The Richmond Consultation affirms the World Council of Churches study "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today" and is committed to work with the WCC and other ecumenical bodies toward the unity we seek.

3. We invite the other churches participating in the Faith and Order movement to give greater study and recognition to how God has maintained the continuity of the Apostolic Faith primarily through the oral character and noncreedal styles of the African American tradition expressed in worship, witness and social struggle.

4. We urge the other member churches of the National and World Council Commissions on Faith and Order to take note of the unity of faith and practice that the Black Church has historically emphasized and to engage the Faith and Order movement in greater involvement in the struggle against racism and all forms of oppression as an essential element of the Apostolic confession.

5. We call upon Black churches in North and South America, the Caribbean and in Africa to confess boldly the faith we received from the Apostles, despite every effort made to distort and falsify it, and joining with us who were a part of this historic consultation in Richmond, to intensify their involvement in the Faith and Order movement by sharing the "gift of Blackness" with those of other traditions.

6. Finally, we urge that this report be published and widely disseminated by the Commission on Faith and Order of the WCC as a study document and that Black Christians all over the world be encouraged to initiate interracial discussion groups for the consideration of its content and implications for the ecumenical movement; and that the result of such dissemination and discussion be reported back to the Commission on Faith and Order by cooperating national councils.

Co-Chairs of the Consultation: David Shannon and Gayraud Wilmore.

Participants: Vinton Anderson, John Brandon, Oree Broomfield, Herbert Edwards, Willie Dell, Jacqueline Grant, Vincent Harris, Thomas Hoyt, Donald Jacobs, Miles Jones, John Kinney, Craig Lewis, Leonard Lovett, Fred Massey, Deborah McGill-Jackson, Pearl McNeil, Henry Mitchell, Ella Mitchell, C.J. Malloy, Albert Pero, Channing Phillips, Herbert Plummer, James DeOtis Roberts, Cornish Rogers, A.M. Spaulding, Olivia Stokes, Darius Swann, Robert Taylor, Richard Thompson, John Satterwhite. Commission on Faith and Order: Jeffrey Gros and William Rusch.

Full Documentation and related papers: *Midstream*, Volume XXIV, No. 4, October, 1985. Order from The Council on Christian Unity, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206; Cost $4.50, Single Issue.

Cornish Rogers, "The Gift of Blackness", (*Christian Century*, June 5-12, 1985) Gayraud S. Wilmore, "The Disturbing Ecumenism of the Black Church in America", (*Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 14 No. 8, September 1985).

Wheaton Philosophy Conference

by David Werther

Arthur Holmes, chairman of Wheaton's philosophy department, opened Wheaton College's thirty-second annual philosophy conference, "Applied Ethics: Doing Justice" (October 24-26), with his paper, "Biblical Justice and Modern Moral Philosophy." It was an appropriate beginning to the conference for two reasons. First, the paper included a biblical characterization of justice against which rival philosophic conceptions of justice could be critiqued. Second, Holmes' endorsement of a classical, and more particularly an Aristotelian conception of justice, was echoed throughout the conference. In recent years the Enlightenment conceptions of justice—where the emphasis is on moral character in the classical tradition—have been given pride of place in the works of John Rawls (Kant) and Robert Nozick (Locke); and many of the philosophic discussions of justice have focused on those works. At the Wheaton conference, however, the focus was clearly on Aristotle. Halfway through the conference, Holmes noted that "Aristotle has been resurrected again and again and again," and then assured the participants that "this was not planned or rigged."

Kenneth M. Sayre of the University of Notre Dame and Jon N. Moline of the University of Wisconsin-Madison addressed the topic of environmental ethics from the perspective of ancient philosophy. This was the first of four spheres of justice considered in the conference. Sayre turned to Plato for guidance, whereas Moline approached the issue from an Aristotelian perspective. Sayre argued that responsible stewards of the environment will uphold the mixture of measure, truth, and beauty Plato referred to in the *Philebus*. Moline held that responsible stewardship of the environment can be learned by seeking the guidance of those who have displayed "practical wisdom" in dealing with these issues. Thus complex environmental issues are not to be approached by an appeal to principles, but by an appeal to persons who evidence that which Aristotle refers to as "practical wisdom." This appeal to persons of practical wisdom may be suggestive with respect to Christian views on discipleship. Sayre and Moline, like Holmes, eschewed Enlightenment conceptions of justice in favor of the classical traditions.

This tradition in its Aristotelian form was resurrected again in the discussion of political justice. John Mare of Lehigh University and Richard Mouw of Fuller Theological Seminary both examined political justice from the perspective of virtue. Hare contended that there is a virtue, the pursuit of consensus, which is characteristic of politicians. Mouw maintained that Christian politicians ought to act as moral pedagogues and that their instruction ought to be shaped by the Christian community. Just as in Moline's paper on environmental ethics, the application of justice to a particular topic focused on persons, not principles.

The two final topics addressed in the conference were justice in medicine and justice in business. Kenneth Vaux of the University of Illinois Medical Center viewed ethics in science, technology, and medicine from the perspective of a dialectic between justice and mercy. David Fletcher of Wheaton College answered affirmatively the question, "Is there a right to health care?" Thomas Donaldson of Loyola University considered the justice of the distribution of technological risks in and between nations. In the conference's final address, Elmer Johnson, vice president of General Motors, shared his application to business of James Gustafson's conception of moral discernment.

Holmes indicated that next year's conference will consist of a series of addresses by Alvin Plantinga on the topic of Reformed epistemology. The following year the conference will be devoted to a consideration of the ethics of virtue. Given the attention shown to virtue by this year's speakers, it will be interesting to see how the thinking of the Christian philosophic community develops with respect to this subject in the next two years. Will Aristotle be buried, or will he again be resurrected?

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TSF CAMPUS MINISTRY

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Pinnock's Major Work on the Doctrine of Scripture

by Donald K. McKim

The Scripture Principle
by Clark H. Pinnock (Harper & Row, 1984, 251 pp., $14.95).

Through all the wranglings by evangelicals over the Bible, we have missed a strong, sustained, systematic statement about the many dimensions of the nature of Scripture and how to interpret it.

Clark Pinnock has provided such a statement with his recent, very significant work. In it he explores the doctrine of Scripture and comes down squarely on the side of Scripture's supreme authority for the church and the Christian. He does this in the face of many challenges from the varied perspectives of both "liberals" and "conservatives." To present this pose and sustain such a stance is not easy. So we can expect his work to be criticized from both ends of the theological spectrum.

Pinnock is concerned with what he calls the "Scripture principle." This is simply the recognition of the authority of the Bible. It means "belief in the Scriptures as the canon and yardstick of Christian truth, the unique locus of the Word of God." The Introduction to his work is a discussion of the importance of maintaining this Scripture principle in light of the various crises it faces and which the rest of his book details. What is needed, Pinnock argues, is "a systematic treatment of the Scripture principle that faces all the questions squarely and supplies a model for understanding that will help us transcend the current impasse." (this Introduction was published in the January/February 1985 issue of *TSF Bulletin*).

The Scripture Principle has three parts with three chapters in each part. The major divisions are: *The Word of God,* in which Pinnock deals with the "Pattern of Revelation," "The Biblical Witness," and "Inspiration and Authority"; *Human Language,* where the topics are "Incarnation and Accommodation," "The Human Dimension" and "Biblical Criticism"; and *Sword of the Spirit,* where the concerns of "Word and Spirit," "Unfolding Revelation" and "The Act of Interpretation" are taken up. Major components of the doctrine of Scripture are amply addressed and the major thrust of Pinnock's work is seen in the three main parts. The Bible is the Word of God that comes to us in human language and comes alive for us by the work of the Holy Spirit. Each element here is crucial. Truncated views of Scripture will eliminate or underplay any of these three realities which Pinnock in a balanced way maintains in parity. He gives cogent expression to the positive theological value of each ingredient, stating forcefully the implications of subsuming any of the three dimensions.

Pinnock sees Scripture as the Word of God that leads sinners to a saving knowledge of God in Christ. As a deposit of revelational truth and the religious classic of Christianity, Scripture is revelation through both propositional communication and personal communion. Scripture's purpose is to give us a right relationship with God, and through a variety of literary modes God gives in Scripture a norm or rule for faith and practice. Inspiration, Pinnock argues, does not occur only with the final redactor of Scripture but over a long period of time as a "charism" of God's people.

Part II of this work is a strong statement on recognizing that Scripture comes to us in the form of the human, having been written by real human creatures. Three categories expressing this human dimension are accommodation, incarnation and human weakness. Pinnock wants to maintain a "dynamic personal model" of inspiration that gives full room to both the divine initiative and the human response in the composition of Scripture. In inspiration, "God does not decide every word that is used, one by one, but works in the writers in such a way that they make full use of their own skills and vocabulary while giving expression to the divinely inspired message being communicated to them and through them." The Bible is not written according to how we in the Western world think history-writing should be done, but rather by the principles of ancient historiography. Biblical criticism can be either a positive or negative force, depending on whether it helps us hear God's Word in Scripture or seeks only to excise the supernatural from Scripture.

Part III deals with the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Word of God in Scripture as well as with God's unfolding revelation in Scripture. It also includes a most helpful chapter on the art of biblical interpretation, which develops some basic principles for hermeneutics. Pinnock stresses that "revelation has to be received and become meaningful to those whom it addresses. The external letter must become an inner Word through the work of the Spirit." While "the Bible is a deposit of propositions that we should receive as from God, is also the living Word when it functions as the sword of the Spirit." "What is needed," urges Pinnock,

> is an encounter with God in and through the text and a discernment as to what God is saying to us now. The possibilities of meaning are not limited to the original intent of the text, although that is the anchor of interpretation, but can arise from the interaction of the Spirit and the Word. We read the text and in it seek the will of the Lord for today.

In his final chapter, Pinnock shows how we are saved from hermeneutical chaos by the safeguards and controls that "fend off radical subjectivity." These include the text itself, tradition, and the living community of believers.

One sees in this book a clear call to recognize Scripture as God's authoritative Word. This Scripture functions first and foremost to bring us to a saving knowledge of God in Jesus Christ and to give guidance for the life of faith in the present day. *The Scripture Principle* is a call to commitment to the Bible while honestly facing the challenges to scriptural authority in the church. These include the perspectives on Scripture from liberal theology in its many forms, and from those committed to a biblical criticism which imports modern, "scientific" standards on biblical texts, not permitting the possibility of the reality of the supernatural to which the texts themselves witness.

This book is also a call to those in evangelical circles to approach Scripture on its own terms and not to impose theological presuppositions or categories that do violence to the essential nature of the biblical materials. For an understanding of revelation and inspiration, Pinnock urges a recognition of the human dimensions of the Bible as a book written in an ancient near-Eastern cultural setting by many authors who employed a variety of literary forms and who through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit communicated God's message of salvation to the world.

On the contentious question of using the term *inerrancy* to describe the nature of Scripture, Pinnock sees two sides and makes a choice. On the one hand, he recognizes that the slogan "What the Bible says, God says" is "too simplistic" and that the case for biblical errorlessness is "not as good as it looks." He cautions that we should not ask whether God can lie, for "what we might expect God to do is never as important as what he actually does." Pinnock concludes that the case for total inerrancy just "isn't there"; the inerrancy theory is "a logical deduction" without firm exegetical support, and "those who press it hard are elevating reason over Scripture."

On the other hand, Pinnock sees "inerrancy" as a term to describe the Bible's fundamental trustworthiness. He believes the New Testament encourages a trusting attitude along with a lenient definition of "inerrancy," evidencing the deep confidence we ought to have in Scripture. A moderate use of the term possesses a nice combination of "strength with flexibility." Pinnock predicts this moderate definition will lead many people to "flock to its use" when the term is "fairly interpreted," thus allowing a "great deal of latitude in application." So he chooses to retain the term.

In the face of the vociferousness of those who so staunchly claim inerrancy and whose presuppositions are at crucial points so radically different from Pinnock's, it is questionable whether the choice to retain the term is helpful or even possible. To hope to be able to salvage this seventeenth-century theory which, as it is used by its loudest defenders today, moves in directions Pinnock wishes to avoid, is a hard struggle indeed. Unfortunately, Pinnock has not yet been persuaded that the "Reformation principle"—that "Scripture can be trusted in what it teaches and relied upon as the infallible norm of the church"—is better conveyed by the term *infallible,* used by the Reformation Confessions themselves, than by the nineteenth-century Hodge-Warfield "inerrancy" theory which is still the major operative model for contemporary inerrantists. To demonstrate this, one need note only that, while Pinnock mentions a piece by Roger Nicole as providing a "careful and responsible" definition of inerrancy, Nicole himself has strongly criticized Pinnock's book, especially at this point, quoting approvingly Carl F.H. Henry's assessment that Pinnock "retains inerrancy as a concept, but seems to thin it out almost to the breaking point" (*Christianity Today,* February 1, 1985, p. 68). In light of this, if Pinnock thinks his plea for flexibility will be able to reverse the stringent definitions of Hodge-Warfield now consciously propagated in new garb by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, one wonders how well-founded his judgment here can be.

Unfortunately, too, Pinnock has also accepted the strict inerrantists' reading of the church's tradition on Scripture in spite of the work by Jack Rogers and Donald McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (Harper & Row, 1979). While Pinnock's current position accords well with many of the positive emphases of this

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work, in rejecting its historical arguments, he must defend his use of the term *inerrancy* despite the inerrantists who maintain that only the strict view has the proper historical justification. Pinnock may legitimately do this as a systematic theologian. But he should hardly expect to persuade those who have invested their lives in defending what they believe is the church's historic tradition. Whether a "moderate definition" of inerrancy will "carry the day" as Pinnock bravely expects is doubtful, yet remains to be seen.

But this is a major work on the nature of Scripture. It deserves to be widely read and used as the best systematic evangelical treatment of the doctrine. It is a splendid statement since it combines biblical fidelity with a clear-eyed vision of how technical difficulties about Scripture can be approached using the best positive tools of theological scholarship from the perspective of faith. One should not lament (as some have and will) that Pinnock's views have changed since his 1971 work, *Biblical Revelation*. The direction of his development has been toward an honest, open appraisal of Scripture in light of its own witness and contemporary questions. Yet Pinnock has not wavered in his commitment to Scripture as God's authoritative Word which has as its "central purpose" to "bring people to know and love God." For this commitment we can all be grateful, and from this book we can all learn as we seek to be faithful to the Word of God.

A Critique of Carl Henry's *Summa*

by Alan Padgett

God, Revelation, and Authority
by Carl F. H. Henry (Word Books, 1976-1983, 6 vols., $24.95 each).

Carl Henry is well known to readers of *TSF Bulletin*, as the foremost representative of evangelical thought in America today. We have reason to rejoice that he has finished his *magnum opus*, a work of six large volumes. He has brought into the twentieth century that great movement in American Reformed thought which extends back to the Puritans, on through Princeton Orthodoxy, and down to Henry himself. His theology exhibits both the positive and negative aspects of this tradition.

Volume one (438 pp.) is subtitled, "God Who Speaks and Shows: Preliminary Considerations." Henry begins with a critique of culture and modern epistemology and philosophy, setting his own view over against that of others. These chapters function as a prolegomenon, and discuss the method which controls the rest of the work. In volumes two, three and four (373, 536, and 674 pp. respectively), Henry expounds at great length his "Fifteen Theses on Revelation." These are:
(1) Revelation is freely initiated by God.
(2) Revelation is given for human benefit.
(3) God nevertheless transcends his own revelation.
(4) The fact that God gave revelation assures that revelation has a unity.
(5) The nature, content, and variety of revelation are God's determination.
(6) God's revelation is personal.
(7) God reveals himself in nature and history, as well as Scripture.
(8) The climax of revelation is Jesus of Nazareth.
(9) The mediating agent in all revelation is the Logos of God (the Second Person of the Trinity).
(10) God's revelation is conceptual-verbal.
(11) The Bible is the reservoir and conduit of divine truth.
(12) The Holy Spirit is active in revelation by (a) inspiring the authors of Scripture, and (b) illuminating our reading and understanding of Scripture.
(13) The Holy Spirit also enables individuals to savingly appropriate revelation.
(14) The church approximates the kingdom in miniature, and models the appropriated realities of divine revelation.
(15) The self-manifesting God will unveil his glory in a crowning revelation of power and judgment.

In the final two volumes (443 and 566 pp. respectively), subtitled, "God Who Stands and Stays," Henry deals with the doctrine of God against the backdrop of the first four books. He argues for the traditional view of God found in Protestant orthodoxy of the seventeenth century, brought up to date merely by reacting to and criticizing modern "heresies" such as process theology, feminist theology, and neo-orthodoxy. Henry argues for a literal heaven and hell, a six-day creation, Angels, Devils, and a God who is immutable, impassible, and timeless.

I cannot deal adequately with Henry's multi-volume work in this review. The only adequate response would be another multi-volumed dogmatics! I wish to focus here on the "Fifteen Theses," since these form the heart of Henry's work.

There are many strengths in this, the largest systematics ever published in America. Henry has certainly done his homework, as is obvious from the many outlines of other books, and the large bibliographies at the end of each volume. To read Henry carefully is to acquire a theological education! There are many sections in which he has effectively argued for an evangelical position over against other options in modern theology. In the first volume alone, I commend and recommend the chapters on "Revelation and Myth," "The Ways of Knowing," "The Rise and Fall of Logical Positivism," "Secular Man and Ultimate Concerns," "The Meaning or Myths Man [*sic*] Lives By," etc. The problem with this, on the other hand, is that Henry tends to devote page after page to outlines and quotations from other perspectives. This often makes his books repetitive. More than once, I had to force myself to finish a chapter. From time to time, I had to perform redaction-criticism to discover what Henry himself thought amidst all the quotations and summaries! The bottom line is, these books have not been edited well enough. We might expect more from the founder and former editor of *Christianity Today*.

Much of Henry's theology is excellent, and there is a great deal to be learned from his *summa*. The discussions of Theses 1, 2, 7, 8, and 15, *inter alia*, are really very good. The rest of this essay will be negative, however. Such is the nature of a review! But what follows should be taken in the context of my positive regard for Henry's work.

A good part of the time, Henry complains about the illogic, confusion, and contradiction present in other theologians. We need, therefore, to examine his own philosophy.

When Henry uses the word *logic*, he always means Aristotelian logic. He does not appear to realize that there are other logics, such as Chinese or Hegelian. While symbolic logic works well for abstract thought, I believe that Hegelian logic, for example, has much to say for itself with respect to physical and human nature. In the real world, things are sometimes not so black and white as "A does not equal not-A": reality often involves elements of both. A modern automobile is neither M (metal) nor Non-M, but elements of both. While Henry might complain that Hegel is a "pagan" philosopher, surely he was much more Christian than Aristotle!

Perhaps the greatest weakness in Henry's philosophy is his undefended and naive dependence on Gordon H. Clark. Because of this, Henry's theology becomes rather "hyper-rationalist": truth is found *only* in propositions. True propositions are clearly known and easily accessible in an inerrant Bible, and Aristotelian logic reveals the machinations of the Divine Mind.

I believe, on the contrary, that the biblical notion of truth is not limited to propositions. For someone who believes in inerrancy, Henry has a strange tendency to read his views into the Bible, rather than perform legitimate exegesis. One instance of this eisegesis can be found in his discussion of the Logos in John (3:482-487; cf. any standard commentary on John). The Bible does speak about truth, and about the Logos, but this is first and foremost a Person for John (Jn. 1:14, cf. 14:6, "I Am the Truth"). Paul, also, does believe that the "love of the truth" will lead

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us to salvation and sanctification in the Holy Spirit (2 Thess. 2:12-15). But for Paul this truth is a story (God-spell) about a Person, not a set of inerrant propositions. We fundamentally believe in Jesus Christ, not in a set of propositions. While belief in Jesus surely *implies* belief in certain propositions (i.e., that Jesus lived, taught, died, rose, etc.)) *this is clearly secondary.* The foundational belief in the New Testament is always a belief "in," not a belief "that"; or, better, our belief "in" (personal trust) leads us to certain beliefs "that" (beliefs about certain propositions). Henry is aware of this and tries to deal with it (3:433), but the attempt only reveals the depth of his onesidedness.

We need not follow Henry in order to believe in objective, divine truth. Objectivity can be maintained in an eternal Person, the Living Word, as much as in a set of eternal, inerrant propositions (as T. F. Torrance has clearly shown in his many writings). Indeed, Henry's way of salvation owes far more to Plato and Aristotle than it does to Jesus. Henry confesses that belief in Jesus is "a kind of literary shorthand" (3:438) for belief in propositions! This can only lead to the idea of salvation-by-knowledge, a return to Gnosticism (not a secret gnosis, but a gnosis none the less!). Henry's dialogue with Torrance (3:216-229) discloses the weakness of his own position; his withholding of the name "evangelical" from Torrance is sheer prejudice. Thesis six claims that revelation is personal, but this boils down to the idea that God reveals his Names in the propositions of the Bible. This is *personal* self-revelation?

Another major problem with Henry's *summa* is that he has declined to see significant value in much of modern thought. This arises from his theological method. Henry's approach is what Nicholas Wolterstorff calls "foundationalism" (see his *Reason Within the Bounds of Religion,* 2nd ed., 1984). Wolterstorff, Alvin Plantinga, William Alston, and other evangelical philosophers have rightly rejected foundationalism, as did C. S. Peirce and J. H. Newman in the previous century. There is no pure Cartesian set of indubitable propositions from which we can derive philosophy and theology. Against Henry, I must insist that the Bible cannot be a foundation of inerrant propositions, upon which we build the edifice of theology. Henry has chosen not to draw upon the insights of modern philosophy, and his theology is based on this questionable theological method. If, as he claims, the Bible is the set of foundational, inerrant propositions, then all we need to do is arrange these propositions in systematic order, criticize other positions, and we have pure, timeless truth. Theology just doesn't work that way! Henry's theological method neither fits the phenomena of Scripture nor performs the actual task of philosophy and theology. (For a much better view, still upholding inerrancy, see Clark Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* reviewed elsewhere in this issue.)

In one important area especially—hermeneutics—Henry has failed to learn from modern thought. His view of interpretation can only be described as naive. He has read widely in this field, and as usual summarizes important books, but only to reject them (4:296-315). He insists that "revelation has a propositional-verbal character and can be directly extracted [!] from the scriptural text. . . . the Bible is a book of divinely disclosed doctrinal truths comprehensible to any reader" (4:300). According to Henry, exegesis presupposes a fixed methodology and is a scientific quest for objective and permanent knowledge (4:304). This view cannot stand up against the facts of science and Scripture. Kurt Godel in mathematics and Werner Heisenberg in physics *proved* that there is no objective knowledge of the sort Henry is looking for. In philosophy of science, M. Polanyi and T. Kuhn both clearly demonstrate that science is not "objective" in the sense of personal prejudice and interest playing no part in scientific discovery. The fact is that we cannot escape our life situation and our personal interests in order to obtain pure, timeless truths. Henry is dreaming the impossible dream.

On the other hand, I must commend Henry for his cautious acceptance in volume four of the historical-critical method. He rightly accepts form-criticism, for example (4:81f.) while rejecting conclusions based on false presuppositions. Henry takes Harold Lindsell to task for the latter's anti-intellectualism in rejecting the historical-critical method (4:393). He plainly states that "historical criticism is never philosophically or theologically neutral" (4:403). One only wishes he had come to this conclusion in his discussion of hermeneutics!

All in all, I feel Henry has done evangelicalism both good and harm in this *summa.* The good comes from his clear placing of evangelical options in the mainstream of current theology. Though some may ignore his work, they cannot claim that evangelical theology has not been ably articulated. On the other hand, Henry has harmed evangelical theology by his uncritical acceptance of the philosophy of Gordon H. Clark. This philosophy is simply not viable and will give some a poor excuse to reject Henry's theology out of hand. It also leads to a *summa* in which page after page is spent discussing the views of other scholars, only to reject them in the end. Henry places himself in a lonely corner, where just a handful of conservative theologians are willing even to dialogue with him. He has failed to profit from modern thought, and therefore has failed to write the modern exposition (not just *defense*!) of evangelical theology we so desperately need.

Erickson's Three-Volume *Magnum Opus*

by Clark H. Pinnock

Christian Theology
by Millard J. Erickson (Baker Book House, 3 vols., 1983, 1984, 1985, 1274 pp., $57.85).

Millard Erickson is now dean of Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and has labored for two decades to write a major systematic theology which would replace A. H. Strong in the teaching of ministerial students. This he has accomplished with great distinction, and has given to all of us a lucidly written and carefully organized evangelical theology. I do not think one has to be Baptist to recognise that here is the basic level textbook in Christian doctrine we have been needing for some time. It is quality work from first to last. Erickson is current in biblical studies, historical theology, and philosophical issues, and presents the fruits of his considerable labors to us in an eminently readable and edifying form. Almost wherever you look in the vast extent of this *magnum opus* you discover wise teaching on the major issues confronting our theological convictions today. And the preacher will find here the material for a lifetime of pulpit work. I am frankly filled with delight when I contemplate this magnificent production.

One can tell something about this work by noting the people to whom Erickson dedicates each of the three volumes: to Bernard Ramm his first theology professor, to William Hordern his doctoral mentor, and to Wolfhart Pannenberg who has been an inspiration to him. Ramm symbolizes the solid evangelical setting in which Erickson lives and works. Hordern represents the larger realm of theological thought adjacent to it. And Pannenberg stands for the high level of reflection which Erickson wants to engage in. Because he has incorporated the wealth of theological investigation from beyond his own confessional circles, Erickson has been able to create the masterpiece he has. Here is an evangelical theologian who has grown up in the family of conservative theology and not forsaken it, but has also moved beyond its confines in his search for good ideas. He has been able to integrate these insights into a framework which respects the authority of the Bible, employing them in the service of an evangelical witness and piety.

The way the author proceeds will not surprise anyone, though it does raise a question. He begins, after clearing up some preliminary matters, by exploring the issue of how we know God. He goes into general and then special revelation, and makes the case for Scripture as a product of the latter and the touchstone of authority in theology. On the basis of the canonical principle he then advances to an exposition of all the various top-

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ics familiar to systematic theology, based upon the data Scripture affords. But is it proper to start with the Bible rather than the gospel? If the gospel is the heart of Scripture, should we not start with it? Is this gospel true because the Bible happens to teach it, or does the Bible derive its authority from the good news? I am asking the Lutheran question: should not a systematic theology begin with the good news even though, admittedly, it must move swiftly to "what preaches Christ"? How evangelical is it to start with something other than the evangel?

What Erickson actually does start with is the presupposition of God revealing himself in the Bible (p. 33). "From this basic postulate we may proceed to elaborate an entire theological system by unfolding the contents of the Scriptures." He seems to rest the issue of validation, not upon the narrative of the gospel, but upon verbal revelation as a kind of rational axiom. And like a true rationalist he does not want to allow for much of a role for natural theology which would depend precariously upon empirical factors. Erickson, then, can be placed in the rationalist tradition in evangelicalism typified by E. J. Carnell, Gordon Clark, and Carl Henry. For reasons of apologetics he does not begin with the gospel but with the axiom of verbal revelation. In this, Christian theology would not differ essentially from Islamic theology. I cannot help but sense there is something wrong about this state of affairs. Do we really wish to compare sacred books with the Muslim, or to contrast good news with bad news?

On the doctrine of Scripture, Erickson plays it safe and espouses inerrancy, even though he provides plenty of reasons why someone might not want to do so. I say he plays it safe because everyone knows inerrancy is the word one has to use if one hopes to abide comfortably in the evangelical camp these days. And why not? Inerrancy is a word with no precise meaning; so if it is the password for getting safely past the sentries, why not use it? It frees one to do his work in relative peace without fear of attack.

Erickson's theology stands in the Calvinistic Baptist tradition as Strong's did. Given the elite status which Calvinism enjoys in the evangelical establishment, this ensures wide acceptance. In fact, of course, Erickson's Calvinism is very diluted. He admits, in a discussion of God's plan, that some Calvinists would not recognize what he is proposing to be Calvinistic at all (p. 359). For my part, I do not doubt that Erickson remains in the truly Reformed camp. My problem with it is a matter of whether what he says is coherent. How can God be said to be in control of everything in a determinist sense and not be identified as the author of sin? Throwing in a litle Arminian talk at key points softens the impression, but does nothing to promote understanding. I am glad to hear Erickson say God "permits" sin and calls us into a partnership with himself. Yet for the life of me I cannot see what these sentiments have to do with Calvinism or how they fit in with it. In a discussion of the extent of Christ's atonement, for example, Erickson is treading on Arminian ground. He says that the atonement is universal and applies to all sinners, and then explains why all are not saved: "There is the possibility that someone for whom salvation is available may fail to accept it" (p. 835). Again, Erickson refers to this idea as the most diluted form of Calvinism. Indeed, it is so diluted that one could easily declare himself Arminian and say such things with greater conviction and coherence. But let me add that, if he were inclined to do so, one would also incur displeasure from the evangelical establishment which requires its theology at least to appear Calvinistic, even if considerably diluted. Examine, for instance, *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Walter Elwell, and see if you can find a single article bearing upon any topic of interest to Calvinism which was not written by a Calvinist. Certainly Erickson is wise to appear at times to be Arminian but at no time actually to be so.

But there is a side to Reformed theology not well represented in this work or in much of the evangelicalism it comes out of. I am referring to its culture-building social dimension. From Calvin came the powerful Christ the Transformer motif which has become so influential in the ecumenical church of today. Calvin believed that God wanted to take dominion again over his fallen creation, and expected his people to implement his statutes in society whenever they could. On the basis of this idea Geneva itself was governed, and from it sprang the Puritan political theology which bore fruit in England and in New England. Indeed, it would be hard to deny that the Catholics, the Lutherans, and practically all others have taken over this culture-transforming vision from Calvin and made it their own—all others, that is, except a large body of pre-millenial, heavily baptistic evangelicals who continue to define salvation in narrowly individualistic terms and do not expect God to use Christians to change the face of human culture in this age.

Having blamed Erickson for being too Calvinistic in theology proper, I now object to his not being Calvinistic enough when it comes to the holistic scope of salvation. He narrows down the atonement to penal substitution (p. 815) and discusses the nature of salvation in very nearly exclusively individualistic terms (Part 10). He even says, "Jesus made it clear that the eternal spiritual welfare of the individual is infinitely more important than the supplying of temporal needs" (p. 905). Is this perhaps the reason why the kingdom of God as a topic is not treated either under Christology or under salvation? Is it any wonder that forty million American evangelicals have been unable to impart to the public square a tangy Christian flavor? How could they if they have no hope for culture except to be taken out of it by our returning Lord Jesus?

Fortunately, large numbers of evangelicals today do not live by the theology which they believe and Erickson presents, and they are beginning to move out to reclaim before it is too late (if it is not already too late) areas of Christian influence in society. But sooner or later we will need an evangelical systematic theology which will legitimate rather than discourage the work of culture reclamation we are already starting to engage in. I do not think liberation theology has much to offer, since it is in the last analysis a thinly disguised religious version of Marxist politics. I think we are going to need the old Calvinistic eschatology called post-millenialism. This is the hope which places victory rather than defeat before our eyes.

This is the evangelical systematic theology we need to have at hand. It covers so many topics so well and supplies the foundations so generously. I think we have to go beyond it in a number of ways, but it informs the discussion richly and sets up a marvelous base camp from which to climb higher. Many of us will be enabled to scale further heights in evangelical theology only because Erickson labored so diligently to attain the high level of theological understanding evident in this fine set.

BOOK REVIEWS

History and Historical Understanding **edited by C. T. McIntire and Ronald A. Wells (Eerdmans, 1984, 144 pp., $6.95). Reviewed by Brother Jeffrey Gros, F.S.C., Director of the Commission on Faith and Order, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA.**

This study of history and historians by eight well known authors, four of them teaching at Calvin College, is a welcome addition to the literature. Not only is it helpful to bring the Gospel alive from its historical sources for historians and biblical scholars, but also for teachers of Christianity and the sophisticated general reader.

The diversity of points of view among the authors provide a very enriched understanding, ranging from Langdon Gilkey's essay on meaning to Swieringa's apologetic for using scientific resources in history. Of course, as in any anthology, the varieties of style make for very different levels of interest for diverse readers. However, Marty's discussion of the difference that Christianity makes to the historian, the contribution that history can make to the believer, and the historian's vocation provides stimulating spiritual reading for any Christian scholar. Likewise, Marsden's discussion of the question of common sense and Baconian science, as it relates to subjectivism, interpretation and theory, is a helpful analysis not only for the background of the historian but also for the biblical scholar. Rienstra's essay on objectivity and the tensions involved lay open many of the epistemological tensions inherent in the historical process. One will find Handy's essay on how history is to serve the present as its cultural memory and on the tensions between history and faith to be an enlivening contribution.

The final essay draws on data by Van Kely. It relies on methodologies developed around the interpretation of the French Revolution, but has implementations for the hermeneutics of history in a wider context. Indeed, the McIntyre article verges on a metaphysical theory as he discusses the question of the

historical dimension of our world.

These short essays will be a challenge for those who are not technicians in the historical disciplines, but a challenge well worth the effort. It would be fascinating to put these essays in dialogue with some non-Protestant historians whose biblical doctrine of church sees history as carrying some normative weight in the interpretation of the scriptural revelation. Indeed, Gilkey and Marty, among others, witness to the fact that there is a strong self-understanding among historians that tradition is indeed a norm of the Christian faith, even if it is a norm subordinated to Scripture. By uncovering the relationship of faith and history, modern evangelical historians are recapturing the ancient faith of the church that the Spirit is somehow operative in the Christian community through the process of establishing tradition. The dialogues over Scripture and tradition, church authority and biblical authority, and the hermeneutical norms to be used in these discussions will be greatly enriched by these distillations of the thinking of major historians.

Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry
(Faith and Order Paper No. 111, World Council of Churches, 1982, 33 pp., $3.50). Reviewed by John Deschner, Lehman Professor of Christian Doctrine, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

This small booklet, by far the most widely disseminated publication in the history of the World Council of Churches, is being widely regarded today as an important ecumenical event in its own right.

More than fifteen years in the actual drafting, and based on more than sixty years of ecumenical dialogue, this text presents the growing "convergence" among churches concerning these three historic, church-dividing issues. As such, it represents a new fact in the ecumenical situation which churches are beginning to take into account.

The process behind the text is as important as its content. Around 1970, the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC began to feel that the time had come to assess the theological results of the many ecumenical conferences and meetings since the first World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne in 1927. Typically, at such meetings, responsible spokespersons for the various churches had reached and documented points of ecumenical consensus on theological questions of church-dividing importance. Would it not be useful to summarize this material and ask the churches to respond to it?

Five years of work produced a first substantial draft. The Nairobi WCC Assembly (1975) then asked the churches for some response to this "Accra draft." More than 100 of the approximately 300 Protestant and Orthodox churches in the WCC responded, ranging from brief letters from archbishops to a 60 page commission report. Especially significant was a substantial Roman Catholic participation, since the Faith and Order Commission, with its own bylaws, is the only place where Rome officially participates in the ecumenical theological dialogue. It can be fairly claimed, then, that this paper arises out of the most widely represented theological forum today.

The many loose-leaf volumes of response material were then thoroughly analyzed, and over the next several years the "Accra draft" was thoroughly rewritten a number of times. The aim was to say as much as could be said together, but also to record the disagreements as honestly and clearly as the agreements. And, at major points of divergence, the report attempted to discern possible future convergences—i.e., points beyond the divergent churches at present, but which the churches felt might be possible to attain in faithfulness to each church's understanding of the apostolic message.

The resulting text was once again thoroughly debated and much revised at the 1982 Commission meeting at Lima. Then, to the astonishment of many, it was unanimously approved (with no abstentions) by all of the nearly 120 theologians present (Protestant, Orthodox, Roman Catholic) to be "mature enough" for referral to the churches once again, this time with a request for some kind of official response from their most authoritative body by December 1985.

The kind of "response" asked for is significant. This is no facile request for "adoption." The WCC has no authority to propose doctrine for the churches. Rather, the churches were asked for some kind of official statement about the kind of notice they were prepared to make of the existence and ecumenical role of such a document. Specifically, they were asked about (1) "the extent to which your church can recognize in this text the faith of the Church through the ages"; and, in light of that, (2) "the consequences your church can draw from this text for its relations and dialogues with other churches, particularly with those churches which also recognize the text as an expression of the apostolic faith," and then (3) "the guidance your church can take from this text for its worship, educational, ethical, and spiritual life and witness."

The interest in this "Lima text" among the churches has been enormous. Hundreds of thousands of copies have been distributed and studied. Translations now approach thirty in number, with more to come. Hundreds of churches have designed impressive response processes, most of them including substantial local participation, and many culminating in formal action by general synods, assemblies, or episcopal colleges. As of this writing, several months before the response deadline, more than forty member churches have already submitted their formal response. A preliminary assessment at the recent Faith and Order Commission meeting in Norway showed them to be overwhelmingly positive in character, with many proposals for further development of this dialogue process.

In content, the "Lima text" does not aim at a full systematic statement of doctrine on the three points discussed, but rather at what is "required and sufficient" to generate *mutual recognition* of the churches by each other: mutual recognition of baptism, visible eucharistic fellowship, and mutual recognition of ministers. Nevertheless, the text has proven to be rich enough in constructive teaching to provide stimulation and guidance to many churches for development of their own doctrine in these matters—especially, but by no means only, in the so-called Third World.

Criticism? A number of points require further development, especially concerning the relation of word and sacrament, and the apostolic authority of ministers. The primary criticisms, though, are perhaps what might be expected: from Protestants that it is too "Catholic"; from Catholics and Orthodox that it is too "Protestant"; and from the "Third World" that it is too much cast in Greco-Roman-North Atlantic modes of thought.

This Lima text is to be recommended for study by any who wish to deepen their own understanding of the meaning of baptism, of the Lord's Supper, and of ministry; or of the ecumenical situation among the churches today at the level of theological differences; or, what is more important, of their own perception of the Apostolic Faith as a power not simply behind us but ahead.

Political Issues in Luke-Acts
edited by Richard J. Cassidy and Philip J. Scharper (Orbis, 1983, 180 pp., $9.95). Reviewed by Craig L. Blomberg, Professor of Bible and Religion, Palm Beach Atlantic College, West Palm Beach, Florida.

How should a Christian respond to social evils? Extremist positions clamor for attention, be they violent brands of liberation theology or escapist retreats of certain fundamentalists. In developing what he hoped was a centrist position between these poles, Fr. Richard Cassidy of St. John's Provincial Seminary, in his 1978 work entitled *Jesus, Politics and Society*, compared Jesus' approach favorably with that of Mohandas Gandhi. Especially in light of Luke's portrait, Cassidy saw Jesus as rejecting violence but not resistance or protest, and concluded that he was "deeply committed to establishing social relationships based upon service and humility; since such qualities were little valued in the society around him, there was a constant tension between his positions and those sanctioned by the existing order" (p. 75).

Now Cassidy has collaborated with Philip Scharper of Orbis Books to edit a volume of essays furthering the debate which his earlier volume enlivened. The ten authors, from both sides of the Atlantic, reflect various mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic backgrounds. Three have clearly addressed the topic promised by the book's title, four deal with the more limited issue of Jesus' death, and another three address broader social issues with political relevance only in a very general sense.

In the first of these categories fall Robert O'Toole's "Luke's Position on Politics and Society in Luke-Acts," Willard Swartley's "Politics and Peace (*Eirene*) in Luke's Gospel," and J.D.M. Derrett's "Luke's Perspective on Tribute to Caeser." All three utilize

redaction criticism to highlight Luke's distinctives. O'Toole finds him advocating full use of Roman polity for legal protection, yet leaving the door open for more radical, undefined action, and concludes that "structures which do not assist the disadvantaged must be removed" (p. 14). Swartley contrasts Cassidy with Conzelmann who views Luke as de-politicizing the gospel and who recommends using Luke's *eirene* texts (without ever explaining this choice of criterion) to judge between the two. He discovers that Cassidy (like John Yoder before him) has dealt more adequately with the passages in which Luke speaks of peace, but that they cannot "be seduced into either the Pietist or Sadducee-Zealot perversions" (p. 35). Derrett rejects the traditional interpretation of Luke 20:20-26 as delineating separate spheres of political and religious authority, viewing this and other New Testament passages as establishing clear conditions which limit rulers' powers. Tribute, he emphasizes, does not equal obedience. Derrett fails, however, to persuade that Luke is significantly different from Mark or Matthew on any of this.

In the second category fall the closing contributions to the volume: Charles Talbert's "Martyrdom in Luke-Acts and the Lukan Social Ethic," Daryl Schmidt's "Luke's 'Innocent' Jesus: A Scriptural Apologetic," Jane Via's "According to Luke Who Put Jesus to Death?" and Cassidy's own "Luke's Audience, the Chief Priests, and the Motive for Jesus' Death." Via and Cassidy, without reference to each other's articles, debate the extent of the role of the chief priests in the Lukan Jesus' death and prove only that they are both trying to strain too much from too little. Schmidt very briefly illustrates how the charges against Jesus in Luke are not as false as sometimes thought. Talbert's offering proves by far the most weighty of the four. He makes two main points, corresponding to the title of his article, though the link between them needs strengthening. On the one hand, Luke's view of Jesus' death basically agrees with Jewish and Greco-Roman views of martyrdom, especially in their legitimating and evangelistic functions. On the other hand, Cassidy's view fails to distinguish Jesus' attitude to political rulers (indifference) from his approach to religious authorities (non-violent resistance). In what may be the most important statement of the entire book, Talbert therefore endorses Yoder's thesis "that the first duty of the church for society is to be the church. That means to be a society which through the way its members deal with one another demonstrates to the world what love means in social relations." Thus Luke's Jesus "is no more a social activist of the Gandhi variety than of the Zealot type"; rather "he is preoccupied with ordering the life of the people of God" (p. 109).

The middle three essays treat more disparate material. Massyngbaerde Ford ("Reconciliation and Forgiveness in Luke's Gospel") highlights Luke's concern for Jesus' love of his enemies, especially tax-collectors and Samaritans, but she breaks little fresh ground. F.W. Danker ("Reciprocity in the Ancient World and in Acts 15:23-29") discovers parallels to Luke's letter describing the decision of the Apostolic Council in correspondence from Greco-Roman benefactors to their public. Reciprocal benefit rather than authoritative coercion sets the tone in each case. Danker's theological conclusion is crucial—Acts 15 is not establishing a "law"—but his historical deduction that the Hellenistic parallels diminish Luke's credibility in "recapturing the past" does not follow without additional discussion. The strangest article of all comes from Quentin Quesnell ("The Women at Luke's Supper"). *In nuce*, Quesnell argues that since more than "the twelve" (including women) surrounded Jesus throughout Luke's gospel and into Acts 1, then more than "the twelve" (including women) were likely present at the Last Supper. The argument is plausible, but the data are insufficient to prove much one way or the other. But what if women were present, perhaps serving tables as he suggests? Is there some important implication for the modern debate on women's roles in the church to be derived from this? If so, Quesnell never tells us. If not, what is this article doing in a book on Politics? The reader remains baffled.

In sum, O'Toole, Swartley, and Talbert offer the most substance, with Danker and Derrett running close behind them. For these essays alone, the book is worth purchasing and reading. Especially for evangelicals, who have too often hid from socio-political issues, the agenda this anthology addresses merits close and serious scrutiny.

The Gospel and the Poor
by Wolfgang Stegemann (Fortress, 1984, 80 pp., $3.95). Reviewed by D. Scott Wagoner, Intern Pastor, Evangelical Mennonite Church, Lawton, Michigan.

It is difficult for wealthy Christians to face the teaching of Jesus to renounce possessions and follow him. We who are comparatively wealthy in this world don't have the affinity

toward dispossessing that second coat. And the relationship of Christians to global poverty isn't just a question of charitable practice, but, as Stegemann says, "is rather a question of Christian self understanding." Like turning a prism under sunlight, this little book sheds different colors of insight on the impact of the good news (gospel) on the poor in New Testament times. This is primarily accomplished through Stegemann's sociohistorical analysis of two representative groups of the poor (followers of Jesus) in the first century.

The first section, "The Poor and the Gospel," lays the groundwork for understanding the major treatment which follows. This is done through defining the New Testament terms for poor (*ptochos* and *penes*) and rich (*plousios*) and by analyzing the encompassing nature of "the poor," including their identification with the sick, naked, hungry, and destitute.

The second section, "Good News for the Poor," includes insightful treatments of the socioeconomic status of Jesus, his encounters with specific poor during his public ministry and the influence of such "little people" on the world around them. Stegemann says, "By his preaching and practice of healing, Jesus of Nazareth gave motive and substance to the hopes focused on him." The hopes were nothing less than relief from the endless plight of oppression and destitution voiced by those attracted to him, and the caring communities established out of this "Jesus movement."

Another insightful treatment in this section deals with the different gospel authors, their addressees and how each focuses specifically on poverty and the poor. Stegemann gives helpful contrasts from the gospel accounts and backgrounds to illustrate these differences. Of particular interest is the varied usage of the rich (versus the poor) within the accounts, attributable to the presence (or absence) of wealthy individuals within the authors' respective addressees. Mark's use of the rich is exemplary, of those who remain outside the Kingdom of God due to their passion to possess. Unlike Mark, however, Luke had wealthy individuals within his community of hearers, and therefore exerts emphasis on the criticism of the rich. As Stegemann says, "Luke wants to see the rich not merely renounce their possessions but use them in the service of the destitute (*ptochoi*)."

In the final section, Stegemann makes an appeal for a sociohistorical exegesis based on the "gap" between our present day affluence and the living conditions of the early Christians. He claims it is impossible for us to "perceive the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ in isolation from the way in which it was manifested concretely in time and space." In other words, looking through affluent, modern-day eyes, the gospel becomes merely a means to justify sinners, both rich and poor. But it is much more than this. And Stegemann's appeal should not be ignored—though neither should it be made the sole basis for biblical interpretation. He concludes that "for us wealthy Christians, a theology of the poor means that we must let our theological reflection be informed by the scandal of world wide poverty, and that we not act any longer as if God has chosen the rich of this world." I highly recommend this book for serious students of Scripture.

The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics. Volume I: Seeing the Form
by Hans Urs Von Balthasar (Ignatius Press/ Crossroads Publications, 1982, 691 pp., $35.00). Reviewed by Roger Newell, Claypath United Reformed Church, Durham, England.

This is the first volume of the English translation of Von Balthasar's seven volume dogmatics. Von Balthasar, Karl Barth's Roman Catholic colleague at Basel, takes on the task of incorporating aesthetics into the methodological and epistemological structure of theology. Though long neglected, he argues that aesthetics is a fundamental ingredient in theological knowledge. By "theological aesthetics" he means neither a defensive aesthetical apology for the truth of the faith, nor an abstract discussion of beauty as a prolegomena or controlling framework for theology, but rather an exposition of God's beauty revealed in Jesus Christ. Von Balthasar's aesthetics strongly affirms that beauty has an objective form which measures man and creation. True beauty lies in the domain of the ethical and historical, where beauty was crowned with thorns and crucified, and which wounds us and causes us gladly to become fools for his sake. Von Balthasar ends his introduction by exploring the relationship between theological beauty and the beauty of the world—a relationship in which aesthetics as well as morality stands under the judgment of the crucifixion. Thus the form of Jesus cannot be apprehended by merely natural forms.

In the second section (the heart of the book), Von Balthasar begins his study with the subjective or idealist concern: how do we perceive the beauty of revelation? Only when we grasp that faith and knowledge are a unity, says Von Balthasar. Theology errs and grows cold and abstract when it disengages faith from understanding. Perceiving the truth of revelation includes not only the logical but also the categories of the beautiful, lest knowledge of the truth be merely formalistic and pragmatic. The price of integrating aesthetics as intrinsic to theological knowledge is a loss of manipulative control over the object in exchange for enjoyment. Unlike idealism, theological aesthetics affirms that the infinite can be grasped within a finite form. A Christian does not abandon flesh (myth) for flesh that is resurrected (revelation). Faith perceives that the dying and rising of God's Son is the true form of God's beauty and glory manifested in the world. Of course such a perception is God's gift and possibility. As long as we regard faith as our own possibility, we have not risked the leap of faith, nor abandoned ourselves to Jesus Christ. Faith's light shines from faith's object, reveals itself to the subject and draws the subject into the sphere of the object.

Von Balthasar gives a vivid historical perspective to his exploration by taking us on a journey through the theological aesthetics revealed in church history. Here too we find criticism of medieval aesthetics for permitting interior experience and appropriation to dominate theology and eclipse Jesus Christ, the historical form of God's glory. In discussing Christ's experience of God's glory as the archetypal experience of faith, Von Balthasar raises a question which only a theologian who takes the Incarnation as central can raise and which also puts an important question to our doctrine of the resurrection: "Do the bodily senses participate in Christian knowledge, since the objective form of faith is God in the flesh and therefore requires a sensory encounter?" (p. 307). For all concerned with a knowledge of God beyond but not less than the conceptual, there follows an intriguing discussion of the "spiritual senses." Here and elsewhere, Von Balthasar poses a challenge to those Protestants wary of incorporating beauty, and hence the other spiritual senses (beyond hearing the Word), as an essential element of theology. For Christ has appeared in our history and the rays of his resurrection already begin to brighten history with his beauty.

Von Balthasar concludes the first volume with the realist concern to describe this objective aesthetic form which crowns and recapitulates all the beauty of heaven and earth, namely, a living, suffering, dying man, who rose bodily in glory. As the inquiry into the objective form continues, one finds that our questions and our very selves are transformed by the inherent power of this form of forms, which judges and redeems myth as it does concepts. Using myth and concept in obedience to Christ, theology seeks the appropriate measures and limits of each.

What shall we make of this effort, so massive in its design? Here is a theological aesthetics rooted in Christology, where the flesh of academic precision is not divorced from the spirit of prayer and faith. Along the way, traditional Roman emphases appear—e.g., tradition, not the Holy Spirit, connects our imitation experience to Christ's archetypal experience. Ironically, in spite of his avowed prescription to make aesthetics integral to theology, Von Balthasar's theological aesthetics probably fails to achieve Barth's own aesthetic power of description. Perhaps the aesthetic form of theology is not easily wedded to the scientific precision demanded by the form of dogmatics. Perhaps the quest for the integration of theology and aesthetics has yet to find its own proper form, unless that form already abides with us in the preaching and liturgy of worship.

The Person of Christ: A Biblical and Historical Analysis of the Incarnation
by David F. Wells (Crossway Books, 1984, 205 pp., 7.95). Reviewed by Clark H. Pinnock, Professor of Theology, McMaster Divinity College.

This book was written in the series called *Foundations for Faith* (general editor, Peter Toon) and is the best yet in the initial volumes of about six. David Wells is a very

learned and astute man, and has packed into these two hundred pages an astonishing amount of wisdom and knowledge. He admits in the preface what an enormous amount of work it took him to complete the assignment, and it is obvious from what he has produced. He has immersed himself in the depths of the biblical and historical discussions of Christology, and left few important stones unturned.

Wells did his doctorate in 19th century Roman Catholic theology, and has had to dig deeply into technical New Testament scholarship as well as all the standard historical theology up to the present. The two great achievements for me in the book are the way he convincingly presents the biblical evidence for a high Christology in the framework of the coming of God's kingdom, and his masterful delineation of the revisionist Christology in the modern period.

I was especially appreciative of the competence and clarity with which the author exposed the heretical Christology of religious liberalism. "What Schleiermacher really presented was not so much a doctrine of incarnation as of inspiration. It was a view of Jesus as a God-filled man." It refreshes me to hear, amid all the praises heaped upon this theologian, about the sickening effect his theology had upon the Christian faith in general, and on Christology in particular. Surely this shift to functional Christology in the modern period is the greatest heresy the church has faced for years.

Among the 20th century theologians, Wells devotes his attention to three: Barth, Pittenger, and Schilebeeckx. Pittenger is Schleiermacher warmed over, while Barth defends the Chalcedon formula in all essentials. But Wells serves us best by explaining Schilebeeckx, the always enigmatic Dutch liberal Catholic. Being an expert on modern Roman Catholic theology, Wells is in a good position to unscrew the inscrutable. Schillebeeckx, it turns out, is a lot more like Pittenger than he is like Barth.

And as if this were not enough, Wells gives us in the conclusion some proposals of his own which arose from his considerable researches. Proper Christology must be done "from above" and not from human experience alone. And in a final point, he expounds upon his version of an anhypostatic union, and suggests how to solve a mystery leftover from the patristic debates. This is a magnificent book, and I hope it can rise up above the series of which it is part, and shine on its own as quite simply the best evangelical treatment of Christology now available.

A Hitchhiker's Guide to Missions
by Ada Lum (IVP, 1984, 143 pp., $4.95). Reviewed by Donald E. Douglas, Vice President for Overseas Operation, English Language Institute/China.

Ada Lum, veteran staff worker for IFES with liberal international experience, writes a readable, provocative, and helpful reflection on international service in Christian mission.

Two major threads run through the entire book. One is the development of a number of biblical texts dealing with the concept of missions. Jesus and Paul are singled out as models in the author's biblical development of modern mission. Lum emphasizes the ministry of disciple-making which she defines as the task of equipping others for spiritual ministry in the continuing task of world evangelization. The other thread is a personal recounting of things learned through time and experience. The book provides a series of snapshots in a life which has been unusually blessed and useful in international Christian ministry.

The themes which the author develops are not new to the individual versed in mission literature. The matter of obedience to God, learning to work successfully with others, developing cross-cultural sensitivities and abilities, and a host of other issues are taken up in the volume. Perhaps the most innovative chapter is her last, entitled, "When Our Work is Done." In this chapter she develops the rarely discussed idea that it is appropriate for those engaged in modern mission to be prepared to conclude their work in a particular place. Sensitivity, trust and confidence that God is in control of one's life and ministry are crucial to this ability.

Also helpful are her approaches as an itinerant servant of God toward cultivating an appreciation for beauty and "things" without owning them. This is sound advice for those who "own nothing and yet possess all things." Learning to appreciate and store experiences and the fleeting beauty that the itinerant servant encounters in various places is, indeed, a skill worth developing.

The Christian experience is dynamic, not static. Consequently, change is more likely to be indicative of the servant of Christ's life and ministry than continuity. Lum reveals how even this sort of life, so incomprehensible in western culture which places such great emphasis on security and stability, can be cultivated. Learning to deal with change creatively in the context of ministry is a prominent message of the book. Development of this capacity is not limited solely to the overseas servant of God.

If weaknesses exist in the author's treatment of modern mission, one might be her omission of the issue of social justice in today's world as a focal point for Christian expression in missions. What is to be the Christian missionary's attitude toward institutionalized evil in the society in which one serves? Perhaps an itinerant worker is not expected to face these issues in precisely the same way as one who remains deeply engaged in the society in which he or she serves. While admittedly this is a ticklish problem for the alien, it nonetheless is an issue which those who are loyal to Christ must seek to address.

This would be an excellent book to place in the hands of a young person contemplating an overseas mission career. Its fresh and eminently readable style should appeal to university and Bible school or seminary graduates. Ada Lum is to be congratulated for causing us to think once again of primary issues relative to the world Christian mission.

The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians
by F. F. Bruce (Eerdmans, 1984, 442 pp., $17.95). Reviewed by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Professor of Greek, Wheaton College.

Any new commentary from the pen of Professor Bruce is a welcomed addition to one's understanding of the Bible. Bruce brings always to his explanation of the text not only a mastery of all significant secondary sources, a thorough understanding of the world of the New Testament, the fullest competence in the biblical languages, but also high intelligence tempered by a humbleness before the Scriptures and before the Lord of the Scriptures. These his most recent expositions are no exceptions.

Each of these commentaries contains appropriate introductory material that provides historical and cultural information necessary to understand the message of the letters. For example, Bruce's description of the cities of the Lycus Valley (Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis), the Jewish settlements and the nature of Christianity there, set the scene for understanding the thrust of Paul's remarks. Bruce gives a lengthy, helpful discussion of the "Colossian heresy," concluding that the sources of this heresy should be looked for within Judaism, even possibly within normative Judaism, rather than within Iranian or Greek cultures. He discusses, too, the difficult problem of the relation of Ephesians to the other Pauline letters: an encyclical letter, i.e., a general letter, perhaps written to Gentile Christians in the province of Asia, more particularly to those up and down the Lycus Valley, it has affinities with other letters that bear Paul's name. These affinities are closest with Colossians, but are numerous also with 1 Corinthians, Romans, even Galatians. Bruce holds that all three of these letters—Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians—were written by Paul, probably from Rome in the early 60s.

Professor Bruce's verse by verse exegesis of the text is the result of detailed research. It is clearly expressed, conservative in its theological presentation, straightforward, highly enlightening. It is not cluttered with endless discussions about conflicting interpretations that often can impede the progress of novices and dull their interest in serious Bible study. Yet most of the information that the more fully trained scholar would desire or need is readily available in the copious footnotes that attend each page. In these notes Bruce explains in greater detail the more technical problems, such as those that occur in passages like Colossians 2:13-20—passages that test the mettle of any commentator: what is meant by "the bond that stood against us," "the principalities and powers," "the elemental forces" (*stoicheia*), etc.

Bruce welcomes the opportunity to expound Ephesians along with Colossians because his study of the two letters confirms him in the conviction that Ephesians contin-

ues the line of thought begun already in Colossians. Particularly, in this regard, he sees Ephesians as drawing out the implications of Christ's cosmic role for the church (see especially his comments on Eph. 3:8-13). Furthermore, Ephesians for him comprises the summation of Paul's reflection, the crown of his thinking, "gathering up the main themes of the apostle's teaching into a unified presentation *sub specie aeternitatis*."

There is very little to say negatively about these commentaries, and what is said now is not intended as a criticism. Nevertheless, one could wish that there were more of Bruce's own discussion about the "household rules," the *Haustafeln* (Col. 3:18-4:1; Eph. 5:21-6:9), both as to their origin, and why they were included in these letters. Bruce does an excellent job in interpreting Colossians 3:18 and Ephesians 5:22, etc.—the subjection of wives to their husbands—in light of their historical context. But knowing this scholar, one could wish that he had done more to draw out the implications of Paul's teaching on this subject for today's society. It would also have been helpful if, in commenting on Philemon and the relevant places in Colossians and Ephesians, Bruce as a classicist had shared with us more of his own vast knowledge about slavery in the ancient world. One could wish, too, for clearer, fuller, more forthright explanations of some of those difficult texts that most frequently send Bible students scurrying to the commentaries for answers—e.g., what is meant when the text says that God intends "to unite," "head up," "gather up" in Christ all things in heaven and earth (Eph. 1:10).

But remember, any such "wishes" as these are personal and must not in any way be allowed to detract from the overwhelming value of these tools for the study of such crucial New Testament letters as these. One can only express gratitude to Professor Bruce for sharing his wealth of knowledge with us. These commentaries will take their place among the standard works on Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians, and will be referred to increasingly and with gratitude for generations to come.

The Anglican Church Today and Tomorrow
by Michael E. Marshall (Morehouse-Barlow, 1984, 170 pp., $5.95). Reviewed by the Rev. Dr. Kenneth J. Wissler, Priest-in-Residence at St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Wilmington, Delaware, and Church Development Consultant.

Michael Marshall is formerly Bishop of Woolwich, England, and presently episcopal director of the Anglican Institute, St. Louis. In this slim volume Bishop Marshall sets out to discuss the place and role of the Anglican Church at a time when, in his opinion, there is evidence for an ever-growing interest in religion. Therefore, he undertakes the difficult task of addressing several diverse audiences at once. Marshall calls Anglicans to return to their particular theological tradition, which he rightly characterizes as not a system but a method. The major and distinctive feature of this method is the tripartite dialogue of Scripture, church tradition, and reason. To the serious inquirer he offers a guidebook to Anglican theology and practice. Finally, he implicitly presents to non-Anglican Christians the rationale for the particular Anglican witness as both Catholic and Reformed/Evangelical, rather than the compromise which it is so often thought to be.

Despite the disparity of his audiences, Marshall sets out to accomplish his task in a well-ordered, logical approach which is simple and sensitive without being simplistic, condescending, or argumentative.

It is the author's contention that the Church must meet the challenges and opportunities of the renewed interest in religion by first getting her own house in order. This can be accomplished only by first engaging the whole Church in sound theological practice. This process will not only enable Christians to meet the challenges posed by other religions, sects, and cults but will also enable non-Christians to make intelligent decisions in the growing religious marketplace. Within this process Anglicanism has a special role to play. Therefore, the author discusses Anglican roots, history, theological method, spiritual practice, and world-view. In this way, Marshall brings to light the particular and unique Anglican contribution: as a church which sees the whole world as sacrament, as a model for comprehensiveness without compromise, and as a theological method which holds in uncomfortable but necessary tension Scripture, tradition, and reason, of which each is a bearer of God's Word.

Marshall oncludes his work with two elegant discussions: an urgent plea for a higher regard for comprehensiveness and consensus rather than divisiveness and majority rule not only within the Anglican Church but also between denominations; and a portrait of his vision of what the Anglican Church must be if she is to remain true to her calling. The author believes these are necessary if the Anglican Church is to meet the "important challenge" of "a renewed faithfulness already latent within Anglicanism itself which at its best should act as a kind of leaven within all the Christian churches and therefore would presumably be lost in the end by any distinctive or separate sense" (p. 165).

Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church
by Joseph Wilson Trigg (John Knox Press, 1983, 300 pp., $15.95). Reviewed by Robert Webber, Professor of Bible, Wheaton College.

Since Vatican II, considerable attention has been given to early church studies. This fascination with the early church, which began among the Catholics, has spread beyond the borders of Catholic Christianity into the Protestant community. While evangelicals have been slow to show interest in Christian history prior to the Reformation (other than Au-

gustine and Aquinas), there are now signs of growing interest in the early church fathers. Names such as Ignatius, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Cyprion are becoming more familiar, as is their teaching. *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church* makes a solid contribution to this recent interest in the early church.

While the focus of the book is directed toward the person of Origen—his life, thought and work—the topic addressed is much broader. It reaches into the heart and mind of Christian faith in Alexandria in the third century. The influence of Alexandrian Christianity on the eastern church is somewhat analogous to the influence of Roman Christianity on the western church. Since Origen lays some of the foundations on which the eastern Christian house is built, the study of Oreigen inevitably gives us insight into the background of the orthodox tradition.

In this work the author, a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and an active member of the Patristic Society, brings to life the fruits of French and German scholarship regarding Origen. Since Origen has been increasingly recognized as one of the most comprehensive thinkers between Paul and Augustine, the value of this book ought not to be underestimated.

A major merit of the work is that it studies Origen and his thought in cultural context. Consequently we are introduced to a system of Christian thought that arises in a particular city, influenced by a specific philosophy, conditioned by a response to Gnosticism. These aspects of Origen's background are examined in the first three chapters, which deal with Alexandrian Christianity in general, and more specifically with Platonism and Gnosis.

Next, Origen's theology and spirituality is examined in the context of these and other influences. His writings, such as the *Hexapla, Commentary on Genesis,* and *On First Principles,* are briefly evaluated. The philosophical underpinnings of this thought are clearly set forth and illustrated.

Among many things, I find two matters worthy of particular emphasis. The first is the author's ability to interpret Origen in the context of his times. In short, his hermeneutic is a model of good historical theology. Trigg does not interpret Origen through his own twentieth century grid. Rather, he carefully sets forth the cultural context of Alexandria, particularly the Neo-Platonic philosophy of that city as the context in which Origen's work must be understood. This hermeneutic allows both the historian and the theologian to come to fair conclusions about Origen's theology, particularly those aspects of his theology which may be regarded as standing outside the orthodox tradition.

A second matter of special interest to current readers is the emphasis Trigg places on praxis. Origen is seen as more than a theologian. He is viewed as a devout Christian struggling not only to be a spiritual person himself, but wrestling with the issues of the church in his day.

These two aspects of the book lift it out of the status of being a mere summary of information and detail. Rather it is a book which, by showing us how one intelligent and deeply committed Christian wrestled with his times, will lead us into a thoughtful desire to interact with our own history. While it is not a book for beginners, it is writen clearly enough that a person without a background in the early church can profitably read and understand.

Partners in Dialogue: Christianity and Other World Religions
by Arnulf Camps, translated by John Drury (Orbis, 1983, 272 pp., $10.95).
Reviewed by Paul G. Hiebert, Professor of Anthropology and South Asian Missions, Fuller Theological Seminary.

This volume brings together English translations of three small books written by Arnulf Camps, professor of missiology at the Catholic University of Nijmegen in Holland. In these books Camps provides us with a brief overview of different responses within Christendom, particularly within the Roman Catholic Church, to questions raised by religious and cultural pluralism. In the past, questions of the relationship between Christianity and other religions were largely asked by missionaries. Today, churches in the Two-Thirds World must define their existence in the midst of dominant non-Christian religions, and churches in the West have Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists in their neighborhoods. Should Christians declare the uniqueness of Christ as the only way, or should Christianity be presented as one way among many ways? Should Christians seek to convert others? And how should they respond when others seek to convert them? And how should they respond to the theological and liturgical pluralism that is emerging out of attempts to contextualize Christianity in non-Western cultures.

In Part One the author surveys literature on inter-religious discussions and lays what he feels are the foundations for genuine dialogue. He denies that in dialogue we must assume all religions are valid ways of salvation. Dialogue must be an honest confrontation between people who have deep convictions. The questions of salvation itself must be the center of discussion. Camps affirms that this is found only in Christ. But following the lead of Vatican II he affirms that there is salvation outside the Catholic Church, even outside Christianity. People in other religions have God's general revelation which is sufficient for salvation until they know of Christ's redemptive work. The purpose of dialogue is to help them see God's message latent in their religion, thus pointing them to Christ.

Evangelicals will disagree with many of Camps' theological presuppositions, based as they are on a liberalism influenced by liberation theology. Nevertheless, it is refreshing to see a discussion that does not gloss over the hard theological issues that must be confronted if dialogue is to take place.

In Part Two, Camps outlines a few of the basic teachings of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, the new Japanese religions, African traditional religions, Latin American spiritism and Maoist philosophy, and asks what they have to contribute to Christian thought, and where Christianity must confront them.

In Part Three, the author reviews Catholic attempts to adapt liturgy and ecclesiastical structures to different cultural contexts. Appealing to the example of the early church, to Vatican II, and to the need to indigenize Christianity in new cultural settings, he calls for a return to local churches as communities of believers who study the Scripture and apply it to their daily lives, and for the mobilization of laity for ministry in the world. He gives examples of these in the basic ecclesial communities in Latin America, Africa and Asia, and in the indigenous forms of liturgy, service and theology emerging around the world. Camps clearly reflects here only one point of view within the Catholic Church.

As evangelicals we will disagree with Camps at many points, but the book is useful to us as a survey of some recent developments in the Catholic Church relating to religious and theological pluralism.

BOOK COMMENTS

Islam: A Christian Perspective
by Michael Nazir-Ali (Westminster Press, 1984, 192 pp., $11.95).

This is not a hatchet job on Islam nor is it an introduction to Islam. The author and I agree that Dr. Rahman's *Islam* is a masterful introduction. Then what is this book? "In this work," the author explains, "I have tried to present an appreciation (using the word in the sense of a critical appraisal) of facets of Islam from the standpoint of one who is a Christian with a Muslim background living in a Muslim context" (p. 7). He has done this well. Traditionally the two poles of Christian thought on non-Christian religions have been either a non-critical, semi-syncretic acceptance of the religion as having equal validity with Christianity, or a non-critical rejection of it as demonic. If we accept that all truth comes from God, how do we handle what seems to be Christian truth in a non-Christian religion?

In this book we do not find an all-embracing answer to the question, "How must a Christian react to Islam?" Instead we find one Christian brother's answer to his question, "How do I react to Islam?" He says that part of Islamic culture is God-given and good. Other parts come under the judgment of the gospel and are to be rejected. Some is authentically a genuine consciousness of God while some is a contradiction of that consciousness. How to decide? His story, his quest for answers, illuminates my quest for answers. I am living and teaching in the midst of a strong Islamic community that is active in seeking converts in the Chicago area. How I should act and respond to their challenge is not an idle question but one I face on an almost daily basis.

I highly recommend this book. I don't agree with all of it, but it challenged me to look at Islam from a new angle. It is a short book. You can read it in several hours, but

it will give you things to mull over for days. You do not need to know much about Islam to profit immensely from it. The model of this book should be duplicated for Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and some of the other major religious/ideological positions of today.

–Charles O. Ellenbaum

Theology in Africa
by Kwesi Dickson (Orbis, 1984, 243 pp., $9.95).

Kwesi Dickson demonstrates how far ranging and complex the issues are for theologizing in the African context. He says, accurately, that a theology for Africa is "not thinking through the theological deposit from the West," but "consists in thinking through faith in Christ."

The book begins with the background factors of historical theologies and the impact these have had on the development of the church in Africa. This is followed by an analysis of African cultural realities that bear on authentic African theologizing. The book concludes with the implications this study will have on theological education in Africa.

Dickson's work must be judged in light of its title, *Theology In Africa*. It is not, for example, *An African Theology*. Dickson draws on political history, philosophical and systematic theology, and the phenomenology of African society for issues which will shape an African theology. One could wish to see more on contributions which untrained African Christians can make to thinking through the meaning of faith. Theology needs to be seen as a function of the whole body of Christ, with trained theologians guiding the process. Discussions on sources and methodologies desperately need translation into concrete models. Even with this valuable book, that task is still waiting to be done.

–Dean S. Gilliland

The Compassionate Visitor
by Arthur H. Becker (Augsburg, 1985, 128 pp., $5.50).

Written by an Anglican rector, hospital chaplain and CPE supervisor, this is the best volume I have read on how and why to minister to people who are ill, especially in a hospital setting. In my experience, most pastors tend to trivialize hospital visits after the immediate crisis of hospitalization has subsided or stabilized. While this book is written to provide resources for laity in making hospital visits, I kept thinking as I read how wonderful it would be for pastors to be informed by the insights offered by Pastor Becker.

Beginning with the psychological effect of illness, Becker next discusses the compassion that God shows in illness and how the visitor begins to experience compassion more than fear during the hospital visit. Using brief excerpts from case studies in visiting, an overview of the "art of listening" is presented in a simple, straightforward way. The bulk of the volume (chapters 4-8) is devoted to how to minister in the actual visit: use of Scripture, prayer, communion, and, finally, a blessing for the dying. How to make the hospital visit spiritually effective is the theme, content, and tone of this book.

A final blessing for the reader is the inclusion of "A Patient's Bill of Rights" and an exceedingly helpful list of "Common Medical Terms."

As a student or pastor, you will want to do the best job possible in hospital visitation, and if you are interested in training lay people to visit, this book is a *must*.

–Paul Mickey

The Majesty of Man: The Dignity of Being Human
by Ronald B. Allen (Multnomah Press, 1984, 221 pp., $11.95).

This book, written by an evangelical Old Testament scholar, presents a biblical and balanced case for a positive and even noble view of the human person as a bearer of God's image. Taking note of the recent reactions against secular humanism by many Christians, and clearly aware of the anti-humanistic forces masquerading under the cloak of humanism, Ron Allen has a passion for the recovery of authentic humanity as a rich and rewarding experience of Christian life.

While the book is not written in a pedantic and critical style, it nonetheless contains exegetical gems and keen insights into crucial Old Testament passages which depict the creation and formation of human persons as bearers of the divine image. Written primarily for lay Christians, the book is popular and topical in approach. The author blends his own perspective and experience with insights gleaned from a wide variety of contemporary sources.

Critical issues with regard to human sexuality, male and female role relations, and respect for the life of the unborn are touched upon lightly, but sensitively. The author wishes to be understood as holding a hierarchical view of the role of men within marriage, but he clearly advocates full equality of personhood and dignity for women based upon the inherent dignity and worth of both men and women grounded in the divine image. The book is irenic in tone, enthusiastic and even passionate in urging a new and deeper appreciation of the richness and goodness of humanity, and written with delightful good humor.

One is surprised to find the omission of some sources in the bibliography, notably Karl Barth's stimulating discussion of humanity in his *Church Dogmatics*, III/2, E. Brunner's contribution to theological anthropology, as well as such standard works on Old Testament anthropology as H. H. Wolff. For this reason, the book will disappoint those who expect more of a theological anthropology, but wil evangelize (one hopes) the Christian community in terms of a recovery of the richness and beauty of all that is human—to the praise and glory of God.

–Ray S. Anderson

John Case and Aristotelianism in Renaissance England
by Charles B. Schmitt (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983, 303 pp., $35.00).

This book is too technical to be widely useful, but it nonetheless contributes important historical background to issues of pressing concern. John Case taught philosophy at Oxford during the last third of the sixteenth century. His skill in appropriate Aristotle and his several successful textbooks in logic and related subjects made him the most important Aristotelian philosopher of Elizabethan England and helped reestablish the prestige of Aristotle until the rise of the modern science provided new intellectual guides in the next century.

Case's Aristotelianism may have had something to do with Richard Hooker's appeal to reason on behalf of Anglicanism, and his works formed the basis of the curriculum which Archbishop William Laud imposed on the English Universities in 1636. As such, he stood against the efforts of Luther and Calvin, and of his Puritan contemporaries like William Ames, to ground learning in an extrapolation from revelation rather than in a description of nature. Case's kind of Aristotelianism thus helped sustain the idea of a neutral, "scientific" approach to reality precisely at a time in English history when representatives from the earlier Reformation and from Puritanism were making noises about

the value-laden, religiously significant character of all "science."

Philosophy in the period that followed—the age of Newton and Locke—drastically revised Aristotle, yet followed Case's general approach to knowledge more than that of the reformers. With major exceptions, such as Jonathan Edwards, this approach eventually won out among Protestants during the seventeenth century and beyond. Case's part in forestalling a full-scale application of Reformation principles to the world of thought was not dominant, but Schmitt's book shows his importance for one heretofore neglected stage of that process.

—Mark Noll

How to Read Prophecy
by Joel B. Green (IVP, 1984, 154 pp., $5.95).

This handbook is a fine defense of biblical prophecy. But from which direction is the attack coming? While acknowledging the dangers of liberal rationalizing of prophecy into social commentary, the author faces another foe: Hal Lindsey and fundamentalist dispensationalism. He does an excellent job of exploding Lindsey's claim to be a literalist and in so doing demonstrates the various genres in which God's Word comes to us. In this regard, I would like to see him wrestle further with the question of what happens when prophecy becomes written Scripture and Scripture comes to be seen as prophetic (e.g., the Psalms).

Green's book is an excellent presentation of the unity of revelation in Scripture. However, he also pays attention to apparent discontinuities; e.g., he speaks of the surprise element in the New Testament proclamation that the Old Testament has been fulfilled in Jesus.

Finally, Green seems to have a pastor's heart. He expresses legitimate fears that an overemphasis on seeking signs of the end leads to a lopsided gospel and neglects the very virtues of patience and responsibility for the needy that the prophets sought to inculcate.

This is a good introduction to the study of prophecy, especially for those who are familiar with *The Late Great Planet Earth.*

—Stephen F. Noll

Apologetics: An Introduction
by William Lane Craig (Moody Press, 1984, 214 pp., $13.95).

Dr. Craig, professor of philosophy of religion at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has written the finest survey of apologetics I have ever read. He not only interacts with the historical literature, he often adds new perspectives and arguments to the ongoing debate. Craig discusses the relationship between faith and reason, the absurdity of life without God, arguments for the existence of God, miracles, historiography and philosophy of history, the deity (claims) of Christ and the resurrection. What makes Craig's book superior to the others is his knowledge of the problems involved, his grasp of the literature, and his insights into the problems discussed. For example, his discussion of the resurrection includes a balanced understanding of biblical criticism. His section on the cosmological argument is excellent.

The only problems with this work are of a specialist nature, and are incidental to the major points the author is making. Craig has failed to grasp the radically personal nature of human knowledge (M. Polanyi, H.G. Gadamer, the later Wittgenstein). He still feels that one only needs to display one's presuppositions, and as long as we can test history by the "objective facts," we can have scientific history (pp. 141-149). In history there are no "objective" facts—only *already* interpreted facts. Of course this does not lead automatically to relativism as Collingwood argues. We *can* prove the Christian view of the resurrection, etc., is rational; we *cannot* prove that other views are less rational than our own. Craig's attempt to *dis*prove naturalism and atheism is a good attempt, but obviously fails. On the other hand, his overall goal of proving that Christianity is rational is a grand success. I highly recommend this book. There is much to learn here, and Craig stands head and shoulders above similar books. Let us all learn from him that apologetics is a *rationale* for our faith; the reasons we believe are found in the Living Word and in His Spirit.

—Alan Padgett

Heralds of a New Reformation
by Richard Shaull (Orbis, 1984, 139 pp., $8.95).

Combining a survey of biblical, church and personal history, Richard Shaull reports the major contributions of liberation theology, and suggests ways that North American Christians can respond to its challenges. Part of a growing genre dedicated to making liberation theology accessible to first world Christians (lay, clergy, and theologians), Shaull writes as one who has taken—in a North American context—many of the radical steps to which he believes liberation theology is calling Christians.

Shaul shows how liberation theologians have reread the Bible from the perspective of the poor. Drawing upon the reconstruction of biblical history to which recent sociological studies have led, he affirms their conclusion that the history of God's action in the world is one, rather than two (sacred and secular). Thus, God's consistent favoring of marginalized people is carried out through the decline and fall of empires, with or without the participation of God's people. He describes this new perspective, and the movement it has created, as a "new Reformation"—this time coming not from Europe, but from the Third World, especially Latin America.

The new structures being developed by Third World Christians, especially the ecclesial base communities, are offered as models, even though we will need to contextualize themn to First World settings.

Many evangelical readers may miss a sense of God's transcendence, cringe at the positive evaluation of the Marxist contribution, and be offended by the thoroughness of Shaull's critique of traditional churches. But those who allow themselves to be challenged by the truth communicated here will reap significant benefit.

—Frank M. Alton

The Bible and Popular Culture in America
edited by Allene Stuart Phy (Scholars Press/Fortress Press, 1984, 248 pp., $15.95).

Allene Stuart Phy, professor of English at Alabama State University, has assembled a competent group to comment on the popular appropriation of Scripture in American life. This book, which takes its place in the six-volume series on "The Bible in American Culture" produced as part of the Society of Biblical Literature's Centennial Publication series, is a treasure trove of interesting facts about the use of the Bible, mostly in the twentieth century. There are intriguing essays on the Bible's place in American humor (G. Frank Burns), in country music (Charles Wolfe), in broadcasting (Perry C. Cotham), in colportage (Ralph W. Hyde), and in popular painting (Ljubica D. Popovich, who also comments wisely on an interesting series of plates). The editor contributes an engaging overview and her own essays on fictionalized accounts of the life of Jesus and on biblical literature for children.

The range of material is vast, from "Peanuts" to plays, hardsell merchandising to heartwarming music, enduring primitive art to unendurable private exploitation. This book is a trifle less academic than others in the series, but it does not suffer for that. It admirably succeeds in illustrating, and at least partially explaining, what Phy describes as both the "ludicrous discrepancy . . . between the ancient wisdom of the scriptures and the vulgarities of American popular culture" and the "profound ways in which the holy books of the Jewish and Christian religions relate to [the] lives" of Americans.

—Mark Noll

The Divorcing Christian
by Lewis R. Rambo (Abingdon, 1983, 196 pp.).

An ordained United Presbyterian minister and seminary professor, Lewis Rambo chronicles with perception what divorce is like as a Christian. Cited as one of the participating factors in his own divorce and in his struggle to forgive himself, his ex-wife and God, is his tendency toward perfectionism. Especially poignant is chapter two, "Healing the Wounds," and chapter four, "Living Again," in which the reader experiences the shame, blame, anger/rage, and gradual forgiveness that have become Rambo's experience. Far more than a personal story, *The Divorcing Christian* tells how to minister to the recently divorced (two years or less), with compassionate power (chapter three) and how to cope with life (chapter six) and sex (chapter five).

Woven through the text are references to books that will serve well seminary students who should realize after reading this book that a ministry to single adults in their congregations will constitute a significant ministerial opportunity. Divorce is here to stay and despite that unpleasant fact, we welcome the contribution of *The Divorcing Christian* in order better to minister to Christians who are divorced. Our thanks to the pain, perseverance and honesty of Lewis Rambo in writing a book that will benefit us all.

–Paul Mickey

Redeeming the City: Theology, Politics, and Urban Policy
by Ronald Pasquariello, Donald Shriver and Alan Geyer (Pilgrim Press, 1982, 216 pp., $10.95).

Traditionally the church's response to the city has at worst been one of neglect and abandonment and at best feeble on-again-off-again attempts to deal with visible and immediate crises in the lives of a few people. These efforts often border on paternalism, although they are necessary to meet short term emergency needs.

In *Redeeming the City,* the authors opt for a more comprehensive approach which focuses less on the symptoms of human suffering and more on the underlying and pervasive causes. It urges churches and church agencies to engage in ministry from a policy making perspective. This translates into a more concerted effort in lobbying for changes in federal, state and local urban policy. The goals of these efforts should be a more equal distribution of wealth and power.

The authors begin with a biblical-theological analysis which steers a balanced course between Ellul's overly pessimistic view of the city and Cox's premature optimism. This is followed by a critical examination of the Carter and Reagan urban policies and then outlines a just urban policy and some creative examples and suggestions for the church. It concludes with some recent church statements on urban policy. The book articulates the problems well and would be excellent for an adult study seminar in the church. But for those involved in city ministries, it will be seen as somewhat short on depth and quite predictable.

–Douglas J. Miller

Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method
by Howard Clark Kee (Yale University Press, 1983, 320 pp., $22.50).

This refreshing book concludes that "the Golden Bough has indeed broken" (p. 290). Kee, in other words, feels that efforts like those of Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough* (as well as Mircea Eliade's timeless religiosity or the structuralism of Levi-Strauss and Foucault) to explain religious phenomena by reference to static, suprahistorical human constructs are bankrupt. Kee champions, rather, a method which describes religious events as participants experienced them. Using the miracle stories in the general time of Christ to demonstrate this "sociohistorical method," Kee carefully examines the accounts of wonders associated with the cults of Asclepius and Isis as well as those in the New Testament. He is not much concerned with whether these purported events actually happened, but with what they meant to those who reported them, those who were impressed by them, and those who doubted them. Along the way, Kee lands some well-deserved blows against the closed-minded reductionism practiced by some advocates of the historical-critical method.

Kee's treatment of New Testament miracles may not indicate adequately the extent to which these differed from other miracle stories of the period. And the book never suggests that a "sociohistorical method" can demonstrate the truth of any miracle story. Yet with other recent works, like Benedicta Ward's *Miracles and the Medieval Mind* (1982), Kee heralds a significant advance in the treatment of the miraculous in Christian history.

–Mark Noll

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Urban Ministry Conference

The fifth national Congress on Urban Ministry, to be held in Chicago April 8-11, 1986, will focus on the theme, "Spirituality and Social Justice: an Essential Relationship for Urban Ministry." Plenary speakers will include: Walter Brueggemann, George Clements, Murphy Davis, Vincent Harding, Alvaro Nieves, Tom Sine, Barbara Williams-Skinner, and Jeremiah Wright. They will address the three days' subthemes: "Blessed are the poor," "Blessed are those who hunger after righteousness," and "Blessed are the peacemakers."

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TSF BULLETIN. A journal of evangelical thought published by Theological Students Fellowship, a division of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. TSF exists to make available to theology students in universities and seminaries the scholarly and practical resources of classical Christianity. *Editor,* Vernon C. Grounds; *Assistant to the Editor,* William L. Mangrum; *Publishing Coordinator,* Becky Merrill Groothuis; *Copy Editor; Production, Circulation, and Advertising Manager,* Neil Bartlett; *Editorial Assistance,* Becky Merrill Groothuis, David Werther, Charles R. Boardman. *Student Contributors* include Linda Mercadante (Princeton Theological Seminary), Christian Kettler (Fuller Theological Seminary) and Todd Speidell (Fuller Theological Seminary).