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TSF BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1986
VOL. 10, NO. 1
$4.00

A Publication of
THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS FELLOWSHIP

THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS FELLOWSHIP

Theological Students Fellowship is a professional organization dedicated to furthering the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We provide context and content for theological reflection and spiritual formation in the classical Christian tradition. TSF 1) supports local chapters at seminaries and universities, providing students, pastors and professors a context for encouragement, prayer and theological reflection; 2) publishes *TSF BULLETIN*, offering biblical and theological resources of classical Christianity necessary for continued reflection on and growth in ministry; 3) provides reprints, bibliographies, longer monographs, books and tapes on topics relevant to persons seeking to minister with integrity, in light of biblical faith in today's complex milieu.

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TSF BULLETIN (ISSN 0272–3913) publishes five issues bimonthly during the academic year (September–June). Editorial address is Theological Students Fellowship, P.O. Box 7895, Madison, WI 53707). **Membership** package including a subscription to *TSF Bulletin* costs $20/year; *student* membership $16/year; library and institutions subscriptions cost $25/year; individual subscriptions are available at $18/year. Add $4.00 per year for postage to addresses outside the U.S. U.S. currency only. Send address changes to TSF, P.O. Box 7895, Madison, WI 53707-7895. Allow six weeks for address changes to become effective. **Manuscripts:** Unsolicited material is welcomed, but 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 is a division of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, though TSF BULLETIN does not speak for IVCF in its articles and reviews. Although editors personally sign the IVCF basis of faith, our purpose is to provide evangelical resources for biblical *thinking* and *living* rather than formulating "dogmas."

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Introducing This Issue

Appropriately as a new academic year is beginning, the *Bulletin* launches into a new year of publication. You are now reading Vol. 10, No. 1, which means that for ten years this journal has been serving as the voice of the Theological Students Fellowship. From its embryonic days as a sort of news-sheet, it has evolved into what in my opinion is a deservedly respected forum for the creative discussion of issues important to the whole Christian community. Evangelical in commitment yet irenic and ecumenical in spirit, the *Bulletin* owes an immense debt of gratitude to its editorial pioneers, Mark Lau Branson and Thomas McAlpine. I am merely building on the foundation they laid with the help of unpaid associates and contributors.

You who are acquainted with past issues will, of course, notice a radical change in our masthead. The personnel, I am most thankful to point out, remains essentially unchanged except for some additions and a few resignations necessitated by sheer overload. Our former Associate Editors are now listed under an Advisory category. That new category has been augmented by, alphabetically, Edith Blumhofer, Church History; Ed L. Miller, Philosophy; Greg Spencer, Cultural Studies; John Vayhinger, Counseling and Psychology; and Marvin Wilson, Jewish Studies. We are planning in future issues to give some biographical data regarding these outstanding individuals who have consented to be *TSF Bulletin* coworkers. Our other colleagues in this cooperative enterprise have been designated, as you will note, Resource Scholars. We have also included the names of Student Contributors and International Contributors who will help us develop a global outlook.

As for the contents of this issue, I think the brief meditation by Carlyle Marney, who was both an ecclesiastic gadfly and a sensitive pastor, will strike a resonant chord with many readers who chafe at the provincialism of their churches and denominations. It reminds me of a classic First World War cartoon, depicting two quarreling British soldiers who are cowering in a crater under a barrage of bursting shells, one angrily telling the other, "If you know a better 'ole, go to it." Marney would have appreciated that straightforward advice.

Since Karl Barth was born in 1886, this year Christians of every persuasion, even those sharply critical of Barth's theology, have been appreciatively commemorating his centennial. Though the May/June *Bulletin* was primarily a tribute to the Basel titan, it is surely fitting that we carry a few more articles on one of the all-time theological greats. Hence the splendid contributions of Torrance, McKim, and de Gruchy.

Writing from a Third World perspective, Thomas Hanks enables us to see much more penetratingly some of the implications of biblical faith for the social and political struggles of our time—yes, and the need for Christians to make their (our!) faith a matter of praxis rather than mere theory.

As technology provides means of travel and communication which obliterate the barriers of space and time, thus shrinking our planet to a global village, the question of religious pluralism inescapably confronts us. Historian Arnold Toynbee in the recent past and philosopher John Hick in the present day have argued against the biblical affirmation that Christianity is not simply a unique and superior faith but the one exclusive, redemptive gospel. Can we, then, insist with Jesus that he is "*the* way, *the* truth, *the* life," and that nobody comes to the Father except by him? Harold Netland, a missionary with the Evangelical Free Church of America, who is presently ministering with KGK (Kirisutosha Gakusei Kai), the Japanese branch of Inter-Varsity, probes this crucial problem in depth, persuasively arguing the case for Christian exclusivism.

Once again we include a rich selection of book reviews. And then we share some of the correspondence which reaches us. Perhaps the two letters to this editor will inspire you to express your own opinions and reactions as a reader of the September/October *Bulletin*.

On Ecclesiastical Provincialism

by Carlyle Marney

The awful sadness, the conviction for sin, the curse of that provincialism that throttles a man, is in part the reflection of his awareness that his church does not yet know to whom it belongs, nor from where its only source rises, so he longs for the kingdom of God and rebels against the confinement of his provincialism and stands with his chest against the fence wanting freedom to seek this beatitude of universal love on his own.

Why does he stay where he is? How can one stay within a framework he has already discovered to be provisional and provincial? By what processes of compromise and death does a man remain a member of a limited communion when with all his soul he longs for membership in the larger frame?

He knows, first, that any escape that will come to him will provide release only to another, perhaps larger, but limited pasture. He knows any escape is therefore abortive, temporary, and provisional. Should he abandon wholly the frame within which life first found him, he knows that his escape from this immediate delimitation of community will only subject him to newer, more subtle, and even more vicious provincialisms. That is to say, he knows the relative nature of any release and finds even in this a consciousness of kinship with all those men of other confessions, creeds, and nations who stand pressed against their fences, too. He stays where he is because he learns that there is no place to go. He feels the agony of confinement native to finitude and, therefore, joins the human race, where he is.

He can stay where he is, second, because he knows that there are values and potentials trapped within the lower form, his own community. He is aware of submerged worthwhileness, of hidden possibilities that must not be forgotten or destroyed. He sticks around to be used in the saving of the salt. He will not go outside and throw rocks from a larger pasture. He knows there are values hidden here that are worth his life to preserve and in spite of his despair, he has come to love the place.

Third, he senses, then comes to know, the presence of other climbers on the wall, other travelers on the road. He stays because he is drawn to them by the common agony and delight of the seeking and finding. A new church happens for him. Communion comes in a touch of the hand, a flick of the eye, and frequently, on this road, a confession of the heart late at night. There is constituted for him a most holy, most secret, most intimate personal church. In its light and strength and communion he lives his life, knowing he belongs simultaneously to these and to this, and that this fellowship with other climbers exists only because there is a climb to be made.

All this is to say that a man can stay in a framework he knows to be provisional and provincial because he knows all the time that he belongs to a higher community. To this higher community both his institutional framework and his "fellowship of other climbers" belong and exist as a reflection. In this awareness of belonging always to the higher, he finds ability to live. More, he feels the call of the higher community to come and to stay. He does both; he comes and stays, knowing all the time that this kind of call will split him. He knows all this and comes to know that this is what it means to live on a cross, for the cross means here the tension that maintains between the higher good and the local potential. Yet on every day's journey he feels the invasion of the higher into the lower community in that penetration of love that will not leave us as we are and gives us friends for our journey.

The late Carlyle Marney was a well known preacher and prolific writer. He served as senior pastor at Myers Park Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, leaving there to become director of Interpreter's House, an ecumenical center at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina.

Karl Barth: 1886–1986

by T. F. Torrance

Karl Barth was unquestionably the greatest theologian that has appeared for several hundred years. Protestants honor him among the real giants of the Church: Athanasius, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin. Pope Paul went so far as to say that he was the greatest theologian since Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. That was a surprising tribute from a Roman Pope, for Barth's critical analysis of Roman dogmas was as sharp as it was profound, although he also found much to appreciate in Roman Catholic theology. Yet perhaps it was not so surprising, for Karl Barth, one man, had a greater impact upon the Roman Catholic Church than four hundred years of Protestantism!

Born in a Swiss Manse in 1886, Karl Barth entered the ministry of the Reformed Church, serving first in Geneva and then in Safenwil, Argau. Very soon he found himself struggling hard to be faithful to his divine call to expound the Bible week by week, preaching the Gospel "in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." How could he, a mere man, speak *the Word of God* to others? The seriousness with which he took his ordination plunged the young pastor into a deep spiritual crisis, for he found a "strange new world within the Bible" that conflicted sharply with what he had been taught in the Theological Faculties of Germany.

What was it all about? Karl Barth discovered that the Holy Scriptures don't just speak about God, for in them God himself speaks directly and personally to us. God speaks to us in the Bible as a person speaks to his friend, and yet in such a way that as we listen to his voice we know that we are face to face with the sheer majesty and mystery of God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. If that is what the Bible is, then the Theological Faculties had got it all wrong; for the Bible must be treated in an utterly different way. When he tried to come to terms with his discovery in a commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, in which he called upon the Church to *let God be God*, the book exploded like a bomb among the theologians of Europe, and provoked screams of anger from some of his most famous teachers!

T. F. Torrance held for 29 years the Chair of Christian Dogmatics at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

It was "the Godness of God in his Revelation" that Barth had discovered. What God reveals in the Bible is none other than *himself*: not just something divine, not something like God, not something coming from God. "No, God himself is the content of his revelation." Divine revelation is so utterly unique that it cannot be put on the same level as anything else. "As a man can have only one father; as he is able to look at one time with his eyes into the eyes of only one other man; as he can hear with his two ears the word of only one man at one and the same time; as he is born only once and dies but once—so he can believe and know only one Revelation." That is what happens, Barth held, when we meet Jesus Christ and know that he is the Way, the Truth and Life, and that there is no other way to the Father but by him.

When he made that discovery, Barth resigned from the Social Democratic Party, for he did not want to mislead his congregation by confusing the Gospel with politics. That did not mean that the minister of the Gospel must refrain from proclaiming the Word of God *to* politics, but it did mean that he must address moral, social and political problems *solely on the ground of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ.* That was the stand Barth took up as a professor in Nazi Germany, when he wrote the famous "Barmen Confession" which galvanized the confessing Church in its resistance to Hitler. It is on the Gospel of the sole Lordship of Jesus Christ, Barth taught, that all the powers of evil and tyranny must shatter themselves as on a mighty "Rock of Bronze." When he refused to take the oath of loyalty demanded by the Nazis, Karl Barth was deposed from his Chair in the University of Bonn and deported back to Switzerland.

After the war Barth was more convinced than ever that it was the loss of the Godness of God in his revelation that brought about the secularization of the church in Germany—which was still rampant in all our churches where a secularizing ministry confuses moral and social renovation with the Gospel of redemption through the cross and resurrection of Christ. It was of supreme importance for the Church again to take up the battle for the essence of the Gospel that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, and that there is no other revelation and no other salvation than that embodied in him. That was the supreme truth for which the early Church had struggled in its great theological crisis when the Nicene Creed was born, and for which the Reformers had struggled when the doctrine of justification by grace was at stake. What God freely gives us in grace is not just something which might be controlled and dispensed by the Church, but his very own Self incarnate in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of mankind.

That is what Karl Barth's theology is all about: *the uniqueness and centrality of Christ and his Gospel.* It is through Christ and in his Spirit alone that we have access to authentic knowledge of God, and through the blood of Christ alone that sinners are reconciled to him in forgiveness and rebirth. If we really believe in Jesus Christ, we cannot place Christianity alongside some other religion, or engage in some sort of interfaith approach to God; for God's unique self-revelation in Christ tells us that there is no other revelation of God and no other possibility of being reconciled to him except through the cross. It is at this very point that the Church today urgently needs to be warned against watering down the Gospel, and secularizing the ministry of the Word of God!

Karl Barth's own commitment to Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life makes him subject the foundations of human knowledge and culture to the most radical examination. In Jesus, God has become one with us *as we are.* He has taken our actual human nature and made it his own, with all its sin and guilt, misery and death, in order to heal us in the dark depths of our human existence, not the least in the twisted state of our alienated minds. That is why Karl set himself to think out in a quite unparalleled way the nature of human reason in the light of God's revealing and saving activity in Jesus Christ, and to show how God means us to use it in understanding the truth of the Gospel and its implications for all human activity and behavior. In so doing he has given us in his *Church Dogmatics* an account of the Christian faith second to none in the whole history of Christian theology, and one that I find excitingly relevant for our modern, scientific era.

What Shakespeare is to English literature, and Mozart is to classical music, Karl Barth is to Christian theology today. Anyone still unfamiliar with Barth today must be judged theologically illiterate! But what I like most about his theology is that it is evangelical to the core, for it is utterly faithful to the Gospel and its message of the reconciling love and grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ.

How Karl Barth Changed Their Minds

by Donald K. McKim

1986 is a vintage year for centennials in the theological world. Most notably this is the 100th anniversary year of the birth of two of the 20th century's "giant" theologians—Paul Tillich and Karl Barth.

A couple years ago, when I realized the Barth centenary was coming up, I conceived the project of enlisting prominent contemporary theologians to reflect on how they have dealt with Barth's thought in their own theological development. To do this, I suggested a twist on the rubric made famous by the series of articles in the *The Christian Century* for a number of years, called "How I Changed My Mind." To this series, Karl Barth himself contributed three times. But to have contemporary people reflecting on their interaction with Barth through the years would be of interest right now, I believed. For it would show not only what elements in Barth's life and thought had made lasting impacts on people but would also indicate how some of the shapers of contemporary theology have either accepted, rejected or remained unmoved by Barth's theological views. In that sense we would have a kind of "freeze-frame" of contemporary theology showing where theologians are now, 100 years after Barth's birth. So I solicited essays from a number of people, not all of whom are able to contribute. I asked them to write short, personally-oriented pieces instead of formal "scholarly" ones and to be honest in their assessments of their dealings with Barth's thought whether he had actually "changed their minds" or not. I have now assembled 26 essays that are being published by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company this fall with the title, *How Karl Barth Changed My Mind.*

This has been an intriguing project which has also been lots of fun. Many revealing "Barth stories" emerged. I sought a variety of contributors and am fortunate to have essays from Barth's two sons, Christoph and Markus, as well as from a

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number of Barth's students who shared their memories of *Carolus magnus* as he was called. Eberhard Busch, Barth's biographer and assistant, also granted an interview. The given titles of some of the essays are interesting. Paul Lehmann writes of "The Ant and the Emperor," a reference to Barth's description of his many visitors to his vacation hideaway in 1950 who came, as he said, "like a procession of ants." Dietrich Ritschl calls his piece "How to be Most Grateful to Karl Barth Without Remaining a Barthian." That these essays do not turn out to be merely "puff pieces," praising Barth with no demurs, is seen in the titles by Donald Bloesch, "Karl Barth: Appreciation and Reservations" and by John Cobb, "Barth and the Barthians: A Critical Appraisal."

Of course, it's impossible to summarize the diverse contributions short of going through all the essays. But I would like to indicate some general topics where Barth's influence has been appropriated in this sampling of theologians and then some areas as well where divergencies and critiques arise.

APPROPRIATIONS

Dogmatics

In the realm of dogmatics generally, Paul Lehmann has argued that Karl Barth "delivered theological language and conceptuality from bondage to propositional logic and joined them once again to poetry." This he did, says Lehmann, by exploring "the metaphorical content and meaning of the language of Dogmatics." Barth himself, according to Lehmann, was not fully aware he was doing this. Yet by his "pioneering a metaphorical interpretation of the knowledge and obedience of faith," Barth was brought "to the transforming edge of the world of today and the church of today and tomorrow in their need and search for 'an essential metaphor.'" This was probed by Barth's continual turning to the *analogia fidei*, his description of the task of dogmatics as reflection upon the agreement between the church's language about God and the revelation of God attested in Holy Scripture, and more specifically in his "evocative and provocative re-appropriation of the Chalcedonian *vere Deus-vere Homo*" desription of Jesus Christ. Lehmann sees Barth's appropriation of this formula in its metaphorical meaning as illuminated by the conundrum from a friend which asks: "'When is an analogy not an analogy?' to which the answer is: 'When it is a metaphor.'" This, according to Lehmann, is what the Chalcedonian formula has been and is all about. And it was Barth's contribution to recognize this in order to regain a poetical perspective.

At the same time, Geoffrey Bromiley, Barth's major English translator, sees Barth as having rendered a twofold service in theology.

> First, he has called theology back to its proper object of God and given it a more truly scientific basis under the control of this object, who is always also subject. In so doing he has restored to theology its integrity as an academic discipline in its own right which need not disguise itself among the humanities. But second, he has also related theology firmly to the church's mission. Theology for Barth is no mere academic exercise. It does not serve only to satisfy intellectual needs or to provide apologetic arguments. It brings the whole life and proclamation of the church under scrutiny, subjecting them to testing by the Biblical norm, pointing out the need for addition, correction, or subtraction as the church lives out the Christian life and proclaims the Christian message in the diverse cultures and shifting circumstances of the world. In this sense Barth treats theology as itself a form of ministry, for its scrutinizing is not an exercise in domination but an act of service which protects the church against error and secularization, which helps it to achieve a purity of teaching and preaching and which first and supremely and continuously theology must also render in exemplary fashion to itself.

This emphasis of Barth's on God as the object and the subject of theology is also expounded by T.F. Torrance. He tells of showing Barth how Barth's own approach to epistemological preconceptions in theology paralleled that of Einstein in physics. "In theology as well as in natural science," says Torrance, "theoretical and empirical components in knowledge always operate inseparably together: the only true epistemology is that which is embodied in and is natural to the material content of knowledge." "What is needed," Torrance says, is "an epistemological structure that is indissolubly bound up with the essential substance or positive content of knowledge. That is why the epistemology offered by Barth is not presented in abstraction or detachment from the material content of knowledge, but in the heart of his dogmatic theology, as in *CD* II.1 where it is bound up with the doctrine of God as he has made himself known to us in space and time through Jesus Christ his Incarnate Son."

Martin Marty pays tribute to Barth's doctrine when he writes that "what remains above all, however, is the confidence he gave us that we must, and perhaps can, speak of and about and to God."

God

Barth's doctrine of God with its focus also on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ is highlighted in T.H.L. Parker's essay. Parker writes that "from Barth I learned (gradually, no doubt) the central truth of all truths, that the objectivity of God, the otherness of God, the Sovereignty which [God] will not give to another, is not to be separated from his becoming one with [humanity], from [God] becoming the one who serves [humanity] and even puts himself at their disposal. These are not two contradictories or even two counter-truths to be held in balance, but as Christ is one, the sovereign Lord who is the Servant, the Servant who is the sovereign Lord, so these are one. It is not an *either-or*, not even a *both-and*, but it is *simul . . . et simul*. In being the one [God] is at the same time the other."

Martin Marty also pays tribute to Barth's doctrine of God when he writes that "what remains above all, however, is the confidence he gave us that we must, and perhaps can, speak of and about and to God." While the language analysts, symbolic logicians and philosophers can readily point out the problems in God language, Marty cites Saul Bellow's comment: "Being a prophet is nice work if you can get it, but sooner or later you have to talk about God." And Marty goes on to say: "It has been my experience that in the contexts of agnostics, secular-minded pluralists and those suspicious of the claims of faith, it is expected that this be sooner, not later. Ancillary theological themes can be postponed, made part of trivia quizzes. Theme Number One, *theos+logos*, God-thought, God-language, most efficiently and focally comes up first. Barth

certainly is not the only model when this agenda comes up, and he may not even be the best. But no twentieth century serious thinker more consistently pressed it to the front of thought, writing and preaching than did he. For that, he will live as fashions come and go."

Jesus Christ

Barth's theology is often said to be Christocentric. As Robert McAfee Brown points out: "No Christian theology worthy of the name can be other than Christocentric, and whatever else Barth's theology is, it is Christocentric. God did something, Barth constantly reminds us, in a narrow strip of history on a narrow strip of land, in Palestine and we are forever bound to respond to the nature and the content of that action. If the 'early Barth' stressed the theme of Koheleth that 'God is in heaven and you are on earth,' the mature Barth sings praises to the God who is also on earth as well."

In the realm of dogmatics, Paul Lehmann has argued that Karl Barth "delivered theological language and conceptuality from bondage to propositional logic and joined them once again to poetry."

Barth's Christological interpretation of the doctrine of predestination was another of his important contributions. For Brown, as a Presbyterian, this allowed him to reclaim the doctrine of election. For him, "it was 'II/2' that emancipated me. It was liberating to read Barth's comment that when he approached this topic he had expected to follow his master Calvin, and then discovered that in faithfulness to Scripture he had to break with Calvin, and declare that the doctrine of election was not a doctrine of impenetrable darkness but of indescribable light, God's ultimate 'yes' to humankind. The Scriptures, Barth affirmed, proclaim God's unconditional choice *for* us rather than against us, the preeminence and prevenience of God's grace, the God who has already chosen us before the foundation of the earth." As Béla Vassady noted in this regard, "Only a consistent Christocentricity can secure and guarantee a thoroughly non-speculative character for our theocentric theology."

Barth's focus on election and Jesus Christ leads to what Langdon Gilkey has found to be "the most 'modern' aspect of Barth, paradoxically united to what is most traditional—i.e. the centering of all salvation on Jesus Christ." This is the aspect of what Gilkey calls Barth's "universalism." He writes: "I find his clarity and breadth, and absolute originality, here endlessly inspiring. To me, something like this represents the only possible way to interpret Christian faith, that is in terms of the universality, the priority, the all-encompassing character and the triumph of God's redeeeming love. It is also the only basis on which a Christian can genuinely enter into dialogue with other religions—although this was (I am sure) hardly what Barth had in mind! The paradoxical greatness of the man is brightly illuminated here. At the very point where today his theology seems most 'parochial': explicitly centered in and concerned for the Biblical history, its tribulations and triumphs, at that *same* point it suddenly bursts into transcendence and glory and includes, as few other viewpoints do, the furthest reaches of God's creaturely domain."

Politics

A word should also be said about the influence of Karl Barth on politics according to some of the contributors. This issue is touched on at a number of points but is brought out most clearly in the essays by Lehmann, Brown, and specifically Harvey Cox who titled his piece, "Barth and Berlin: Theology at the Wall." Cox tells of his year living and working in Berlin in 1962 and how in his trips across to the Eastern side, pastors, teachers and lay people most of all wanted copies of Barth's *Kirchliche Dogmatik* to read. Cox tells of how Frederich-Wilhelm Marquardt argued that Barth's whole corpus had to be read from the perspective of Barth's perspective to socialism as Barth's *sitz im leben*. Barth was writing, said Marquardt, a kind of political theology. Then Marquardt pointed Cox to a section in *Church Dogmatics* II/1 (p. 386) where Barth in referring to Amos 5:24 said that "God always takes his stand unconditionally and passionately on this side and this side alone: against the lofty and on behalf of the lowly; against those who already enjoy right and privilege and on behalf of those who are denied and deprived of it." Living in Berlin, Cox found that the real life and death question for all people there was not the question of Bultmann, of how modern persons should understand themselves or of the disappearance of the mythical world-view. It was rather the question of Barth—the question of justice and peace. When Cox then later encountered the theology of Liberation and the writings of Gustavo Gutiérrez, he writes, "I had been made ready by the Barth I got to know in the shadow of the Wall, from the pastors and ordinary Christians who lived in Berlin bravely during those hard but heady days and who seemed to know with some wonderful assurance that they were just where God wanted them to be. For me, the step from Barth to Liberation theology was a natural and easy one."

Barth's relation to Liberation theology is also mentioned in Brown's essay and, interestingly, the same passage from *C.D.* II/1 (p. 386) is cited. Brown argues that there are some "mutually reinforcing convictions" between Barth and the Liberationists including among other things the fact that "neither position starts *de novo*." Barth was a socialist even before he read the Epistle to the Romans in a new light, and Gutiérrez defines theology as a "second act" which is a "critical reflection on praxis in *the light of the Word of God*." Thus, says Brown, "If Barth brings an implicit praxis to his examination of Scripture, Gutiérrez brings an implicit Biblical orientation to his examination of praxis." Brown sees the Biblical rootedness of Barth's theology as the source of Barth's "courage to issue a clear 'No' to Hitler" and that likewise this Biblical rootedness "gives Latin American Christians the courage to say 'No' in their own situations of tyranny."

In this regard also, there was a story in *The New York Times* in November 1985 which I cite in the "Introduction" to the volume. It was about Dr. Nico Smith, a white man and formerly a professor of theology at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa and now pastor of a Black Dutch Reformed Church in Mamelodi, South Africa, who told of the "enormous influence" Karl Barth had on him and his attitudes toward apartheid. In 1963 Smith had met with Barth and Barth asked him, "Will you be free to preach the Gospel even if the Government in your country tells you that you are preaching against the whole system?" Smith said, "That made a deep impression on me," and it subsequently helped shape his decision to leave his theology professorship and now live in a black township near Pretoria. So Barth's influence in political matters contin-

ues to have an effect.

Divergencies

As I mentioned, many of the contributors not only have appropriated much from Barth, but they have also diverged from him as well. A few of these divergencies can be mentioned.

Hendrikus Berkhof tells of how he had to widen his pneumatological thinking to include the realm of experience which Barth had rejected. He writes: "I could not agree with those Barthians for whom experience was a dirty word. I never had believed that Barth's 'No!' to Brunner's 'Nature and Grace' could be the last word. If the Spirit is active both in creation and in redemption, the Spirit must also be conceived as the bridge-builder between these two realms."

Dietrich Ritschl is critical of Barth's developed theology as done "entirely within the categories of Continental Protestantism and Catholicism. To put it more strongly," writes Ritschl, "I think that Barth never in his life had a conversation in depth with a truly non-religious communist, an atheist, a Muslim or a Hindu." When Ritschl told Barth near the end of Barth's life that his (Ritschl's) ambition was "to be a good player in the orchestra of theologians," Ritschl says, Barth "quite strongly disagreed and smilingly admonished me to play a solo-instrument." "I thought and I still think," says Ritschl, "that the time for this is over."

Donald Bloesch finds Barth's "denigration of human virtue" disturbing. He believes Barth "underplays the Scriptural injunction that apart from our striving after holiness we will not see God (Heb. 12:14; Rom. 6:19; Mat. 5:8). The call to sainthood, which is an integral part of the tradition of the church catholic," says Bloesch, "is sadly neglected in his theology."

One of the most sustained critiques of Barth is from John Cobb. Cobb rejects Barth's rejection of a "natural theology" in favor of, in Cobb's terms, a "Christian natural theology." He sees Barth's approach as at the root of what led to the "death of God" movement—an unwillingness to speak of God in terms other than those of the Bible and not in terms of "this world." Cobb questions Barth's concept of "nature" and believes his theology down plays ecology and therefore all the problems related to the rape of the environment.

Barth Today

Enough has been said to see how some of the contributors have viewed Barth, both positively and negatively. There is much more in the book and from other contributors whose names have not been mentioned. For many, Barth has been a starting point, a norm, a way of doing theology by which other systems and other thought can be evaluated. Yet even those whose theology today moves in an orbit other than Barth's do acknowledge his contributions and can find points at which he has been helpful personally. As John Cobb concluded his essay: "So what of Barth? That I could not follow him does not mean I cannot admire him or appreciate much of his legacy. That appreciation can best be shown today, not by becoming Barthians, but by responding as creatively to our situation, as we understand it, as he did his, as he understood it." For a theologian who always said he did not intend to found a "school," Karl Barth in this centennial year of his birth would perhaps be gladdened by that perspective.

Karl Barth: Socialism and Biblical Hermeneutics

by Steve de Gruchy

In Search of the Strange New World in the Bible

In the period 1916 to 1921, while a pastor at Safenwil, Karl Barth discovered and began to give expression to a new understanding of the Bible and its interpretation. It is our contention that major elements of what became of Barth's mature hermeneutic as expressed in *Church Dogmatics 1* were articulated in this "early" period. Barth entered academic work not with the intention of discovering a new understanding of the faith, but to articulate and provide a theological foundation for what he had already discovered.

What Barth had discovered, and what he voiced in a lecture in 1916, was "the Strange New World within the Bible." The first concern evident here is his belief that the content of the Bible is God's Word to us rather than history, morality and religion.

> It is not the right human thoughts about God which form the content of the Bible, but the right divine thoughts about men. The Bible tells us not how we should talk with God, but what he says to us; not how we find the way to him, but how he has sought and found the way to us. . . . It is this which is in the Bible. The Word of God is within the Bible.[1]

A second concern is the role of faith in interpretation. Barth makes himself clear: in spite of all our human limitations, Holy Scripture will interpret itself for us if we "read it in faith."[2] One can only understand the Bible if it is read in faith because really to understand it means to recognize that it "makes straight for the point where one must decide to accept the sovereignty of God. . . One can only believe . . . or not believe. There is no third way."[3]

Two years later, in August 1918, the "Strange New World" exploded on the wider public in the form of Barth's first commentary on *Romans*. We meet a third concern here: to have the Bible speak with importance in the twentieth century.

> What was once of great importance is so still. What is today of grave importance . . . stands in direct connexion with that ancient gravity. If we rightly understand ourselves, our problems are the problems of Paul; and if we be enlightened by the brightness of his answers, those answers must be ours.[4]

This concern led Barth to assign the historical-critical method to its "place" as mere "preparation of the intelligence," and to admit that were he driven to choose between that method and the classical Reformed doctrine of inspiration, he would "without hesitation adopt the latter."[5] This concern surfaces again in another lecture in 1920. Once again Barth wants to assign historical-critical work to a preliminary stage: "For it is clear that intelligent and fruitful discussion of the Bible begins when the judgment as to its human, historical and psychological character has been made and put behind us."[6]

Just before Barth left Safenwil, the second and wholly revised edition of Romans was published. While he saw fit to re-write the commentary, the concerns were still there. In his

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foreword to this edition, he responded to the basic criticism that he was an enemy of historical-criticism by arguing that he was more critical of others because he took concern of the text as his fundamental key to interpretation. In this context he uttered his famous comment that "the critical historian needs to be more critical!"[7]

Also in this foreword, he explicitly refers to a fourth concern, the responsibility of biblical theology and hermeneutics toward the life of the Church and its proclamation:

> I myself know what it means year in, year out to mount the steps of the pulpit, conscious of the responsibility to understand and interpret, and longing to fulfill it; and yet utterly incapable . . .[8]

What Barth had discovered, and what he voiced in a lecture in 1916, was "the strange new world within the Bible."

The fifth concern that is evident at this period is expressed in the lecture mentioned above, "Biblical Questions, Insight and Vistas." Here Barth said, "The Bible tells us more, or less, according to the much or little that we are able to hear and translate into deed and truth."[9] The application of the Word of God to the world around one is fundamental to the interpretation of the Bible.

It is clear then that five crucial and vital elements of Barth's biblical hermeneutic were already expressed while he was a pastor at Safenwil, in the two lectures and the two editions of *Romans*. This is not to say that we meet here his mature and articulated thoughts on the matter. Indeed, Barth had still to make his "false start," to read Anselm and most importantly to discover a trajectory within the thought of Calvin and the Reformation that would provide him with a framework to express that hermeneutic.[10] Nevertheless we are justified in saying that the discovery of this hermeneutic and its fundamental concerns had already been made.

Socialist Praxis at Safenwil

The work of Karl Marx has decisively influenced the way we understand human thought. "Consciousness," he tells us, "can never be anything else than conscious existence,"[11] and historical materialism "does not explain practice from the idea, but explains the formation of the idea from material practice."[12] In other words, who we are and what we do—particularly in relation to the material production in society—determines what we think and specifically how we understand the world around us. This is equally true of religious as it is of political or economic theories that attempt to *understand the world*. All attempts at understanding—i.e., all hermeneutics—are decisively influenced by the social praxis of the interpreter.

Nowhere in the field of biblical hermeneutics is this understood better than in liberation theology. Using the insights of Marx, liberation theologians raise questions about the relationship of the interpreter to society, grounding what Heidegger and Bultmann called the hermeneutical circle and pre-understanding in *real history*. Weir has commented that:

> Form criticism has taught us to seek the *sitz im leben* of the text. The hermeneutics of Liberation Theology are challenging scholarship to discuss the *sitz im leben* of the interpretation.[13]

The liberation theologians make clear that there is no possibility of coming to the biblical text with a *tabula rasa* because we all bring our own agendas to the study of the Bible. Miguez Bonino has commented:

> What Bultmann has so convincingly argued concerning a *pre-understanding*, which every man brings to his interpretaion of the text, must be deepened and made more concrete, not in the abstract philosophical analysis of existence, but in the concrete conditions of men who belong to a certain time, people and class, who are engaged in certain courses of action, even of Christian action, and who reflect and read the texts within and out of these conditions.[14]

As these insights are applied to the way the Bible has been interpreted in North Atlantic countries, we became more and more aware that its message is captive to the material and hence the ideological interests of the interpreters. Any attempt to respond to an interpretation of the Bible must begin with *suspicion*: "Every interpretation of the texts which is offered to us . . . must be investigated in relation to the praxis out of which it comes."[15]

In response, then, to our discussion of the relationship between consciousness and social existence, biblical interpretation and praxis, and most specifically the hermeneutic suspicion which leads to the above demand of Miguez Bonino, we need to inquire into the praxis which gave rise to Barth's hermeneutic. Because, as we have seen, the orientation of this hermeneutic is already clear in Safenwil, we need to focus on Barth's praxis as a pastor in this Swiss Village.

In 1972, Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt set the theological world abuzz with his four theses on Karl Barth's theology and radical politics. Marquardt maintained that:

1. Karl Barth was a Socialist.
2. His theology has its life setting in his socialist activity.
3. He turned to theology in order to set the organic connection between the Bible and the newspaper, the new world and the collapsing bourgeois order.
4. The substance of his turn to theology was the construction of a concept of "God."[16]

The fact that these theses were initially rejected by the Kirchlicke Hochschule in Berlin[17] indicates that much of Barth's radical political commitment has been obscured by First-World theologians. George Casalis writes that

> the dominant theologians and the ecclesiastical powers, having an inkling of the danger represented by an outstanding man who refused to be confined in the accepted political, academic and ethical framework, took steps to reclaim him. . . . As a result, conformist theologians and pastors could declare themselves "Barthian" without in any way calling into question the structures and values of social orders and ecclesiastical establishments.[18]

Through the work of Marquardt, Gollwitzer, Casalis, Hunsinger and others, there has been a growing awareness of the radical nature of Karl Barth's political commitments and activities at Safenwil. In a letter in the year of his death Barth reminisces:

> When as a young parson in Safenwil in the Aargau I saw the unjust situation of the workers, who were deprived of their rights, then I believed that as a theologian

> I could meet both them and the other members of the community only by taking their side and therefore becoming in practice a Social Democrat. In so doing, I was less interested in the ideological aspect of the party than in its organizing of unions. And "my" workers understood me on this matter. For them I was their "comrade parson" who was even ready on one occasion to march with them behind a red flag to Zofingen. . . . With that concern, I used the fathers and doctors of socialism to enlighten them as to their rights and possibilities both politically and especially in relations to unions. I successfully taught them to make use of their rights and options, and at times I even represented them at various congresses. Once I was almost elected to the Aargau council of government by the socialists.[19]

Gollwitzer summarizes some of the other activities that Barth was involved in when he notes that in Safenwil Barth "established three unions, organized strikes, travelled up and down the countryside as a party speaker, offended the well-to-do in his community, urged his presbyters to join the party, [and] formed a 'red' presbytery. . . ."[20] These comments and Barth's personal reflection enable us to understand what we would call the praxis of Karl Barth the pastor. They describe the *sitz im leben* out of which Barth could say: "Real socialism is real Christianity in our time."[21]

Barth and Segundo's Hermeneutical Circle

In the attempt to integrate Barth's socialist praxis and his discovery of this new way of reading the Bible, we will rely on Segundo's model of the Hermeneutical Circle, for this articulates most clearly the way in which social activity and biblical interpretation interact. This is Segundo's preliminary definition of the circle:

> It is the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present day reality, both individual and social.[22]

There are four stages or "decisive factors" in the hermeneutical circle. We shall examine each in turn with reference to Barth.

1. As one experiences reality, one becomes suspicious that all is not as one is led to believe. Ideological suspicion arises, in which one recognizes that the dominant way of explaining things does not fit with reality. Behind talk of peace and order lurks violence and exploitation. This is Segundo's first precondition: one has to become critical of one's society in order to begin to participate in the circle.[23] "A human being who is content with the world will not have the least interest in unmasking the mechanisms that conceal the authentic reality."[24] It should be clear from our discussion that Barth's embracing of socialism involved a critical attitude toward the ruling class of his day. It is clear too from this period that Barth looked upon the "fathers and doctors of socialism" with appreciation,[25] and the recorded correspondence with Herr Hussy indicates that he understood the prevalent socio-economic situation from a Marxist perspective.[26] What is clear from all of this (remarkably so in a letter from *Letters 1961-1968*), is that all of this grew out of his deep commitment to the workers of his parish. It was not just intellectual games!

2. This critical awareness and ideological suspicion grows to include even theology. Here one recognizes that the dominant theology and interpretation of the Bible cannot deal adequately with reality. Prior to the First World War, Barth had made himself "a committed disciple of the 'modern school.'"[27] The suspicion that it could not deal adequately with reality arose most dramatically with the advent of that War. Not only was the whole project of the "modern school" thrown into disrepute, but Barth was deeply shocked at the moral support his theological teachers gave to the German war effort.[28] This was an "ethical failure" that had its roots in theology. He wrote:

> The unconditional truths of the gospel are simply suspended for the time being and in the meantime a German war theology is put to work, its Christian trimmings consisting in a lot of talk about sacrifice and the like.[29]

Ideological suspicion also arose in the area of his day-to-day praxis of *preaching*. The responsibilities Barth faced as a preacher in a working class congregation raised serious questions about the legitimacy and adequacy of the theology he had been taught. He communicated to his friend Eduard Thurneysen his "increasing realization that our preaching is impossible from the start."[30] It must be remembered that in the case of both the War and homiletics, Barth's suspicion received its primary stimulus from his commitment to the workers in his parish and hence to socialism. Hunsinger has written that "the problem of the sermon was for Barth a problem of praxis, and praxis for him included socialist politics."[31] Barth speaks of a radical rejection of prevalent theology when he writes that

> a whole world of exegesis, ethics, dogmatics and preaching which I had hitherto held to be essentially trustworthy, was shaken to the foundations, and with it all the other writings of the German theologians.[32]

3. While the second step involves a rejection of prevalent theology, it can also mean the rejection of the Christian faith. If, however, one does not want to reject the faith itself, then one moves to this third step where one seeks to investigate "the suspicion that the prevailing interpretation of the Bible has not taken important pieces of data into account,"[33] and therefore that it is the expression of the faith and not the faith itself which cannot deal with the unmasked reality. Against Marx, who would have had similar views to him on the first two steps, Barth believed that the failure of liberal Protestantism did not mean the failure of the Christian faith. It meant rather that the Christian faith had to be restated. This involved having an "exegetical suspicion" that what his teachers propagated as "Christian" did not in fact have its roots in the Bible. Thurneysen refers to this shared suspicion:

> It happened as something basically very simple: the Bible struck us in a completely new way. It was already familiar to us, but we read it through certain filters and interpretations. When the theology and the world-view which created those filters were shaken, the interpretation began to fall apart.[34]

4. The fourth point in Segundo's circle is the appropriation of a *new hermeneutic*. We have examined Barth's new hermeneutic in detail above. The evidence we have in terms of responses by representatives of the "old school" bear witness to its novelty. Harnack branded him as being in line with Thomas Munzer, and according to one of the highly regarded New Testament professors, Julicher, he was a new Marcion![35] The inability for Barth and Harnack to correspond over the issue of biblical interpretation also illustrates the profound paradigm shift initiated by Barth's new hermeneuic.[36]

Because we have been speaking of a circle and not a straight line, factors four and one are related in such a way that the affirmation of a new hermeneutic—the grasping of new possibilities in the biblical text—leads on to a deeper commitment in the struggle for a better world. For the reason that the stress is on *action in response to God's Word* rather than mere con-

templation from afar, George Casalis has suggested the term *hermeneutical circulation*. This linguistic change carries with it a change in emphasis which recognizes that the interpeter does not sit still and let his or her mind go round a carousel of thought, but is actively moving in real life.

This constant circulation is also true of Barth. He continued to move around the circle again and again. New issues such as the 1918 Russian Revolution, the Swiss General strike, the rise of Nazi Germany, and the 1948 Hungarian Invasion led him to new suspicions and new insights into reading the Bible.[37] Marquardt quotes Barth himself as recognizing this: If "political relationships change, then Christians will simply take that as an occasion to read the Bible anew. . . . And quite certainly this: a new understanding of Scripture . . . is the community's decisive particpation in the change of the political order."[38] As events led to a new reading of the Bible, this in turn led to a deeper political involvement which included membership in the SDP in Nazi Germany and his refusal to resign from it in 1933; his political activity in the war years, his deportation, and his involvement in the Church struggle; his participation in the communist led *Committee for a Free Germany*; and his continuing rejection of capitalism and the "American Way of Life."[39]

Conclusion

In this essay we have argued (1) that biblical hermeneutics and social praxis are inextricably linked, and that a change in one involves a change in the other. This we have seen is true for Barth. His new hermeneutic which he discovered at Safenwil arose out of his socialist praxis. At the same time we have argued that (2) the orientation of this new hermeneutic remained the same throughout his life and that the themes articulated in the Safenwil period remained dominant in his mature theology.

We conclude with two remarks that flow from the above. (1) If Barth's hermeneutic arose from a socialist praxis, and if his hermeneutic did not change in orientation throughout his life, this lends further credence to the view that Barth remained committed to socialist praxis (at least in principle) throughout his life. Any basic change in praxis would have led to a corresponding basic change in his hermeneutic. (2) If Barth's hermeneutic arose out of socialist praxis, and if it was a *Reformed* hermeneutic, then he has a pivotal role to play in the search for Reformed theology that can be mature enough to be open to the challenge of liberation theology, to be in dialogue with it, and to learn from it while at the same time remaining true to the best of its tradition.

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[1] K. Barth, "The Strange New World Within the Bible" in *The Word of God and the Word of Man*. Trans. D. Horton (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p.43.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 34.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[4] K. Barth, Preface to the First Edition of *The Epistle to the Romans*. Trans. E.C. Hoskyns (London: OUP, 1933), p.1.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 1.
[6] K. Barth, "Biblical Questions, Insights and Vistas" in *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, pp.60f.
[7] K. Barth, Preface to the Second Edition of *Romans*, p. 8.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[9] K. Barth, "Biblical Questions, Insights and Vistas," p. 95.
[10] We are speaking here of that trajectory in Calvin which sees a relationship between the Word of God and the words of the Bible, but which avoids verbal infallibility and inerrancy and links together faith, the Spirit and the Word. See for example E.A. Dowey Jr., *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (New York: Columbia UP, 1952) for a discussion of the two trajectories in Calvin.
[11] K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*. Ed. C.J. Arthur (London: Lawrence and Wisehart, 1970), p. 47.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 58.
[13] J.E. Weir, "The Bible and Marx," in *The Scottish Journal of Theology* Vol. 35, p. 344.
[14] J. Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (London: SPCK, 1975), pp. 90f.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 91.
[16] F-W. Marquardt, "Socialism in the Theology of Karl Barth" in *Karl Barth and Radical Politics*. Ed. and Trans. G. Hunsinger (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), p. 46.
[17] See *Karl Barth and Radical Politics*, p. 10.
[18] G. Casalis, *Correct Ideas Don't Fall From the Skies*. Trans. J.M. Lyons and M. John (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1984), p. 90.
[19] K. Barth, "To an Engineer in East Germany, June 1968," in *Letters 1961-1968*. Trans. and Ed. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), p. 303.
[20] H. Gollwitzer, "Kingdom of God and Socialism in the Theology of Karl Barth" in *Karl Barth and Radical Politics*, p. 79.
[21] K. Barth, "Jesus Christ and the Movement for Social Justice" in *Karl Barth and Radical Politics*, p. 36.
[22] J.L. Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*. Trans. J. Drury (Maryknoll, Orbis, 1976), p.8.
[23] For a discussion on what Segundo considers the two pre-conditions for entry into the circle, see *Ibid.*, pp. 8f.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[25] K. Barth, "To an Engineer in East Germany, June 1968," p. 303.
[26] See K. Barth, "Answer to the Open Letter of Mr. W. Hussy in Aarburg" in *Karl Barth and Radical Politics*, pp. 40ff.
[27] K. Barth in E. Busch, *Karl Barth*. Trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM, 1976), p. 46.
[28] On the very day that the war broke out, 93 German intellectuals including Harnack and Hermann issued a manifesto in support of the war policy of Kaiser Wilhelm II and Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg.
[29] K. Barth in *Revolutionary Theology in the Making: The Barth-Thurneysen Correspondence 1914-1925*. Trans. J.D. Smart (Richmond: John Knox, 1964), p. 26.
[30] In E. Busch, *Op. Cit.*, p. 81.
[31] G. Hunsinger, "Toward a Radical Barth" in *Karl Barth and Radical Politics*, p. 202.
[32] In E. Busch, *Op. Cit.*, p. 81.
[33] J.L. Segundo, *Op. Cit.*, p. 9.
[34] Quoted in F-W. Marquardt, *Op. Cit.*, p. 60.
[35] See K. Barth, Preface to the 2nd edition of *Romans*, p. 13.
[36] See H.M. Rumscheidt, *Revelation and Theology: An analysis of the Barth-Harnack Correspondence of 1923* (Cambridge UP, 1972).
[37] For a short discussion of this see F-W. Marquardt, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 60f.
[38] In *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[39] See R. Petersen, "An analysis of the Nature and Basis of Karl Barth's Socialism" (Unpublished MA Thesis, UCT, 1985) and the essays by Marquardt, Gollwitzer and Hunsinger in *Karl Barth and Radical Politics* for a fuller discussion of these events and their significance. For Barth's response to capitalism and the "American Way of Life" see specifically K. Barth, *How to Serve God in a Marxist Land*, Ed. R. McAfee Brown (New York: Association Press, 1959). See also G. Hunsinger, "Karl Barth and Liberation Theology" in the *Journal of Religion*, Vol. 63, No. 4, 1983, in which he contends that one of the concerns that unites Barth and liberation theology is a highly critical response to capitalism.

The Evangelical Witness To the Poor and Oppressed

by Thomas D. Hanks

For our consideration of the evangelical witness to the poor and oppressed, I would like to outline ten fundamentals of biblical theology that shape and characterize the proclamation of the Good News to the poor.[1]

1. Oppression and Poverty

Essential to the faithful proclamation of the gospel to the poor and oppressed is the recognition of the fundamental character of oppression in biblical theology and in human history. Explicit vocabulary for oppression occurs more than 500 times and constitutes a fundamental structural category of biblical theology. In more than 150 biblical texts oppression is explicitly linked to poverty and is viewed in Scripture as the basic cause of poverty. True, more than 20 other causes for poverty can be found in Scripture—such as idolatry in Judges or sloth in Proverbs. However, all other causes occur but a few times each and lack the massive emphasis Scripture places on the causal link between oppression and poverty.[2] Since 1968, Latin American theologians have insisted that if we recognize oppression as the fundamental cause of poverty, then neither simple charity nor economic development proj-

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ects by themselves are adequate: the ultimate Christian answer must be *liberation* from oppression.

Historically evangelicals often have recognized the decisive character and necessity of liberation, as in William Wilberforce's struggle to abolish slavery in the British Empire.[3] Such Christian initiatives throughout church history stand in fundamental continuity with Jesus' own approach and sense of mission, which involved both the verbal proclamation of the gospel to the poor as well as liberation for prisoners and oppressed and the implementation of Jubilee Year principles in the socio-economic sphere (Luke 4:18-19). The decisive, emphatic role of liberation in Jesus' own programmatic description of his mission corresponds to the fact that he stands in continuity with the Old Testament in recognizing oppression as the fundamental cause of poverty. The character of the gospel as precisely Good News to the poor is disastrously subverted when Christianity is reduced to serving as a religious-ideological prop for an oppressive status quo. If the basic cause of poverty is oppression, then the Good News to the poor *must* carry the banner headline "liberation," as Jesus recognized. His own teaching and liberation praxis, particularly as delineated in Luke's gospel, constitutes a much broader and more profound analysis of oppression and liberation than contemporary Marxist analyses of class struggle.

Essential to the faithful proclamation of the gospel is the recognition of the fundamental character of oppression in biblical theology and in human history.

To appreciate the profundity and breadth of Jesus' analysis and the radical character of his liberating gospel and praxis, let us observe how the structural hierarchy of oppression as delineated by Luke contains some seven layers:[4]

1. *Demonic powers vs. all humanity.* At the uppermost level of what C. S. Lewis might have preferred to describe as the "lowerarchy" of oppression, we have Satan and the demonic powers that dominate and oppress all humanity. Since death is their ultimate aim, with sin and illness as their preferred instruments, Jesus is appropriately described in Peter's sermon to Cornelius as "*healing* all who were *oppressed* of the devil" (Acts 10:38).[5]

2. *Empire vs. provinces and colonies.* The second level of oppression obviously is the Roman Empire that conquered and oppressed weaker nations such as Israel, using such mechanisms as military occupation and taxation. However, while Jesus ministered and Luke wrote ever with an awareness of this level of conflict, the empire was not made a primary focus of immediate struggle as it later became in the book of Revelation.[6]

3. *Local oligarchy vs. the people.* Instead Jesus focused the brunt of his political attack on the oppression exercised by the local political-religious oligarchy: chief priests, Sanhedrin, scribes, Herodians and Pharisees. The dialectical counterpart in this struggle was the common people (*laos*) whom Luke describes as normally siding with Jesus against their self-appointed "leaders."[7] This conflict culminated in Jesus' triumphal entry and forceful but non-violent protest and occupation of the Temple site. These actions brought down upon him, as God's oppressed servant, the institutionalized violence of the crucifixion.

4. *Rich vs. poor.* The fourth level of oppression in Luke comprises all the economic mechanisms of oppression exercised by the rich against the poor. While repeatedly studied in recent years, the fundamental role of oppression is commonly downplayed or overlooked.[8]

5. *Men vs. women.* The fifth level of oppression delineated in Luke's portrayal of Jesus' liberating message and ministry involves the traditional domination of women by men. Widows, as women commonly poor and oppressed, receive special attention. Flenders has pointed out that Luke likes to present women and men in contrasting pairs.[9] The contrasts highlight the common spheres and mechanisms of male domination and oppression. Jesus' teaching and praxis, the power of the Holy Spirit, and Luke's own inspired pen collaborate to oppose male domination, pride and privilege.

6. *Elders and adults vs. youth and children.* Luke gives special attention to the infancy and childhood of Jesus and John the Baptist; both die as young martyrs, and Luke notes repeatedly the role of the elders in bringing Jesus to trial and crucifixion. Obviously Luke was keenly aware of the "generation gap" (1:17) and the conflicts it engendered. Orphans as well as children of one parent receive special attention.[10]

7. *Respectable society vs. prostitutes and publicans.* The seventh level of oppression in Luke is represented by the social outcasts, oppressed by society as a whole. Prime examples are the prostitutes and publicans. Neither group was economically poor, but as "immoral minorities" they were despised, rejected and harassed by the "moral majority." Constantly we find Jesus honoring and stressing the basic dignity of the immoral minorities that society scorned and despised.[11]

Conclusion. Luke's theology is commonly presented as focusing on spiritual salvation. Characteristic elements we have outlined as representing seven levels of oppression are commonly listed as rather unrelated "beads on a string"—almost as if they represented psychological quirks or neuroses of Luke. However, when we approach these concerns from the starting point of Jesus' own explicit programmatic statement of his mission—to proclaim Good News to the poor and bring liberation to the oppressed—the unity and coherence of Luke's theology and the truly radical character of Jesus' teaching and liberating praxis is immediately obvious. Luke's theology is not limited to spiritual salvation—it is a comprehensive theology of integral liberation for the oppressed; and precisely for that reason it is Good News to the poor.[12]

2. "All have sinned"—the Poor included, but especially their Oppressors

Fundamental to the proclamation of the gospel to the poor is the teaching that "all have *sinned* and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), that "Christ died for our *sins*" (1 Cor. 15:3), that "God commands all men everywhere to repent" of their sins (Acts 17;30-32; Lk. 13:3,5). Obviously if our doctrine of sin is not thoroughly biblical our entire gospel and all our evangelistic efforts become drastically distorted. This has happened in two ways.

Wheaton professor Mark Noll in a tribute to the late Francis Schaeffer concluded that Schaeffer, more than any other modern evangelical leader, "understood existentially the malaise that was eating the heart out of the modern world."[13] In a context where intellectual leaders and communications media unite to bombard everyone with their ideology that "man is dead," that we are but animals, that we are just machines, Schaeffer insisted that "humans possess *vast dignity* because they are made in God's image."[14]

As Kenneth Kantzer points out in his analysis of Robert Schuller's *Self-esteem: the New Reformation*, pastorally we are working in a milieu vastly different from that of Paul and the

Reformers. The Reformers worked in the afterglow of the Renaissance and a humanism that was not secular but still profoundly religious, often Christian. They could proclaim bluntly "all have sinned" and never ask themselves how incoherent, absurd or irrelevant that might sound to beings that view themselves as one more pig at the trough or as somewhat complicated machines soon to be rendered obsolete by the latest computer (if not first pulverized by nuclear holocaust). Kantzer says we should learn from the fact that Schuller, with his "pre-evangelism" stressing self-esteem, self-worth, human dignity and human potential, is "now reaching more non-Christians than any other religious leader in America."[15]

puters to work: tabulate and analyze the specific sins mentioned in traditional evangelism. Why is it almost always the common failings of the poor that we denounce and almost never the characteristic sins of their oppressors?[17]

Paul's universal conclusion that "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23) comes after six Old Testament quotations that denounce very specifically the institutionalized violence and lies of the oppressors (Rom. 3:10-18). The apostle also was careful to preface his exposé of human sin with clear teaching on creation (Rom. 1:20-23) and link it to a reference to the vast dignity of our human calling to live for the "glory of God." Fundamental to the proclamation of the gospel to the poor is

The character of the gospel as Good News to the poor is disastrously subverted when Christianity is reduced to serving as a religious-ideological prop for an oppressive status quo.

I refer to the evangelistic efforts of Schaeffer and Schuller because—whatever their shortcomings—their discoveries and insights are also of great significance in communicating the gospel to the poor. Today the great philosophers and the mass media have convinced everyone from European intellectuals to American rock singers that human beings are but animals or obsolete machines. By their ideologies, the great empires and oligarchies have sought to instill precisely that low view in the minds of colonies and common workers for millenia. The degree of their success in this task is the secret of their continual domination.

One of the Hebrew words for oppression means literally "to treat like an animal."[16] But an animal cannot sin; neither can your computer. The dehumanizing effects of the oppressive empires and their supporting oligarchies is much worse in modern industrialized technological societies than anything suffered in the Ancient World. Pack animals and computers still have the great value of being useful. In contrast, the unemployed adults and unschooled children who are left to scavenge for a living in the slums and garbage dumps are told in effect: "You are not even as important as a watchdog or pack animal—certainly not as clever as a computer; you are lower than an animal, lower than a machine; you are useless, as disposable as the styrofoam cups you are picking through; you are garbage, the refuse and scum of society." In such a context Christian evangelists *dare* not bypass the biblical teaching on creation. Our creation in God's image and for his *glory* provides the necessary presupposition and complement to the teaching about sin.

Into the slums of the Third World, where human beings have been denied all sense of worth and dignity, Marxist groups come with an electrifying message: you whom the capitalist oppressors treat as animals and view as garbage and scum—you can become the wave of the future, the makers of history, who establish a new kind of classless society with liberation and justice for all. However, as Schaeffer insisted, the biblical teaching on our creation in God's image, for his glory, dignifies human nature infinitely more than any conceivable existentialist or Marxist view.

Since 1968 Latin American theologians have sought boldly to steal the fire back from the Marxists and begin, as Jesus did, with a bold proclamation of liberation to the oppressed, coupled with a strong denunciation of oppression. Undoubtedly some Latin American theologians, priests and pastors can be faulted for dwelling too exclusively on the sins of the oppressors and not always making clear that "all have sinned"—that given the opportunity we all tend to oppress, dominate and treat unfairly anyone who is weaker in any way. But before we denounce Latin American heresies, put your com-

not only the universal truth (all have sinned) but especially the particular prophetic denunciation of the sins of the oppressors against the poor.

3. Christology: the Resurrection of God's poor, oppressed Servant

Fundamental and utterly central to the proclamation of the Good News to the poor is a Christology that is radically biblical. Paul can summarize his entire gospel in stark economic terms:

> You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for your sakes he *became poor*, so that you through his poverty might *become rich* (2 Cor. 8:9).[18]

For Paul the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity implies a theology of revolution, just as it did for Mary (Lk. 1:52-53). The socio-economic status of Jesus and his parents receives far more attention from the gospel writers than the technical medical fact of Mary's virginity. Jesus' poverty and simple life-style have attracted much scholarly attention in recent years.[19] Latin American theologians have stressed not only Jesus' humanity and poverty, but also the conflictive political dimension of his ministry.[20] Already in 1891 in his work *Christianity and the Class Struggle*, Abraham Kuyper recognized that Jesus "like the prophets before him and the apostles after him invariably took sides against the oppressor and for the oppressed."[21]

Precisely what upper and middle class suburban pulpits find an embarrassment to be hurriedly spiritualized or superficially rationalized, the poor in Latin America's Christian base communities find to be an exciting discovery.[22] Traditional Catholics, fundamentalists and conservative evangelicals rush pell-mell from the dogma of the Virgin Birth to the dogma of the penal substitutionary atonement. Thus they manage to dodge any implications of Jesus' incarnate life: costly discipleship and a conflictive political stance on the side of the oppressed and poor.

Elsewhere I have shown that the so-called "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah 53 is in fact the "Oppressed Servant," with four Hebrew words for oppression used six times in that one chapter.[23] Particularly the circumstances surrounding and leading up to Jesus' crucifixion were manifestations of oppression—terrible abuses of ecclesiastical and political power and authority. The crucifixion itself was an act of institutionalized violence. Jesus was a victim of the same kind of violence that condemns millions in the Third World to death each year: carnivorous injustice masked behind purported political "legality" and legitimated by idolatry and religious hypocrisy

(Mt. 23). Thus on the day of Pentecost, Peter points his finger at those who had crucified Jesus and declares: "This Jesus . . . you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men" (Acts 2:23). Here was a powerful, prophetic, political act of denunciation against oppression, injustice and institutionalized violence.

Evangelicals and Catholics have rightly insisted that the atoning work of Christ was penal and propitiatory, as Scripture abundantly attests.[24] However, we might do well to note that one of the earliest biblical expressions of God's anger makes clear that what most provokes God's wrath is the oppression of the poor and the weak (Ex. 22:21-24).[25] God's oppressed servant suffered the institutionalized violence of the crucifixion. However, unlike conformist militarists of modern oppressive empires—capitalist and communist alike—Jesus was truly revolutionary: "God's servant "did no violence" (Is. 53:9). He did not respond in kind, but broke the deadly cycle of violence and made "peace by the blood of the cross" (Col. 1:20).[26]

Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead represents the decisive divine vindication of his non-violent praxis and all that he taught and suffered. Like the socio-economic circumstances of the incarnation, Jesus' resurrection emphatically manifests God's preferential option for the poor and oppressed—above all when they suffer martyrdom through institutionalized violence. Against the "last enemy," death itself, God unleashes his omnipotence in history on the side of his oppressed servant. Jesus' tomb is empty, his disciples astonished, his tormentors and oppressors dumbfounded and terror struck. The Easter message, then, is not some innocuous card with lavender ribbon and yellow flowers to be sold to the consumer society. Easter is conflictive, partial, earthshaking (Mt. 28:2!) Good News to the poor.

The next decisive step in the revolutionary project of the establishment of God's kingdom is the Ascension. Enthroned at God's right hand, Jesus is the Lord of history who alone is worthy to break open the scrolls as conflictive events on earth move toward their final consummation (Rev. 5). Today, divided and discouraged Marxists struggle to define and implement their "historical project." The Good News to the poor is that the Lamb who was slain is enthroned as the Lord of history. His original "historical project" is still the best: the "Upside-down Kingdom,"[28] the revolution of God. Beside this kingdom both capitalist and communist ideologies are hopelessly conformist. The oppressive empires that embody and propagate them do well to tremble before the "original revolution."[29]

4. Authentic Repentance and the Empty Hand of Faith

Fundamental to the proclamation of Jesus' Good News to the poor is the call for radical repentance that expresses itself in terms of transferral of wealth from the overloaded hands of the rich to the empty hands of the poor, from the hands of the oppressors to the hands of the oppressed.[30] John the Baptist expressed it with classic simplicity: "He who has two coats let him share with him who has none; and let him who has food do likewise" (Lk. 3:11). Whatever the affluent may think of that demand, obviously it is Good News to the poor. "Capital"—accumulation of wealth not so shared—is prime evidence of sin and calls for repentance. When repentance is not soon forthcoming the evangelist announced God's imminent judgment against the glaring injustice of the wealthy oppressors. Traditional exegesis commonly fails to recognize why God's judgment is also an essential part of the Good News to the poor. However, in Scripture the wrath of God, culminating in his judgment against affluent oppressors, is a fundamental dimension of the Good News to the poor.[31]

The call to radical repentance is especially difficult and costly for wealthy oppressors. The declaration that salvation is by grace alone and faith alone is particularly Good News to the poor. Isaiah's classic invitation to the exiles and prospective emigrants in Babylon well exemplifies this truth:

> Come all you who are thirsty, come to the waters. And you who have no money, come buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without cost. (55:1)

Those whose hands are truly empty find that the simple invitation to extend the empty hand of faith is most appropriate to their condition. Salvation is by faith alone—the one area, as James points out, where the poor may be said to have the advantage (2:5). And this, too, is part of the Good News to the poor.[32]

Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead represents the decisive divine vindication of his non-violent praxis and all that he taught and suffered.

5. Liberating Justice and Forensic Justification

In 1513 at the University of Wittenberg, a German professor of Old Testament by the name of Martin Luther was preparing his lectures on the Psalms for a course that was to last three years. F.F. Bruce reminds us how Luther was struck by the prayer of Psalm 31:1, "in thy *justice, liberate* me."[33] Medieval theology had stressed the penal, distributive dimension of justice, but working without reference to the Exodus paradigm, had failed to recognize the dimension of liberating justice. With his linguistic insights from the Psalms about God's liberating justice and faith as personal trust in God, Luther eventually returned to expound Romans and the Reformation exploded in Europe.

What Luther discovered in the Psalms about God's liberating justice, Latin American theologians, going behind the Psalms to the Exodus paradigm, have developed more fully. The Exodus enables us to understand why in the age-old conflict between oppressors and oppressed, God's *distributive* justice is *liberating* justice for the oppressed, who are suffering injustice, but *penal* justice for the oppressors like Pharaoh, who refuse to repent.[34]

Given this fundamental sociological-linguistic insight, we can begin to appreciate the revolutionary character of Paul's letter to the Romans, where the fundamental theme is God's *liberating justice*, forensic justification being the decisive initial expression.

A Latin American *relectura* of Romans 1:16-18 reads like this:

> Not in the least am I ashamed of our Christian message of Good News to the poor—I'm actually proud of it. Far from some religious "opiate of the people" it rather constitutes God's revolutionary dynamite and explodes on the scene of human history underneath all in his creation that oppresses. This gospel brings substantial healing and holistic liberation to all who integrate the message into their lives, be they religious legalists or

secular humanists. In this Good News for the poor God's liberating justice for all the oppressed detonates repeatedly in human history, destroying empires and institutions as well as individuals who harden their hearts against God's historical project of cosmic liberation. Our subversive, revolutionary message, of course, is one thing affluent oppressors do not eagerly grab up. Rather it is especially sought by the oppressed and poor and all who like them stand with empty hands, stretched out in faith—and then enthusiastically pass on this transforming Good News to others of similar condition and like attitude. God's righteous indignation is plainly revealed from heaven against all institutionalized violence and oppression, because in their zeal to oppress, people go to the extreme of making the truth itself "un desaparecido" [vanished victim in Argentinian repression].[35]

The theme and structure of Romans make clear that Christ's propitiatory and redemptive work together with forensic justification (3:21-26) represent the decisive divine acts of liberating justice. From these deep founts flow all other facets of that "freedom of the Christian man" which Paul and Luther celebrated:[36]

Romans 5: Freedom from the eschatological wrath of God, and its historical outworkings.
Romans 6: Freedom from the inherent tendency to oppress.
Romans 7: Freedom from the domination and condemnation of the Law.
Romans 8: Cosmic liberation from futility and death.
Romans 9-11: The universal scope of God's historical project of liberation, embracing both Jews and Gentiles.
Romans 12-13: Revolutionary subordination under imperial domination.
Romans 14-15:13: Liberating praxis for both strong and weak within the Christian base communities.
Romans 15:14-33: Paul's personal project for spreading the revolution throughout the Roman empire.
Romans 16: Greetings to five subversive house churches springing up under Emperor Nero's nose.

Paul thus makes explicit in the structure of Romans that forensic justification is the great foundation stone on which all other dimensions of God's liberating justice and Christian freedom are erected (5:1-2ff.). Ernest Käsemann has pointed out that in Romans 2:1-16 Paul expounds the apocalyptic theme of the final judgment, where God manifests his ultimate distributive justice, *before* turning to the justification of the ungodly (4:5), which is the dialectical and paradoxical anticipation of that final judgment.[37]

Why, then, is forensic justification fundamental in the evangelism of the poor? First, because the poor and oppressed, like all other descendants of Adam, are sinners, guilty before God and in need of forensic justification as classically expounded by Paul in Galatians and Romans, and by Luther and Calvin at the Reformation. Historically, the poor and oppressed in Israel sought to receive justice "in the gate" of their community. However, as in any modern culture, the opposite often occurred. Wealthy oppressors could bribe judges and witnesses, pay for sophisticated lawyers and intimidate the poor with violence. The biblical doctrine of forensic justification is Good News especially for the poor, because it testifies to a Supreme Judge who cannot be bribed, a superlative advocate who need not be hired—and who even pays for us the enormous debt that stands in the books against us.

What evangelicals often forget is that justification by faith alone does not constitute a conservative prop for the status quo: it is radical, revolutionary theology. As F. F. Bruce has pointed out, historically this doctrine has revolutionized and democratized European ecclesiastical and political structures, leading to the collapse of feudal hierarchy, overthrow of monarchy, rejection of the ideology of divine right of kings, etc. Bruce concludes:

> The man who has had such personal dealings with God, and has been raised to his feet by almighty power and grace, can never be enslaved in spirit to any other man. The doctrine of justification by faith underlies and undergirds the forms which democracy has taken in those lands most deeply influenced by the Reformation; it is a bastion of true freedom. Luther was charged with "inciting revolution by putting little people in mind of their prodigious dignity before God." How could he deny the charge? The gospel, as he had learned it from Paul, does precisely that.[38]

What evangelicals often forget is that justification by faith alone does not constitute a conservative prop for the status quo: it is radical, revolutionary theology.

We should add that just as the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries saw ecclesiastical and political structures begin the process of democratization, so in the 19th and 20th centuries the great conflict has centered more on the democratization of economic structures in the various types of New Deal, Fair Deal, Great Society, Socialism, Marxism, Communism, etc.

We also need to appreciate and develop the profound anthropological and psychological implications of our proclamation of justification by faith in contexts of oppression and poverty. Increasing numbers of Marxist leaders and liberal or humanist social workers are coming to the conclusion that the most devastating and *irreparable* effects of poverty are not the external physical deprivations, terrible as these are. The most insuperable problem is the continual shame, humiliation and insults that crush all sense of dignity, self-esteem and self-worth and systematically eliminate all basis of hope for change.

Bruce J. Malina's recent anthropological study of "Honor and Shame" as pivotal values in the ancient biblical world provides fundamental insight for the proclamation of justification by faith to the poor.[39] By relating Malina's insights to Paul's teaching in Romans, we can see that for Paul, forensic justification of the ungodly implies *social vindication* on the human plane. Käsemann has pointed out the significance of Romans 3:4, which he calls a "key passage for the whole of Paul's doctrine of justification."[40] Here the Apostle cites Psalm 51:6 (LXX): "So that you may be justified—proved right—in your words and prevail in your judging." Divine, forensic justification occurs in a conflictive social context and carries with it the implication of social vindication. This dimension of social vindication Paul makes even more explicit in Romans 5:1-11, where three times he repeats "we boast" (5:2,3,11)—the same verb earlier used to describe *improper* boasting in human works (3:27; 4:2). In Romans 5:5 the Apostle adds that Christian hope does not *put to shame*.

To appreciate fully the significance of these texts for the poor and oppressed, we must recall passages like Hannah's

Song (1 Samuel 2:1-10) and Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55). Here oppressed, humiliated women exalt in their social vindication in the presence of their oppressors and detractors. Hebraic "justice in the gate" undoubtedly provided countless similar experiences of social vindication. The decisive experience of forensic justification thus carries with it not only peace with God, reconciliation and adoption as his sons (Rom. 5:1, 10-11; 8:14-17), but also implies social vindication of the despised, the humiliated and rejected. When we realize what justification and the accompanying sense of social vindication can mean to the poor, we can perhaps begin to understand why Luther's early preaching was soon followed by the Peasants' Revolt. Evangelicals like to recall how Paul's Epistle to the Romans has sparked four great theological revolutions in the church: those of Augustine, Luther, Wesley, and Barth.[41]

A fifth revolution for the poor and oppressed of the Third World awaits the discovery and proclamation of the full implications of Paul's teaching on forensic justification as the first and decisive expression of God's liberating justice.

6. Regeneration—New Birth, baptism of the Holy Spirit: Power to the Powerless

Fundamental to the proclamation of the Good News to the poor is the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Decades ago biblical theologians began to emphasize that "Spirit" in biblical theology is not to be equated with the negative Greek philosophical concept of non-material.[43] Rather in biblical theology God's Spirit represents something positive: divine power—"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you" (Acts 1:8).

As we have seen in our analysis of oppression, Scripture shows that human life is conflictive: society consists of a hierarchy of multiple layers prone to oppression, hence the weaker, dominated elements continually struggle for liberation. Joel's prophecy, quoted by Peter in his Pentecost sermon makes clear that God gives his Holy Spirit not to reinforce the privileges and power of the oppressors. Rather God puts the power of his Spirit on the side of the weak and oppressed to effect a democratization of power in human life and society:

> I will pour out my Spirit [divine power] upon *all* flesh [humanity in its weakness]; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy [marking the end of male domination]; and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams [the generation gap bridged; the end of domination by the elders and their traditions]; yea, and on my male slaves and my female slaves in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy [liberation from socio-economic domination as the poor become history-makers].

This biblical teaching on the revolutionary democratizing work of God's Spirit has suffered a thousand distortions in church history. It has been co-opted by political and ecclesiastical hierarchies to justify the cruelest oppression and religious persecution. It has been subverted by Christian militarists of all ideologies to justify the slaughter of millions in war—despite Zechariah's rebuke and promise: "Not by military might and power, but by my Spirit, says the sovereign Liberator" (4:6). Jacques Ellul has pointed out how the three great oppressive empires in today's world (the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., and China) find themselves characterized by common trends and agreement in their fundamental ideologies:

> a. slavish, uncritical pursuit of technological innovation and domination;
> b. unprecedented growth of state power with common idolization of military power;
> c. unscrupulous use of violence, with integrative propaganda used to mask their atrocities.[44]

To protect and liberate the poor and oppressed from the domination of the great empires throughout history, to foster fullness of life before the onslaughts of the powers of death, God puts his Secret Weapon in the hands of the poor and oppressed—the power of his Holy Spirit, communicated through his Word and Sacraments. Thus fundamental to the proclamation of the gospel to the weak, the powerless, the poor, is God's promise: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:8):

> —power to love the brethren and create authentic human community (Rom. 5:5)
> —power to love even your enemies who oppress and persecute you (Rom. 12:14-21)
> —power to bear witness and suffer martyrdom, to enlist even your persecutors in the ranks of the apostles (Acts 7:9).

Biblical Christianity has never been a matter of the affluent evangelizing the poor; rather . . . it is the poor who evangelize their affluent oppressors.

7. Salvation and Holistic Integration

Fundamental to the Good News to the poor and oppressed is the proclamation of full salvation in all the breadth and depth of biblical teaching. C. I. Scofield in his note on Romans 1:6 wrote: "The Hebrew and Greek words for 'salvation' imply the ideas of *deliverance*, safety, preservation, *healing* and soundness: 'salvation' is the great inclusive word of the Gospel." In the Spanish translation of Scofield, the first definition given for salvation is "liberación." This breadth of the biblical concept is easily confirmed in texts such as Zechariah's prophecy in Luke 1:67-79, and Mary's Magnificat (Luke 46:55). Zechariah speaks of being "*saved* from the hand of our *enemies*, and from the power of all who hate us" (Luke 1:71). Despite the obvious breadth of the New Testament concept of salvation indicated by the Greek word usage and summarized in Scofield's note, popular evangelicalism tends to limit the meaning of New Testament teaching on salvation to justification, forgiveness, and spiritual regeneration. John Stott has given a well-argued defense of this common, restricted interpretation of salvation.[45] However, as I have argued elsewhere, Stott's sharp distinction between secular political liberation and spiritual salvation may well rest more on a platonizing of the New Testament linguistic data rather than historical-grammatical exegesis.[46] A proper *historical* approach must begin with the Old Testament understanding of the *multiple* blessings of the Abrahamic covenant of grace as these blessings continue in the New Testament.

Hermeneutically, we might point out that Calvin, insisting on the fundamental continuity of the Old and New Testaments, found it necessary to stress that the Old Testament always contained a vertical, *non-material* dimension, including justification and forgiveness.[47] Latin American theologians, confronted with centuries of platonizing interpretations of key biblical texts, have stressed that the New Testament offer of

salvation contains a *material* dimension, including salvation from enemies, liberation from oppressors.[48]

Within the Old Testament itself we see a progressive deepening of the teaching on justification and forgiveness, especially after the exile, and in Jeremiah's proclamation of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Ps. 130:8). Similarly in the New Testament, Jesus begins by promising *"liberation"* to the oppressed (Lk. 4:18-19), but uses the same word (*'aphesis*) in the great commission with reference to *forgiveness* of sins (Lk. 24:47). Paul's gospel begins with the broad concept of liberating justice (Rom. 1:16-17) but soon focuses in on our deepest need: forensic justification of the ungodly. Elsewhere I have shown in detail how Isaiah 53 presents salvation in three dimensions: as forensic justification based on penal substitution (the evangelical perspective), as physical healing (the Pentecostal perspective), and as liberation from socio-political oppression (the Latin American perspective).[49] The Johannine interpretation of salvation in terms of abundant life (10:10) confirms the conclusion that "salvation" should not be reduced to the non-material, interpersonal dimension, even in Paul.[50]

However, in proclaiming the Good News of full salvation to the poor and oppressed, biblical theology requires that we proceed with historical awareness and pastoral sensitivity. Popular pentecostal "prosperity" theology lacks biblical balance and destroys the historical dialectic of biblical teaching in this area. Even in Deuteronomy, while obedience brings prosperity, affluence produces apostasy and judgment.[51] In later historical contexts, obedience and fidelity often augments oppression and persecution (Ps. 44; cf. Job). Similarly in the New Testament, while the promises of the Abrahamic covenant continue in all their breadth,[52] fidelity may also result in persecution and loss of goods (Heb. 10:32-39); hence those who are justified but dispossessed of their earthly goods learn to boast and rejoice even in their common experiences of oppression and persecution (Rom. 5:3; 8:31-39). Such texts remind us that we should not restrict "full salvation" to the purely vertical and non-material; but neither dare we allow materialist, secular or Marxist philosophies to dictate to the church an agenda of "bread alone" nor usurp the biblical emphasis that Jesus came to save us from our sins (Mt. 1:21).[53]

8. Christian Base Communities and House Churches vs. Empire and Priestly Hierarchy

One tragic dimension of the suffering of the poor is poignantly expressed in Proverbs: "The poor are shunned by their *neighbors*" (14:20). "A poor person is shunned by all his *relatives*—how much more do his *friends* avoid him"(19:7). Because of this devastating social alienation, fundamental to the Good News for the poor is Jesus' purpose as expressed classically in the promises contained in Matthew's gospel: "Where two or three are assembled in my name, I am right there in their midst" (13:20). "I will multiply and build up my house churches and base communities, and the power of death shall not prevail against them" (Mt. 16:18). The radical New Testament teaching on authentic Christian community as embodied in base communities and charismatic house churches is part of the Good News to the poor. Luke describes the great banquet from which the poor are not excluded or shunned but rather eagerly sought out and urged to come (Lk. 14:12-24).

This strand of the gospel is Good News to all the poor and oppressed in their social alienation. Jesus offers his personal friendship, but also the social solidarity of the new communities that gather in his name. Jesus promises the fullness of his personal solidarity and presence to groups of two or three that do not even come up to minimal standards for Jewish synagogues. Thus he reminds us that authentic Christian community commonly stands in conflict with the traditional authoritative hierarchies that seek to legitimate and promote the privileges and interests of the dominant classes and empires.

Ironically, the radical ecclesiology of Matthew's gospel provides the very texts that have been co-opted to legitimate the traditional church hierarchy in Latin America (Mt. 16:13-20; 18:15-20). Yet when Paul describes the "church" in Rome he speaks of persecuted emigrants and slaves in five house churches—a far cry from our modern image of St. Peter's basilica, Pope, curia, college of cardinals, etc.[54]

The radical New Testament ecclesiology with its house churches and charismatic, democratic leadership enables a Christian assembly to devote its full economic resources to the needs of the poor instead of squandering them in vast building programs and professional salaries. Whenever Christians succumb to the "edifice" complex and professionalize the clergy, inevitably that is bad news for the poor. Then we may offer only erudite discourses in ornate architecture, but must leave it to leftist political groups to take up pressing concerns such as daily bread for widows, clean water and decent housing for the slums, and medical care for impoverished families. A recent issue of *Newsweek* estimates that in Brazil alone there are 60,000 Christian base communities. The article says:

> With the *Bible* as their primer, members studied their responsibilities—and their rights—as citizens. They dug wells and built health centers and schools. And they learned how to protest when the government tried to thwart their projects. . . . Their membership—approximately 10 million—makes them perhaps the most important force for change in the giant, fast-growing country.[55]

Bill Cook has pointed out that individualistic Protestant evangelism of the poor has resulted in individual upward social mobility, while the base communities are more faithful to New Testament teaching on solidarity in Christian community. He concludes: "This fundamental flow in our Calvinistic ethic—our rank individualism—is responsible, I believe, for the superficiality of much of Protestant evangelism."[56]

The tremendous force of the Christian base communities and their leaders in Latin America represents an unprecedented threat to oppressive regimes, along with the traditional hierarchies that have legitimated them. The powers of death have responded with a wave of institutionalized violence, assassination, torture, imprisonment and exile affecting more than 1200 priests, nuns and evangelical pastors since 1968. However, the base communities and house churches continue to multiply and grow, because the resurrected Lord of Life is in their midst. That too is a fundamental part of the Good News to the poor.

9. The Blessed Hope and Realizable Eschatology

Fundamental to the Good News for the poor and oppressed is the full biblical teaching on the Christian hope. As in the case of salvation and liberation we may say that hope in the Scriptures has two *spatial* dimensions: the spiritual, heavenly sphere, and the material, earthly sphere. Hope in the Good News for the poor also contains two *temporal* dimensions: prophetic, "realizable" eschatology, and apocalyptic consummation. The apocalyptic dimension, dominant in the New Testament, includes the triumphant personal return of Jesus as World Liberator, with the resurrection of the dead and final world judgment—the New Jerusalem descending from heaven to earth.

Historically, the apocalyptic and utopian elements in Scrip-

ture sprang from small, weak, oppressed communities in times of cruel persecution; hence they have particular relevance for the oppressed and poor today. Institutionalized violence and martyrdom is commonly their lot, but the apocalyptic hope assures them that the resurrected Liberator, whom they love and follow, will personally return in certain triumph. Fallen young martyrs, tragically cut off in the prime of life, will be raised to share with Jesus in his millennial reign on earth (Rev. 20:1-6). Universal resurrection will be followed by world judgment. The single criterion for world judgment will be solidarity with Jesus as he confronts us in the person of the poor and oppressed: the hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless, sick and imprisoned.[57] The blessed hope of the Liberator's triumphant personal return, millennial reign, universal resurrection with world judgment based on the single criterion of good works done for the poor—all this is glorious good news to the poor, but a drastic threat to all who oppress and persecute them. This hope is also a threat, as Jesus' parable shows, to all whose egotism and greed so dominate their horizon that they remain indifferent to the sufferings of the poor, and who thus passively support the mechanisms and structures of oppression and persecution.

The prophetic dimension of Christian hope, more prominent in the Old Testament, refers to those earthly first fruits and anticipations of the millennial reign and eternal state—what we might call "realizable eschatology." Although New Testament writers, with their anticipation of an imminent parousia, commonly stressed the purely futuristic, apocalyptic dimension, 2000 years of church history reminds us that we dare not neglect the Old Testament, prophetic, "realizable" strand. In Romans Paul speaks of the Old Testament Scriptures, with their strong elements of material, political, realizable eschatology, as providing a firm basis of hope even for gentile believers (15:4, 12-13). Providentially, but perhaps unintentionally, the Apostle also points us to this essential function of the Old Testament in his final letter to Timothy (3:14-17), as we shall see in our final section.

Various materialist, secular and Marxist movements consistently offer the poor the hope of improved earthly conditions. Non-Christian religions of the oriental and neo-platonic types offer escape from the pain and suffering of the material realm. Tragically, most traditional Christian theology and evangelism have not faithfully maintained the powerful biblical dialectic between the heavenly and earthly, and between realizable eschatology and apocalyptic consummation. Especially since Augustine, neo-platonism to a greater or lesser extent has dominated virtually all Christian eschatology. Recently, negative overreactions to naturalist materialism and Marxist faiths often further exaggerate this fundamental perversion of biblical teaching. Affluent Christians commonly are quite happy with this domestication of the Christian hope. With their material needs abundantly satisfied, they eagerly respond to promises of escape from future earthly tribulation to an eternal life in the heavenly sphere.

The results of this situation may be observed throughout the Third World: middle-class missionaries, as well as national evangelists who uncritically accept their ideology, establish churches in the most terrible slum conditions, but offer only a neo-platonic hope of escape to heaven. Marxists in the same environment tell the poor: you can become a history-maker" and change these miserable conditions; work with us to establish the new classless society, free from imperialist domination, with peace, freedom and justice for all.

Latin American Christian base communities have sought to reappropriate the fire that Marxist groups have stolen. While usually not explicitly premillennial, the emphasis on the material, earthly eschatology is much closer to early patristic premillennialism than to the Augustinian neo-platonic spiritualization that has dominated both Catholic and Protestant eschatology, even in its current premillennial and dispensational forms. The dominant, recurring notes in the prophetic hope for the poor as they are expressed in the base communities are: peace, freedom, and justice.

The peace on earth, which angelic messengers announced to poor shepherds at the Liberator's birth, first came to clear expression in the history of human thought in the oracles of Isaiah and Micah. These two prophets spoke of peace to a poor, oppressed nation that was reeling under the impact of cruel Assyrian invasion (Mic. 4:1-5; Is. 2:1-5; cf. 9:1-6). In Micah the hope of the poor for universal, permanent peace on earth appears to result when Israel's great day of atonement and Jubilee law is extended to all the gentile nations, with the result that "*every man* will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree" (4:3).

Just distribution of land (representing the means of production in an agricultural society) clearly is essential to universal, permanent peace in Micah's vision. In continuity with the Exodus paradigm, the Jubilee law, and Micah's vision, Jesus also focused on radical land reform and Jubilee celebration as intrinsic to his mission and Good News to the poor (Lk. 4:19; Mk. 10:29-31; Mt. 5:5-6). Our Lord is quite explicit that just redistribution of possessions is not merely a future apocalyptic element, but an essential part of eschatology that is realizable "in this present age" (Mk. 10:30).[58]

However, Micah's prophetic hope for world peace and economic justice refers also to universal conversion, freedom, education in Torah, and disarmament. Today when nuclear holocaust threatens the human species—affluent and poor alike—with destruction, when ferocious wars between communist states and between Islamic nations have discredited alternative ideologies, it is time for Christian evangelists to reclaim that fundamental element in our original message of "peace on earth." Militaristic empires ever seek to instrumentalize the poor in their efforts at world conquest. The Christian gospel offers the only firm basis for peace—based on the divine promises and commands—and seeks to enlist the poor not as cannon fodder for empirial conflict, but as courageous peacemakers (Mt. 5:9).

The poor, who commonly suffer the institutionalized violence condemned in Scripture, are exhorted to abstain from vengeance (Mt. 5:38-48; Lk. 6:27-36; Rom. 12:14-21), stop the vicious cycle of violence, and establish communities that refrain from war and that expand by the power of God's Word and Spirit rather than by military conquest (Zech. 4:6; Is. 9:7). Beginning with the angelic message to the shepherds, God in the gospel has committed the great hope and key to peace into the hands of the poor. As they share their Good News, a world weary of wars and rumors of war discovers the only firm basis for hope: faith in the promises of God and obedience to the clear commands of Jesus and his apostles.[59] Biblical Christianity has never been a matter of the affluent evangelizing the poor; rather, in the first century as today, it is the poor who evangelize their affluent oppressors.[60]

10. The Epistemological Privilege and the Epistemological Certainty of the Poor

Fundamental to the Good News to the poor is the confident affirmation that the Scriptures attesting this gospel are true, not religious myth or political propaganda in the service of oppressive imperial ideologies. Latin American theologian Hugo Assmann apparently was the first to speak of the "epistemological privilege of the poor."[61] This epistemological

privilege forms part of Luke's Good News to the poor. Actually, you might say it started when the angels announced Messiah's birth to poor, illiterate shepherds. This constituted an unprecedented "headstart" program, and they managed to locate the Messiah some two years before the wealthy wise men managed to confirm their "star hypothesis." Then when the seventy[two] return from evangelizing the poor in the Galilean villages, Jesus is filled with joy through the Holy Spirit and exclaims: "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children" (10:21-22). In contrast and conflict with elitist-controlled education, Jesus celebrates the democratization of knowledge and education signaled by his incarnation, miracles and teaching ministry. Culminating the educational revolution begun in the Old Testament,[62] this democratization of knowledge and education constitutes a fundamental dimension of the Good News to the poor as recorded in the gospels. It is also accompanied by a corresponding judgment on an oppressive elite (Lk. 10:21) who substitute imperial propaganda for sound education and permit their ideologies to blind them both to the revelatory character of Jesus' Good News to the poor and to the imminent divine judgment on the oppressors (Lk. 10:10-16; cf. Mt. 23). As Howard Marshall explains, the "infants" [nēpiois] in Jesus' saying represent the poor, needy and oppressed who accept the gospel.[63] Jacques Ellul has prophetically analyzed how propaganda functions in contemporary societies, especially in the dominant empires of the U.S.S.R., U.S.A., and China. He points out that it is not the illiterate peasant, but precisely the educated elite—those who gorge themselves on technologically processed information—who are most susceptible to and most completely dominated by imperial propaganda that is not disruptive but "integrative."[64]

Complementary to the biblical teaching on the epistemological privilege of the poor is our evangelical emphasis on epistemological certainty. However, what is commonly forgotten in all our weighty tomes on propositional revelation and inerrancy is that epistemological certainty, grounded in the work of the Holy Spirit and the authority and truth of God's Word (incarnate, preached and inscripturated), is not ideologically neutral nor the special prerogative of the affluent, but rather constitutes a fundamental strand of the Good News to the poor (Lk. 16:17; Mt. 5:17-19; Lk. 21:33; Mk. 13:31; Mt. 24:35; Jn. 17:17). Jesus' stress on the epistemological privilege and certainty of the poor is, of course, also elaborated by Paul as part of his understanding of the Good News to the poor (1 Cor. 1:18-31, esp. 27-29; 2:1-16, esp. 18).[65]

The radical implication of this evangelical certainty strand in the Good News to the poor is perhaps best communicated by a Latin American paraphrase of Paul's *locus clasicus* on the inspiration of the Old Testament (2 Tim. 3:14-17):

> But as for you, Timothy, keep applying to your praxis all you have learned and thus become certain of. Remember the godly women in your family who dared to teach you, and be grateful that you were not (like so many) consigned to illiteracy, but from infancy were taught the Old Testament Scriptures. This subversive literature is able to make you wise for salvation, healing, and integral liberation through commitment to God's Spirit-empowered Liberator and Messiah. Our Hebrew Scriptures do not at all reflect the idolatrous propaganda and ideologies of oppressive empires; rather in their entirety they have been breathed out by God's powerful Spirit of truth. Hence they are helpful in every age for instructing the humble poor and illiterates in true wisdom; for reproving oppressors of all sorts; for correcting our praxis, and for training us in justice that is truly liberating; in order that the ministry of every believer may have a prophetic quality, and that he or she may be equipped and trained to carry out the kind of good works that don't simply create passivity and paternalist dependence, but that really help the poor and oppressed to discover their full dignity and freedom as God's sons.

The inspiration, perspicuity and authority of the Scripture, according to Paul, thus also constitutes an inalienable strand in the gospel, the Good News to the illiterate, the poor and the poorly educated.

Conclusion

We have outlined ten elements that are fundamental in biblical theology for the proclamation of the Good News to the poor and oppressed. In 1970 black evangelist Tom Skinner brought students at the Urbana convention to their feet cheering with his ringing declaration, "The Liberator has come!"[66] Often since then I've had to ask myself: Do affluent white evangelicals preach a different gospel? Are the conflictive, triumphant strains of Jesus' Good News to the poor and woes to the rich still clearly recognizable in our message? Or in our zeal to make "evangelical" synonymous with "conservative" have we utterly failed to conserve those fundamentals so essential to our Lord and to Paul—those characteristics of the gospel that make it *preferentially* Good News to the poor? There is, as Paul insists, "no other gospel" (Gal. 1:6-9).

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[1] By "poor" I mean those lacking elements necessary to human life: land or employment, food, drink, clothing, housing and health—both physical and psychological (honor, dignity, sense of worth, identity, hope, freedom). See Job 24:1-2, Mt. 25:31-46. Jacques Ellul has written extensively seeking to define both the biblical and sociological concepts. See his *Money and Power* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1984 [1954, rev. 1979], pp. 141-151; *The Betrayal of the West* (New York: Seabury, 1978 [1975], pp. 85-125.

[2] Thomas D. Hanks, *God So Loved the Third World* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1983), pp. 38-39, 58-60; see also Elsa Tamez, *The Bible of the Oppressed* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1982); Jacques Pons, *L'Oppression dans L'Ancien Testament* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1981).

[3] John Pollock, *Wilberforce* (London: Lion, 1977), p. 238.

[4] Young Kim, "The Vocabulary of Oppression in the Old Testament," Drew University Ph.D. thesis, 1981 (available from University Microfilms International). Kim's outstanding analysis of the mechanisms of oppression in the Old Testament provides the starting point for my analysis of the levels of oppression in Luke.

[5] Hanks, op. cit., pp. 50-60, esp. 53, 54; Kim, op. cit., p. 264, citing Dt. 28:27-42; Is. 38:10; Ps. 103:3-6; cf., the abundant pentecostal and charismatic literature related to this theme, but often rather myopic in exegesis, hermeneutics and theological perspective.

[6] Juan Stam, "El Epocalipsis y el imperalismo" in Elsa Tamez and Saul Trinidad, eds., *Capitalismo: Violencia y Anti-vida* (San José: EDUCA/DEI, 1978, Vol. I, 351-394. Richard J. Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics and Society: A Study of Luke's Gospel* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979), pp. 50-97; Richard J. Cassidy and Phillip J. Scharper, eds., *Political Issues in Luke-Acts* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1983), pp. 38-48.

[7] I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), pp. 241f., 868f. (note especially Lk. 22:2; 23:5); Richard J. Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics and Society*, pp. 52-54; 63-64, 92-93, 101-107, 114-127; *Political Issues*, pp. 146-167; Colin Brown, ed., *Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), II, p. 799.

[8] Walter E. Pilgrim, *Good News to the Poor: Wealth and Poverty in Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981); Luke T. Johnson, Fortress, 1981); Joseph A. Fiztmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor Bible* 28 (New York: Doubleday, 1981), I, 247-251; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, p. 41); I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), pp. 122, 141-144, 206-209; W. Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1948), pp. 373f.; Kim, op. cit., in his treatment of the Old Testament mentions specifically the rich, merchants, creditors, employees and landholders (people of the land), pp. 273-277.

[9] Helmut Flenders, *St. Luke: Theologian of Redemptive History* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), pp. 9-10; Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty, *All We're Meant to Be* (Waco: Word, 1974), pp. 215f.; James G. Sigountos and Myron Shank, "Public Roles for Women in the Pauline Church: A Reappraisal of the Evidence," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol. 26:3 (Sept. 1983), pp. 283-295. Note the neglect of the factor of oppression and Exodus paradigm in Scroggie, op. cit., p. 191; Marshall, *Luke: Historian*, pp. 139f.; Morris, op. cit., p. 40; James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1981), pp. 36f., 79-93; Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1980), pp. 226-231.

[10] While occasionally noted by Lukan specialists, the age factor does not appear to have received much attention, nor has its place in the overall context of Luke's teaching on oppression and liberation. Kim, op. cit., notes the role of elders as oppressors in the Old Testament (Is. 3:14-15; Num. 22:7,14; Judg. 8:6,16; 10:8,14). On the role of elders in Luke-Acts, see Lk. 9:22; 20:1; 22:24-30,52,66; Acts 4:5,8,23; 6:12; 22:5; 23:14; 24:1; 25:15; cf. 2 Pet. 5:1-5; 2 Tim. 4:12; Jas. 1:27. For the role of children and youths, see Lk. 1:15-17,41,66,76-78; 2:6-7,8-12,16,22-24,50-52; 7:11-17; 9:38,46-48; Acts 7:19; Scroggie, op. cit., pp. 375f.; Morris, op. cit., p. 41; Fitzmyer, op. cit., p. 188; cf. Mt. 2:18-21; 18:2-5; 19:13,14; Mk. 10:141-15.

[11] Scroggie, op. cit., pp. 365-370, 380; Morris, op. cit., p. 80; John G. Gager, "The Social World of Early Christianity" in *The Bible and Liberation* (Berkeley: C.R.R.E., 1976), pp. 120-130.

[12] Marshall moves in this direction, but does not quite arrive; *Luke: Historian*, pp. 94-102.

[13] "Francis Schaeffer, 1912-1984," in *Eternity*, July-August, 1984, p. 12.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Kenneth S. Kantzer with Paul W. Fromer, "A Theologian Looks at Schuller," *Christianity Today*, August 10, 1984, p. 23.

[16] Hanks, op. cit., pp. 9-10 (on *nagas*).

[17] José Pereira de Souza, "Los Efectos de la Cruzada de Costa Rica 1972 sobre las iglesias evangélicas de San José," Masters thesis, Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano, 1973.

[18] None was richer than He; none became poorer than He." Philip E. Hughes, *Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 299. C. K. Barrett refers to "the absolute naked poverty of the crucifixion" in *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1973), p. 223.

[19] Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1977), pp. 95-98; Sider, ed., *Living More Simply* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1980); *Life Style in the 80's* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982).

[20] Jon Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1978): see my critique, Tomás Hanks, *Opresión, Pobreza y Liberación* (Miami: Caribe, 1982), pp. 121-127.

[21] Cited by Harvey Conn, "Sin in the City: the Privatization Myth," *Occasional Essays* XII (June 1984), p. 48.

[22] Ernesto Cardenal, *The Gospel in Solentiname* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979). See also the literature cited on the Christian base comunities under note 56 below.

[23] Hanks, *God So Loved*, pp. 73-96.

[24] Ibid., also sections of my doctoral thesis on propitiation and wrath, "The Theology of Divine Anger in the Psalms of Lament," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1972, pp. 1-24, 483-586.

[25] Hanks, *God So Loved*, p. 16.

[26] Ibid., pp. 105-108; Pons, op. cit., pp. 27-52; Kim, op. cit., pp. 22-27, 45-46, 178-184; G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* IV, 478-487.

[27] José P. Miranda points out the failure of Marx's dialectics in having nothing to offer as counterpoint to our last enemy: "When Marx avoids the problem of death and therefore does not even glimpse the possibility of resurrection, it is not precisely his lack of faith in God but rather insufficient dialectics for which we must approach him." *Marx and the Bible: a Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1974), p. 279; cf. Sobrino, op. cit., pp. 259-272; 374-381.

[28] Donald B. Kraybill, *The Upside-Down Kingdom* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1978); cf. Jacques Ellul, *Changer de Revolution* (Paris: Seuil, 1982).

[29] John H. Yoder, *The Original Revolution: Essays in Christian Pacifism* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971); Norman K. Gottwald, *Tribes of Yahweh* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979), p. 593. Also, see note 40 below.

[30] Pilgrim, op. cit., pp. 129-134; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, pp. 694f. (on Zacchaeus, Lk. 19:1-10).

[31] Luke 3:18 (cf. 10-17!); Rom. 2:16 (cf. 1-15!); Rev. 14:6 (cf. v. 7!); First World commentators often have difficulty seeing what is so "good" about the news in such texts; thus Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 272f.; but cf. Marshall, pp. 61, 149 and Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 56-57.

[32] As G. C. Berkouwer points out, "Calvin aptly compares faith to an empty vesssel" [Institutes III':7], *Faith and Justification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954; See Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), I, pp. 223-253; Peter Davids, *Commentary on James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 110-112); James Adamson, *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 108-110.

[33] F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1977), pp. 470f.

[34] Thomas Hanks, "The Kingdom and the Poor: Perspectives from Psalm 72," *Occasional Essays* X:1 (June 1983), esp. pp. 67-83.

[35] For the linguistic basis of the *relectura* of Rom. 1:18 (violence . . . oppression), which depends on the LXX translation of Hebrew terms for violence and oppression, see my review of Jacques Pons, *L'oppression dans L'Ancien Testament, Occasional Essays* X:1 (June 1983), esp. pp. 103-105.

[36] Martin Luther, "Treatise on the Liberty of a Christian Man," [1520] in *Three Treatises* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1943). Regarding the structure of Romans, Anders Nygren's commentary is a helpful starting point.

[37] Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 56-57.

[38] F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Tyndale, 1963), pp. 39-40.

[39] Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: insights from cultural anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), pp. 1-24. See also the anthropological emphasis in Peter Worsley, *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), pp. 41-44, 332-344. The significance of Worsley's work is pointed out by Christopher Hill in his review article, "Keeping One Half of the World Poor," *The* [Manchester] *Guardian* (overseas weekly edition), May 6, 1984, p. 23.

[40] Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 56-57.

[41] Bruce, *Romans*, pp. 58-60; *Paul*, pp. 469-474. Donald Grey Barnhouse made a similar point in his expository sermons on Romans but omitted mention of Barth. How different church history would have been had Phoebe failed to deliver Paul's letter!

[42] Promising earlier developments, such as Hans Küng's work on justification in Barth's theology, Vatican II, and massive increase in Bible distribution and reading in Latin America, augmented both by the base communities and charismatic movement, have yet to bear their full fruit in the development and application of forensic justification. A growing number of Latin American theologians, both Protestant and Catholic, foresee significant theological development in this area.

[43] Walther Eichrodt, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), I, p. 215. Few terms in the history of philosophy and theology are as widely used in so many senses with so little attention to careful definition.

[44] These points occur repeatedly throughout Ellul's 40 books and more than 600 articles. See, for instance, *The Technological Society* (New York: Vintage, 1964); pp. 284-291; *The Technological System* (New York: Continuum, 1980), pp. 55-57, pp. 134f.; *Propaganda* (New York: Vintage, 1965), pp. 74-75, 250-270; *The Betrayal of the West* (New York: Seabury, 1975), pp. 134, 193-200; for details, Joyce Main Hanks, *Jacques Ellul: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1984), indexed references to technique (pp. 134f., 275f.), propaganda (pp. 131f., 274); state (p. 277); violence (pp. 136, 251); totalitarianism (pp. 135f., 280); U.S.A. (p. 281); U.S.S.R. (p. 277); war (pp. 136, 281f.).

[45] John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1975), pp. 82-105. See also Robert Saucy, "Dispensationalism and the Salvation of the Kingdom," *Theological Students Fellowship Bulletin*, May-June, 1984, pp. 6-7.

[46] Hanks, *God So Loved*, p. 132, note 9.

[47] *Institutions of the Christian Religion*, Book III:X-XI.

[48] Mortimer Arias, *Salvación es Liberación* (Buenos Aires: Aurora, 1973); Gabriel Fackre, *The Christian Story* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 190-194.

[49] Hanks, *God So Loved*, p. 73-96.

[50] Elsa Tamez, op. cit., pp. 75-82.

[51] Dt. 8; 32:13-18.

[52] Rom. 5:1-11; 2 Cor. 8-9; on Mk. 10:29-31 see William L. Lane, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), pp. 370-373; Fernando Belo, *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1981), pp. 173f.; "Vagabond Radicalism in Early Christianity," in Willy Schottroff and Wolfgang Stegemann, eds., *God of the Lowly* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1984), pp. 157-160.

[53] Ellul warns against the common notion that the poor must first have their material needs met *before* the gospel can be proclaimed to them; *Violence* (London: SCM, 1970), pp. 37-40.

[54] Bruce, *Romans*, pp. 266f. Correlation of the vocabulary for work with the women mentioned in this chapter shows that women seem to be doing the great bulk of the work in these house churches, probably because the men had to fulfill secular callings.

[55] *Newsweek*, Oct. 22, 1984, p. 13.

[56] Guillermo Cook, "The Protestant Predicament: From Base Ecclesial Community to Established Church—A Brazilian Case Study," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 8:3 (July 1984), p. 100; John Eagleson and Sergio Torres, eds., *The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities (Maryknoll: Orbis, 19)*; on house churches, aside from traditional Plymouth Brethren literature, see Howard A. Snyder, *The Problem of Wine Skins* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1975); *The Community of the King* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1977); Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980); David Prior, *The Church in the Home* (London: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1983).

[57] Gustavo Gutierrez, *Teología de Liberación* (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1972), pp. 254-265. Gutierrez' interpretation on certain points, of course, may not be correct. If the "last word" on this intriguing but difficult text has been written, I have not seen it. Cf. Jacques Ellul, *The Ethics of Freedom* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 319-331d; Robert McAfee Brown, *Unexpected News: Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), pp. 127-141.

[58] See literature cited under note 52.

[59] John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), *passim*.

[60] Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1983), pp. 16-22.

[61] "Ponencia de Hugo Assmann," in Sergio Torres and John Eagleson, eds., *Teología en las Américas* (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1980), pp. 339-343, esp. p. 340.

[62] Norman Gottwald, *Tribes*, p. 409.

[63] I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 434.

[64] *Propaganda, passim*: Michael R. Real, "Mass Communications and Propaganda in Technological Society" in Clifford G. Christians and Jay M. Van Hook, eds., *Jacques Ellul: Interpretative Essays* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1981), pp. 108-127.

[65] See, however, the distinction made in the Westminster Confession, Chapter I, between the perspicuity for the ordinary person regarding the way of salvation, and theological controversies that must be resolved by reference to the Hebrew and Greek.

[66] John R. W. Stott, et al., *Christ the Liberator* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1971), pp. 208-209

The Challenge of Religious Pluralism

by Harold Netland

Even a cursory survey of the theological literature of the past three decades indicates that theologians have discovered what missionaries and nonwestern Christians have known for a long time: we live in a religiously pluralistic world in which the great majority of people hold religious convictions quite different from those of orthodox Christianity.

Today there is unprecedented interaction between various cultures, and western theologians are becoming aware as never before of the great diversity among religious traditions, and also of the implications of this for doing Christian theology. For someone who has done his or her theologizing exclusively within the western intellectual context, it can be most unsettling to be invited, for example, to give a series of lectures in, say, Kyoto or Bangalore, and there to be exposed firsthand to sophisticated, articulate, and sincere adherents of other faiths.

With increased awareness of religious pluralism has come a host of disconcerting and perplexing questions: If Christianity is the true religion, why is it that so much of today's world rejects it in favor of diametrically opposing religious traditions? Why are there so many diverse religions? Is it theologically and morally acceptable to maintain that one religion is uniquely true, and that others are at best incomplete or even false? Is Jesus Christ really so unique after all? The challenge to Christian theology posed by pluralism should not be minimized. Canon Max Warren seems to have had prophetic insight when he observed—almost thirty years ago—that the impact of agnostic science upon theology will turn out to have been as mere child's play when compared to the challenge to Christian theology of the faith of other men.[1]

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The growing awareness of religious pluralism is forcing many theologians today to grapple in a fresh way with the issue of the relation of Christianity to other faiths. And this is as it should be, for as Wilfred Cantwell Smith notes, the fact of pluralism should affect the way in which theology is conducted in the West:

> How does one account, theologically, for the fact of man's religious diversity? This is really as big an issue, almost, as the question of how one accounts theologically for evil—but Christian theologians have been much more conscious of the fact of evil than that of religious pluralism. . . . From now on any serious intellectual statement of the Christian faith must include, if it is to serve its purpose among men, some sort of doctrine of other religions. We explain the fact that the Milky Way is there by the doctrine of creation, but how do we explain the fact that the Bhagavad Gita is there?[2]

Consequently, over the past quarter century, questions regarding the relation of Christianity to other faiths have been addressed in the writings of P. Tillich, K. Barth, H. Kraemer, S.C. Neill, K. Rahner, H. Küng, R. Panikker, W. Pannenberg, J.A.T. Robinson, J.B. Cobb, Jr., J. Macquarrie, J. Moltmann, J. Hick, and W. Cantwell Smith, as well as a host of lesser figures.[3]

We live in a religiously pluralistic world in which the great majority of people hold religious convictions quite different from those of orthodox Christianity.

Undoubtedly most persons—at least until recent times—have concluded that since some conflicting truth-claims are made by the major religions, not all the claims made by the various traditions can be true. At least some must be false. For example, it has traditionally been held that the Muslim and the orthodox Christian cannot both be correct on the question of the identity of Jesus of Nazareth. We might, for convenience, refer to this as the exclusivist position. As I use the term, exclusivism maintains that if the central claims of a given religion R are true, then if the claims of another religion S contradict those of R the claims of S are to be rejected as false. We should note that as here defined exclusivism does *not* entail that if the central claims of one religion are true then *all* of the claims of the other religions must be false; nor does it entail that all of the other religions are without inherent value. It simply maintains that if two or more incompatible beliefs are advanced by various religions they cannot all be true.

On this definition, orthodox Christianity has historically been exclusivist. When claims from Buddhism or Islam contradict those of Scripture, the former have been rejected as false. What is often overlooked, however, is that most other traditions (with the possible exception of certain forms of Hinduism) are also exclusivist. For example, Theravada Buddhism rejects as false those claims made by Christians which are incompatible with its central beliefs.

Now the fact that there are a number of exclusivist traditions presents what is often regarded as the scandal of religious pluralism—the problem of conflicting truth-claims, with the apparent implication that millions of devout and sincere people are embracing false beliefs. In part as a result of great personal contact with adherents of other faiths, exclusivism is increasingly being rejected by Christian theologians and even missionaries as naive, arrogant, intolerant, and a vestige of an immoral religious imperialism. Thus, Waldron Scott, former general secretary of the World Evangelical Fellowship, speaks of the ". . . sheer incredibility to the modern person of an exclusivist approach . . ." to the relation among religions.[4] The evangelical Christian, who maintains the unique truth of the claims of Scripture and rejects as false any rival claim, is very much on the defensive in contemporary discussions of pluralism.

Why has exclusivism fallen into such disrepute? Several widely accepted, yet dubious, assumptions seem to be responsible. First, much of contemporary theology is inundated with a pervasive epistemological skepticism which regards any claim to religious truth as problematic, and which views with incredulity those who hold that God has definitively revealed himself in one particular tradition. Closely related is the rejection of the universal (viz., transcultural and timeless) and exclusive (viz., a true statement necessarily excludes its contradictory as false) nature of truth as being "Greek" or "Aristotelian," and thus not necessarily valid in today's pluralistic world. Roger Trigg notes that historically, epistemological and moral relativism have always been attractive options when people who had previously led settled and complacent lives are suddenly confronted with new and different ideas and practices.[5] It is hardly surprising, then, to see that an increasingly influential relativism has accompanied the growing awareness of cultural and religious pluralism.

Second, it is frequently assumed that there is something arrogant and intolerant about holding that one religion is true and that those which are incompatible with it are false. Similarly, it is sometimes claimed that exclusivism must be rejected since it allegedly produces such reprehensible effects upon the interaction between adherents of different faiths. And, since today we are all members of an interdependent global community, it is claimed that we must at all costs strive for peaceful coexistence and harmony, and that accusing adherents of other religions of embracing false beliefs is somehow incompatible with this.

And third, it is increasingly accepted today that if God is indeed a God of love, he is morally obligated to provide all persons with equal opportunity for responding to him; and that maintaining that salvation is necessarily linked to personal response to the person and work of Jesus Christ is incompatible with God's love and goodness, since it allegedly cuts off from the possibility of salvation those who through no fault of their own have never heard of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, christologies which see Jesus Christ as being uniquely and exclusively divine, and thus normative for all persons, are increasingly being criticized for being out of touch with the realities of our pluralistic world. As a result of these and other related assumptions, a strong reaction against the perceived evils of exclusivism has resulted in a preoccupation with dialogue and searching out areas of agreement among religions at the expense of considerations of truth.

Consequently, a growing number of theologians and mission leaders are rejecting exclusivism in favor of a more open posture which sees God at work in all the major religions. Many—such as Karl Rahner, Hans Küng, and John B. Cobb, Jr.—are willing to admit that God has revealed Himself in other traditions besides Christianity and that other faiths offer authentic ways of salvation, while also still maintaining in some sense the superiority, uniqueness, and normativity of Jesus Christ. However, such "mediating" positions are vigorously attacked from both the theological right and the left. Con-

servatives accuse them of failing to take seriously the biblical data on the exclusivity of the person and work of Christ, while radical theologians chide them for still holding on (in some sense) to the uniqueness and normativity of Christ. Thus, the central focus of much of the debate over the proper Christian response to other religions is upon christological issues.[6]

The Theocentric Model

Of particular interest in recent years has been the emergence of a growing number of theologians who accept what Paul Knitter calls the "theocentric model" of the relation among religions.[7] Although individual thinkers vary in details, all who put forward this model agree that any christology which allows for the absoluteness, exclusivity, or normativity of Jesus Christ must be rejected. In contrast to exclusivism, the theocentric model holds that it is the one God who is ultimately at the center of reflection and devotion in all the various religions, and thus no single religion can claim superiority or definitive truth. While recognizing significant differences among religions, it is maintained that ultimately all the major traditions are authentic historically and are culturally conditioned responses to the same divine reality. Just as there are many paths leading to the summit of Mt. Fuji, so there are many authentic paths to salvation mediated through the great religions. This, of course, is a familiar theme in certain traditions in eastern thought, such as Advaita Vedanta. But it is also a view which has considerable appeal today in the west, not only on a popular level among the laity but increasingly among Christian clergy and the theological community as well. As such it demands closer scrutiny.

The growing awareness of religious pluralism is forcing many theologians today to grapple in a fresh way with the issue of the relation of Christianity to other faiths.

One of the most articulate and influential spokesmen for the theocentric position is John H. Hick, currently Danforth professor of religion and philosophy at Claremont Graduate School. Professor Hick's 1986 Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh, which deal with the problem of religious pluralism, are to be published in book form under the tentative title, *An Interpretation of Religion*. Hick, who at one time accepted a Christianity "of a strongly evangelical and indeed fundamentalist kind,"[8] began in 1973 to call for a "Copernican revolution" in our thinking about religions.[9] The revolution he advocated would involve "a shift from the dogma that Christianity is at the center to the thought that it is *God* who is at the center and that all the religions of mankind, including our own, serve and revolve around Him."[10] God—or, as Professor Hick prefers, the Eternal One—should be recognized as being the center of religious awareness, with the various conceptions of the divine expressed in the many traditions all being reflective of the one divine reality. That is, "the great religions are all, at their experiential roots, in contact with the same ultimate divine reality."[11]

One of the implications of Hick's proposal is a kind of equality among religions such that no single religion can claim to be exclusively true or correct, or to have a definitive revelation from God.[12] It naturally follows from this that the orthodox understanding of the Incarnation must be abandoned, or at least significantly modified. For Hick correctly points out that if Jesus were literally God incarnate then it is very difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Christian revelation is definitive:

> For if Jesus was literally God incarnate, the second Person of the holy Trinity living a human life, so that the Christian religion was founded by God-on-earth in person, it is then very hard to escape from the traditional view that all mankind must be converted to the Christian faith.[13]

Accordingly, he urges us to reinterpret the doctrine of the Incarnation as a "mythological idea," a "figure of speech, a piece of poetic imagery" which signifies that Jesus is "our sufficient, effective, and saving point of contact with God."[14] By understanding the Incarnation in mythological categories, Hick claims that Christians can maintain God is *truly* to be encountered in Jesus but not that God is uniquely or definitively revealed in Jesus. God can and does reveal Himself in similar ways through other great religious figures.

But if the various religions all reflect the same divine reality, why the bewildering diversity in the respective conceptions of the divine? Why are there conflicting truth-claims about the nature of the divine reality? Hick has a two-fold answer which brings us to the heart of his theory.

First, the various conceptions of the divine found in the major religions represent culturally conditioned human responses to the one divine reality:

> The basic hypothesis which suggests itself is that the different streams of religious experience represent diverse awarenesses of the same transcendent reality, which is perceived in characteristically different ways, by different human mentalities, formed by and forming different cultural histories. . . . One then sees the great world religions as different human responses to the one divine Reality, embodying different perceptions which have been formed in different historical and cultural circumstances.

This is partially simply an extension of Hick's religious epistemology, which is based upon what he takes to be the irreducibly interpretative nature of all experience, including religious experience.[16] In the context of pluralism, then, he is building upon this interpretative element in religious experience and crediting various historical and cultural factors with influencing how followers of different traditions conceptualize the divine reality.

The second part of Hick's answer lies in his distinction between the divine reality as it is in itself and the divine reality as it is experienced by historically and culturally conditioned persons. Immanuel Kant's distinction between noumenon and phenomenon is adapted (and used in a most non-Kantian manner!) to illustrate the point:

> Summarizing this hypothesis in philosophical terms made possible by the work of Immanuel Kant, we may distinguish between, on the one hand, the single divine noumenon, the Eternal One in itself, transcending the scope of human thought and language, and, on the other hand, the plurality of the divine phenomena, the divine *personae* of the theistic religions and the concretizations of the concept of the Absolute in the nontheistic religions. . . . The Eternal One is thus the divine noumenon which is experienced and thought within different religious traditions as the range of divine phenomena witnessed to by the religious history of mankind.[17]

By making this fundamental distinction Hick claims to be able to maintain consistently both that the conceptions of the di-

vine reality in the various religions are actually different, and even conflicting, and that these various images are human responses to and reflective of the same single divine reality. Certainly if both propositions can be maintained consistently, then it would make good sense to reject the position that one religious tradition can be true and other conflicting religions are false, for all religions would be partial reflections of the same divine reality.

But in spite of its considerable intuitive appeal, Hick's thesis is highly vulnerable on several counts.[18] First, scholars have been quick to point out that Hick and his colleagues who call for a mythological reinterpretation of the doctrine of the Incarnation seriously distort the New Testament data on the person and work of Jesus Christ.[19] Their suggestions that the New Testament language of incarnation was originally intended to be simply metaphorical, and not literal, and that Jesus did not conceive of Himself as in any sense uniquely divine, and that similar notions of divine incarnation can be found in other religious traditions are held on extremely tenuous grounds, and have been vigorously challenged in the academic community. Indeed, such mythological reinterpretation of the Incarnation seems to be little more than a dubious and speculative account of the person of Christ read back into the New Testament writings.

Second, it is important to recognize that Hick's thesis is a comprehensive, second-order theory about all religions and religious experiences. That is, he is not proposing an alternative religious perspective but rather a comprehensive theory about *all* religious perspectives. As such, the adequacy of his theory will be a function of at least two factors: (a) the accuracy with which the theory reflects the ease with which it accommodates the various religious traditions, and (b) the internal consistency and plausibility of the theory itself. His proposal is problematic in both areas.

To the extent that certain major religious traditions do not find their views adequately accounted for on Hick's analysis, his theory is called into question. If significant elements of a religion clash with his proposal, this *prima facie* counts against his theory. Two examples, one from Christianity and one from Buddhism, will be given to demonstrate that significant aspects of some major religions cannot be accounted for neatly on Hick's theory.

Orthodox Christianity accepts the traditional understanding of the doctrine of the Incarnation, in which it is held that Jesus was both God and man. Hick, as noted above, rejects this view in favor of a mythological reinterpretation of the Incarnation. Now the christological issues involved in the debate need not concern us here; what is crucial to see, however, is that since Hick's theory—by his own admission—cannot accommodate the orthodox understanding of the Incarnation, it cannot be an adequate *general* theory about religious traditions. Certainly the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation is a central element of a major religious tradition, and the fact that Hick's theory cannot accommodate it counts significantly against his thesis.

Similarly, Hick's theory has difficulty accounting for the Zen notion of *satori*. *Satori* is said to be an immediate, direct, unmediated apprehension of ultimate reality which transcends all distinctions and dichotomies. Any kind of apprehension which implies dualism is rejected by Zen as being less than ultimately real. This, of course, gives *satori* an absolutely unrivalled status among religious experiences. Hick recognizes the Zen claims for the exclusivity of *satori*, but he then goes on to suggest that not even *satori* can be granted such exclusivist status, since it too is the product of interpretative activity and the influence of the surrounding culture.[20] Now Hick may very well be correct in his analysis of *satori* (it is not at all clear to me that the notion of *satori* is even coherent) but this is beside the point. Zen Buddhists will almost certainly not accept Hick's reinterpretation of *satori* since it eliminates what is central to Zen: the claim to a direct, unmediated apprehension of ultimate reality which transcends all distinctions. Thus, Hick's theory cannot accommodate the basic notion of *satori* as it is understood within the Zen tradition.

In both cases, Hick attempts to deal with troublesome doctrines by reinterpreting them to eliminate problematic elements. But the price of doing so is that the reinterpreted doctrines bear little resemblance to the beliefs originally held in the respective traditions. And this surely counts against his theory as a general theory of the nature of religion.

Nor does Hick's theory fare much better when we inquire into its internal consistency and plausibility. The Eternal One in itself is said to be the divine *noumenon* and the various conceptions of the divine in the many religions are the divine *phenomena*, or manifestations of the Eternal One. Thus, Yahweh, Allah, Krishna, Shiva, Brahman, Amida, Sunyatta, etc., are all divine *phenomena* or *personae* through which the Eternal One is manifested. If the *personae* are indeed accurate reflections of the Eternal One, there must be significant continuity between images of the divine and the divine reality they reflect. This can be expressed in another way by saying that the set of true propositions about a given image of the divine (e.g., Allah or Amida Buddha) must form a subset of the set of all true propositions about the Eternal One as it is in itself.

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Hick correctly notes that images of the divine can be placed into two broad categories: those which conceive of the divine reality as personal (e.g. Yahweh, Allah) and those which conceive of it in nonpersonal categories (e.g. Nirvana, Sunyatta).[21] It is crucial to Hick's thesis that the Eternal One can accurately be described in both personal and nonpersonal categories, as these categories are understood in the respective traditions. Thus, terms such as "Yahweh," "Allah," "Shiva," "Nirguna Brahman," and "Emptiness" should all ultimately have the same referent. But this hardly seems plausible. Careful consideration of the meanings of the personal and nonpersonal images of the divine in the respective traditions reveals that several of them seem to have clearly incompatible entailments. For example, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the ontological implications of the Judeo-Christian image of the divine as Yahweh, who is ontologically distinct from and independent of the created world, are incompatible with the ontological monism of the notion of the Nirguna Brahman from Advaita Vedanta.[23] Or again, the ontological implications of the Muslim image of the divine as Allah seem clearly incompatible with the monistic idealism of the Yogacara school of Mahayana Buddhism, to say nothing of the ontologically ultimate notion of Emptiness in Zen.

Thus, in spite of its considerable intuitive appeal, John Hick's proposal is plagued by some serious epistemological difficulties. And it would seem that similar difficulties would vitiate any formulation of the theocentric model which holds that all religious traditions are ultimately reflecting the same single

divine reality. If we are to take seriously the beliefs of the various religions and to portray them accurately, and if we are to have a view which is epistemologically sound, I do not see how we can avoid something very much like the traditional exclusivist position.

An Evangelical Response to Religious Pluralism

How should evangelicals respond to the challenges posed by religious pluralism? Simply ignoring the issues will hardly do; nor will mere mechanical repetition of traditional "pat answers" be adequate. If evangelical theology is to be credible in today's pluralistic world—particularly in Asia—what is needed is a comprehensive and sensitive response to the set of perplexing questions which are the focus of the current debate. And integral to such a response will be a carefully formulated apologetic for exclusivism.

An evangelical response must begin by refuting certain widely accepted—yet gratuitous—assumptions. For example, the epistemological skepticism and relativism which are pervasive in much contemporary theology must be shown to be unwarranted. Much of the current literature on religious pluralism is marked by sloppy and indefensible work in epistemology masquerading as profundity. Evangelical philosophers can make a vital contribution by clarifying basic issues and exposing faulty reasoning. Similarly, evangelicals must refocus attention upon the central issue of truth and the problem of conflicting truth-claims.[23] While we can readily admit that religion serves a variety of social and psychological functions, we must recognize that one of the central concerns of religion is to provide truth about God, humanity, and our universe. As such, the truth question must not be glossed over but must be vigorously pursued.

Further, it must be emphasized that the widely accepted equation of exclusivism with intolerance is misleading. To be sure, history provides ample evidence that exclusivists of all faiths have acted in intolerant and barbarous ways to adherents of other faiths. But there is no necessary connection between holding a given group's religious beliefs to be false and the radical mistreatment of members of that group.[24] Surely one can consider the beliefs of another to be false and yet treat that individual with dignity and respect. To deny this is to suggest that we can only respect and live harmoniously with those with whom we happen to agree. But this is nonsense. On the contrary, is it not a mark of maturity to be able to live peaceably with those with whom we may profoundly disagree?

It is crucial that an evangelical response to religious pluralism develop a genuinely biblical theology of religions which gives special attention to three areas. First, since much of the current debate is over christology, the biblical understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ must be clarified. This should be done not simply by collating the biblical data, but also by making explicit reference, through comparison and contrast, to other great religious figures.[25] In this manner the supremacy and normativity of Christ will be clearly evident. Second, an evangelical theology of religions must take seriously the biblical teaching on general revelation and its implications for non-Christian religions.[26] To what extent do religions such as Islam and Buddhism retain truths (however distorted or incomplete) about the nature of God, morality, and the human predicament? What is needed is not simply careful exegesis of all the relevant biblical texts—though that of course is essential—but also a thorough familiarity with other faiths. Third, given that universalism is practically axiomatic in much of the discussion of pluralism, the biblical teaching on the nature of and conditions for salvation must be clarified. Are those who have never heard of the gospel of Jesus Christ necessarily lost without hope of salvation? Obviously this is a highly sensitive issue, but it must be confronted and settled solely on the basis of careful exegesis of all the relevant biblical texts.[27]

Finally, I suggest that the following should serve as guidelines for developing an evangelical response to the cluster of issues raised by religious pluralism:

1. The Bible alone—and not religious experience in general or the sacred scriptures of other traditions—is to be the final authority for conclusions about the relation of Christianity to other faiths.

2. An evangelical response must be based upon careful and rigorous exegesis of all the relevant biblical passages. Too often contemporary discussions of pluralism are marred by what seem to be arbitrary and superficial treatment of the biblical text. Scripture must be allowed to speak for itself.

3. An adequate response must also be epistemologically sound. That is, it cannot be based upon notions of truth, faith, knowledge, or the extent of cultural influence upon beliefs, etc., which are epistemologically untenable.

4. The beliefs and practices of other religious traditions must be portrayed accurately. Too often evangelicals have been guilty of distorting other faiths through gross caricature. Every effort must be made to understand adequately other traditions. And yet in so doing, basic differences between religions must not be ignored. We do the other traditions an injustice if we distort or reinterpret beliefs and practices to minimize the differences.

5. Similarly, a genuinely biblical response will be marked by a sensitive awareness of the fact that those who follow other faiths are also created in God's image and are objects of God's limitless love. Our interaction with those of other faiths must be characterized by genuine humility and respect; there is no room here for arrogance or triumphalism.

6. While in no way compromising the claims of Scripture and the absolute uniqueness of Jesus Christ, nor minimizing the significant differences between various religions, an adequate response must actively seek to discern points of agreement between Christianity and other faiths, and to build upon these to establish bridges of communication to those of other faiths.

7. Out of a profound recognition of the love and grace of God, who earnestly desires that all people come to repentance and an experience of salvation (John 3:16, 2 Peter 3:9) to the end that all the peoples of the earth will glorify and praise Him (Psalm 67), a genuinely biblical response to religious pluralism must also include the priority of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people—including devout adherents of other faiths.

The troubling questions prompted by our increasing awareness of religious pluralism cannot be conveniently ignored; they will not quietly go away. The theological agenda for evangelicals in the coming decades must include careful and Spirit directed consideration of these issues, and the formulation of a response which is thoroughly consistent with Scripture and also sensitive to the realities of other religious traditions.

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[1] As quoted in W. Cantwell Smith, "The Christian in a Religiously Plural World," in *Religious Diversity: Essays by Wilfred Cantwell Smith*, ed. Willard G. Oxtoby (New York: Harper & Row, 1976) p. 7.

[2] W. Cantwell Smith, *The Faith of Other Men* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) pp. 132-133.

[3] See, for example, Paul Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963); Karl Barth, "The Revelation of God as the Abolition of Religion"in *Church Dogmatics*, vol. I, part 2, section 17 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, Ltd., 1956); Hendrick Kraemer, *Religion and the Christian Faith* (London: Luttterworth, 1956); Stephen C. Neill, *Christian Faith and Other Faiths* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), revised and reprinted as *Crises of Belief* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984); Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* (New York: Seabury, 1974-1978) vol. 5 pp. 115-134, vol. 12 pp. 161-178, vol. 14 pp. 280-294; Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian* (New York: Doubleday, 1976) pp. 89-118,

and "The World Religions in God's Plan of Salvation" in *Christian Revelation and World Religions*, ed. Joseph Neuner (London: Burns and Oates, 1967) pp. 25-66; Raimundo Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, rev. ed. (New York: Orbis, 1981); Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Towards a Theology of the History of Religions" in *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971) pp. 65-118; John A.T. Robinson, *Truth is Two-Eyed* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980); John Macquarrie, "Christianity and Other Faiths" in *Union Seminary Quarterly*, 20, (1964) pp. 39-48; John B. Cobb, Jr., *Beyond Dialogue: Toward A Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); Jurgen Moltmann, "Christianity and the World Religions" in *Christianity and Other Religions*, ed. John H. Hick and Brian Hebblethwaite (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) pp. 191-211; John H. Hick, *God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982); Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978) and *Toward A World Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981).

[4] Waldron Scott, "'No Other Name'—An Evangelical Conviction" in *Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (New York: Orbis, 1981) p. 69.

[5] Roger Trigg, "Religion and the Threat of Relativism" in *Religious Studies*, 19, (1983) p. 297.

[6] For a good introduction to the current debate see the collection of essays in *Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism*. Paul Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions* (New York: Orbis, 1985) and Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism* (New York: Orbis, 1983), both recognize the centrality of christological issues and argue that any view which maintains the exclusivity, finality, or normativity of Jesus Christ must be rejected.

[7] Paul Knitter, *No Other Name?*, chapter 8. Other advocates of the theocentric model include John Hick, Raimundo Panikkar, John A.T. Robinson, Stanley Samartha, Alan Race, Monika Hellwig, Don Cupitt, and Rosemary Reuther.

[8] John Hick, *God Has Many Names*, p. 14.

[9] Idem, *God and the Universe of Faiths* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973).

[10] Idem, *God Has Many Names*, p. 36.

[11] Idem, "The Outcome: Dialogue Into Truth" in *Truth and Dialogue in World Religions: Conflicting Truth-Claims*, ed. John Hick (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) p. 151.

[12] Idem, *God Has Many Names*, p. 48.

[13] Ibid., p. 19.

[14] Ibid., p. 75. See also Hick's "Jesus and the World Religions" in *The Myth of God Incarnate*, ed. John Hick (London: SCM Press, 1977) pp. 167-185.

[15] Idem, *God Has Many Names*, pp. 83, 18-19.

[16] For more on Hick's epistemology see his *Faith and Knowledge*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966); "Religious Faith as Experiencing-As" in *Talk of God*, ed. G.N.A. Vesey (New York: Macmillan, 1969); and Michael Goulder and John Hick, *Why Believe in God?* (London: SCM Press, 1983).

[17] John Hick, *God Has Many Names*, pp. 53, 83).

[18] For a more comprehensive critique of Hick's proposal see Harold Netland's "Professor Hick on Religious Pluralism," forthcoming in *Religious Studies*.

[19] See, for example, the collection of essays in *Incarnation and Myth: The Debate Continued*, ed. Michael Goulder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) and *The Truth of God Incarnate*, ed. Michael Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977).

[20] John Hick, *God Has Many Names*, p. 85.

[21] Ibid., pp. 24-25, 52, 78.

[22] For a concise and helpful introduction to the epistemological and ontological views of the major eastern religious traditions see Stuart C. Hackett, *Oriental Philosophy: A Westerner's Guide to Eastern Thought* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979).

[23] Donald Wiebe, in his important recent work, *Religion and Truth* (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1981), strongly criticizes the strictly descriptivist approach to the study of religion for evading the question of truth. Genuine understanding of religious pluralism must confront the question of truth.

[24] On this see Paul Griffiths and Delmas Lewis, "On Grading Religions, Seeking Truth, and Being Nice to People—A Reply to Professor Hick" in *Religious Studies*, 19, (1983) p. 77. Jay Newman's *Foundations of Religious Tolerance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982) is also very helpful.

[25] A good first step in this direction is the late Bishop Stephen Neill's *The Supremacy of Jesus* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1984).

[26] Bruce Demarest's *General Revelation: Historical Views and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982) is helpful in this connection.

[27] Although evangelicals clearly reject universalism, not all evangelicals are agreed on how to answer this question. See Malcolm J. McVeigh, "The Fate of Those Who've Never Heard? It Depends" in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 21, (1985) pp. 370-379. A sampling of evangelical responses can be found in Harold Lindsell, "Fundamentals for a Philosophy of the Christian Mission" in *The Theology of the Christian Mission*, ed. Gerald Anderson (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961); J. Herbert Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976) p. 160f; Millard Erickson, "Hope for Those Who Haven't Heard? Yes, but . . ." in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 2, (1975) pp. 122-126; Norman Anderson, *Christianity and World Religions* (Downer's Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), pp. 145–161.

BOOK REVIEWS

Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament

by Walter Wink (Fortress, 1984, 181 pp., $14.95). Reviewed by John H. Yoder, Department of Theology, University of Notre Dame.

Since the initial popular synthesis *Christ and the Powers* by Hendrik Berkhof (E.T. 1962) and more occasional uses by Jacques Ellul and Albert van den Heuvel, the Pauline "principalities and power" language has been used increasingly to express the ambivalence of value structures in human experience: structures which both make life possible and make it difficult. Those who do use this language seldom check out whether it has been demonstrated to be an adequate frame for theologically informed social analysis. The critics of this usage do not take the trouble—with the exception of one passage by John Stott—to make their case.

The "principalities, powers, thrones, etc . . ." are, in the minds of the apostolic writers, *either* real spiritual beings (in which case we cannot and need not deal with them, since we moderns know there can be no such things), *or* they are mythical images for real historical entities, and then we can with profit demythologize them and spare ourselves the spooky projections. This either/or is taken for granted as the name of the problem; no one doubts that that is the problem. Even the conservatives who want to affirm that such spiritual entities do exist do not do much theologically or practically about their meaningfulness for faith and life.

The achievement of the Wink survey is to destroy completely the either/or, on the basis of a meticulous reading of all the texts, not only in the New Testament but in the surrounding literatures.

The powers are both human and superhuman, both personifiable and structural, both visible and invisible, both in institutions and in the heart, both good and evil. Sometimes shades of difference of meaning can be discerned, as with *stoicheia* or *exousia* in the singular. More often their meanings overlap or they occur in near-synonymous strings. Sometimes the change is that they be sacralized, sometimes that they be secularized.

The demonstration is abundantly clear that there is in the New Testament—not only in the Pauline texts where Berkhof had found it emerging most clearly—a coherent and usable cosmology to describe the mysteries of creaturely fallenness and the Cross's Victory. The transition from the New Testament data to contemporary relevance is reserved for the other two volumes of Wink's promised trilogy. The hints already generously offered in this volume need therefore not be reviewed here. The value for guiding discernment in social analysis and ethics should be substantial.

The demonstration is least convincing at the point of the assumptions adopted uncritically from realms not under study. One notable weakness is the variety of meanings with which the word *demonic* is used. The other is the discussion of the sense in which the Powers' reality is "inward and outward" and how the "inward" component has no existence of its own. At both of these points Wink seems to slide back from the semantic and philosophical care that had been so productive in reading first century texts, to make a twentieth century "reality statement" which after all boils off some of the dimensions of the material due to the inadequacy of the "inner aspect" notion. The later volumes will have to fill this gap.

For now, the demonstration is convincing on purely scholarly grounds. The New Testament writers did think this way about the cultural/institutional dimension of creation, fall, and redemption. They took for granted (more than they taught it or declared it) that this cosmology, fluid yet clearly patterned, could describe the facts of both history and salvation. They did so with greater refinement (here the reviewer speaks) than the later theologians' systems of nature and grace, law and gospel, or the "orders of creation," to say nothing of post-enlightenment reductions. Whether we have to think that way because the apostles did is a question "evangelicals" will go on debating. Whether post-enlightenment minds *can* think that way, our apologetes and culture critics will still debate. Wink has provided them all the material they cannot avoid facing.

The Seeds of Secularization: Calvinism, Culture, and Pluralism in America, 1870-1915

by Gary Scott Smith (Christian University Press, 1985, 239 pp., $14.95). Reviewed by David Kling, Assistant Professor of History, Palm Beach Atlantic College.

Ever since Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr.'s groundbreaking article on "The Critical Period in American Religion" (1932-33), historians have recognized that between the Civil War and World War I Americans succumbed to and eventually embraced secularization—the loss of religion as a molding force in society. In this revised dissertation, Gary Scott Smith focuses on the origins and evolution of secular thought in America during this critical period and traces the response of Calvinistic thinkers to this profound change. After mapping out a useful typology of Calvinists ("consistently," "considerably," and "somewhat"), Smith elucidates Reformed answers to such secular "isms" as scientific and social Darwinism, ethical subjectivism, socialism, and a generic secular humanism. Calvinists not only defended their worldview against these competing ideologies, but also developed institutional responses to such threats. For example, they crusaded for Christian government by supporting the National Reform Association; they strongly advocated biblically centered public education; and they established social agencies for dealing with urban poverty and the

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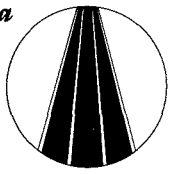
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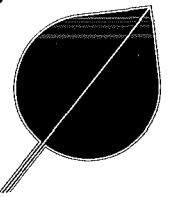
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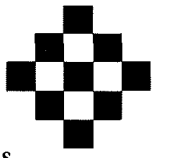
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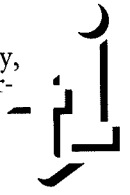

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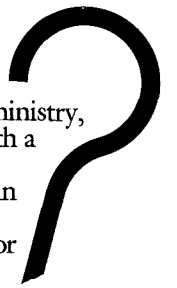
Jacob Firet



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related problems of industrialization.

Yet, according to Smith, the Calvinist response was fundamentally flawed. The Reformed community mistakenly believed that a Christian worldview should continue to dominate America's pluralistic culture. Victims of previous success (in America and elsewhere) and blinded to the pervasiveness of secular influences in America, Calvinists endorsed the coercion of non-Christians to their views. The results of their efforts proved disastrous, for in the name of religious neutrality, secularism (another faith) won the battle of competing ideologies.

Smith goes beyond historical analysis to offer an alternative approach. Throughout his work, he supports the theory of cultural pluralism whereby competing religious ideologies have equal rights in the public realm. That is, in a pluralistic society all faith communities should be given equal opportunity to promote their agendas in the public sphere. Smith considers unbiblical the efforts of Calvinists to build a political kingdom of God and usher in a distinctly Christian age.

This is a timely book. In his concluding chapter, Smith traces the advancement of secularism to the present, and argues that current Protestant groups (the Moral Majority, Religious Roundtable, and the Christian Voice) are repeating the same errors of nineteenth-century Calvinists. Such a strategy, he reasons, is divisive, intolerant, and lacks a biblical basis.

Smith's efforts at relevance, however, are a drawback to the book's structure and, at times, his style. He employs a "scissors and paste" organization where at the beginning and end of nearly every chapter he stresses the applicability of nineteenth-century issues for today. No doubt this is the liability of any dissertation revised for public consumption, yet his didactic approach does not mix well with straight historical analysis.

To Smith's credit, he ties together the disparate strands from previous chapters in his conclusion. Also, in his attempt to heighten the drama of the conflict, he borrows cliches and overworked metaphors. To mention a few: the "Calvinist fortress" was "continually bombarded" by the "artilleries of Arminians, liberals, and skeptics" (p. 34); or Calvinists built "dikes against the flood of secular sensibility" (p. 41)—a more appropriate metaphor for Abraham Kuyper's response in the Netherlands! Still, for those given to asking, "What's happened to a Christian America, and what can be done about it?" Smith's thoroughly researched book is a recommended primer.

The Identity of Christianity
by Steven Sykes (Fortress, 1984, 349 pp., $21.95). Reviewed by Geoffrey M. Bromiley, Senior Professor of Church History and Historical Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary.

This book is by one of the brightest of new Anglican scholars and one distinguished for his knowledge of the European field. Having previously tackled the integrity of Anglicanism, he now boldly takes up the identity of Christianity, his new term for the older "essence." Singling out the three perspectives of conflict, inwardness, and power from which to survey the terrain, he devotes the body of the work to six modern theologians (Schleiermacher, Newman, Harnack, Loisy, Troeltsch, and Barth), and finally attempts some conclusions by way of an analysis, a discussion of unity, and an assessment of the role of worship.

Sykes brings to his work an impressive erudition, originality of insight, clarity of expression, and no little skill in exposition. His three perspectives have obvious relevance, his accounts of the chosen figures are informative, and he has some interesting if not very precise or compelling suggestions.

Yet, although students can learn from the book, one can hardly say that it is more successful than his earlier effort to present Anglican integrity. The initial perspectives have a restrictive effect on the historical exposition. The discussion of power neither bears much relation to its biblical use nor is such as to evoke anything but scorn from an expert in institutions like Jacques Ellul. The individual analyses are not wholly convincing. (What would Barth think of being called "so radical a representative of the inwardness tradition" on p. 207?) The features of continuity, e.g., on pp 245 ff., are so generalized as not to serve any very useful purposes; they do not even mention Christ, and even when filled out a little they hardly bear the weight that Sykes wants to place on them (pp. 251ff.). At the end the book seems to beg a lot of questions when it commends the disputes of theologians so long as they "continue recognizably to be disputing about one and the same thing" and participate in public worship (p. 286)!

More seriously the work proves to be disappointing on four counts. First, it does not give proper attention to the ecumenically accepted role of faith in Scripture, cavalierly dismissing it because of hermeneutical division. Second, it does not reckon sufficiently with the fact of history that almost always and everywhere the churches have focused their instruction on the same basic documents. Third, it fails to relate Christian identity to the evangelistic and missionary task of the church with its kerygmatic requirements. Whatever the case may be with academics, believers who fulfill their New Testament commission may differ in detail but usually get to the heart of the matter, whether in simple or more sophisticated forms.

Fourth and finally, the work does not even raise what is perhaps the most pressing of all the issues of Christian identity, namely, the problem of differentiating the central and the peripheral or adiaphoristic when Christianity makes its way into other regions and comes to expression in new and different cultures, as it has always had to do throughout its history. Here, if anywhere, Christians need theological guidance as they seek to protect the message from assimilation while not perpetuating forms of thought, life, or expression that are merely incidental to it. In this book, however, they will find at best only the most indirect and indefinite of assistance.

Letters to the Editor

TSF Bulletin welcomes letters to the editor. We especially enjoy those that carry on creative dialogue with material we've published. Send your letters to the Editor, TSF Bulletin, P.O. Box 7895, Madison, WI 53707-7895.

Anglicanism and the Bible
edited by Frederick Houk Borsch (Morehouse Barlow, 1984, 261 pp., $7.95). Reviewed by the Rev. Dr. Kenneth J. Wissler, Church Development Consultant, and Priest-in-Residence at St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Wilmington, Delaware.

Anglicanism and the Bible is a collection of six essays edited by Frederick H. Borsch, Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Religion at Princeton University, as part of the Anglican study series. The contributors discuss the importance, place, and function of the Bible within the Anglican tradition.

Within this framework, each contributor addresses a particular concern: William P. Haugaard, Professor of Church History at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, provides an historical sketch of the use and translation of the Bible in the English Church from the Middle Ages to the publication of the King James Bible in 1611. Marion J. Hatchett, Professor of Liturgics and Music at the School of Theology, University of the South, demonstrates through an analysis of various Prayer Books and lectionaries how Anglican worship and spiritual practice are informed by and steeped in Scripture. John E. Booty, Dean of the School of Theology, University of the South, describes how the Bible influenced and was used by the various missionaries and reformers of the 18th and 19th centuries. Reginald H. Fuller, Professor of New Testament at Virginia Theological Seminary, relates the stormy road to acceptance and respectability travelled by the various schools of criticism of the 19th and 20th centuries. W. Taylor Stevenson, Professor of Philosophical Theology at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, outlines what he believes to be the proper relationship between Scripture and science. Through a closely and carefully reasoned analysis of the proper scope and task of each discipline, Prof. Stevenson finds not only no conflict but a shared task to discover truth. He also sounds a prophetic note of warning against the modern idolatry of scientism, which cloaks the spiritual/religious quest in scientific language to provide (pseudo-) scientific answers to religious ques-

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tions. Frederick H. Bouk concludes the collection by describing the relationship between the Bible and the Church as one of dialectic dialogue: while the Bible informs the faith of the Church, it is the Community of Faith which in turn informs the reading and interpretation of Scripture. While such an approach may be open-ended and at times ambiguous, the very nature of the Bible demands it.

As the title of this book suggests, it is written by Anglicans primarily for an Anglican audience. Other than students, historians, and liturgists, few non-Anglicans would probably find this book of great interest. This should not be surprising since the book was written as part of the Anglican Study Series. With this in mind, the six contributors accomplish their purpose admirably. However, the last two articles make valuable contributions beyond this limited scope: at a time when Christians of all traditions are wrestling with the relationship between religion and science and the place of Scripture in the modern world, the article by Prof. Stevenson calls for a clear understanding of the separate but equally necessary place of both Scripture and science without the one co-opting the concerns and quests of the other, while the last article calls for a return to the Bible as providing a method and guide for the religious/spiritual quest in a modern world.

Anglicans who read this book would come away with a greater appreciation for the part the Bible has played in the formation of Anglican practice; they would also have a deeper understanding of the Anglican Church as a church which is as biblical as any church of the Reformation. In this sense, this book takes the Anglican Church one more step toward the rediscovery of her roots and purpose.

As a collection of articles, the book hangs together very well. Each article logically proceeds to the next, and the reader receives the impression that each contributor was very much aware of the contributions of the others. This serves to assist the reader in following the common thread of the theme of the book.

Dictionary of Christian Theology
by Peter Angeles (Harper & Row, 1985, 210 pp., $17.95). Reviewed by Ray S. Anderson, Professor of Theology and Ministry, Fuller Theological Seminary.

This small (as far as theological dictionaries go) and concisely written volume covers more than one thousand core terms and topics. Written to aid the non-specialist reader, this dictionary seeks to bridge the gap between large, more scholarly works and more "popularly" written dictionaries.

The content ranges over a broad field, giving definitions to core theological terms, biblical and historical figures and events, important texts, symbols, rites, religious movements, and theological and philosophical concepts. No bibliographic references or resources are listed.

The author, professor of philosophy at Santa Barbara City College in California, intends that the dictionary be used as an "enjoyable, quick at-hand reference and a beginning to advanced work in the field of Christian religion and theology." In the main, it accomplishes its purpose.

As with any dictionary produced by a single author, however, the listings tends to be selective and some of the definitions so nontechnical as to be misleading. For example, while there are listings for Calvinism and Lutheranism, there are none for Arminianism or Wesleyanism. While there is a listing for infallibility there is none for inerrancy, which ignores a matter of great concern to many contemporary Christians.

Under the heading of theology, there is a definition of liberal theology, but not of orthodox theology, nor neo-orthodox theology, nor evangelical theology. There is a listing of conservative theology, for which the reader is advised to see the definition for Fundamentalism.

Some definitions simply fail through reduction to the lowest common denominator. Incarnation, for example, is explained as, "God becomes human for the purpose of humanizing mankind with the Christ-Spirit." Under the heading of Evangelism, we are given one sentence: "Actively preaching or promulgating the GOSPELS—the word of Jesus Christ—usually in the hope of conversion of others or revitalization of the HOLY SPIRIT."

On occasion, a definition misses the mark completely. Under Predestination, for example, we are correctly told that this is the belief that God has foreordained every event

that has happened, is happening and will happen. Double predestination is then explained by stating: "If God does cause a change in the predetermined plans for things, then this too was predetermined by God, which is in effect 'double predestination' or 'double predetermination.'" The failure to inform us that double predestination for most Calvinists means that God has two decrees—one for salvation and one for reprobation—may be accounted for by the fact that there is no listing for Decree!

For those who have very little knowledge of the vocabulary of Christian doctrine and the historical tradition, this dictionary cannot help but inform. For those who are more serious about the study of Christian faith and doctrine, there are a variety of other dictionaries more substantial and resourceful.

Creeds, Society, and Human Rights: A Study in Three Cultures
by Max Stackhouse (Eerdmans, 1984, 315 pp., $19.95). Reviewed by Esther Byle Bruland, doctoral student in Religion and Society at Drew University and co-author of *A Passion for Jesus, A Passion for Justice.*

General misconceptions and disagreements regarding the roots and fabric of human rights indicate necessary work to be done by Christian ethicists. In *Creeds, Society, and Human Rights* Max Stackhouse has devoted himself to that vital task. He writes, "The phrase 'human rights' implies a universal ethic which claims that they *ought* to be believed and observed everywhere by everyone." However, "at present, human rights are not universal in either the sense that everyone believes in them or the sense that they are everywhere observed in social practice" (p. x). Nor, according to Stackhouse, is there a universal consensus as to what is human or what is right.

The motivating questions of the book, then, are the following: "What are the conceptual and social conditions which make such a universalistic ethic viable? What kinds of 'creeds' and what kinds of social patterns support belief in and action upon universalistic values? What kinds of metaphysical-moral visions allow people to respond to human problems in economic, political, educational, familial, and other relations by cultivating a social order conducive to human rights?" (p. x).

With these evaluative questions in mind, Stackhouse examines three cultures, the United States, East Germany, and India. By means of longitudinal and cross-sectional analyses he assesses their conceptions of human rights and the amount of social space allowed for defining, claiming, and preserving these rights.

Creeds, Society, and Human Rights makes a major contribution in three areas. In the area of methodology, Stackhouse has developed a device for cross-sectional study of societies which he calls a "map of institutional sectors of society based on universal human needs" (p. 18). The map facilitates charting the significance, functions, and interrelations of the various sectors. Its range includes interpersonal, collective, and civilizational structures; individual as well as intersocietal dimensions; and material, associational, and ideational levels of society. Stackhouse uses the map to portray the variations among the three cultures studied in the amount and significance of institutional space devoted to upholding human rights.

Stackhouse puts the descriptive powers of the social sciences in the employ of ethical analysis. He carefully diagnoses the cultural "is" before moving to the ethical "ought." In addition to cross-sectional examination, Stackhouse presents longitudinal descriptions of the three cultures. The descriptive studies which result form a second major contribution of the book.

Care of Souls in the Classic Tradition
by Thomas C. Oden (Fortress, 1984, 128 pp., $5.95). Reviewed by Matthew Floding, M.Div. student, McCormick Theological Seminary.

In this brief but important study Thomas Oden calls pastors and teachers and students of pastoral care to reconsider the rich pastoral legacy of Gregory the Great (A.D. 540-604).

In chapter one, Oden argues the need for such reconsideration by documenting the current amnesia in regard to the classical tradition. His research indicates that since the

1920s, pastoral care has moved increasingly toward accommodation to modern psychological theory. "Pastoral theology has become in many cases little more than a thoughtless mimic of the most current psychological trends." Oden believes there is an emerging hunger for classical wisdom. He does not disparage modern psychology altogether. Rather, he argues convincingly for a "neoclassical approach to Christian pastoral care that takes seriously the resources of modernity while also penetrating its illusions."

In chapter two, Oden introduces Gregory. This valuable section highlights those critical formative experiences which shaped Gregory's outlook as pastor and pope. For Protestants who may only associate Gregory's name with a form of church music it will be helpful to be reminded of a few of his many significant accomplishments. Included among these are the instigation of the mission to England as well as writing his remarkable *Pastoral Care* which provided the model for pastoral care over the next millenia.

In the final two chapters, Oden presents an analysis of Gregory's intriguing series of paradoxical case studies of the diversities of pastoral counsel. The case studies examine personality traits that appear as polarities, e.g. timidity/assertiveness and patience/impatience. These studies reveal Gregory's appreciation of the paradoxical and ironic within the human personality as well as his concern for a variable practice of ministry that is responsive to the needs of the individual parishioner. This ministry, Gregory insisted, must mirror Christ's care for us. Most important, however, is Oden's examination of Gregory's use of the Bible applied to the pastoral counseling situation. Gregory appealed to biblical examples in every case as paradigms for personal growth and building positive relationships.

The value of this book is really threefold. First, it calls the Christian counseling community to be self-critical in its appropriation of modern psychotherapies. The reader will sense something of the personal pilgrimage that Oden himself has made. Secondly, it recovers the valuable contributions of Gregory the Great for consideration by the Church today. Some readers may suspect, however, that Oden makes Gregory out to be a twentieth century Protestant at points. Thirdly, *Care of Souls in the Classic Tradition* encourages pastoral, theological and historical integration in pastoral care. This book should be required reading for students of pastoral care. It will also be greatly appreciated by those caregivers who wish to be introduced to a rich resource of time-tested wisdom.

Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany
by John Rogerson (Fortress, 1985, 320 pp., $29.95). Reviewed by Mark A. Noll, Professor of History, Wheaton College.

John Rogerson, head of the department of biblical studies at Sheffield University in England, is well-known for his historical and exegetical studies in the Old Testament. With this book he goes beyond an examination of the Old Testament itself to study those in the nineteenth century who were so important in the introduction of modern critical scholarship to the Anglo-Saxon world. Rogerson tells the story of advancing critical scholarship in Germany during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, when scholars like de Wette, Vatke, Ewald, and eventually Wellhausen began radically to reinterpret the nature of Old Testament history, religion, and ethics. He then shifts to England and traces the acceptance of generally critical positions, an acceptance that was slower and more cautious than in Germany. Especially interesting to readers of *TSF Bulletin* will be the sections on German confessionalists who first responded with much skepticism to the new critical conclusions (e.g., Hengstenberg), but who then tempered traditional attitudes to the Bible with a relative openness to newer philosophical and historical views (e.g., Delitzsch).

Biblical scholars will have to judge whether Rogerson has succeeded in capturing the inner nature of his story. For historians, the book offers a valuable summary of ways in which German scholarship sustained a looser relationship to established academic traditions, and a closer relationship to the latest speculations in philosophy, than was the case in England. Off-hand comments on the academic settings in which the biblical scholarship took place also illuminate the importance of intellectual environments for the conclusions of academics. The book may be faulted for stressing academic, philosophical, and attitudinal environments at the expense of the theological. Many of the innovations that the Germans treated simply as the discoveries of research or the causal application of philosophical speculation were in fact complex propositions affecting deeply

embedded, and very well attested theological convictions. The result is that the nineteenth-century innovators in biblical scholarship, who presented themselves as the vanguard of sophisticated academic work, displayed a naiveté about the revolutionary character of their conclusions which, to a limited extent, Rogerson also shares. In spite of this limitation, he has written a good book worthy of serious consideration. There is also a useful bibliography.

Wisdom and Spirit
by James A. Davis (University Press of America, 1984, 258 pp., $13.50). Reviewed by Edwin Yamauchi, Professor of History, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

The subtitle of this volume, "An Investigation of 1 Corinthians 1:18-3:20 Against the Background of Jewish Sapiential Traditions in the Greco-Roman Period," accurately depicts the subject of Professor Davis' 1982 doctoral dissertation, written at Nottingham under James D. G. Dunn.

Davis (pp. 4, 117) joins a growing number of scholars (e.g. S. Arai, H. Conzelmann, R. McL. Wilson, F. Wisse) who have opposed the "Gnostic" interpretation of Paul's opponents, maintained by W. Schmithals, K. Rudolph, and G. MacRae. His work is especially indebted to the Philonic researches of B. Pearson and R. A. Horsley.

His monograph is divided in two main sections: I. Wisdom and Spirit in Pre-Christian Judaism, and II. Wisdom and Spirit in 1 Corinthians. In the first part he analyzes the characteristics of "wisdom" in Sirach, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Philo. In the light of the admittedly infrequent occurrence of the words *hokmah* "wisdom" and *hakam* "wise" in the scrolls, one wonders how central the concept of wisdom could have been at Qumran. He does not deal in depth with the "Wisdom of Solomon."

He concludes that common features of Jewish wisdom include: 1) there is a link between wisdom and Torah, 2) there are different levels of attainment of wisdom, 3) the highest level is attained by those inspired by the help of the Spirit, and 4) in Sirach and Philo the sage is marked out by eloquence.

After a thorough exegesis of 1 Corinthians 1:18-3:20, Davis concludes: "Thus, in his critique of the manifestation of wisdom at Corinth, Paul may be seen to concentrate on precisely those features which were earlier found to be characteristic of Jewish wisdom traditions in the Greco-Roman era: a nomistic emphasis, a tendency to distinguish between individuals in regard to their possession of wisdom, and a stress upon eloquence as a quality of the person gifted by God to understand, interpret, and impart wise guidance and teaching" (p. 143). In opposition, Paul represents the wisdom of God centered in the cross as the only true wisdom.

Instead of the retrojection of later Gnostic concepts, Davis has presented a most helpful and persuasive discussion of pre-Christian Jewish texts which illuminates the controversy over wisdom at Corinth.

Within the compass of the author's aims many subsidiary questions were not discussed which might be raised: for example, the impact of Greek philosophy on Philo, or the role of Greco-Roman rhetoric on someone like Apollos. Nor is there any reference to the concept of wisdom, e.g. in James 3:13-16, or any discussion of rabbinic materials.

There are some surprising omissions in an otherwise extensive bibliography (pp. 229-57). The lack of indices is to be regretted. There is an excessive number of misspellings and a lamentable use of diacritical marks, which are either omitted or sometimes wrongly inserted over French and German words (e.g. pp. 58, 73, 90, 119, 155, 159, 166, 179, 189, 198, 216, 221, 222, 231, 233, 236, 237, 238, 239, 243, 247, 248, 249, 252, 253, 257).

The Faith of Christians: An Introduction to Basic Beliefs
by Denis Baly and Royal W. Rhodes (Fortress, 1983, 245 pp., $14.95). Reviewed by Randy L. Maddox, Assistant Professor of Religion, Sioux Falls College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

While this work employs the traditional structure of treating theological loci, it is the product of a rather innovative approach. Each chapter was originally presented as a working draft to a group of twenty interested students. The reactions and criticisms of these students were taken into account in the final draft. In those cases where there were significant differences between the various contributors, the majority opinion was adopted in the text and the minority views stated in the notes.

This approach has the strength of producing a text understandable to contemporary students. The chapter on Christians and Society is an excellent example. Likewise, this approach allows the reader to sense areas of disagreement in Christian circles. Here, the best example is the chapter on the Authority of Scripture.

At the same time, this approach has a deeply troubling aspect. Is it methodologically sound for the majority opinion of those who are admittedly novices in theological studies to determine the content of basic Christian beliefs? Are the authors serious that it was not their aim to tell the students "what they ought to believe" (p. viii)? If so, that may explain some of the characteristics, tensions, and limitations apparent in the text.

One of the most defining characteristics of the text is the majority option for the "liberal view" of biblical authority which treats the biblical material as culturally influenced and, therefore, less inspired in some parts than in others. The ramifications of this view are evident in several doctrinal discussions. Perhaps the clearest example is the discussion of heaven and hell where the majority view opts for a type of ultimate universalism *despite* the solid biblical foundation for the alternative (p. 163)!

However, there is a tension in this commitment to the liberal view. It is seen most

clearly in the intriguing and unsubstantiated argument that, while the New Testament authors used masculine language for God, they did not *intend* to attribute gender to God (p. 33). The implication drawn is that we can continue to use masculine language about God today as long as we are clear on our non-sexist intent. Usually, such distinctions are found only among those concerned to defend the biblical view as timeless and plenarily inspired! All this suggests the text would have been strengthened by a more nuanced discussion and utilization of biblical authority.

A clear limitation of the text is its lack of discussion of the sacraments and the diverging approaches to sacraments in the Christian tradition. Likewise, one could question the apparent identification of original sin with being human *per se* (p. 134), and the abstract approach to defining God's attributes (p. 36).

A final limitation would be the overidentification of the Spirit with the Church (see Chapter Eight). This identification has been challenged by much recent doctrinal reflection. At the heart of this reflection is a sensitivity to the presence of the Spirit in other religions, which seemms to be a preferable alternative to talk of God being incarnate (*sic*) in other religions (p. 188).

In general, the work is well-written, provocative, and helpful. However, it will be less appealing to the conservative and evangelical communities.

The Story of Christianity, Volume I: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation
by Justo L. Gonzalez (Harper & Row, 1984, 429 pp., $12.95). Reviewed by Tim Daniel, Associate Pastor, Trinity Baptist Church, Wheatridge, Colorado.

This thorough and readable account of the Church's development from its infancy to the Reformation reveals the heart of a true historian. Justo Gonzalez takes history personally. He sees history as his own, as the antecedent of who he now is. For Gonzalez our heritage colors the way each Christian from whatever tradition interprets Scripture, relates to the local church and lives out his or her Christianity. To be aware of our historical biases, says the author, is the only way to be in some measure free to look beyond them. Such historical awareness is found at the base of any period of renewal, as Christians display the courage to confront their traditions anew with the Scripure.

The author asserts that Christianity is essentially a historical faith. It was born and grew as a real human movement impacted by all the forces that define other histories. His thrust is that the story of Christianity is just that—a great story. It has a plot, rich characters, and background forces that press themselves onto the stage. Gonzalez' approach is refreshing as it presents the story of the Church not as a sacred, lofty legend set in a mythical land, but as a dynamic, complex human drama like any other. Here the history of Christianity reads as real and believable as a history of World War II.

This is not to say that Gonzalez sees the story as only a human one. Rather he sees church history as the continuation of the book of Acts. It is the record of the deeds of the Holy Spirit through men and women of faith through the ages. It is a divine purpose worked out through a thoroughly earthly medium, the Church.

To accomplish his purpose of telling this story in real terms, Gonzalez presents the events of the New Testament and subsequent eras through rubrics familiar to readers of *Time* magazine. By so doing he provides relevant handles on what was happening in each period. For example, the birth of the Church in Palestine is seen in the wider context of a Jewish-Hellenistic cultural struggle, in which Alexander governments were attempting to impose Greek culture on the Jewish community. In this light, the Pharisees suddenly spring from the pages of Scripture as more than just arch-typical enemies of good. They are devout Jews concerned with preserving revealed truth from compromise by applying the law in everyday situations. From this perspective many of the conflicts in the New Testament make more sense. These were logical and inevitable reactions of two poles of

opinion, not unlike those in our religious community today. Their world was as complex as our own.

This text is thorough enough to provide a good reader for most survey courses. Gonzalez covers the background of Christianity's birth in Palestinian Judaism, the Diaspora and the Greco-Roman empire. He includes a unique chapter on what happened to the Church in Jerusalem after Acts. There is a chapter on the mission of the Church to the Gentiles with an interesting look at facts and legends about the apostles. He deals with the Church's conflict with Judaism and the Empire, giving unique insights into the government's policy toward Christians following Trajan's edict. He covers the apologists, the forming of the creeds and the lives of leading Christian teachers. He details the final centuries of persecution and the daily life of the Church, including a glimpse of early Christian art.

In Part II the author chronicles the development of the Imperial Church and the impact of Constantine. He describes the origin of monasticism in reaction to official Christianity and the development of the Donatist schism. Gonzalez tells the story fleshed out in the lives of people. The Arian controversy is painted in full color around the lives of men like Athanasius. This method is used to cover the eras of the Cappadocians, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome and Augustine.

Gonzalez turns from a narrative centered around men to a sweeping survey of the new order these men had founded. Part III describes Medieval Christianity from the Barbarian Kingdoms and the Papacy to the Eastern Church. The author deals with Charlemagne, reform movements, the Crusades, Scholasticism, the Renaissance and the rumblings of Reformation. Part IV is a unique and fascinating look at Colonial Christianity promoted by the Spanish and Portuguese crowns in the New World.

Dr. Gonzalez tells the story in short, quick-moving chapters with smooth transitions. The reader wants to read on. It *is* an exciting story! The author provides a workable framework for each major development so that it makes sense. The reader feels the drama and the intertwined forces impacting Christians in each period. This work assumes some familiarity with theological and ecclesiastical terms. It may not be the best reader for a layperson but would suit the bored student or busy pastor well.

Christian Dogmatics, Vol. 1 & 2
edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Fortress, 1984, 569 pp./621 pp., $49.90). Reviewed by Richard A. Muller, Associate Professor of Historical Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary.

Theology must be written anew for each generation. Moreover, it must be written with close attention both to the voice of the church speaking to us through the traditional reading of biblical doctrines and to the voice of the present, performing its faithful task of communicating the biblical revelation in the light of contemporary scholarship. *Christian Dogmatics*, written by a team of Lutheran theologians under the editorship of Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson, is a significant attempt at contemporary theological statement, resting on a clear grasp of problems and issues confronting theology today.

The fact that the volumes are written by a team of authors rather than a single theologian results in a wide range of approaches to theology and, at times, in somewhat disconcerting shifts in perspective and presuppositions. Jenson's discussion of the Trinity manifests a strong use of the fathers, particularly the Cappadocians, while Braaten's Christology, not as favorable toward patristic materials, manifests a willingness to wrestle with contemporary problems confronting Christology. Together, Braaten and Jenson represent a Hegelian interest that is not nearly so evident in the *loci* by Sponheim, Forde and Hefner; while Braaten in particular reveals an admiration for the theological perspectives of Pannenberg.

Although it is not possible to survey all twelve of the *loci* of this *Dogmatics* in one review, some detailed review of select topics seems appropriate. Forde's essay on justification stands out as a fine discussion of this crucial doctrine. Both the Pauline foundations and Luther's unique contribution to Protestant exegesis are carefully described and then expertly drawn into dialogue with contemporary issues. Forde well shows the dangers of post-Kantian and post-Freudian tendencies to "psychologize" this doctrine—as if justification were not an objective, forensic, and totally gracious act of God. Forde also rather nicely brings Luther's language of *simul justus et peccator*—at once justified and a sinner—to bear upon the problem of the relationship of justification to sanctification. We are sanctified, but nonetheless *peccatores*. Underlying this generally sound discussion, however, there is an element of distaste for traditional or scholastic Lutheran dogmatics and its schematized *ordo salutis* that evidences an unwillingness to recognize the problem of moving from the rather existential character of Luther's thought to a systematic statement of the meaning of justification in the context of other elements of Christian life—where, as the Lutheran scholastics recognized, there is good reason to ask questions concerning the logical, causal or temporal succession of such things as grace, calling, faith, justification and sanctification.

Braaten's christological locus very clearly views the theological world as taking form in the aftermath of neo-orthodoxy and, frequently, in the terms announced by Pannenberg. This approach has both negative and positive results. Negatively, Braaten's discussion of the "historicity of God" attempts to juxtapose ontological categories associated with "Greek" thought with the historical perspective of the "Hebrew" mind. Not only has recent scholarship made this kind of juxtaposition less than acceptable, there is also no genuine biblical or Hebraic basis for moving from a sense of the historical character of God's revelation to a notion of God himself

as historical. This latter idea rests primarily on the vaguely Hegelian assumptions of Pannenberg's theology. On the positive side, Braaten does encapsulate nicely the problem of the starting point or "root" of Christology—whether the historical Jesus, the resurrection as event, or the kerygma of the early church—and points toward a synthesis of the various views in a historical Christology resting on the issue of the "personal identity" of Jesus. In this portion of the discussion, we find an important presentation of biblical and churchly materials as they point toward contemporary issues and formulation.

One last example: Schwartz's discussion of the Word in relation to sacraments and under the more general rubric "The Means of Grace" provides sound contemporary insight into the typically Lutheran conjunction of the living Word preached with the efficacious grace of the sacraments. The perception offered here of the divine presence in the life of the church is one that Protestants outside of the Lutheran tradition will do well to heed: the doctrine of the Word of God needs to be more than an examination of objective "properties" of the biblical text! Schwartz includes in his discussion a salutory statement concerning the way in which the form of biblical revelation, culminating in Christ, does not negate but rather transforms philosophical and metaphysical conceptions of the essence and attributes of God. Nevertheless, we also find here the influence of Pannenberg's rather one-sided and aprioristic view of revelation as indirectly given in history, to the exclusion both of theophany and direct propositional statement. We certainly agree that much of the language of the Bible is not logically propositional or descriptively direct, but we would also recognize that direct, even propositional, statement does also occur in Scripture.

By way of conclusion, I would suggest that these volumes, particularly in the light of their traditionally Lutheran title and their adoption of the traditional *locus*-method of exposition, would have done well to maintain a closer dialogue with the Lutheran dogmatic tradition, not only of the seventeenth, but also of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The authors do appreciate and occasionally critique the systematizing efforts of seventeenth century giants like Johann Gerhard, but they make no reference at all to the American bearers of the orthodox Lutheran tradition, C. F. W. Walther, Franz Pieper, Conrad Lindberg. I would not claim that Christians today can easily adopt all of the arguments and conventions of these older thinkers, but their writings do continue to be a source of sound definition and well-conceived traditional statement of doctrine that ought not to be ignored by anyone attempting to write dogmatics in the classic sense of the term. The great problem facing contemporary efforts like the Braaten-Jenson *Dogmatics* is that its orientation toward issues, in the absence of clearer rootage in the tradition of Lutheran dogmatics, becomes the controlling factor in theology. In this case, the appeal of Pannenberg and Hegelian metaphysics may not only limit the present usefulness of the volumes but may also result in the ultimate failure of this dogmatics to maintain its audience when the current interest in Pannenberg fades and Hegelianism once again joins the ranks of defunct metaphysical systems.

BOOK COMMENTS

Crumbling Foundations: Death and Rebirth in an Age of Upheaval
by Donald G. Bloesch (Zondervan, 1984, 168 pp., $6.95).

Prolific evangelical theologian Donald Bloesch gives us an exercise in what he calls "social prophecy," by attempting to bring modern culture and the church under biblical scrutiny. The work is more a manifesto than a treatise; more a tract than a monograph.

Bloesch is inspired to preach the integrity of the gospel in an age of compromise. His tone is consistently sermonic, *warning* us of "technocratic humanism" (with repeated reference to Ellul), ideological captivity (either to the left or the right), secularism, nihilism, totalitarian government, neo-occultism, etc., and *exhorting* us to remain biblically faithful.

Bloesch is a synthesizer; he quotes and refers to countless sources from a broad variety of social and theological perspectives. For instance, we find several footnoted references to the conservative writer R.J. Rushdoony (who is usually ignored by established theologians). Yet Bloesch also cites several books published by Orbis, a leading publisher of liberation theology (Bloesch is, though, critical of liberation theology).

Sometimes this synthetic approach is profitable and legitimately catholic, culling insights from a wide variety of sources and avoiding the narrowness of constrictive ideology. Other times catholicity gives way to vagueness and a blurring of focus because too many ideas have been thrown together without sufficient development, clarification, and analysis.

Crumbling Foundations is a call to biblical fidelity and integrity. But the call seems a bit muffled and too general to direct our steps very specifically.

—Doug Groothuis

Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook
by John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay (John Knox Press, 1982, 132 pp., $6.95).

Hayes and Holladay, Old Testament and New Testament professors respectively at Emory University, divide their 132-page handbook into ten chapters (each of which contains a helpful reference bibliography): 1) Introducing Exegesis; 2) Textual Criticism; 3) Historical Criticism; 4) Grammatical Criticism; 5) Literary Criticism; 6) Form Criticism; 7) Tradition Criticism; 8) Redaction Criticism; 9) Integrating Exegetical Procedures; 10) Employing the Fruits of Biblical Exegesis.

The book is not a guide or manual per se, but does provide clear discussions of the various criticisms, including discussions of how individual passages might, in general, be exegeted according to one critical method or another. The authors are critics in every sense and their assumptions about the composition, transmission and editing of biblical materials are those normally associated with the left wing of biblical scholarship. This naturally affects their methodology, as illustrated in the chapter on Redaction Criticism: ". . . or if a text appears not to be taking up a previous biblical tradition and reinterpreting it, in these instances, *try as one may*, one cannot demonstrate that an author or editor has redacted anything [italics mine]" (p. 95). How much one tries to find redaction, of course, is bound to make a rather big difference in how much one finds.

As an explication of current critical presuppositions, procedural theories, and analytical styles, the book is very valuable. Its audience is mainly the theological student, who in any case would still require a further guidebook of some sort actually to produce a full-blown exegetical paper.

—Douglas Stuart

Nuclear Pacifism: "Just War" Thinking Today
by Edward J. Laarman (Peter Lang, 1984, 210 pp., $20.95).

Originally a Ph.D. dissertation for the University of Notre Dame, Edward Laarman's book is a closely reasoned analysis of Christian just war theory as it applies to modern war. While Laarman is from a Reformed

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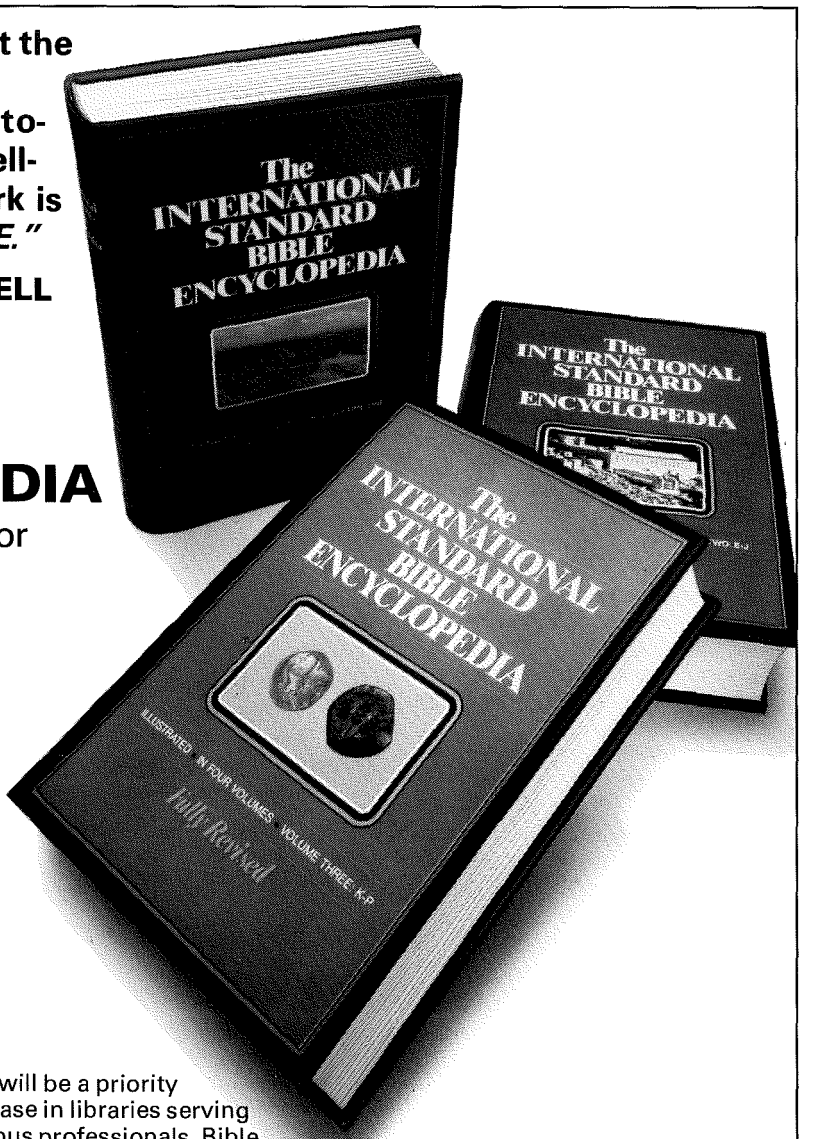

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tradition (B.A., B.D., Calvin), his theological roots lie with his teachers John H. Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas. Nevertheless, this is not a pacifist critique of just war theory, but a careful examination of the debate between different kinds of just war theory.

It is not Laarman's purpose to question the basic assumptions of just war theory, but to examine the success or failure of their application to nuclear deterrence and war. Laarman focuses on the two major just war criteria of discrimination (between combatants and non-combatants) and proportionality. He then examines how these criteria are used by three modern streams of theologians who locate themselves in the just war tradition.

These include "nuclear pacifists," such as Walter Stein, who call for unilateral disarmament; counterforce advocates, such as Paul Ramsey, who justify both deterrence and the use of nuclear weapons as long as only military installations are targeted; and those such as J. Bryan Hehir who believe nuclear weapons may never be morally used, but that nuclear possession and "bluff" may be justified for the sake of deterrence. Laarman concludes that nuclear pacifists are most faithful to the just war tradition.

This book is not for casual reading. Laarman shows an admirable grasp of a wide range of materials and depicts opposing viewpoints very fairly. His casuistry is impressive. Laarman's primary readers will be scholars (who may disagree at points) and students who are seriously interested in modern just war theory.

—Bernard T. Adeney

Christianity: A Way of Salvation
by Sandra S. Frankiel (Harper & Row, 1985, 135 pp., $6.95).

This book is overly brief for what it tries to do. Unlike the two earlier volumes in this series (Religious Traditions of the World: *Religions of Japan* and *Religions of Africa*), this volume attempts to do too much. Chapter 1 is the Introduction and sets forth the purpose of the book. The next two chapters are the book's weak points. Chapter 2—Historical Development of Christianity—only deals with the Western Church, which is a serious weakness. There is a rich vein in Christianity from our non-Western brothers and sisters and this is completely lacking. The book gives the impression that we are only a Western religion, which is far from the case. Chapter 3—Structures of Christian Life—is factually correct as far as it goes, but it is fatally incomplete. It introduces data and leaves it hanging. For example, she writes out the Roman, Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and then her analysis is finished in only four paragraphs. This book is designed for the beginner and I'm afraid that this will leave that reader worse off than before.

Her fourth chapter is worth the price of the book. It is entitled, "Dynamics of Christian Life." Here, she chooses two examples, not trying to cover the entire waterfront, and she does it well. Her coverage of the pilgrimage experience using the pilgrimage to St. James (Santiago) of Compostela in Spain (12th century) and the life and impact of the Beecher family in America through Lyman Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe is excellent. I believe that the entire volume should have used this format.

The author's orientation can be summed up by the subtitle to the book—a way of salvation. It is definitely not an evangelical author or book. If you are in seminary and take courses in church history and systematic or historical theology, this book can be avoided. I would not use it in a world religion class because of its incompleteness. If you can, read Chapter 4. What we need is an evangelical scholar who can write for a popular market, to do a similar book. As the remaining titles come out in this series, they will be reviewed: *Religions of China, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and Native Religions of North America.*

—Charles O. Ellenbaum

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Whole Hearted Integration: Harmonizing Psychology and Christianity Through Word and Deed
by Kirk E. Farnsworth (Baker, 1985, 160 pp., $6.95).

I have now read this book for the third time; twice while it was in preparation and once in its bound form. My enthusiasm for it has grown each time. I am jubilant about this book. I believe it says something unique that has not been stated before. I found it readable and stimulating. I intend to make it required reading in my courses on this subject.

What is it that I find so unique in this volume intended for Christian mental health professionals who are eager to know how to relate their discipline with their faith? Two things: first, I find Farnsworth's distinction between "critical" and "embodied" integration extremely convincing; and second, I find Farnsworth's procedure of clarifying method prior to discussing content very helpful.

In earlier articles, Farnsworth has called for "embodied" integration. This is integration that is "lived" rather than "thought"—his term for critical integration. In the present volume, Farnsworth elaborates on this distinction; and, while he still affirms the high importance of the incorporation of integration into the daily lives of Christian mental health professionals, he yet reasserts the value of critical, conceptual thinking about these matters.

The emphasis on clarifying method before defining terms is a crucial contribution of this volume. The early chapters detailing the methods of psychology, of theology, and of integration are valuable. They will provide a useful introduction to the problems in the

The Journal of Esther Edwards Burr 1754-1757
edited with introduction by Carol F. Karlsen and Laurie Crumpacker (Yale University Press, 1984, 318 pp., $25.00).

Esther Edwards Burr (1732-1758) was the third child of Jonathan and Sarah Pierrepont Edwards. In 1750 she married the Rev. Aaron Burr, an evangelical Presbyterian from Newark, New Jersey. Soon Esther moved with her husband to Princeton where the Rev. Burr gave his full attention to superintending the College of New Jersey. During the brief time allotted to this family, Esther bore two children, the second of whom became famous as a vice-president of the United States and the killer of Alexander Hamilton. The family's world came crashing in when death carried off four members in rapid succession: Aaron Burr (September 1757), Jonathan Edwards, who had come as Burr's replacement to head Princeton College (March 1758), Esther (April 1758), and Sarah Edwards (October 1758).

The remarkable document reproduced here is a journal kept by Esther Burr from October 1, 1754, to September 2, 1757. It formed part of a two-way correspondence with Sarah Prince, daughter of a well-known Congregational minister in Boston. It is one of the most complete records of a woman's experience in colonial America. Karlsen and Crumpacker have done their jobs as editors superbly, sketching clearly biographical, theological, social, and economic backgrounds, and providing the necessary notations for making full use of the journal.

The life which shines forth is one of piety, hard work, family joy and tragedy, nearly overwhelming domestic responsibility, and faithful friendship. In their introduction the editors highlight Esther Burr's many duties as household manager and the "sisterhood" which bound her with Sarah Prince, her mother, and other women. To these appropriate emphases, they could have added that Esther Burr's journal is also a compelling record of consistent, even moving, Christian faithfulness.

–Mark A. Noll

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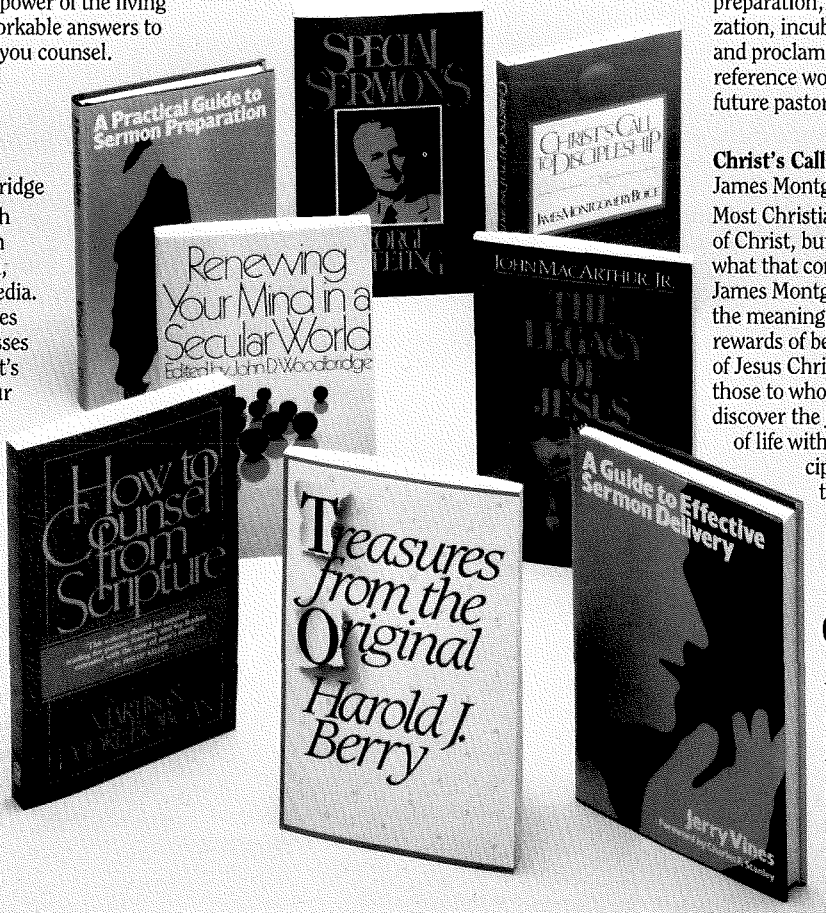

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integration endeavor that goes far beyond the simplistic statement that "only a particular kind of psychology can be integrated with a particular kind of theology."

As I stated before, Farnsworth's thoughts are like vintage wine—they get better with age. I would recommend this volume to any serious seeker of insight into the integration enterprise. Those who read, and read again, will not be disappointed. They will be called to intentional and devout embodied integration, plus be enlightened in their efforts to do critical integration.

—H. Newton Maloney

The Hermeneutical Reader
edited and translated by Kurt Mueller-Volmer (Continuum Press, 1985, 346 pp., $27.50).

Currently the word *hermeneutics* is used in three different ways but with some overlap: 1) in the more traditional American usage to indicate rule of biblical interpretation; 2) in the continental way to indicate the root-methodology and root-assumptions of a theologian's theology; 3) in a third or more secular meaning which deals with the whole nest of assumptions or presuppositions in any given major discipline.

The author's purpose is to provide us with a historical review of this third meaning or usage by translating from the German classic essays on the subject matter and thereby enabling scholars to get a headstart into the very

complex shape the study has taken in recent years. His list is Chladenius, Schleiermacher, von Humboldt, Droysen, Boeck, Dilthey, Husserl, Ingarden, Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, Habermas and Appel.

It is a scholar's scholar book. Only those with some grasp of the subject matter (*Vorverständnis!!*) can read it with some basic understanding of what is being said. For evangelicals who have a specialized interest in tracking this movement for its potential theological usage, this is a basic resource book.

—Bernard Ramm

Dissentient Voice: Enlightenment and Christian Dissent
by Donald Davie (University of Notre Dame Press, 1982, 154 pp., $16.95).

The book's chief historical thesis is that the English Enlightenment, as opposed particularly to the French, was not entirely or essentially anti-Christian. Apart from Samuel Johnson, demonstration is sought in the poetry of Watts, Doddridge, and Wesley, who unite intellect and culture with the profound and paradoxical subject matter of the faith and testify to a reasonable and "experimental" religion. Their hymns display a controlled simplicity that rendered them accessible "to men and women who were less sophisticated and less learned than they were."

The author regrets the decline of nineteenth-century Dissent into fervor and philistinism. Even worse is the ill-defined liberalism of the twentieth century, presaged in the Unitarianism of the late eighteenth. One of Mr. Davie's main concerns is, in fact, definition. Thus he objects to the extension of "the words 'Christian' and 'Dissenter' to comprehend people who deny both Original Sin and the Holy Trinity," a linguistic sign of the present "muddle about the boundary between Belief and Unbelief."

Apart from the 1980 Ward-Phillips Lectures on English Language and Literature given at Notre Dame, the book contains occasional essays sparked by episodes in present-day letters. With many a deft blow at secularists and *marxisants* as well as spiky and skeptical Anglicans, they illustrate the wit and wisdom of a leading poet and critic, a constitutional monarchist who, like myself, was reared not far from the heart of English Dissent.

—Geoffrey Wainwright

Doing Theology in a Divided World
edited by Virginia Fabella and Sergio Torres (Orbis, 1985, 217 pp., $11.95).

"Doing Theology in a Divided World" was the topic of the Sixth International Conference of the Ecumenical Association of the Third World Theologians (EATWOT), which, for the first time, also included first world representatives of liberation theology. The participants' *basis* for discussing theology is story-telling, that is, narrating personal experiences of doing theology in a divided world (e.g., case histories of Dutch feminism, Nicaraguan revolution, the Sri Lankan Devasarana Movement, the Swedish Christian Labor Movement, and the Canadian Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America). Next, the concrete *context* of theology, say the participants, requires social analysis, especially the interrelatedness of oppression and efforts for liberation (e.g., racial—black South African; economic—Latin American; feminist—female North American; and cultural—non-western, third world perspectives). Finally, theological reformulation is the *implication* of liberating praxis, which involves a re-reading of the methods and themes of theology from the standpoint of liberational commitment (e.g., Protestant and Catholic critiques of Eurocentric theology, and methodological reflections from black, West European, and Asian participants). In short, they advocate concrete commitment to liberation for the oppressed, social analysis of exploitation, and a new hermeneutic of biblical and historical interpretation as the way of doing theology in a divided world.

These short essays (authored by twenty-six contributors) are contextual yet dialogical in nature. Sex, race, class, culture, and religion are the contexts in which one does theology—a point not new to liberationists. The *interdependence* of contexts, however, is the key insight of the book, as well as its chief problem: specifically, how to reconcile the distinctiveness of Christianity with the plurality of social contexts and religious themes in this new *multi*-contextual theology.

—Todd Saliba Speidell

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bloesch Replies to Finger

While appreciating Thomas Finger's thoughtful comments on my book *The Battle for the Trinity* (TSF Bulletin, March/April, 1986), I wish to answer some of his criticisms for the purpose of clarifying my position. I shall give quotations from Finger and then state my reaction.

1. "I wish that Bloesch had consistently used some precise term to indicate the viewpoint he is opposing." The term I consistently use for the adversary of Christian faith in this area is "ideological feminism." Even if the word "ideological" is sometimes omitted for the sake of readability, the context always leaves my meaning abundantly clear. I have indicated in this book as well as in my earlier *Is the Bible Sexist?* (Crossway, 1982) that the women's liberation movement itself has much to commend it. The essential equality of woman and man and the dignity of woman are something all Christians should support. What I oppose is feminism as a life-and world-view, an attempt to achieve a holistic humanity through a resymbolizing of God and nature.

2. "It is unfair to link 'feminism' with the programs and death camps spawned by Nazi ideology." Nowhere did I associate feminism with the demonic side of Nazism. What I did point to were some striking parallels between the two ideologies, including the resymbolizing of language about God. My position is that Christian faith must resist alliances with so-called good theologies as well as bad.

3. Feminism is "the most racially and nationally inclusive of all the modern 'isms.'" I do not think that feminism is more inclusive than socialism or welfare liberalism. No ideology is really all-inclusive. Feminism excludes male chauvinism and patriarchalism. In its radical forms, it also excludes women who give priority to motherhood over a career. Socialism excludes the moneyed class, and fascism excludes racial and ethnic minorities. Only Christian faith overcomes all racial, class and gender barriers; but Christian faith is not entirely inclusive, for it excludes from the family of God those who consciously persist in known sin.

In all but its mildest forms, feminism really does not appeal to the vast majority of women. It is guilty of misrepresentation when it claims to speak for women in general. Elizabeth Achtemeier, distinguished biblical scholar and author of the foreword of my book, is an example of a growing number of women in academic circles who are taking exception to the audacious claims of ideological feminism.

4. "Bloesch sometimes employs words with ambiguity." I have repeatedly said that words do not necessarily contain their meanings, and therefore there is a certain fluidity in all words, particularly those employed as symbols. I have consistently described both metaphor and analogy as symbolic expressions but have insisted with Thomas Aquinas that only the latter yields real knowledge. I have followed the eminent philosopher of language, Paul Ricoeur, in sometimes speaking of "conceptual metaphors," where metaphors are used as concepts to explain or define something.

Finger faults me for obscuring the relation between symbol and concept. But I think I have made it clear that although symbol has chronological priority over concept, it needs conceptual elucidation if its meaning is to be made more broadly intelligible. Yet nuances of meaning that reside in the symbol are invariably lost in conceptualization, and this is why abstract thought must always return to the symbol if it is to keep in contact with the reality of which it speaks. Symbol is the foundation of intelligible discourse, but concept is its culmination.

5. "The uniqueness of doctrine that Donald Bloesch so emphasizes consists in affirming this equality among the Trinitarian persons." I believe we have a deficit understanding of the Trinity unless we give equal weight to the voluntary subordination within the Trinity. The Son freely subordinates his own will to that of the Father, and the Spirit freely carries out the decisions of the Father and the Son. To be sure, within this basic subordination there is a mutual subordination, and Finger reminds us of this important truth.

6. "The Bible uses different words or images to speak of God: God is called 'Lord' and 'Father,' but also 'Fortress' and 'Rock.'" But the difference is that the latter are metaphors, which point to the way God exists or acts, while the former are names, which reveal the inner character of God. The God of the Bible is not a nameless being beyond concepts and words (as in Neoplatonic mysticism) but the Living One who reveals his proper name—Father, Son and Spirit. Feminist theology and ideology relegate the Trinitarian names to a metaphor that is on a par with "Fortress," "Rock," "Wind," etc.

7. Finger looks forward to the time when "masculine and feminine imagery for God may come to be employed with similar frequency in the Church." But this means that the doctrine of the Trinity is bound to be sacrificed for more "inclusive" and ipso facto impersonal language concerning God. My critic refers to God as "the transcendent Origin of all things" and "the stable, transcendent Source of all things." It seems that for him symbolic abstractions of this type actually function as the norm in governing the use of language applied to God. I contend that to call God "heavenly Father" is much closer to biblical understanding than to describe him as "the transcendent Origin of all things." Can we pray to a transcendent Source of all being?

The doctrine of the Trinity makes explicit the mysterious but at the same time integral relationship of Father, Son and Spirit attested in Holy Scripture. Calling God "she" introduces an entirely new dimension that actually distorts the biblical intention. Finger fails to realize that the very act of changing back and forth from Father to Mother draws attention to sexuality, which is patently not the intent in the Bible.

8. Viewed eschatologically, God, for Finger, becomes primarily the immanent, indwelling Spiritual Presence. What is depicted in biblical apocalyptic literature, however, is a divine intervention into human history and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth.

In conclusion, I affirm the divine motherhood as well as the divine fatherhood, but I insist that God has chosen to relate himself to us primarily as masculine, which Finger acknowledges but dismisses as of minimal importance, apparantly indifferent to the marked biblical stress on names.

My protest is directed not against the women's movement with its demands for equal pay for equal work but against the rebirth of Baalism and Gnosticism that actually undercut women, since they basically portray woman in terms of sexuality rather than in terms of partnership with man in the battle for social righteousness.

Donald G. Bloesch
Professor of Theology
University of Dubuque
Theological Seminary

In Praise of TSF

I am writing to express my great appreciation to you and all those involved in bringing out the March/April 1986 issue of *TSF Bulletin*. Smith's article on Whitefield and Wesley I found very informative on an historical matter concerning which I have great interest but little information. I would also like to compliment you for the interchange among Anderson, Mickelsen, and Sheppard, which though frustratingly brief for contributors and for readers such as myself, was an exciting example of creative theological investigation.

Not being involved directly in the training of ministers in my present position in a Faculty of Arts, issues of *TSF Bulletin* that concentrate on articles intended for the professional ministry are of more passing relevance to me. The March/April issue, however, speaks across the confines of the ministerial profession to the intellectual and pastoral needs of the larger Christian community, and I commend you for it. These articles exhibit what a journal like *TSF Bulletin* should be, a forum for serious dialogue on important questions.

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