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A Publication of
**THEOLOGICAL
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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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Introducing This Issue

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Launched ten years ago and starting as an unpretentious newsletter for the Theological Students Fellowship, the **Bulletin** through the years has brought to its readers outstanding articles by some of today's finest scholars. Holding fast to a common Christian commitment, its contributors have been free to explore ideas and issues from their own theological perspectives. Often they have engaged in provocative discussion, pushing back the frontiers of evangelical thought, yet concerned to remain within the spacious confines of biblical revelation.

This issue illustrates the outworking of that editorial policy. I for one found myself in disagreement with some of the views expressed. But that has been the case, I know, with every issue published. Yet all the viewpoints which are shared with you, our readers, ably articulated by their proponents, need to be heard attentively, considered objectively, and debated irenically. In short, a major function of the **Bulletin** has been and still is to challenge the closed-mind syndrome. Mark Twain's advice is perennially pertinent: "Take your mind out and stamp on it. It's getting all clogged up."

Robert K. Johnston, in examining the contemporary vocation of the theologian (page 4), calls for precisely such an attitude of committed open-mindedness. If the theologian is to do his unique task properly, Johnston rightly insists, he needs both art and heart. Only by integrating these two components is he able to practice his craft with competence.

Reechoing Johnston, Douglas Jacobsen reviews the development of hermeneutics since 1915 (page 8). He argues that the interpretive root metaphors of truth, authority and responsibility demand critical scrutiny if Christianity is indeed to be dynamically relevant.

The comments by the *doyen* of American evangelical theologians, Carl Henry (page 16), reveal the same concern. If anyone within the camp of traditional Protestantism knows the intellectual, cultural, and ecclesiastical terrain of not only the USA but also the world, it is Dr. Henry. In his varied roles as scholar, author, editor and professor, he has been a tremendous catalyst in effecting the transformation of a shibboleth-ridden fundamentalism into a live option for thinking people. His incisive analysis of the movement he so greatly helped to create, what Harold John Ockenga christened the new evangelicalism, should be pondered by his fellow evangelicals. And seminarians should heed the very directive counsel he gives regarding their struggles with theological options.

Donald K. McKim's most helpful bibliography (page 19) offers guidance in the crucial area of Scripture's origin, nature, authority, and interpretation. What a plethora of options that corpus of specialized literature discloses!

Perhaps no other area of theology is more hotly controverted today than that dealt with by Kathleen E. Corley and Karen Torjesen, "Sexuality, Hierarchy and Evangelicalism" (page 23). Here the issues of biblical authority and hermeneutics are volatilized. I anticipate that the openness set forth will draw heated rejoinders from our readers. Appropriately, Henry's remarks on hierarchy and related matters (page 25) furnish a sort of postscript to the Corley/Torjesen argument.

Shifting our attention from America to Japan, Yoshiaki Yui's letter concerning the Yasukuni Shrine issue (page 27) is an arresting reminder that public policies have profound theological implications. The stance we take in obedience to our understanding of God's Word may bring us into conflict with our society. Obedient discipleship, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer emphasized and exemplified, does not guarantee the Christian's popularity. And that is a lesson which we US evangelicals, in danger of being culturally co-opted, must learn—if we have not already learned it.

The interpretive reports of Donald Persons (page 29) and Wilma Jakobsen (page 31) tell us about two widely divergent conferences addressing two radically different situations. Yet underlying both is a single question: how can we bear obedient and effective witness (obedient even when not effective!) to the demands of the gospel of our campuses, in our churches, in our own countries, and throughout the world? Quarrel as we do over ways and means, our unifying purpose is to make the Lordship of Christ more than a theological watchword. To borrow a cliché, God talk must issue in God walk.

Even in book reviews, maybe especially in these appraisals, theological options are set before us. How, oh, how to put into practice an aphoristic assertion made by that intriguing coiner of aphorisms, G.K. Chesterton? "The purpose of opening the mind is like that of opening the mouth—to shut it again on something solid."

All of which recalls the concluding sentence in Unamuno's master work, *The Tragic Sense of Life*: "May God deny you peace but give you glory."



The Vocation of the Theologian

by Robert K. Johnston

The fiction of John Updike has its detractors and its disciples. Some consider him to be a master of saying nothing well—a writer capable of dazzling displays of talent and even erudition, but one holding a shallow vision of life. Others consider his work the labor of a serious artist trying to make comprehensible life's mystery. Critics and followers alike, however, consider Updike one of our most sensitive commentators (or better, portrayers) of the American scene. Over the last quarter of a century, Updike has chronicled America's changes in psyche and society, in small town and in suburbia.

Updike has returned to religion time and again. Unable to accept the faith characteristic of his small-town roots, he has nonetheless sought a blessing from above for many of his characters. Whether a frightened boy in a barn shooting pigeons, an adulterous ex-basketball star whose child has drowned, a wayward cleric or an urban artist seeking to uncover the mystery of his childhood sense of place, Updike's archetypal character wrestles with his standing before the divine. As he does, Updike's hero (there are few heroines) mirrors a wider dis-ease apparent in our society.

Given such a pattern, it is significant that in Updike's latest novel, *Roger's Version*, he turns to the question of the vocation of the theologian. His central character, Roger Lambert, 52, is an assistant professor of theology in one of the Boston seminaries (the description fits Harvard although the location is only implied) and an ordained Methodist cleric. He is now teaching, for a love affair with one of his parishoners 14 years earlier has not only ended his first marriage but his first career as well. While wayward clerics have previously supplied Updike his literary grist, Roger is distinct in that he suffers not so much from a sense of guilt but from a pervasive numbness of spirit. He hides this behind an erudition in his public life and a fascination with sexuality in his private life.

Such barrenness of soul and fecundity of body continue themes evident in Updike's *Rabbit is Rich* and is surely a caricature of those of us in the theological guild. But Updike has as usual felt the pulse of the wider American experience. Although the theological crises Americans face is hardly the challenge Roger encounters (of responding to a graduate student who believes the existence of God can be proven by processing the known data about the universe on a computer), the theological enterprise is nonetheless in crises.

Vanderbilt's Edward Farley spoke to something of this issue in his seminal book, *Theologia* (1983), although his purview was the whole of theological education. A better indicator of the crises perhaps is Theodore Jennings' edited volume, *The Vocation of the Theologian* (1985). Growing out of a consultation at Emory University on the redesign of its graduate program in systematic theology, the volume has a list of contributors that reads like a who's who of America's ecumenical theologians—Wainwright, Ruether, Kaufman, Gilkey, Cobb, Cone, and Altizer (Miguez-Bonino represents a Latin American liberationist perspective too). Yet, although the essays in their particularity are meant to further constructive theological work, what is evident to Jennings as editor is "the shifting kaleidoscope of intersections and divergences" within the theological community.¹

Jennings attempts to give this situation a positive face in his epilogue. He believes "the absence of a consensus concerning (theology's) aim and object, its sources, its center, its boundaries" and the opening of theological work to a "vigorously contested (and celebrated) pluralism" are "the indispensable context for the exercise of theology as a liberal discipline." Yet even Jennings is more candid than this concerning the situation in theology today in his introduction to the volume, which he labels "The Crisis of Theology." He notes that in American theology today, there is "the deflection of theological energy, the avoidance of theological tasks, indeed, even the abdication of theological responsibility."²

Theology has been reduced to (1) prolegomenon—the study of questions of hermeneutics, (2) historical theology—the study of other theologians or theological traditions, and (3) interdisciplinary study—the study of theology and literature, psychology, or social sciences in which theology is largely assumed and the creative energy given to bridge-building between the disciplines. For Jennings, the crisis is not to be measured in terms of these activities themselves, all creative and even necessary. Rather, the crisis is observed "in the way in which these activities have usurped the place of actual constructive and/or systematic theological work." "It is the absence, lack, and silence at the center of our work which transforms our scholarly productivity into feverish business (business?)."³ Ecumenical theology seems now to be in eclipse. It no longer shapes culture, life or thought to any significant degree.

Evangelical Trends

A word concerning evangelical theology is similarly discouraging. Evangelicals have come a different route with hardly more pleasing consequence. Historians like Sydney Ahlstrom and George Marsden chronicle evangelicalism's twentieth century unwillingness to entertain a critical spirit. There has been a pervasive anti-intellectualism, a social and political conservatism, a marked otherworldliness, and a separatism both ecclesiastical and cultural that have combined to make evangelicals an "embattled minority."⁴ At least such is evangelicalism's fundamentalist legacy.

The first frontal challenge to such a fundamentalism was sounded from within the movement by Carl Henry in his *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*.⁵ Since that time evangelicals have entered increasingly into both the academic and social arenas. Their growing involvement has, to be sure, caused a counterreaction by modern-day fundamentalists. The Moral Majority and the new surge in Christian schools and home education are an attempt to stem the tide. Yet for large numbers of evangelicals the break has been made. Any continuing narrowness in traditional evangelical theology is, even to many evangelicals, "obstrusive and a little depressing," to quote James Packer, himself a leading evangelical theologian.⁶ There is a recognized need to move beyond a fortress mentality (with its emphasis on apologetics) and speak out clearly and constructively a positive theological agenda. Perhaps Fuller Seminary can be viewed as a symbol of this shift as George Marsden's new book, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* delineates.⁷

In the October 17, 1986 issue of *Christianity Today*, this leading evangelical voice took stock of its last thirty years in

Robert K. Johnston is Dean and Professor of Theology and Culture at North Park Seminary in Chicago.

publishing. Gordon-Conwell theologian David Wells was asked to write on evangelical theology and he labeled his remarks, "A Strange Turbulence." Again, one notes the sense of crisis in vocation that is being suggested. Wells speaks of American evangelicalism beginning as a small movement with dominant theological figures and now being a large movement with few established thinkers. It is not only the ecumenicals with their loss of Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, Tillich and the Niebuhrs who have suffered theological loss. Evangelicals have not spawned a new generation of thinkers either. The result, according to Wells, has been an abandonment of serious theological reflection by many laity, a borrowing from such imports as Berkouwer and Thielicke by many clergy, and a return to historical theology by others.

that an over-dogmatism in religion produces. Schulz is correct; dogmatism stifles theological creativity.

The history of evangelical theology's dogmatism is so univocal that Paul Holmer can characterize "systematic theology of the evangelical sort" as "a kind of tenseless, moodless tissue of erstwhile truths, ineluctable, shiny, and necessary . . . teachable, tangible, and orthodox."¹¹ Holmer has in mind articles such as John Gerstner's "The Theological Boundaries of Evangelical Faith" (in Wells and Woodbridge, eds., *The Evangelicals*), that seek to narrow evangelical theology's boundaries to a tightly reformed perspective (even Finney is called a foe of evangelicalism).¹²

Kenneth Kantzer, too, does not want "to sacrifice the term, Evangelical, for something less than full Protestant ortho-

Hermeneutical theology with its emphasis on revision and creativity dominates ecumenical circles. Catechetical theology with its essentially conservative agenda characterizes evangelical thought. Neither model, however, has proven fully adequate to the contemporary vocation of the theologian.

There has been in evangelicalism, too, a period of theological fragmentation. Carl Henry's six volumes, *God, Revelation and Authority*, demand of their readers a philosophical positioning that has failed to garner evangelical consensus. Other theological volumes are restatements of existing theologies, not fresh formulations. None has captured the broad allegiance of evangelicals. As Wells suggests, "The time is undoubtedly ripe for theologians to capitalize on the rich harvest of biblical studies of recent decades, the maturing awareness of evangelical responsibility in culture and society, and the absence of serious competitors in the wider theological world." Yet Wells admits that such a prospect is not necessarily forthcoming.⁸

Here, then, is the situation facing Christian theology today. Hermeneutical theology with its emphasis on revision and creativity dominates ecumenical circles. Catechetical theology with its essentially conservative agenda characterizes evangelical thought. Neither model, however, has proven fully adequate to the contemporary vocation of the theologian. Packer can praise evangelical thinkers today for "their concentration on the person and work of Jesus Christ."⁹ Jennings can celebrate the theologian's "vocation of freedom."¹⁰ But each is all too aware of his tradition's shortcomings. The crises is on both the theological left and the theological right, and it is at present severe enough to have called into question the very vocation of the theologian.

If evangelicals and ecumenicals are to move beyond their present feverish busyness to substantial theological output, they must learn to listen to each other and appropriate one another's strengths methodologically. In particular, evangelicals need to learn from theological revisionists something of theology's *art*. Ecumenicals, on the other hand, need to discover from theological conservatives something of theology's necessary *heart*.

The "Art" of Theology

In one of his Peanuts comic strips, Charles Schulz has Lucy say to Snoopy, "You'll never be a good theologian . . . you're too DOGmatic! HaHaHaHaHa!" After bonking Lucy on the head with his typewriter, Snoopy lies down and reflects in disgust, "I hate jokes like that!" The joke hinges, of course, on the word-play concerning "dogmatic." But it also is dependent upon a general perception of the rigidity and sterility

doxy," even though his definition and Gerstner's would differ. Kantzer has been a leader in reconciling warring factions within evangelicalism. With evangelicals from Luther's day onward, Kantzer argues for evangelicalism's formal principle of the authority of scripture and its material principle, the gospel. However, when Kantzer discusses what this material principle implies, he narrows in, listing sixteen necessary doctrines: a pre-existent Christ, Jesus Christ as divine-human, the virgin birth, Christ's substitutionary atonement, Christ's bodily resurrection, and so on.¹³ One can hardly argue that his list deviates from historic Protestantism (at least, I would not). Nonetheless, the theological task seems finished as we listen to his explication. It is buttoned up tightly. Questions concerning the juxtaposition of biblical images of the atonement, for example, seem out of place. All that seems required is faithful reiteration. Theological creativity seems unnecessary, if not suspect.

To give a third example, Carl Henry edited an early and seminal work entitled *Revelation and the Bible: Contemporary Evangelical Thought*.¹⁴ It includes three articles on special revelation. Not only is there a discussion of "Special Revelation as Historical and Personal," but articles by Gordon Clark on "Special Revelation as Rational" and by William J. Martin on "Special Revelation as Objective" set the tone for the volume. It is this bias toward philosophical rationalism that has turned much of evangelical theology into little more than elaborate engineering projects—apologetic efforts demanding special form and structure that "tidy up" biblical revelation through "analytic and undefinitional exactness."¹⁵

In an interesting article entitled "Evangelicals and Theological Creativity," long time Fuller Seminary Professor Geoffrey Bromiley comments, "In this significant field of originality or creativity, Evangelical theology seems to many people to be at an inherent disadvantage." And as this article proceeds, though contrary to Bromiley's intention, such an initial judgment seems, indeed, to be in order. Bromiley would allow for "sober creative activity." "Theology must keep a *scientific* procedure in studying and describing the data," he argues. Theology is, thus, an *objective* enterprise" (italics mine). For Bromiley, "false creativity arises when theology is treated as one of the arts instead of the sciences." Such a conservative posture need not close off positive and constructive theological work, he feels. Room for creativity remains in research, interpretation and application. He pleads for evangelicals to move be-

yond a defensive mentality, "a fixation on Liberal extravaganzas of speculation," and to present strong and attractive theological alternatives. Somehow, however, new evangelical efforts at theological creativity seem more likely to be semantic redefinition in the schematic than to evidence real originality.¹⁶

What these evangelicals and the majority of their colleagues continue to react against is the viewpoint of those like Gordon Kaufman and I.M. Crombie who understand theology to be "a sort of art of enlightened ignorance."¹⁷ They applaud those like Geoffrey Wainwright who expressed the hope in his inaugural address at Union Seminary in 1980 that his listeners would find "nothing substantially new" in this lecture. "In theology," stated Wainwright, "novelty is too often too close to heresy."¹⁸

our politics and our play, our work and our religion. We often find ourselves propelled beyond ourselves. Moreover, in searching for meaning, we sometimes discover a meaning which transforms that search, so we find what we are seeking without knowing that we seek it. Our search is where we must begin epistemologically, experientially. But having found, in the case of Christian theology, the surprising presence of a divine other—a co-presence, we come to realize that even our search was motivated and directed by the other. The songwriter has expressed it well: "I sought the Lord and afterwards I knew . . . I was found by Thee."

The art of theological co-relation has its dangers. The prevalence of grace can become merely an apologetic device, a means of leveling disturbing insights and preempting pro-

Theology is not only a science, but an art, and novelty and creativity have characterized the thought of past theological giants.

Yet, theology is not only a science, but an art, and novelty and creativity have characterized the thought of past theological giants. Even Wainwright in his seminal work *Doxology* evidences real originality particularity in his interweaving of Protestant and Orthodox perspectives. Evangelical reticence in recognizing theology's art can only impede its theological progress. As Bernard Lonergan observed in his book, *Method in Theology*, theological "method is not a set of rules to be followed meticulously by a dolt. It is a framework for collaborative creativity."¹⁹

The edited volume *Christian Theology: An Introduction to its Traditions and Tasks* is one such example of "collaborative creativity." Accepting the premises of the Enlightenment as a given and finding in Schleiermacher's cultural reformulation of Christian doctrine a methodological analogue, the dozen or more leading ecumenical theologians who contributed to the volume agreed that the "tradition must be transformed if it is to be responsive to the challenge of the modern age." Beginning each chapter of their constructive theology with a description of "where we are," the authors assumed disjunction with the received tradition given the Enlightenment and sketched out a program for future system building.²⁰

The reformist programmatic spelled out in *Christian Theology* is provocative. It sets a high standard for all in its scholarship and creative vision. However, evangelicals will find its approach unnecessarily one-sided, centering too completely in the Enlightenment emphasis on "the interpretive capacities of the self in the construction of the world."²¹ Any substantial help from Scripture or tradition is downplayed in these pages. For these authors, scripture's and tradition's "house of authority has collapsed, despite the fact that many people still try to live in it."²²

What is presented methodologically, one could argue, is a transformation of Paul Tillich's theology of correlation, the issues of Enlightenment thought finding their complement in the fundamental symbolic content of the Christian faith. But just as question dictated response in Tillich's theology, Tillich's protestation notwithstanding, so modern attempts at the art of the theological correlation seem too often to reduce revelation's creative impact.

For this reason, I would suggest that the necessary *art* of the theological formulation be understood not as a task of correlation, but as a dialogue based in co-relation (I am indebted to Thomas Langford for this insight). There is a transcendent thrust in humankind, a quest, or search, which is evident in

ductive dialogue. A commitment to Scripture's divine revelation cannot be allowed to fix our experience with Scripture or our conviction as to what Scripture is saying. But a theology of co-relation can also open one up to creative two-way dialogue. As Bernard Lonergan points out, "Theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and the role of a religion in that matrix."²³ Here is the art of theology rightly understood. We begin our life in the world, but we are not limited theologically to that perspective. Our pre-understanding not only provides illumination; it is also in need of transformation. As Peter Berger cautioned in his *A Rumor of Angels*, "We must begin in the situation in which we find ourselves, but we must not submit to it as to an irresistible tyranny."²⁴

Perhaps mindful of Schleiermacher's metaphor, evangelical theologian William Dyrness has suggested Scripture will function for the theologian "more like a musical score than a blueprint." "A score gives guidance but it must always be played afresh."²⁵ We come to the score as modern men and women and the theological music we produce will sound accordingly contemporary. Nevertheless, we are as musicians not left to our own devices. God in his grace has provided us music to play. Such is the artistic task the theologian must accept.

The "Heart" of Theology

If evangelical theologians need to learn from their ecumenical colleagues that theology is more a dialogical "art" than an analytical "science," ecumenical theologians can learn from their evangelical counterparts that a correlation exists between theological integrity and sanctification. We are surely on sensitive ground here. Too often critics of a particular theologian's formulation have gloated when biographers have exposed personal inconsistencies. Non-Tillichians have noted, for example, Tillich's pornography collection and have been tempted to say, "I told you so." Such cheap theological biography has no place in the Christian community. A theologian's work can outdistance his personal appropriation of it.

On the other hand, the continuing influence in evangelical circles of C.S. Lewis and Dietrich Bonhoeffer is largely due to the strong correlation between their writings and their witness. These men lived out what they wrote with high integrity, and thus their theologies have a compelling quality.

We can, perhaps, be again instructed by Charles Schulz's Peanuts as we consider theology's necessary inner heart. Lucy is once again speaking to Snoopy who has returned to his typewriter on his doghouse roof. She asks rhetorically the

would-be canine theologian, "How can you write about theology? You've never been in a church?" This causes Snoopy to reflect, "Au contraire! When I was at the Daisy Hill Puppy Farm, we went to chapel every morning! I was part of a forty-beagle choir." As Snoopy lies down, putting his head on his typewriter, he rhapsodizes, "You've never hear 'Rock of Ages' until you've heard it sung by forty beagles!" Lucy, again, speaks more than she knows. Schulz's humor hinges on our uneasy awareness that theology today is too often being written irrespective of the living faith of the Christian community.

In his article "The Theologian as Christian Scholar," the present dean of the Duke Divinity School, Dennis Campbell, comments on the professional drift of contemporary theology. He compares the present situation in academic theology to Albert William Levi's discussion of the modern professionalization of philosophy:

Philosophy today is primarily a matter of professional competence, and we no longer ask if the motive of its possessor is a deep spiritual commitment to the passionate search for some fleeting insight into the wisdom of life The divorce between technical concern and spiritual relevance seems to have become absolute.²⁶

There has been, argues Campbell, a similar tendency in ecumenical theology for it to become "principally a matter of professional competence." Chief among the many reasons for this reorientation, Campbell believes, is the changed social location of the Protestant theologian from the Christian community to the secular academy. As William Hamilton narrated in his sensitive essay entitled "Thursday's Child," some theologians for whom a traditional faith commitment is not a personal reality feel trapped in doing a job they have no interest in.²⁷

For Campbell, the answer to this crises in theology is not a naive return to pseudo-certainties, but a renewed consideration of the role of "the theologian as *Christian scholar*" (italics mine). He argues, "I am not proposing that the theologian cannot work effectively in the secular academy; but wherever the theologian might work, without the church as a primary community of identity and loyalty, constructive theology cannot be sustained."²⁸

Such a viewpoint is the *sine qua non* of evangelical theology. To be an evangelical is not only to do theology from out of a biblical center, but to join with others who emphasize the importance of a "personal relationship" with Jesus Christ who is Savior and Lord of one's life. Loyalty to Christ impels the evangelical "to demonstrate God's love and to carry out God's mission in worship, nurture, evangelism, and justice."²⁹

This evangelical agenda of sanctification has its historical roots most particularly in pietism. Although this often maligned movement degenerated into anti-intellectual sentimental excess, its flowering was profound and energizing. It is far more telling than is generally perceived that the label "pietist" has become a pejorative one in the theological guild today. Spener in his *Pia Desideria*, and Arndt, in his book *True Christianity*, protested vigorously against a theology gone academic. "What had happened [by the time of Pietism's flowering] was that the *religious* and the personal, experiential dimensions of justification by grace through faith were missing."³⁰ The Pietists thus argued for the balancing perspective of sanctification.

Pietists sought not to overturn the evangelical Reformation, but to complete and perfect it. They, like their evangelical colleagues in the awakening movements of later generations, sought a reform of the church through small renewal groups and through an extended mission of proclamation and social demonstration. As Richard Lovelace points out, "The majority

of the Pietists . . . were united in insisting that ministers and church members should reform not only their doctrines but their lives."³¹ Their leaders during the seventeenth century worked to create theologies of "live orthodoxy" that challenged both individuals and congregations to move beyond mere mental commitment to conversion and spiritual renewal. The pietist literature is only now being adequately translated and republished, but it is both intellectually profound and spiritually alive.

It would be wrong to isolate theological engagement to within the evangelical community. Among contemporary ecumenicals influenced by liberation and/or post-Barthian models of Christian thought, engagement has a similarly high agenda. But among ecumenical theologians adopting an Enlightenment ethos, churchly and confessional theology is too often criticized. To conceive of theology essentially in terms of the church amounts to "a kind of ecclesiastical positivism," to quote Gordon Kaufman, for example. Kaufman desires theology to interpret and explain the church, not vice-versa. He states:

. . . it is evident that the church does not provide theology with its real foundations (today), nor can the church define for us what theology is or should be as a vocation.³²

Kaufman is relentless in pushing his point. Although thinking of himself primarily as a Christian theologian, Kaufman is not willing to have Christ displace God in the order of our thinking and valuing. "Theology is," for Kaufman, "first and foremost 'thinking about God,' not 'thinking about Christ.'"³³ Such a public vocation seeks a theology which is intelligible, not authoritative. As such, theology continues to find *God the Problem* (the title of Kaufman's 1971 volume).³⁴

Schubert Ogden, in his article, "On Teaching Theology," argues similarly that theology must remain theoretical: "I do not understand my function to be in any way to teach the Christian witness by directly instructing and training my students to bear it."³⁵ There seems little danger here that students might find the technical, second-order reflection of theology something so worth believing that men and women might live radically new lives on its account.

Conclusion

The vocational crisis facing the American theologian is this: evangelical engagement has yet to produce vibrant theology for it has too often refused to take seriously the "art" of its craft. Ecumenical reflection, on the other hand, has produced more rigorous, thoughtful and creative theology, but theology which is too often sterile, lacking "heart."

There are, however, signs of hope, particularly among evangelicals and ecumenicals alike who have been influenced by Barthian and/or liberation models of theological engagement.

Frederick Herzog, for example, has joined the phrases "God-walk" and "God-talk" in his theological formulation. In writings such as his book *Liberation Theology*, he argues for the overthrow of our present understanding of the human, one at the same time Puritan and Cartesian. We need, instead, to meet Jesus. It is he who will turn us from private, modern individuals to a realization of our corporate identity.

In an article entitled "Embarassed by God's Presence" which appeared in the *Christian Century* in January of 1985, William Willimon and Stanley Hauerwas noted

. . . an increasingly strong stress on Christian formation and sanctification. Wesley was right; the gospel is not simply about forgiveness; it is also about response. The

gospel is more than a set of interesting ideas; it is a whole way of life which requires the church to be holy. It is always *contretemps*, always an alternative to life in the world. We are therefore at odds with those who turn theology into an arcane discipline, the urbane pastime of graduate schools of religion. Theological integrity and sanctification are inextricably related. Christian theology is renewed not by new thinking, but by new living.³⁶

Correspondingly, we might take note of evangelical theologian Bernard Ramm's recent book, *After Fundamentalism* (1983). Ramm sees the need to get beyond liberalism and fundamentalism. Taking his cue from Karl Barth, Ramm finds himself increasingly uncomfortable with evangelicalism's obscurantism which has issued from its disregard of the Enlightenment. He writes:

My concern is that evangelicals have not come to a systematic method of interacting with modern knowledge. They have not developed a theological method that enables them to be consistently evangelical in their theology and to be people of modern learning. That is why a new (theological) paradigm is necessary.³⁷

Theological mavericks on the left and on the right (liberationists, post-Barthians, and progressive evangelicals) are beginning a theological *rapprochement* that is encouraging. The dialogue must continue with a wider range of significant voices joining in. Both paradigm and piety demand our best present theological efforts.

¹ Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., "Epilogue: The Vitality of Theology," in Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., ed., *The Vocation of the Theologian* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 144.
² *Ibid.*, pp. 145; Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., "Introduction: The Crises of Theology," in Theodore Jennings, ed., *The Vocation of the Theologian*, p. 2.
³ Theodore Jennings, "The Crises of Theology," p. 4.
⁴ The phrase is Sydney Ahlstrom's, "From Puritanism to Evangelicalism: A Critical Perspective," in David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *The Evangelicals* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), p. 285.
⁵ Carl F.H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947).

⁶ James I. Packer, "Taking Stock in Theology," in John King, ed., *Evangelicals Today* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1973), p. 29.
⁷ George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).
⁸ David F. Wells, "A Strange Turbulence," *Christianity Today*, 30, No. 15 (October 17, 1986), p. 20.
⁹ James Packer, "Taking Stock in Theology," p. 29.
¹⁰ Theodore Jennings, "The Vitality of Theology," p. 145.
¹¹ Paul Holmer, "Contemporary Evangelical Faith: An Assessment and Critique," in David Wells and John Woodbridge, eds., *The Evangelicals*, p. 78.
¹² John H. Gerstner, "The Theological Boundaries of Evangelical Faith," in David Wells and John Woodbridge, eds., *The Evangelicals*.
¹³ Kenneth Kantzer, "The Future of the Church and Evangelicalism," in Donald Hoke, ed., *Evangelicals Face the Future* (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1978), pp. 132-133.
¹⁴ Carl F.H. Henry, ed., *Revelation and the Bible: Contemporary Evangelical Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958).
¹⁵ Paul Holmer, "Contemporary Evangelical Faith," pp. 82, 90.
¹⁶ Geoffrey Bromiley, "Evangelicals and Theological Creativity," *Themelios* (Sept., 1979), pp. 4-8.
¹⁷ I.M. Crombie, quoted in Gordon D. Kaufman, "Theology as a Public Vocation," in Theodore Jennings, *The Vocation of the Theologian*, p. 49.
¹⁸ Geoffrey Wainwright, "Toward God," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, 36 (supplementary issue, 1981): 13.
¹⁹ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. xi.
²⁰ Robert H. King, "Introduction: The Task of Theology," in Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, eds., *Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), p. 14.
²¹ John B. Cobb, Jr., "The Religions," in Peter Hodgson and Robert King, eds., *Christian Theology*, p. 355.
²² David Tracy, "Theological Method," in Peter Hodgson and Robert King, eds., *Christian Theology*, p. 50.
²³ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. xi.
²⁴ Peter Berger, *A Rumor of Angels* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), p. 94, quoted in William A. Dyrness, "How Does the Bible Function in the Christian Life?" in Robert K. Johnston, ed., *The Use of the Bible in Theology: Evangelical Options* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), p. 161.
²⁵ William Dyrness, "How Does the Bible Function in the Christian Life?" p. 171.
²⁶ Albert William Levi, *Philosophy as Social Expression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 110, quoted in Dennis Campbell, "The Theologian as Christian Scholar," *Religion in Life*, 45 (Autumn, 1976), pp. 319-320.
²⁷ Dennis Campbell, "The Theologian as Christian Scholar," p. 320.
²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 320-322.
²⁹ David Allan Hubbard, *What We Evangelicals Believe* (Pasadena: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1979), p. 15.
³⁰ C. John Weborg, "Reborn in Order to Renew," *Christian History*, 5, No. 2 (1986): 17.
³¹ Richard Lovelace, "A Call to Historic Roots and Continuity," in Robert E. Webber and Donald Bloesch, eds., *The Orthodox Evangelicals* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978), p. 56.
³² Gordon Kaufman, "Theology as a Public Vocation," in Theodore Jennings, *The Vocation of the Theologian*, pp. 50-51.
³³ *Ibid.*, p. 64.
³⁴ Gordon Kaufman, *God the Problem* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).
³⁵ Schubert Ogden, "On Teaching Theology," *Criterion*, 25, No. 1 (Winter, 1986): 12-14.
³⁶ William Willimon and Stanley Hauerwas, "Embarassed by God's Presence," *Christian Century*, 102 (January 30, 1985), p. 99.
³⁷ Bernard Ramm, *After Fundamentalism* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), p. 27.

From Truth to Authority to Responsibility: The Shifting Focus of Evangelical Hermeneutics, 1915-1986

by Douglas Jacobsen

American Christianity is dynamic, not static. It exists in a shifting historical situation, not a vacuum. The visible church cannot fully escape this fact of historical change as the climate of the day. From day to day, reactions to it may appear quite imperceptible; in the span of a generation they will become quite apparent, and may even be cataclysmic. (Christianity Today, editorial I:3, November 12, 1956).

This article is about biblical hermeneutics. What I mean by this term is simultaneously broad and yet simple. Hermeneutics refers to the process of thinking by which one renders the meaning of the Bible available to people living in a later age. My interest here is not in the fine points of exegesis or with particular interpretations of particular passages of the Bible. Nor is my interest focused on the particular rules of interpretation that may or may not be part of the hermeneutical tools

of a given era. Rather, I want to zero in on the underlying core of a hermeneutical stance—or, to be more accurate, I want to isolate the three different hermeneutical root metaphors that have shaped three different generations of American Evangelical hermeneutics.¹

Let me expand this idea of root hermeneutical metaphors. Very obviously the biblical hermeneutical process is complex. It is no easy task to understand and to make present to a contemporary audience the meaning of a 2000 year old book. This task is made even more difficult when one is committed to the belief that the meaning of the biblical text needs to be presented both in an academically accurate manner and in a way that will grab the hearts of its hearers. As complex as this picture may be, it is also the case that almost all hermeneutical positions are grounded in some one primary concept, value, or metaphor around which all this complexity swirls in an orderly fashion. This core idea—this root metaphor from which all else grows—identifies the basic point of contact

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where the biblical text meets the contemporary audience. It is not the whole picture, but it defines the foundation upon which the rest of the hermeneutical system is based; and because it is so foundational, it is one of the best means by which to identify the distinctive orientation of any given hermeneutical framework.

My thesis in this article is that three generations of Evangelical biblical interpreters can be identified by three different biblical hermeneutical root metaphors. These "generations" are, on the one hand, capable of being organized chronologically. On the other, they represent, to a certain degree, three different ideal approaches to the Bible, all of which are represented within the contemporary diverse Evangelical panoply. The three metaphors I see as operative in twentieth century American Evangelicalism are: truth, authority, and responsibility.

In chronological terms, a hermeneutic of truth predominated in the Fundamentalist era (for my purposes here I will define that period as roughly 1915-45); a hermeneutic of authority was the majority position in the age of (what I will call here) "Classic" Evangelicalism (1945-75); and a hermeneutic of responsibility has come to the fore in Evangelicalism after 1975 (this last generation I will label Post-Classic Evangelicalism). Contemporary proponents of these different views are hard to identify en masse, but a few representative individuals can be pointed out. John Warwick Montgomery, for example, seems clearly to be operating out of a truth hermeneutic; D.A. Carson, out of an authority hermeneutic; and Robert K. Johnston, out of a responsibility hermeneutic.²

While I first became engaged with this subject in an attempt to make sense out of current Evangelical hermeneutical debate, in this article I want to focus primarily on the historical sequencing of these generations. The questions I want to ask and answer are these: (1) Why did this particular understanding of the hermeneutical task come to the fore at this point in time? (2) How was the distinctive hermeneutical root metaphor of each generation expressed? (3) How did the metaphor function in the historical setting of each chronological generation?

Before answering these questions, one important fact should be pointed out. Since my purpose in this article is to isolate the distinctive root metaphors of these three generations of Evangelical thinkers, I will inevitably end up emphasizing differences more than similarities between these generations. That emphasis, which I necessarily must make in this article, should not be interpreted as a total picture of the movement. It is not. Concerns for truth, authority, and responsibility were important themes for all Evangelicals in the seven decades under discussion. And an essay could profitably be written that traces continuities in the larger Evangelical movement among these lines. Therefore, when I speak of Classic Evangelicalism's emphasis on authority, please do not mistake me for saying that Classic Evangelicals had no regard for responsibility or truth. That would be untrue, as it would also be untrue to say that Fundamentalists lack all concern for authority and responsibility, or that post-Classic Evangelicals have abandoned the search for truth and a commitment to biblical authority.

The Fundamentalist-Evangelical Generation: The Hermeneutics of Truth

The Fundamentalist movement with its attendant hermeneutic of truth needs to be understood in historical context. Fundamentalists saw themselves as a people under attack—both religiously and nationally. Religiously, they found themselves vehemently criticized by a group of liberal scholars who

seemed (to them) to be denying the very foundations of Christianity. This was expressed most clearly in J. Gresham Machen's charge that liberalism was not only a departure from historic Christian orthodoxy, but an entirely different kind of religion.³ Nationally, Fundamentalists saw American culture heading toward an "age of insanity"—the words are those of Charles Blanchard.⁴ There was a tendency in Fundamentalism to link these two concerns, and that makes logical sense when one remembers that until the end of the nineteenth century Protestant Christianity had been the dominant strand in American culture; and that within that Christian cultural core, a nexus of ideas fairly similar to Fundamentalism's essentials of the faith had defined the religious beliefs of the majority of the nation. The self-assigned task of Fundamentalism was to simultaneously defend the orthodox Christian faith and the cultural hegemony of that faith in the nation. The hermeneutical metaphor that could most make those claims stick was truth. Orthodoxy was the true interpretation of the Bible (i.e., true Christian faith), and that true interpretation of the Bible was also true in an absolute sense and thereby deserving of the most prominent place in the life of the nation. It was some time around the year 1915 that this self-understanding really dawned on the Fundamentalist movement. I am not arguing that a hermeneutical concern with truth was absent from Fundamentalist Evangelicalism before 1915. What did happen around 1915 was that Fundamentalism took on a qualitatively different degree of differentiation of identity from the larger Christian community in America, and that accordingly, the hermeneutical commitments of the movement took on a much more distinctive hue. For example, it is not until around 1915 that Fundamentalists come to see themselves as a clearly defined religious community over against mere conservatism in religion. In any case, 1915 is the year *The Fundamentals* were completed, and after that date no one could claim ignorance of either the issues or the combatants.⁵

Fundamentalism was a complex movement—a mix of academic and popular elements blended together out of a diverse ecclesiastical and theological background. Let me illustrate the prominence of a truth hermeneutic in three different strands of the movement. First I will examine *The Fundamentals*, which I take to represent the mainstream of the movement. Then I will look at R.A. Torrey, the most prominent leader of the Bible teachers' wing of Fundamentalism. And finally, I will turn to J. Gresham Machen who represents the Reformed and most academic side of the Fundamentalist coalition.

The Fundamentals are clear in their assertion that Christianity and the Bible are true. The 1917 reprint edition of the series, in fact, makes that claim part of the title—*The Fundamentals: A Testimony to Truth*. Let me illustrate the tack taken in the collection as a whole by looking at the first essay published in this edition, "The History of Higher Criticism," by Canon Dyson Hague from Toronto.

Hague's basic argument is that while higher criticism is not necessarily bad, "the work of the Higher Critic has not always been pursued in a reverent spirit nor in the spirit of scientific and Christian scholarship." The underlying problem seems to be that scholars in the modern world simply rushed too much. According to Hague, it was a "hurrying age" and few scholars—especially those with a bias against the supernatural—took the time needed to make the careful judgments called for in the work of higher criticism.⁶

It is important to note that Hague has no argument with higher critical methods in and of themselves. In fact, he seems confident that the best scholars—the most careful and scientific—would never find their opinions in conflict with true Christianity. He writes:

The desire to receive all the light that the most fearless search for truth by the highest scholarship can yield is the desire of every true believer in the Bible. No really healthy Christian mind can advocate obscurantism. The obscure who opposes the investigation of scholarship, and would throttle the investigators, has not the spirit of Christ. In heart and attitude he is a Mediaevalist. To use Bushnell's famous apologue, he would try to stop the dawning of the day by wringing the neck of the crowing cock. No one wants to put the Bible in a glass case.⁷

teaches, and do not wish to read into it their own notions and speculations. It is sometimes said that "you can make the Bible mean almost anything." Yes, you can, but the question is not what you can make it mean, but what God intended it to mean, and that is easy enough to find out provided you wish to find out and will get right down to hard, honest, earnest investigation.¹¹

Torrey rarely addressed the question of academically-arrived-at truth and how that might or might not affect Christian faith. His concern for truth, rather, was with what he saw as

Three generations of Evangelical biblical interpreters can be identified by three different biblical hermeneutical root metaphors: truth, authority, and responsibility.

While Hague felt that the best academically-arrived-at truth would always support the truths of Christianity as Fundamentalists saw them, he did voice two concerns about academic scholarship. The first had to do with the process of becoming academically proficient both as a scholar and as a Christian. Hague argues that "a little learning" often seemed to incline a person away from the truth. If persons should find themselves in this degenerate state, they should be forewarned and encouraged that deeper study and research will restore a conviction about the truth of the Bible and Christianity.⁸ Hague's second concern deals with an entirely different situation—that of the academically uneducated. He seems to say that, while the best education will lead one ultimately to truth, no such education is necessary to interpret the Bible accurately. In very strong words, Hague asserts the right of every Christian to make his or her own judgments about the truth, no matter how little formal education they might have had.

... it is the duty of every Christian who belongs to the noble army of truth-lovers to test all things and to hold fast that which is good. He also has rights even though he is, technically speaking, unlearned, and to accept any view that contradicts his spiritual judgment simply because it is that of a so-called scholar, is to abdicate his franchise as a Christian and his birthright as a man.⁹

Hague was especially concerned that the believer's "right of private judgment" not be jettisoned in response to the conclusions of "avowedly prejudiced judgment." Scholars who denied all possibility of the supernatural, he argues, are not competent to pass judgment on "the Book that claims to be supernatural."¹⁰ For Hague, "truth" was the final criterion of all biblical interpretation, but this truth could only partly be equated with the rigorous academic pursuit of truth.

R.A. Torrey's concerns overlap Hague's at this point. While well educated himself, Torrey was adamant in the opinion that lay people with very little formal education could understand the Bible and its teaching about Christian life and doctrine as clearly as the academically-credentialed biblical scholar. His whole career was stalked on this belief and nowhere does he lay out his views on the subject more clearly than in the first chapter of his book *The Christ of the Bible*. Torrey states:

We are to study the actual Christ of this Book, not the Christ that we would like to have or love to dream of, but the Christ that really IS. The Bible is one of the easiest books in the world to understand if men really wish to understand it and to find out what it actually

the subjective and soft-headed spirit of the age which led men to jump to premature conclusions, not having rigorously examined all the evidence. His purpose in writing *The Christ of the Bible* was to show that "the Christ of many modern poets and romancers and philosophers, and also the Christ of the rapidly increasing cults, and even the Christ of many supposedly evangelical preachers and theologians"¹²—"Christ's" which all these people claimed to find in the New Testament—simply do not correspond to the picture of Jesus found in the Bible. Torrey's remedy for this situation was a strict methodological inductivism in biblical study. His concern was with truth in the sense of fidelity to what the Bible actually said about any given subject when viewed in its entirety. He placed himself in opposition both to all talk about the Bible that seemed purposely to ignore what the Bible said—that is, he opposed all those who used the Bible disingenuously—and he set himself against all soft-headedness that seemed to miss the plain meaning of the text—that is, he hated stupidity. The implication of Torrey's approach is that the truth or falsity of Christianity can only be ascertained if the message of Christianity as it is announced in the Bible is first stated in an accurate, intelligent, and truthful manner.

While Torrey only implies this last dictum, J. Gresham Machen made it explicit. In an address delivered to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in May of 1927, he lays out his opinion as follows:

... if the Christian religion is founded upon historical facts, then there is something in the Christian message which can never possibly change. There is one good thing about facts—they stay put. If a thing really happened, the passage of years can never possibly make it into a thing that did not happen. If the body of Jesus really emerged from the tomb on the first Easter morning, then no possible advance of science can change that fact one whit. The advance of science may conceivably show that the alleged fact was never a fact at all; it may conceivably show that the earliest Christians were wrong when they said that Christ rose from the dead the third day. But to say that that statement of fact was true for the first century, but because of the advance of science it is no longer true—that is to say what is plainly absurd. The Christian religion is founded squarely upon a message that sets forth facts: if that message is false, then the religion that is founded on it must of course be abandoned; but if it is true, then the Christian Church must still deliver the message, faithfully as it did on the morning of the first Easter Day.¹³

For Machen the issue seemed straightforward. Either Christianity was factually true or it should be discarded as a lie. The liberal position against which he was arguing seemed to him to want to wriggle out of this logical choice of options. Liberals wanted to preach the values of Christianity without having to deal with the sticky issue of whether or not the historical events upon which those values had traditionally been based ever really happened. Interpreting liberalism as two-faced because of this stance, Machen concluded that "modern liberalism could be criticized (1) on the ground that it was un-Christian and (2) on the ground that it was unscientific."¹⁴

better science will prove the truth of Christianity sounds much like Hague's affirmation that the best scholars are sincere believers. It is interesting to note the optimism that is inherent in each of these positions. Fundamentalist expectations of the future were to prove misplaced, but that should not blind us to the fact they really were optimistic about the future. They thought (hoped) that the "insanity" of their age would soon pass.

The optimism of Machen and Hague is important to note, not only because it seems so ironic in retrospect, but also because it gives us perhaps the best insight into exactly what function Fundamentalism's hermeneutic of truth played in the

Around 1915, Fundamentalism took on a qualitatively different degree of differentiation of identity from the larger Christian community in America, and accordingly, the hermeneutical commitments of the movement took on a much more distinctive hue.

Machen's critique of liberalism as unscientific deserves further attention. His attack in this regard is really twofold. The first is rather obvious—one cannot play fast and loose with facts and still claim the title scientific. However, there is another consideration. In Machen's view the liberal strategy for rescuing Christianity from the corrosive intrusions of science was bound to fail. He writes:

Admitting that scientific objections may arise against the particularities of the Christian religion—against the Christian doctrines of the person of Christ, and of redemption through his death and resurrection—the liberal theologian seeks to rescue certain of the general principles of religion, of which these particularities are thought to be mere temporary symbols, and these general principles he regards as constituting "the essence of Christianity."

It may well be questioned, however, whether this method of defence will really prove to be efficacious; for after the apologist has abandoned his outer defences to the enemy and withdrawn into some inner citadel, he will probably discover that the enemy pursues him even there . . . Mere concessiveness, therefore, will never succeed in avoiding the intellectual conflict. In the intellectual battle of the day there can be no "peace without victory;" one side or the other must win.¹⁵

Machen was a consistent thinker. His critique of liberalism as unscientific implied that Fundamentalism needed to be rigorously scientific if it claimed to speak of truth, and he did not shrink from that conclusion. Echoing the optimism that was so typical of the age as a whole, Machen chastened his fellow conservatives for slipping into a liberal-style avoidance of encounter with science and philosophy. Against such a position he argued: "We ought to try to lead scientists and philosophers to become Christians, not by asking them to regard science and philosophy as without bearing upon religion, but on the contrary by asking them to become more scientific and more philosophical through attention to all, instead of some, of the facts."¹⁶ The implications of this position for biblical interpretation are clear. While Machen allowed the logical possibility that Christianity could be disproved by science, he had an overwhelmingly optimistic faith that the Bible simply never would be contradicted by the facts of science.

Machen's position brings us full circle back to Canon Hague's argument in *The Fundamentals*. Machen's assertion that

historical setting of the movement. First let me make explicit the very obvious fact that Fundamentalists almost never actually got down to the business of trying to reconcile science and religion—academically-arrived-at truth and Christianity. What they did do was argue that science and religion, truth and Christianity, were really, underneath it all, compatible—even though on the surface it appeared otherwise. What seems to be going on here is what Clifford Geertz describes as a typical religious response to the problem of bafflement—that point at which we discover the limits of our analytical abilities. The religious response to bafflement, according to Geertz, "is not to deny the undeniable—that there are unexplainable events, that life hurts, or that the rain falls on the unjust—but to deny that there are inexplicable events." He goes on to say that "what is important, to a religious man at least, is that it [i.e., our present inability to explain any particular event] not be the result of the fact that there are no such . . . explanations."¹⁷

Living in an age that they admitted seemed crazy, Fundamentalists found their hermeneutic of truth to be a useful tool. It gave them a platform that allowed them to address the larger society: The claims of truth are public. But, it simultaneously provided a buffer against bafflement. The world was not really crazy; it only needed to be called back to its senses. Science was not really a threat to religion; it only sometimes seemed so—the best scientists are believers. To notice this social function of Fundamentalism's hermeneutic of truth is not to say that Fundamentalism's intellectual project was either invalid or misconceived. I do think, however, that Fundamentalism's announced hermeneutical agenda was a larger task than that movement could, at its time in history, pull off. And this analysis of Fundamentalism helps explain the later history of the movement.

Fundamentalism's optimism that the truth of Christianity would soon become obvious again, after the insanity of the age had passed, was of course to prove chimerical. The world did not regain its pre-modern senses, and no appeal to truth on the part of Fundamentalists could keep that fact from striking home. By 1930, Fundamentalism was in full flight into separatism (Machen left Princeton in 1929). Since truth, as the Fundamentalists saw it, was being scorned in the public realms of society, the only option seemed to be to establish separate enclaves where truth could be preserved as long as this age of insanity lasted. Fundamentalism's grand scheme of truth thus took on a diminutive form and also an increasingly le-

galistic tone, as concerns for maintaining the boundaries of the community of truth came to take precedent over questions relating to the harmonization of scientific/academic and religious truth. Within these closed communities, dispensationalism rapidly became the leading biblical interpretive framework. This makes sense and supports Fundamentalism's continuing hermeneutical commitment to truth. What dispensationalism is, in a hermeneutical sense, is a neat way of resolving many apparent conflicts in the Bible. It also provides a method by which one can ignore various biblical passages that might not ring true to a twentieth century audience, or that simply might be too uncomfortable to hear. In either of these cases, the "offending" passages are easily relegated to some other age. They just don't apply.

In closing this section, I want to make one last point. Fundamentalism should not necessarily be critiqued for this opting out of the public debate over truth—at least not by us living in the latter years of the twentieth century. The same option, in a different context, is currently receiving a very cordial welcome in the American scholarly community. I refer, of course, to the closing lines of Alasdair MacIntyre's influential *After Virtue*. MacIntyre's concern is with moral not religious/cultural confusion, but his remedy has the aura of *deja vu* to most American Evangelicals. His solution to the moral schizophrenia of the age?

What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the dark ages which are already upon us. And if the tradition of the virtues was able to survive the horrors of the last dark ages, we are not entirely without grounds for hope. This time however the barbarians are not waiting beyond the frontiers; they have already been governing us for quite some time. And it is our lack of consciousness of this that constitutes part of our predicament. We are waiting not for a Godot, but for another—doubtless very different—St. Benedict.¹⁸

The Classic Evangelical Generation: The Hermeneutics of Authority

Around 1945 a new hermeneutical paradigm emerged within the American Evangelical tradition centering on the root metaphor of authority. This new idea came into being coterminously with what was then called the Neoevangelical movement. Institutionally this movement found representation in the National Association of Evangelicals; later it received a voice in the form of *Christianity Today* magazine. The leaders of the movement are relatively easy to enumerate. Carl F.H. Henry, Bernard L. Ramm, Harold John Ockenga, Frank E. Gaebelain, E.J. Carnell, Harold Lindsell, and Billy Graham stand out as prominent, but others could be added. For all these individuals, for this institutional organization, and for this journal, the authority of the Bible was a watchword. The accomplishments of the Neoevangelical movement are impressive, especially within the evangelical orb of Protestantism in America. In many ways the individuals associated with it placed a stamp on American Evangelicalism that continues to this day. Certainly it was the dominant evangelical position until 1975. It is proper therefore to label this generation the generation of Classic Evangelicalism.

Evangelicals in this era breathed a different air than that of their Fundamentalist forebears. The cultural situation of the nation had shifted significantly, and Classic Evangelicals had accordingly set for themselves different goals than those of the earlier movement. In order to understand the hermeneutical stance of Classic Evangelicalism it is necessary to be

attentive to two factors: (1) the negative reaction against Fundamentalism and (2) the positive response to the new situation facing the nation in this era. Both of these concerns fed into the configuration of the movement as it developed.

The Classic Evangelical view of American history between the years c.1930 and 1945 ran something like this: the Fundamentalist decision to flee the public realm of society and withdraw into separatism had left a large gap in the larger culture. Fundamentalists might have succeeded in protecting their own particular worldview, but the impact on the American society as a whole had been to hasten the public de-Christianization of life. During the war years and immediately following, however, the atmosphere changed. Scientists and secularists seemed to have lost their confidence. They were faltering. The culture as a whole seemed to be coming to the conclusion that it was in a state of crisis, and that crisis was largely a crisis of authority. Into the gap stepped the Neoevangelical movement. This was no time for defensive withdrawal. Now was the time to reemerge into public view. Classic Evangelicals sensed the age was ripe to hear the "Word of God" announced with authority. The time for tedious proofs of the truth of the Bible was past. Rather than lamenting the fact that this was a "hurrying age," as Canon Hague had argued in *The Fundamentals*, Classic Evangelicals sought hurriedly to seize the day. Their strategy was to preach with authority from the Word of God (using the most contemporary forms of media) and to call on people to respond in the moment (for today was the hour of decision).

The above rendering of the rise of Classic Evangelicalism is not necessarily inaccurate, but it is an in-house analysis and one that is at least slightly suspect given the high compliments it gives itself. Most Classic Evangelical self-descriptions paint the movement as a step up from Fundamentalism—they retained all the good points of Fundamentalism but had good manners and charm to boot. That is, pardon the phrase, not quite the Gospel truth.

Yes, Classic Evangelicalism does look good compared to the generation that immediately preceded it—one of decadent Fundamentalism—but compared to the original Fundamentalist generation it is pale. Classic Evangelicals claimed that they, unlike their Fundamentalist forebears, were willing to dialogue with non-E/evangelicals in a scholarly, not judgmental, manner. However, these Classic Evangelicals rarely noted the fact that they could choose with whom they would debate. The Fundamentalists of 1915-30 did not have the pleasure of choosing their debating companions. They had to fight "heretics" within their own denominations. The scope of the classical evangelical task is also, in a sense, diminutive when compared to that of the original fundamentalist generation. Fundamentalists had hoped to maintain the "Christian-ness" of the entire culture. The fact that they lost that battle does nothing to diminish the grandeur of their aspirations. Classic Evangelicals, by contrast, had the relatively easy task of needing only to assert their own point of view; they eschewed the need to defend the truth of the Christian faith and fell back to the relatively safe turf of authoritative pronouncement. Finally, there was an internal inconsistency in Classic Evangelicalism that was lacking in the early Fundamentalist movement. While Classic Evangelicals talked a good line about openness to the culture, they did so while actively constructing a super separatism—an alternative subcultural enclave—in which to live. Classic Evangelical encounters with non-evangelicals were often billed as "dialogues," but they rarely moved beyond the level of apologetics—missionary forays into non-evangelical turf.

Whatever the possible plusses or minuses of the movement

when viewed in historical context, the hermeneutical center of the movement seems, beyond doubt, to have been authority. In discussing the authority hermeneutic of Classic Evangelicalism, I would like to cover the broad gamut of the movement in a manner similar to the discussion of Fundamentalist truth hermeneutics above. The contours of Classic Evangelicalism are, of course, not nearly so precise as those of the earlier movement. The positions taken by the National Association of Evangelicals and *Christianity Today* are of obvious importance. Beyond dealing with these two sources of Classic Evangelical ideas, I will also look at the opinions of two of the most prominent early mainstream thinkers in the movement—Carl F.H. Henry and E.J. Carnell—and at one “left-wing” member of the Classic Evangelical coalition—Dewey M. Beegle.

The constitution of the National Association of Evangelicals as it was formulated in 1942 includes a short six point “doctrinal basis” of the organization. The first article reads: “That we believe the Bible to be inspired, the only infallible, authoritative word of God.” The prominence of the Bible in the NAE is obvious—belief in the authority of the Bible even takes precedent over belief in the Trinity, which is the second doctrinal article of the institution. The word truth, however, is never mentioned in connection with the Bible. One might suggest that the concept of truth is inherent in the term “infallible.” I would agree. And, I think that truth did play a role in the Classic Evangelical view of the Bible. But, it also seems clear that the relative place of truth as a concept through which the Bible can be made relevant to its modern audience has slipped a good notch from its place of prominence in Fundamentalist rhetoric.¹⁹

Arguments from silence are by themselves relatively weak, but other documents relative to the founding of the NAE back the points outlined above. In the opening address to the assembled conference that launched the NAE on its way, Harold John Ockenga never once mentioned the truth of the Bible. What he discussed in his remarks, entitled “The Unvoiced Multitudes,” was: (1) “the unrepresented masses of Christians,” (2) God’s promise of power “to change the world, and (3) that “there must be a technic for our purpose.” He spoke several times of “true Christians” and of “the True Church,” but not of the truth of the Bible. His conclusion reads as follows:

I say again that we have every reason in the world to believe that there will be a great ingathering of souls before the end of the age. Now is the time for us to do our preaching; now is the time for us to reach out in a frank and positive way. Who knows but what this Council has stepped into the gap for an hour as this?²⁰

Ockenga wanted “true Christians” to band together to use the Bible. Now was not the time to quibble over matters of fact and truth. The job before them, as Classic Evangelicals saw it, was immense and urgent. What it called for was not the tedious work of searching for truth, but the effectiveness of simply speaking with authority.

At this point let me interrupt the flow of people and events to address the issue (I think ultimately a side issue) of the inerrancy, or, differently worded, the infallibility of the Bible. The NAE clearly subscribed to the infallibility as well as the authority of the Bible. Doesn’t this ascription include truth as a hermeneutical norm? My answer to this is a definite yes and no. Yes, questions of truth did not just evaporate in Classic Evangelicalism. Nor have they since. To disregard truth altogether would, I think, place one outside the evangelical orb.

But, I must also answer no. When Classic Evangelicals spoke

of the infallibility of the Bible they only rarely bent the discussion toward topics of truth. Their main use of the term seems to relate only to two issues: (1) whether or not infallibility as a doctrine was explicitly taught by the Bible itself, and (2) the simple fact that a stress on the infallibility of the Bible was pragmatically useful as an encouragement to the faithful and as a critique of liberalism that went down well with the general population.

I do not want glibly to set aside two decades of evangelical spilled ink on the subject of infallibility. But I do think that with regard to the question of hermeneutical stance, it is a secondary concern—at least it was for the founders of Classic Evangelicalism. Later, infallibility did become a shibboleth within the ranks of Classic Evangelicalism. And infallibility has in some recent arguments been interpreted as a hermeneutical commitment—e.g., in recent ETS debate over the membership status of Robert Gundry. But, I think this shift within Classic Evangelicalism coincides with a regression in the movement (similar to that which occurred in Fundamentalism in the 1930s and early 40s). Infallibility became a burning issue only in the 60s and 70s when Classic Evangelicals were beginning to sense the limits of their hermeneutic of authority. In an era when established certainties begin to feel inexplicably as if they are weakening, an increasing ossification of those established (and formerly more flexible) positions often occurs. I think this did occur in Classic Evangelicalism and I think it has to a significant degree obscured our vision of the central hermeneutical strategies of the movement. Enough of a digression; back to the story.

What was implicit through its absence in the NAE position—i.e., the shift of hermeneutical focus *away* from truth to authority—was later to be made explicit in Classic Evangelicalism. This shift happened to the movement as a whole, but perhaps it is most visible in the lives of individuals. Billy Graham, writing in the first issue of the first volume of *Christianity Today* (October 15, 1956)—and I am assuming that Graham’s position was also that of *CT* itself—reflected on his experience in the following manner:

In 1949 I had been having a great many doubts concerning the Bible. I thought I saw apparent contradictions in Scripture. Some things I could not reconcile with my restricted concept of God. When I stood up to preach, the authoritative note so characteristic of all great preachers of the past was lacking. Like hundreds of other young seminary students, I was waging the intellectual battle of my life. The outcome would certainly affect my future ministry.

In August of that year I had been invited to Forest Home, Presbyterian conference center high in the mountains outside of Los Angeles. I remember walking down a trail, tramping into the woods, and almost wrestling with God. I duelled with my doubts, and my soul seemed to be caught in the crossfire. Finally, in desperation, I surrendered my will to the living God revealed in Scripture. I knelt before the open Bible and said: “Lord, many things in this Book I do not understand. But thou hast said, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ Here and now, by faith, I will reserve judgment until I receive more light. If this pleases Thee, give me authority as I proclaim Thy word, and through that authority convict me of sin and turn sinners to the Savior.”

Within six weeks we started our Los Angeles crusade, which is now history. During the crusade I discovered the secret that changed my ministry. I stopped trying to prove the Bible was true. I had settled in my own mind

that it was, and this faith was conveyed to the audience. Over and over again I found myself saying "The Bible says." I felt as though I were merely a voice through which the Holy Spirit was speaking.

Authority created faith. Faith generated response, and hundreds of people were impelled to come to Christ.

For Graham, to ask the question of the truth of the Bible was to miss the point. The crucial fact was that the Bible was authoritative—it was literally God's Word—and its truthfulness had to be assumed by faith as part of one's faith in the God it proclaimed. This kind of "truthfulness"—authoritative truthfulness—was not susceptible to rational debate or empirical testing. For Classic Evangelicals, the authority of the Bible ultimately had to be accepted or rejected as a primary faith commitment. However, they were quick to point out, as Graham does above, that this more-or-less fideistic acceptance of the authority of the Bible was not a decision that had to be made with blind faith. There was pragmatic proof that such a stance was the correct one: It produced converts. Such an argument may or may not be seen as theologically appropriate—few Classic Evangelicals would want to admit such pragmatic proofs into any other aspect of their theologizing—but it does reveal the deep transformation that had taken place in the preceding two or three decades. In the years 1915-30, Fundamentalistic Evangelicals had argued that the claims of the Bible had to be understood to be true to be accepted. Now, the acceptance of the authority of the Bible had been totally removed from the realm.

Edward J. Carnell's opinion regarding hermeneutics and authority is essentially the same as Graham's, but he phrases his position differently and has a few distinctive emphases. Writing in 1957, in a volume edited by John Walvoord entitled *Inspiration and Interpretation*, Carnell gives the following "working criterion" of the Classic Evangelical hermeneutical stance toward the Bible: "Religious thinkers will submit to the Bible only as they despair of learning the meaning of life without assistance from God." This articulation of the Classic Evangelical viewpoint comes in an essay that critiques Reinhold Niebuhr's use of the Bible. Carnell admits that Niebuhr wants to appeal authoritatively to the Bible at different points in his argument to support his case, but he concludes that Niebuhr's selective use of the Bible as an authority simply is not a consistent and coherent position. According to Carnell, one either accepts the Bible whole as being from God and thus authoritative, or one loses the right to appeal to the authority of the Bible. Niebuhr's desire to maintain what Carnell calls "a critical autonomy over the biblical text" ultimately deconstructs any appeals to authority Niebuhr might want to make. Filtered through the subjectivity of the human selection process, in which certain passages of the Bible are declared authoritative while others are shrugged off as irrelevant, the appeal to biblical authority loses all its power. On Carnell's theological map, the road to authority is labeled submission.²¹

Lest this position seem absolutely stark and unbending, let me talk about the flip side—how Carnell contrasted this position with that Fundamentalism. In an essay entitled "Orthodoxy: Cultic and Classical" which appeared in the March 30th, 1960 issue of the *Christian Century*, Carnell critiqued Fundamentalism (especially the Fundamentalism of the 1930s and 40s) for its cold obsession with truth. Fundamentalists, he says, thought they possessed unalloyed truth. As a corollary they also thought they had a monopoly on virtue and accordingly they denounced all who disagreed with them as apostate. Carnell says this had been his own position until he "awoke from dogmatic slumber." It suddenly dawned on him that inclusion in the Church—being a Christian—was not a

function of the truths possessed, but of God's grace which operated through faith and repentance. Carnell came to the conclusion that Fundamentalism had confused sanctification (which includes for Carnell "doctrinal maturity") with justification. They had traded in God's grace for doctrinal legalism. Carnell's relief at having his Christian faith freed from the burden of Fundamentalist scholasticism is palpable:

I know that much of this will sound elementary to outsiders. But to one reared in the tyrannical legalism of fundamentalism, the recovery of a genuine theology of grace is no insignificant feat. The feat calls for a generous outlay of intellectual honesty and personal integrity.²²

All of Carnell's thinking needs to be understood in the light of this heartfelt experience of grace. Even the seemingly harsh language of submission that Carnell uses to critique Niebuhr and other "liberals" is at its core rooted in this understanding of grace. Carnell states that the Classic Evangelical emphasis on the authority of the Bible is, in its first sense, a religious affirmation rather than a theological dictate. The norm of submission to the word of God:

Simply means that since sin is a personal rebellion against God, and since rebellion is an expression of human self-sufficiency, it follows that the natural man will not yield to the revealed word of God until it interests him, and it will never interest him until he discovers profit in such a submission. Whenever God's voice is of neither interest nor profit, man will remain autonomous. Only as one hungers for Scripture will he conform to its teachings.²³

The writings of Carl F.H. Henry add another dimension to our understanding of the Classic Evangelical hermeneutic of authority, especially regarding the turn away from appeals to truth in hermeneutics. The world Henry addressed had changed vastly since the turn of the century—since the early years of Fundamentalism. "Science," that bugaboo against which Fundamentalism had alternatively fulminated against as the epitome of modern anti-supernaturalism and lauded as the final grounding of Christian faith, seemed to have lost its appeal to the great majority of Americans. To ask if the Bible was scientifically true was to ask a poorly posed question in the 1940s—at least that was how Henry saw it:

Who today believes in the adequacy of the scientific method to answer all our problems? . . . Who today does not see that the scientific method now has given us a monster so terrible that we all need to be saved from it? No promise of deliverance lies in a weapon worse than the atomic bomb, for that can only multiply our predicament. Who does not sense that the yearning heart of man today reaches for some power beyond nature, some method beyond the scientific, to govern the fickle human temper, lest in the conviction that nature alone speaks the last word, it be to atomic might that men tomorrow will resort in defining what is good and what is true?²⁴

For Henry the appeal to good science, even to the best science, was misplaced. Whether or not science should be able to prove the Bible true was beside the point—as well as being presumptuously arrogant about the potential of the human intellect. Viewing developments in this light, Henry interpreted the public faltering of faith in the language of scientific objectivity as a step forward for Evangelicals. It was that faltering of scientific faith that had made the Classic Evangelical "revelation method" (read authority) once again so timely.

Henry intoned that it was "the proclamation of God's self-disclosure in the written Word and in the living Word Christ Jesus, that alone can resolve the corrosive uncertainty of the confused mid-twentieth century mind."²⁵ Henry's words did not fall on deaf ears. By the mid 1940s even liberal scholars had come to the point of admitting that a positivistic approach to the Bible was not possible. We either approach the Bible as a religiously authoritative book or not. And it is simple fact that our attitudes do affect our scholarship. Truth as a goal seems clearly to have fallen in esteem on all fronts. Further evidence of this development can be found in the life and career of Dewey Beegle.

Beegle's life illustrates both the overwhelming centrality of authority in Classic Evangelicalism and the limits of the movement. The typical way of looking at Beegle is to locate him in the left-wing of Classic Evangelicalism (i.e., that wing of the movement that did not think that language of inerrancy or infallibility was needed to assure the authority of the Bible). His peers recognized him as part of the movement because of his commitment to authority as the primary hermeneutical stance evangelicals must take. But simultaneously Classic Evangelicals have always relegated him to the margin of the movement because he just was not a party line person.

In *The Inspiration of Scripture*, Beegle affirms the importance of authority in the Classic Evangelical movement. His treatment of the subject follows typical lines. Authority convinces; and without conviction people don't believe the wonderful things God has done; and if people cease to believe all that God has done the power of God in their lives seems to evaporate. While recognizing all of this, Beegle also noted (along with Carnell) the very basic religious nature of the issue. "Humble submission to the Christ back of Scripture is far more crucial than one's doctrine of revelation and inspiration."²⁶ But, Beegle also recognized something else: Authority, if it is to have staying power, must be based on truth. Without such a base all claims to authority ring hollow. The main thrust of his book is that inerrancy must be given up, because it misrepresents the actual nature of the biblical text as we know it (i.e., because it is untrue), so that the authority of the Bible will remain. Let me hop, skip, and jump through three short quotations from *The Inspiration of Scripture*:

Anyone who has experienced the regenerating power of Christ comes to Scripture with the assurance that it "has the words of eternal life." Where new evidence proves that some statements of God's Word is inaccurate, one can readily accept the fact knowing that the essential truths will never be altered . . . (182)

Difficult though it may be to understand, God chose to make his authority relevant to man by means which necessitate some element of fallibility. Whether we like to think of authority in such terms is beside the point. The facts permit no other understanding of Scripture's inspiration and authority . . . (186)

It is time that all Christians make certain that their foundation is in Christ and his view of Scripture. Gnawing fears will vanish, and vision and power will take their place. We need to be about the affairs of God's Kingdom and that means being on the offensive with the proclamation of the gospel.²⁷ (188)

Beegle's message is at its core the same as that of all Classic Evangelicals. The world needs the gospel, and it is at this point in time ready to hear it. We have an authoritative message to proclaim. Let us lay aside the disputes that have torn us apart and be about our task. But he goes beyond this. Let us not make inerrancy our new doctrinal legalism to replace the old

Fundamentalist legalisms from which we have freed ourselves, he says. Let us be true to truth as we are attentive to God's message in the Bible. We must come to honest grips with the nature of the authoritative revelation God has given us. If we really think the Bible is authoritative, let us accept it as it is—let us not try to polish it up better than God made it. In an odd way Beegle is simultaneously more conservative and more liberal than the Classic Evangelical mainline. He never wanted to let go of the truth hermeneutic of early twentieth century Fundamentalism, and he precurses in many ways the turn to responsibility in recent years.

In summary, what can be said about the Classic generation of Evangelicals and their distinctive hermeneutical emphasis on authority? How successful were they at making their hermeneutical metaphor work? I think overall it worked rather well. The audience they sought to address was one that both hungered for authority and thought it could be found. The Classic Evangelical message that the authority their generation needed was to be found in the Bible met that need. While thus connecting the Bible to the concerns of the wider culture, Classic Evangelicalism's emphasis on authority also helped Evangelicals better define exactly what separated them from that larger culture—and it did that in a much less cold-hearted way than the generation of Fundamentalists that had immediately preceded them.

In its popular cash-out, the simultaneous separating and connecting potential of Classic Evangelicalism's hermeneutic of authority set the stage for this generation's notable achievements in the area of evangelism. Their hermeneutic of authority both allowed their audience to hear the message of the gospel and set up a boundary line over which people who heard that message could step to accept that authority—the latter being a necessary condition for any call to conversion. The importance of conversion is central to this hermeneutic, and the natural fit between this method and Evangelicalism's long lasting commitment to Evangelism is obvious.

On the scholarly level, Classic Evangelicalism's hermeneutic of authority pushed Evangelicals to develop their exegetical skills to the level of real excellence. If the Bible is taken really to be authoritative, the important thing is to understand what it says. In this concern to understand what the Bible says, Classic Evangelicals almost always concentrated on the plain and straightforward meanings of the text. Authoritative texts cannot, after all, be obtuse writings. Their meanings must be readily available. And, that is exactly how evangelicals of this generation exegeted the Bible. To perform this exegesis well only two tools are essential: the study of language and the study of the historical setting of the text (of course text criticism should also be mentioned here, but that is more a pre-hermeneutical tool than a hermeneutical tool proper). This combination of requirements made the historico-linguistic method of study clearly the hermeneutical tool of choice for Classic Evangelicals.

If the world had stood still, this combination of religious interpretive community and hermeneutical root metaphor seems as natural a marriage as any that could ever be hoped for. However, the world did not oblige Classic Evangelicals by standing still. And that changing world has in recent years called forth yet a third root hermeneutical metaphor by which Evangelicals are seeking to understand the Bible and relay that message to the world at large.

Look for Part II in the
May-June issue of the Bulletin

An Interview with Carl F.H. Henry

by Diana Hochstedt Butler

When Publisher's Weekly reviewed Carl Henry's Confessions of a Theologian, they called Henry "The Angelic Doctor: the Thomas Aquinas of the Evangelical World." Although some might consider the comparison dubious, by all counts Carl Henry is the elder statesman of American evangelicalism. He was converted to Christianity in 1933—just past the height of the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy—and his autobiography reads like a personal history of modern Christianity. Over the course of fifty years, Henry met and talked with many great theologians, traveled the world and was embroiled in many controversies. His personal knowledge of contemporary Christianity is unmatched; his imprint on modern evangelicalism is undeniable.

On a cold Saturday morning in January, my husband and I met Carl Henry in his Arlington, Virginia home. He was standing at the door waiting for us. He quickly ushered us in from the morning chill. He introduced us to his wife, Helga, who, unfortunately, could not stay with us that morning. They walked us through a cozy and old-fashioned living room with over-stuffed chairs and lots of photographs (passing by the largest pile of Christmas cards I've ever seen in a private home!) to the dining room. We sat down, fortified by coffee and Helga's wonderful German cookies, to talk about theology, evangelicalism, and Henry's life.

Sensing my nervousness, Carl Henry was gracious and reassuring. In some ways, it was more of a conversation than an interview! He was interested in our views, convictions and life stories as we were in his. There was much laughter throughout our serious and thought-provoking discussion.

As we drove back to Boston, I felt encouraged by the discussion. But it was not simply a discussion about theology. We had talked of God in an urgent and personal way, a way which affected us and could affect the world.

There is much I'll remember from that morning, but the comment I'll remember most came at the very end. I expressed some frustration about a controversial issue I tackle at times. Dr. Henry asked me my opinion on the subject. I told him where I stood, that I thought it was scriptural and no argument had convinced me differently. He looked straight at me and said, "Don't be pushed around. Stick to the Bible and maintain your integrity."

That is what Carl Henry wants to say to us all.

TSFB: The title of the commencement address you delivered last spring at Westminster Seminary, "Are Theologians an Endangered Species?," is intriguing. Are theologians an endangered species?

Henry: Well, it depends what you mean by a theologian. Every last human being has a concept of God, shoddy as it may be. So you have Buddhist theologians, Hindu theologians and so on. Or you could mean the term as specifically Christian: those who are skilled in theology. More technically, those who are teachers of theology as a specific vocational calling.

Theologians were an endangered species in Jesus' time, when people tended to supply their own interpretation of the Law and miscarried it. And they are endangered in modern times also. Not only because they are answerable to Scripture, but because of the tendency of secular society to look upon theology as not simply obtuse but as superstitious and myst-

ical. Society views theology as essentially subjective; everybody rolls his own. One theology becomes as legitimate or illegitimate as another.

TSFB: You touch on that in the essays in your two recent books, *The Christian Mindset* and *Christian Countermoves*. Is part of your agenda for evangelicalism to get evangelicals to start *thinking* about themselves?

C.H.: This is one of the great weaknesses of our time: that intellectuals are critical of contemporary society, but the masses are contemptuous of intellectuals! In point of fact, the media age has raised up a new category of intellectual. The intellectual no longer has to wait for reviews of his book by peers who judge the value or merit of a work. Upon publication, he or she is rushed to the media for interviews, and interviewed by people who are not specialists in the field. They are usually interested in certain facets—what touches lower emotions rather than what touches the essence of critical thought. The media themselves therefore propagate a redefinition of the intellectual. The intellectual has become anybody who can turn a smart phrase—particularly about things that the masses are interested in. And it's done in such a way as to provide a dynamic media interview of it.

Take authors who are interviewed—most often they are chosen when their books make radical claims that have not been verified by the scholarly community. My conviction is that an intellectual is first someone who knows the history of ideas, and who knows the strengths and weaknesses of positions asserted in the history of thought; knows that we live upon the past and that not everything is ideal because it's modern. That is especially true of modern thought. On the other hand, I don't think an intellectual is merely a collector of traditions, a curator of diverse philosophical views inherited from the past—though what is past can often be superior to the present, particularly if the scholarship of the past found a basis for assertions rising above the idea that ideas are culture conditioned. The intellectual makes a case for the permanent validity of truth and morality. That sort of intellectual framework provides a basis for the survival of one's idea into the future. In the biblical context, it is the fear of God that is the beginning of wisdom. In the long history of thought, both Western and Eastern philosophers have been more on the side of God and the supernatural. The great religions of the world tend to be theistic and pantheistic. Theism, or a form of theism, is far more prominent throughout history than the naturalism which has dominated contemporary thought. This question is permanently on the agenda: How to make a case that God makes for himself.

TSFB: Everything you are saying runs against the stream of modern Christianity and especially modern evangelicalism. Do you think evangelicals have gone about making a case for God through their *experience*, instead of what they think?

C.H.: The valid point in that approach is *if* one has no experience of thought, then it is an experientially insignificant notion. God is experientially an insignificant notion. It's mere redundancy to say I have no experience of God unless I experience him. That is so elemental it is hardly worth affirming. The real question is what is the source of true knowledge of God. In modern thought, including much evangelical thought, a case for theism is mounted on the basis of the not-God. The appeal is made either from man's experience, which is cer-

tainly the not-God. The appeal is made either from man's experience, which is certainly the not-God, from nature, from the movements of history, inevitable progress, conscience and so on. My conviction is that it's impossible to rise to God from the not-God. There's always something wrong with the argument. That puts me over against Thomas Aquinas.

TSFB: You stand with Karl Barth on that one.

C.H.: Yes. Only because Barth stood with Augustine and beyond him, with Paul and Isaiah and Moses. We need to begin with God's self-revelation. I break with Barth in my insistence that God's personal revelation is intellectual, cognitive and that God builds truths about himself in revealing himself. That's the great difference. Barth, the early Barth, says that revelation is nonpropositional and noncognitive. God confronts the will in man's decision.

There is a great deal of emphasis on decision in contemporary evangelical thought. We are only now beginning to catch up with the fact that even in mass meetings the call for decision gets a response far greater than the number of deciders who actually survive or affiliate with an evangelical church. Recent estimates have put the figure of casualties in the ninety percent range.

TSFB: Given all you've just said, what areas of theology are the most important for young evangelical scholars to be working on today?

C.H.: First, the doctrine of God. If one discards God, then nature is no longer relativized. All sorts of theories of the causal network of nature that holds man in his grasp, or an indeterministic nature that makes the future wholly unpredictable, or sheer evolutionary nature that supercedes anything that arises in the past or in the present—all those theories gain headway if God is discarded and nature is no longer relativized. Again, if one lets go of God, man is no longer relativized. You get totalitarian views that man himself defines the content of human rights, man himself determines the nature of truth and the nature of good. The latter is an echo of contemporary humanism. We don't confirm the reality of God simply because of what the negation of God makes possible. That's a completely ridiculous thought. God is important because he revealed himself and reveals himself still. He's revealed himself in nature, history, conscience and the mind of man, the *imago Dei*. He's revealed himself specially in the Hebrew Christian history and the Scriptural interpretation of that history. He reveals himself ongoingly in Jesus Christ's universal revelation. He still speaks in and through Scripture.

Evangelical theology tends to treat the doctrine of God devotionally. That in itself is certainly not to be disparaged—but it does so to the neglect of the intellectual significance of the doctrine in the contemporary conflict of ideas. Even in the tendency to treat God only devotionally, most evangelical worship tends to be quite thin. Compare some of the Puritans and their writings with contemporary prayers and there's a day and night difference between them. People live with a very thin view of God, a very skimpy view of God. That is why when they run into serious trouble, they buckle so easily. Surely that "fluffy" view of God is not unrelated to the breakdown of faith that issues often in divorce and marital separation and sometimes even suicide in evangelical circles.

TSFB: This is a problem for evangelicalism as a whole; there are many in my generation who grew up within evangelicalism who want nothing more to do with it. People aren't taught who God is in their churches. Many young evangelicals are saying that the worship is feeble, the thinking is feeble. And they think the whole tradition is unrescuable.

C.H.: A lot of it is. Even in its present pulpit presentation, a lot of contemporary evangelicalism is doctrinally very thin.

Too much evangelical preaching fails to bring forward into the present the immense importance of biblical revelation. It has to its credit the fact that it is biblically rooted and it presents the revelation of God in its biblical context, but it too often fails to bring forward into the *present* the implication of that biblical content. That probably is the weakness of evangelical preaching. The modernists dwell in the present. They are weak in trying to find anchorage for their ideas back in the biblical soil. We need to focus on evangelism, but we need to take a critical look at evangelism that preaches what happened in the biblical past, and then make an almost Bultmannian turn in the closing one or two minutes and ask that it be appropriated in an internal decision alone—without realizing that what happened in the past has significance for contemporary history. That means we don't stop with the doctrine of God—we go on to the doctrine of creation. It is remarkable that people who go first to John 3:16 forget how much John said about the doctrine of creation in John 1—before he even got around to the doctrine of salvation.

TSFB: In the forties when you, along with others, were frustrated with fundamentalism, you came up with this new term—"evangelicalism"—to describe yourselves.

C.H.: I've always resisted the term "evangelicalism." Evangelical is good enough for me. I do think, however, the diversity of evangelicals in our time gives an increasing legitimacy for the term evangelicalism. I've always felt that an "ism" was destined to be a "wasm." We are seeing a mish-mash in evangelicalism today. It is encouraged by the evangelical establishment. Whether you think of evangelical crusades or leading magazines, they *try* to reflect as much of the mix as possible. They do not give any critical evaluation of it. Of course, attendance at crusades and the support for the electronic church and the potential subscribers to magazines is tied up with getting the largest response possible. If you are an evangelical you ought to get on the boat with all of us.

What has happened is a lack of responsible criticism of the evangelical movement from its own leaders. That can be done in love. One of the things about *Christianity Today* (when it started) that drew the interest of nonevangelicals was that it contained self-criticism of the movement. Too much of contemporary evangelicalism acts as if it is unqualifiedly normative. Any criticism becomes a betrayal of the cause. For example, when *Newsweek* came out with the cover story on the "Year of the Evangelical" many evangelicals were saying that the last great evangelical awakening had come. That was no more a tribute to evangelical awakening than the man in the moon. Evangelical awakening is here when the world starts judging itself by an evangelical conscience—even though it won't commit itself to evangelical beliefs. That isn't happening. We are far from that today.

TSF: If you would have stayed with *CT*, is that where you would have wanted to go? To support the evangelical movement by both undergirding it theologically and criticizing it fairly?

Henry: Indeed. I had an agreement from Billy Graham that we could even speak critically of his evangelistic meetings. He said he hoped I wouldn't feel compelled to do that all the time!

TSF: Does that lack of ability to look at the movement honestly betray some sort of theological problem within evangelicalism?

Henry: I think so. We are shying away from repentance—and that is the road to renewal. The big question before evangelicals is whether they are going to find a deeper reliance on God and put his claim upon them. I feel that way. I'm ready to plunge in. Frankly, I don't look hopefully on the Reformed

movement, the Arminian movement of the Wesleyans, or the Pentecostals as an alternative to the Evangelical movement. All of this indicates that we have not found unity. We may have found a unity which is superior in some respects to the ecumenical movements, but for evangelicals it's going to take a deeper commitment which involves taking more seriously the doctrine of the church than has been taken in evangelical circles.

to do one article—it should be placed squarely in the midst of one of the best intellectual journals today.

The right authors and issues would have to be joined. It's not so much *who* I'd have as *what* they say. I'm impressed by a good number of writers today, but what is lacking is the strategy, the organizational strategy, that presents them as a cohesive movement assailing the right fortresses. What's lacking is a schematic overview and integration of these efforts.

I do not regard socialism as a benevolent and altruistic alternative—especially now that the empirical data is in. One would think that those who profess to be intellectually oriented would at least begin to evaluate some of the data!

TSF: If *CT* called you up and asked you to be editor, what issues would you tackle? Who would you have writing for you?

Henry: If I got that call, I would think I was having a bad dream! I would do precisely what I suggested to the meeting in Palm Springs of evangelical leaders who were contemplating "passing the torch" to the younger generation: We need an overall strategy that looks at where we are as American evangelicals in the world, what the problems and barriers are, what resources we have for doing something and how they can be most effectively meshed to the need—so that we can do maximally what we have some promise of doing.

I don't mean simply to suggest a strategy of activism. I include in this the need for reviving the prayer meeting, probing a deeper spirit of worship, and stressing a profounder role for Scripture and its bearing upon contemporary society—all of it. The last forty pages of my autobiography gives an agenda. The remarkable thing is that while I was in Asia, I had American pastors ferret me out and say that chapter so gripped them that they wanted their churches to be pilot projects for that sort of thrusting into the future. So there is an agenda. I think *Christianity Today* has its distinctive ministry today. It is venturing the somewhat impossible task of trying to minister on two fronts, one which is very popular and the other which is cognitive. The tragedy would be if those two do not coincide in their commitment and interest.

TSFB: Which they obviously seem not to—judging from the pages of the magazine.

C.H.: That's true. We had 170,000 paid subscriptions in those days, predominantly pastors and seminarians. Today they have about 212,000, but they've lost the intellectuals. It's too bad. And, ironically, *Christian Century* has become more conservative.

TSFB: Should evangelicals start a new journal for their concerns to be voiced? Or has our society become so obsessed with visual media that a journal would no longer have the kind of impact it had in the 1950s?

C.H.: If that comes about, it ought to come about through *all* the seminaries and the Christian colleges doing it together. We have some good journals today. We have the *Westminster Journal*, the *Trinity Journal*, the *ETS Journal*. But if we had one great journal, there would be a chance of it being read. Another idea would be to have a committee and pick out the people who have ability and place their key articles on key issues right into existing secular nonevangelical journals, then present an award publicly every year for the best article. That's one alternative we haven't thought about. Why start another journal? Wouldn't it be just as effective to have a review committee that venture assignments and make commitments with funds? Even if a professor had to take off a two-hour course

They all run around like lonely cowboys at a rodeo lassoing this or that loose cow or bull on the horizon.

TSFB: Is that kind of cooperation possible with the diversity in evangelicalism today?

C.H.: I don't know. Only God knows the answer to that question. Evangelical Christianity may have squandered its opportunity. I don't mean that it will perish, but I'm talking about the opportunity that it had. F.F. Bruce says that the evangelical movement was at its strongest when *Christianity Today* gave it theological leadership. What made evangelical Christianity strong in the contemporary context was the alliance between Graham's evangelism and *Christianity Today*. Graham penetrated across lines into the ecumenical denominations and carried evangelism out of the fundamentalist arena to what was then the mainstream. *CT* carried evangelical beliefs out of the independent arena. It showed there was an international, interdenominational evangelical scholarship. We have allowed that advantage to slip away.

Despite all the claims of the electronic church and despite all the effort of the Moral Majority and the evangelical engagement in the public arena, evangelicals within four or five years may well be back where they started from as a public influence. The Falwell effort to bring about a coalescence between fundamentalists and evangelicals has reached a dead-end, I think. The acceleration of naturalism, or raw paganism, on the American scene is proceeding at an astonishing rate. There is a gratifying evangelical remnant—though it often thinks of itself as much more than a remnant—and we can be grateful for that. But I think the humanism is quickly going out of Humanism and that unless there is an evangelical renewal, in the 1990s we will see a relapse of humanism to paganism, to sheer pagan naturalism—that is what the church will face.

TSFB: That makes me uncomfortable.

C.H.: It did not make the apostles uncomfortable. They continually said God, Christ, the Lord of history, could return right now and wind the whole thing up for judgement. In that context, they found boldness under God. That was the key to their boldness, the key to their wisdom, the key to their peace, the key to everything they had was the fullness of the Spirit in their lives. They lived in two worlds. They lived in the other world as the ultimately real world and, secondly, this world as the world of contemporary opportunity.

TSFB: That kind of bold eschatology can give us hope. Would a clear biblical eschatology empower the church?

C.H.: It would be a great help, but I wouldn't go on eschatology alone. I would center it on the doctrine of God. Then on the doctrine of creation, the doctrine of redemption and eventually the doctrine of future judgment. Of course, the future judgment is already underway because Christ is even

now judging the nations.

TSFB: I'd like to ask you some questions about your autobiography. I must confess that the last chapter moved me, too. Was part of your purpose in writing it to "pass the torch" on to the next generation of evangelical leadership?

C.H.: I have never felt that. One thing about that meeting in Palm Springs—with leaders gathered to pass the torch—bothered me. I ask myself, "Is this a way of perpetuating your centrality and leadership and passing on the torch? Were they passing it on to people whose hands were really out? Are these the people who are going to receive it?" I think that's a great deal of presumptuousness. God called me when I was a pagan. He works that way. Solzhenitsyn did not come to Christianity from an evangelical context. C.S. Lewis didn't come to us out of the evangelical movement. They were both gifts from God. Chuck Colson didn't come out of the evangelical movement. We are so confident about passing the torch within; maybe God has a torch to pass to somebody who is without. Somebody who can really speak in an uninhibited way as not simply a critic, but as one whose work and witness to God is such a blessing that people have to listen. That is often a factor in the renewal of the Christian community.

TSFB: So you weren't purposefully passing the torch, yet you do not refrain from giving an agenda. You said in the preface that you were reluctant to write an autobiography. Why?

C.H.: In part because my conversion was in the context of the Oxford Group. They were often charged by critics as engaging in a recital of their sins. And I've lived through part of an evangelical era in which people turn their liabilities into promotional assets: "How God saved me from twenty years as a drug addict" . . . that sort of thing. One wonders whether the drugs get more publicity than the Divine. I've always been reticent to talk about myself. I'd rather talk about ideas than about myself. I may not seem that way. I guess an ex-newspaperman does not talk about himself but the world around him.

TSFB: The title, *Confessions of a Theologian*, immediately made me think of Augustine's *Confessions*.

C.H.: Yes. That was intended. It was dual entendre: confession in the sense of disclosure and a confession of faith in God.

TSFB: But you never expressed the kind of doubt and intellectual torture that Augustine went through. You seem so confident. Were you personally affected by the winds of twentieth century theology?

C.H.: I wrestled them deliberately in university. I don't often speak about that. I deliberately searched out problems and certainly put myself through intellectual doubts as part of that procedure. But I must say that Christ has been real to me in a vital way ever since June 1933. It was just a blinding experience. I know he is real. He's alive and he is the Risen One. I've never, even in the most serious crises of life, doubted

that.

TSFB: So many people have struggles with believing the right things about God. Have you ever felt pulled toward a different theological outlook?

C.H.: I've walked the world and have seen the masses in their poverty. I've had to ask whether the "isms," the ideologies, are really the benevolent alternative. I'm critical. I'm a critic of American society, the "freestyle," the free living lifestyle of America, and its injustices.

But I disagree with left-leaning criticism at a number of points. First, I do not regard socialism as a benevolent and altruistic alternative—especially *now* that the empirical data is in. One would think that those who profess to be intellectually oriented would at least begin to evaluate some of the data! Second, I do not share the view that the West is the worst of all alternatives. The emphasis on self-determination that survives in the free world is far superior to the totalitarian bureaucracy and controls that are characteristic of the communist oriented nations. Third, most of the social criticism of our time evades the central issue of an objective spiritual and moral order. Hence, it can offer no alternatives to the present situation that escapes ideologies which supply a false meaning and hope for human life.

In these three respects I put myself over against the Left, but surely I share the view of the deterioration of American culture. When politicians say that we essentially are a good people, they either have a questionable view of human nature or they look at the intentions of the best segments of American society and confuse them with the mindset and willset of the whole populace.

TSFB: What would you say to a seminary student who was struggling with the theological options?

C.H.: Understand them, so that you fully understand what is involved. See through them. And do this in the light of the biblical view of man. This is a tremendous corrective. The belief in the inevitability of progress and the essential goodness of man encourage one to take an uncritical view of the bureaucracies of the totalitarian movements. Remember that Karl Barth, who studied under Harnack and classic liberalism, was astonished one day when he opened the German papers and found that Harnack and others had signed the statements hailing the Kaiser's dream of *Deutschland uber Alles*. They did it because of their optimistic view of nature and history. Barth, having read the Epistle to the Romans, was horrified to discover this. Go back and read Romans. It made a difference to Augustine. It made a difference to Luther.

TSFB: And to Edwards and Wesley.

C.H.: And it made a difference to Barth. God is still waiting for it to make a difference in the lives of others in contemporary society.

The Authority and Role of Scripture (1981-1986): A Selected Bibliography

by Donald K. McKim

Donald K. McKim is no stranger to anybody working to understand evangelical hermeneutics and related views of Scripture. TSF Bulletin is pleased to provide a new bibliography which will guide many through the raging currents of this important discussion. This bibliography updates an earlier bibliography which can still be ordered from TSF Research.

SCRIPTURE

A. BIBLICAL DATA

Barr, James. *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983.

Here Barr presents his views of the significance of the biblical canon, Scriptural authority and the functions of biblical criticism. He takes particular aim at the "canonical criticism" position advocated by Brevard Childs. An important contribution to this on-going debate.

Childs, Brevard S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

Childs presents his approach of "canonical criticism" as it applies to the books of the Old Testament. He is concerned especially with the final form of the biblical texts, a theological understanding of canonical texts and how Old Testament texts were used in the New Testament.

Childs, Brevard S. *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

Here the "canonical criticism" practices of Childs are applied to the New Testament books.

Marshall, I. Howard. *Biblical Inspiration*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.

This is a very readable and ably presented account of biblical inspiration from a New Testament scholar. Marshall sees value in the critical study of Scripture within limits and deals also with the "trustworthiness" of the Bible, the inerrancy debate and gives an account of how Scripture is authoritative today. Highly recommended for evangelical readers.

B. HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS

Hannah, John D., ed. *Inerrancy and the Church*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984.

This is one of a series of books sponsored by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy to reaffirm and defend biblical inerrancy as vital for the church. This volume is an historical survey from the early church to the present with essays from a number of scholars who uphold the inerrancy view.

Hatch, Nathan O. and Mark A. Noll, eds. *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Eight scholars here explore how the Bible has functioned among various groups and at different times in American life. From the Puritans to the present, the book examines how the Bible has influenced civil religion, culture, church life and political rhetoric as well as a distinct view of history and national consciousness in the United States.

Kugel, James L. and Rowan A. Greer. *Early Biblical Interpretation*. Library of Early Christianity, ed. Wayne A. Meeks, Vol. 3. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.

This is an interesting and important study of how Scripture was interpreted in early Judaism and Christianity. It details the formation of the Old and New Testament canons and also how early Christians adapted the Hebrew Scriptures for their use in light of Christ. Exegetical methods of the early church are also surveyed.

Noll, Mark A. *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987.

Here is a fine account of how evangelicals in America have interacted with critical biblical scholarship during the last century. Noll traces the emergence of American evangelical biblical scholarship which was substantially helped at many points by the models of British evangelical scholars.

Reventlow, Henning Graf. *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World*, trans. John W. Bowden. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.

This is an encyclopedic study of the emergence of modern attitudes toward the Bible from the period of Renaissance Humanism through the Enlightenment. Reventlow shows the origins of biblical criticism in the cultural movement of Renaissance Humanism. There are over 400 pages of text and 200 of footnotes so the volume will become a standard source of reference for years to come.

Woodbridge, John D. *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.

This is a counter to the book by Jack Rogers and Donald McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (Harper & Row, 1979). Woodbridge argues that the tradition of biblical inerrancy has been the historical position of many of the leading theologians of the Christian church through the centuries.

C. THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Abraham, William J. *Divine Revelation and the Limits of Historical Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Here is an incisive study of issues relating to belief in Divine Revelation and a host of historical and scientific questions. Abraham presents a strong case for Divine intervention in history in ways which do not cause us to reject the canons of modern historiography. His analyses of Troeltsch and Van Harvey are quite probing.

Barr, James. *Beyond Fundamentalism: Biblical Foundations for Evangelical Christianity*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984.

In this book, the ever-engaging Barr raises important biblical and theological issues that must be accounted for in constructing a doctrine of biblical authority. Among these are issues of inspiration, the origins of the world, the relation of Jesus and the Old Testament, etc. Barr's works always challenge and this one is no exception.

Bartlett, David L. *The Shape of Scriptural Authority*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.

The primary focus of this book is on how various types of biblical writings such as prophetic words, narratives, wisdom and testimonies can function as authorities in the Christian community. This approach is somewhat different than usual and opens up a number of important issues.

Carson, D.A. and John D. Woodbridge, eds. *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986.

These nine chapters from various scholars focus on the topics of the title from the basic perspective of a commitment to biblical inerrancy. Essays of a theological, historical and interpretive nature are included.

Carson, D.A. and John D. Woodbridge, eds. *Scripture and Truth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.

A number of scholars committed to biblical inerrancy here present biblical, historical and theological essays covering a range of topics relating to biblical authority. The pieces are detailed and confront opposing views head-on.

Countryman, William. *Biblical Authority or Biblical Tyranny?* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981.

Countryman deals with a number of issues related to biblical authority in this book. His strongest statements are directed toward challenging views held by Fundamentalism. For

him, Scripture is not an absolute authority, but only one of the authorities God has given along with other institutions in the church.

Dulles, Avery. *Models of Revelation*. New York: Doubleday, 1983.

Dulles has written a significant volume comparing how revelation is perceived in contemporary theological movements. He deals with revelation as doctrine, history, inner experience, dialectical presence and new awareness before presenting his own model of revelation as symbolic mediation. He next shows how each model describes Christ, other Religions, the Bible, Church and Eschatology. A very fine treatment.

Geisler, Norman, ed. *Biblical Errancy: Its Philosophical Roots*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.

Here are scholarly analyses of philosophical figures and movements perceived as threats to the concept of biblical inerrancy. The presentations are detailed and vigorously argued.

Geisler, Norman, ed. *Inerrancy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979.

The essays in this volume are fourteen scholarly papers presented at the International Conference on Biblical Inerrancy in October, 1978. They cover a variety of topics associated with the "inerrancy" of Scripture and are written by those who are thoroughly committed to this view. Biblical, historical, theological and philosophical aspects are covered. The "Chicago Statement on Inerrancy" is included.

Gnuse, Robert. *The Authority of the Bible: Theories of Inspiration, Revelation and the Canon of Scripture*. New York: Paulist, 1985.

This is a very useful survey of various models of biblical authority. Gnuse deals with what he calls: Inspiration, Holy History, Existential, Christological and Models of Limitation. He also discusses the development of Scripture, rise of the canon and the relation of Scripture and Tradition. His extensive bibliography is a fine resource.

Greenspahn, Frederick E., ed. *Scripture in the Jewish and Christian Traditions: Authority, Interpretation, Relevance*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1982.

In these nine essays, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish scholars address the authority, interpretation and relevance of Scripture. This is a helpful collection though not all Protestants will completely agree with the positions advocated by their respective spokespersons.

Helm, Paul. *The Divine Revelation*. Foundations for Faith, ed. Peter Toon. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982.

This is a philosophical approach to Revelation dealing with topics such as Natural and Special Revelation, Revelation and Objectivity, Infallibility, Certainty, Evolution, Tradition and Development, and Special Revelation and the Unity of Knowledge.

Johnston, Robert K., ed. *The Use of the Bible in Theology: Evangelical Options*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1985.

A number of important evangelical theologians here reflect on how they use the Bible in doing theology. What emerges is a fascinating array of approaches each with its own questions and concerns yet united by the common commitment to Scripture as the Word of God.

Lewis, Gordon and Bruce Demarest. *Challenges to Inerrancy: A Theological Response*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984.

This book contains thirteen theological essays by scholars committed to inerrancy that survey positions from the Enlightenment onward that have rejected inerrancy. It also contains an essay that argues for inerrancy on the basis of the Old Princeton theology.

McKim, Donald L., ed. *The Authoritative Word: Essays on the Nature of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.

This volume presents essays by top scholars on different dimensions of the issue of the nature of Scripture. The three divisions of the book are Authority: Sources and Canon; Doctrine and Its Development and Current Views. Among the topics considered are how the Scriptures were formed, canon, revelation, inspiration, the work of the Holy Spirit and recent views of biblical authority. An extensive annotated bibliography is also included.

McKim, Donald K. *What Christians Believe About the Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985.

Here a wide spectrum of views about the nature of Scripture found in contemporary theology is presented. Initial essays concern the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions followed by ten pieces surveying theological positions titled: Liberal, Fundamentalist, Scholastic, Neo-Orthodox, Neo-Evangelical, Existential, Process, Story, Liberation and Feminist Theology. Each view is presented objectively and on its own terms.

Nicole, Roger R. and J. Ramsey Michaels. *Inerrancy and Common Sense*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980.

This volume shows some differences in evangelical views about the "inerrancy" of Scripture. Its contributors have been associated with Gordon-Conwell Seminary. The pieces present an historical study, focus on terminologies, textual transmission of Scripture and biblical interpretation. The approach is described as "irenic."

Pinnock, Clark H. *The Scripture Principle*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984.

This is a major statement on the nature of Scripture from an evangelical theologian which deals fairly and sensitively with numerous issues surrounding the issue of biblical authority. The three parts of the book present Scripture as the Word of God, written in Human Language as the Sword of the Spirit. It will be a most helpful volume for all who contemplate what the Bible is and how it functions.

Youngblood, Ronald, ed. *Evangelicals and Inerrancy*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984.

Here is an anthology of selections from the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* which cover a wide range of issues but are united in their adherence to biblical inerrancy. As a sourcebook for the inerrancy view, this is most useful.

D. BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Carson, Donald A., ed. *Biblical Interpretation and the Church: The Problem of Contextualization*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984.

Here are eight essays by an international assortment of scholars who address the problems of biblical hermeneutics in relation to issues facing churches throughout the world. The primary focus is ecclesiological and missiological.

Dunnnett, Walter M. *The Interpretation of Holy Scripture*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984.

Dunnnett deals with theological and interpretive issues in this survey of the practices of biblical interpretation today. He includes chapters on language, literary form and historical and cultural contexts as well as one on models of interpreting Scripture which deal with various literary genre. His bibliography is quite detailed.

Ferguson, Duncan S. *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1986.

This is a fine introduction to biblical hermeneutics that covers major issues of biblical hermeneutics, the practice of hermeneutics and hermeneutics in the life of the church. The chapters are clearly written and quite helpful in setting the landscape of both historical and contemporary approaches.

Froehlich, Karlfried. *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*. Sources of Early Christian Thought, ed. William G. Rusch. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

Froehlich has assembled a very useful collection of texts from the patristic period that demonstrate the emergence of hermeneutical issues in the early centuries. His introduction to the volume traces the major streams and is most illuminating.

Gottwald, Norman K., ed. *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983.

Twenty-eight chapters by numerous authors make this anthology very significant in describing sociological and political approaches to biblical studies. Social and political hermeneutics are important new methods with far-ranging implications which are clearly seen in these stimulating essays.

Hagen, Kenneth, Daniel J. Harrington, Grant R. Osborne and Joseph A. Burgess. *The Bible in the Churches: How Different Christians Interpret the Scriptures*. New York: Paulist, 1985.

Each author contributes a piece to this work. Hagen writes on the history of Scripture in the church; Harrington on Catholic interpretation and Burgess on Lutheran interpretation. Harrington concludes with a chapter in the convergences and divergences that emerged. Also of interest is that each writer presents a case study interpretation of Ephesians 2:1-10.

Keegan, Terence J. *Interpreting the Bible: A Popular Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. New York: Paulist, 1985.

This book focuses on structuralism, reader-response criticism and canonical criticism as leading methods of critical biblical scholarship. A chapter on the history of biblical interpretation and the potential impact of these critical biblical studies methods are also included. A number of charts and diagrams enhance the usefulness of this book.

Lundin, Roger, Anthony C. Thiselton and Clarence Walhout. *The Responsibility of Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.

A team of biblical and literary scholars have proposed a new approach to hermeneutical theory. They come to it from a philosophy of action and argue that textual meaning comes from the different interrelated actions by authors and readers who produce and use texts rather than from language itself as the locus of meaning.

McKim, Donald K., ed. *A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics: Major Trends in Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.

Twenty essays here present the variety of approaches to biblical interpretation today. These are divided into: Biblical Avenues, Theological Attitudes, Current Assessments and Contemporary Approaches where the chapters are on the Theological, Literary, Structural, Contextual, Anthropological, Liberation and Feminist approaches.

Radmacher, Earl D. and Robert D. Preus. *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, Papers from ICBI Summit II. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

This large volume contains sixteen papers and two responses to each from scholars at the second summit of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. Included also are four appendices, one of which is "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics."

Russell, Letty M., ed. *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985.

Here is a splendid collection of essays from twelve women who portray the varieties of approaches to feminist biblical interpretation today. Each piece presents its own perspective and at points the writers interact with each other. As a picture of what women theologians are saying about biblical interpretation, this is a most important resource.

Swartley, Willard, ed. *Essays on Biblical Interpretation: Anabaptist-Mennonite Perspectives*. Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1984.

These twenty essays from Anabaptist-Mennonite scholars identify the major emphases in Anabaptist biblical interpretation, the development of the place of the Bible in Mennonite history between the sixteenth-century and the present as well as the current endeavors of Mennonites to reflect on methods of biblical interpretation and the authority of Scripture. The concluding essays describe how the Bible may function in the congregation. This is a fine collection.

Swartley, Willard. *Slavery Sabbath War and Women Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1983.

By focusing on these four issues, Swartley gives a fascinating study of how commentators have used Scripture to support their views on different sides of these topics. A wide range of material is cited and summarized making this book of real value for data on the issues themselves as well as for the case studies in biblical interpretation it presents.

Vander Goot, Henry. *Interpreting the Bible in Theology and the Church*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984.

In this book, Vander Goot calls for a hermeneutics of trust in the Bible which needs to be read from God's perspective. He calls for the recognition of the priority of text over context, "listening in" over analysis, the literal sense over hidden senses and the canonical sense of Scripture to be found in the context of the Christian church.

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Sexuality, Hierarchy and Evangelicalism

by Kathleen E. Corley and Karen J. Torjesen

The Seventh Plenary Conference of the Evangelical Women's Caucus International, held in Fresno, CA, July 6-10, 1986, was the scene of a difficult and turbulent debate over the issue of gay rights. The debate resulted in the passage of a resolution which supported civil rights for homosexual persons and publicly acknowledged the lesbian minority of the EWCI.¹ The debate has rocked the organization, which had two years previously decided to limit its central focus to the issue of biblical feminism, exception being made for a stand in support of the ERA. The passage of the resolution caused some members to leave the organization and led other non-members to join. The debate has continued within local chapters of the EWCI. The text of the resolution runs as follows:

Whereas homosexual people are children of God, and because of the biblical mandate of Jesus Christ that we are all created equal in God's sight, and in recognition of the presence of the lesbian minority in the Evangelical Women's Caucus International, EWCI takes a firm stand in favor of civil rights protection for homosexual persons.

The discussion itself was a heated and emotional one, and included anguished testimonies of lesbian Christians, as well as parents and children of homosexual persons, concerning their struggles within their evangelical communities which had not always offered the acceptance and understanding that they so needed. Many voting members present did not want to force a statement on so sensitive an issue, which was evidenced by an attempt to table the resolution as had been done previously at the Sixth Plenary Conference of the EWCI in Wellesley, MA in 1984. Finally, after the motion to table the resolution lost by a narrow margin, the vote was called for and the members present passed the resolution. Eighty voted in favor of the resolution; sixteen were opposed to it; 25 abstained.

It seemed that many members of the EWCI instinctively felt the support of civil rights for homosexual persons was an issue of human rights that was intrinsically related to the issue of biblical feminism, but still hesitated to support a public stand by the EWCI on such a sensitive issue. This hesitancy of many members of the EWCI to take such a stand is indicative of a greater trend within the larger evangelical community to avoid the difficult theological questions concerning homosexuality and lesbianism, as well as other general issues of sexuality. Moreover, the vehement negative response to the resolution indicates such reactions may be based more on prejudice than on careful theological reflection. Anne Eggebroten, a founder of EWCI and a cosponsor of the resolution, comments: "The anger and emotion raised both within the EWCI and the larger evangelical world reveal how deeply important it is to us to believe that homosexuals are *not* children of God, are *not* equal, and do not deserve any protection, even in the

areas of civil rights."² As Christians in a world that has been deeply affected by Western Jewish and Christian tradition, we need to take a hard look at our own traditions, particularly when those traditions may be fostering injustices and are being used in support of political oppression of minority groups.

That the traditional rejection of homosexuality and lesbianism on religious grounds is being used in the public sphere to deny civil rights to homosexual persons is clearly evidenced in the recent decision of the United States Supreme Court upholding the right of the state of Georgia to maintain laws prohibiting the practice of sodomy (*Bowers vs. Hardwick*, 106 S. Ct. 2841, 1986). Chief Justice Burger, in his concurring opinion, repeated Chief Justice White's argument for the "ancient roots" of the anti-sodomy laws and further stated that, "Decisions of individuals relating to homosexual conduct have been subject to state intervention throughout the history of Western Civilization. Condemnation of those practices is firmly rooted in Judeo-Christian moral and ethical standards." This argument reflects the brief presented by the state of Georgia which states:

No universal principle teaches that homosexual sodomy is acceptable conduct. To the contrary, traditional Judeo-Christian values proscribe such conduct. Indeed, there is no validation for sodomy found in the teaching of the ancient Greek philosophers Plato or Aristotle. More recent thinkers, such as Immanuel Kant, have found homosexual sodomy no less unnatural . . . To find this tradition and the roots of modern conventional morality and law relative to the crime of sodomy, only a brief historical review is necessary. Sodomy was proscribed in the laws of the Old Testament (Leviticus 18:22) and in the writings of St. Paul (Romans 1:26, 27; I Corinthians 6:9, 10). Sodomy was a capital crime in ancient Rome under the Theodosian law of 390 A.D. and under Justinian. Sodomy was proscribed by the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas. Sodomy was prosecuted as heretical in the ecclesiastical courts throughout the Middle Ages. During the English Reformation when powers of the ecclesiastical courts were transferred to the King's courts, the first English statute criminalizing sodomy was passed.³

This hailing of "traditional moral values" was repeated in various Amicus briefs in support of the petitioner, such as those of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, Concerned Women for America, and the Rutherford Institute. It was therefore on the basis of Western Jewish and Christian moral tradition that the Supreme Court of the United States felt that the continuance of the state anti-sodomy laws was justified.

The response of the official religious bodies submitting Amicus briefs (Presbyterian Church U.S.A., The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends, The American Friends Service Committee, The Unitarian Universalist Association, Office for Church and Society of the United Church of Christ, and the American Jewish Congress) did little to combat the traditional prejudices against homosexuality reflected in the briefs in support of the petitioner, unlike the brief of the American Psychological Association and American Public Health Association.

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tion, which cited recent and ongoing research within these professional organizations that challenged notions of homosexuality as an illness or disorder.⁴ It is unfortunate that the religious organizations did not have the support of modern theological reflection and research to dispute those arguments in support of the anti-sodomy laws that were primarily founded in the religious heritage of United States. This lack betrays the need for theologians, biblical scholars and religious ethicists to undertake research into the roots of legal prohibitions against same-sex relations that are found within the Bible itself and in subsequent theological reflection on the biblical texts throughout the history of the Western Church.

giving up his sexuality.⁸ (In Augustine's day the virginity movement was the most impressive and powerful expression of Christianity). Augustine's first experience of grace was the experience of special enabling power to renounce his sexuality.

According to Augustine, the sinfulness of sexuality can only be redeemed by the good of procreation which adds new members to the church, the body of Christ.⁹ All sexuality, however, even sexuality within marriage, remains sinful unless procreation is its object.¹⁰ So, for example, Augustine condemns sex after menopause, because only lust or passion could be its object.

Thomas Aquinas is the major theologian whose arguments

All Christian arguments against homosexuality and lesbianism are rooted in a theological definition of sexuality created at the beginning of the Western theological tradition. Thus before the theological arguments against same-sex relations can be considered, the theological understanding of sexuality must be reconstructed.

The civil condemnation of homosexuality as reflected in these briefs and in the larger society is based on a set of theological beliefs that evolved over a period of a thousand years. In the arguments cited in the briefs we are actually looking at the tip of a theological iceberg. Therefore it is necessary to understand the massive theological structure which lies just below the surface of this set of theological briefs on which the social prohibition of same-sex relations is based.

The theological arguments against same-sex relations fall generally into three groups. Such relations are classified either as lustful, or as unnatural (contrary to natural law) or as falling short of full humanness (understood as the complementarity of male and female). We will briefly sketch the historical development of each one of these.

Before starting, we need to understand that all the Christian arguments against homosexuality and lesbianism are rooted in a theological definition of sexuality created at the beginning of the Western theological tradition. Thus before the theological arguments against same-sex relations can be considered, the theological understanding of sexuality must be reconstructed. The architect of the Christian theology of sexuality which has prevailed for fifteen centuries is Augustine. The most important legacy of Augustinian theology is the strange equation between sin and sexuality.

Augustine did his thinking on sexuality in the tradition of the Greek philosophers. They understood the soul, the center of the human person, to be composed of a rational and ruling part, reason, and an irrational part which must be ruled, namely the passions. In the perfected human being the rational part exercised perfect control over the passions. Augustine, the creator of the Christian doctrine of original sin, used this notion of the soul to explain the consequences of the fall. The rational part of the soul was no longer able to govern the passions, specifically sexual passion.⁵ Consequently, all of humanity descended from Adam inherits original sin, or the inability to rule the passions.

Augustine equates sexuality with sin.⁶ Sexuality itself is sinful because it is irrational passion: Augustine's idea of sex in the garden before the fall is that it was rational and therefore without passion!⁷ Since the fall, the expression of sexuality is not possible without irrational passion, which is the punishment of Adam and Eve's original disobedience.

Augustine himself struggled and agonized over his conversion to Christianity because in his understanding it meant

against same-sex relations are cited. He builds onto the framework of Augustine's theology of sexuality in two ways. First, homosexuality is sinful sexuality because lustful passion is exercised without the redeeming factor of procreation. It is "contrary to right reason" and "out of control."¹¹ Lechery, according to Thomas, is less sinful than same-sex relations because although it is lustful, it is still procreative.

Second, Aquinas takes Augustine's notion that procreation is the only redeeming feature of sinful sexuality and uses it to determine the divinely ordained purpose of sexuality. The divinely ordained purpose of sexuality is procreation; procreative sexuality is, then, "according to nature."¹² Thus same-sex relations and masturbation are contrary to nature. Thomas carries the argument further by saying that a sin against nature is a sin against God who created nature, and therefore homosexuality, lesbianism and masturbation are equivalent to sacrilege.¹³ Both of these theological arguments developed during a period when celibacy was the ideal. They are based on the premise that sexual passion is sinful and that to be truly human is to be rational, and rationality is expressed by ruling the passions.

The repudiation of the monastic system during the Reformation led to a rejection of celibacy as the ideal. Marriage was no longer seen as a "hospital for incurables to keep them from falling into graver sins" but as a holy obligation placed on all men and women.¹⁴ This led to a slightly modified vision of what it meant to be fully human. To be human is to exercise dominion. The primary form of this dominion was the rule of the male over the female, husband over wife.¹⁵ By the Augustine definition of human nature, women were not fully human because they were more irrational (sexual) than men. By the Reformation definition of human nature women were not fully human because they could not fully exercise dominion.

This ordering of male over female was understood to reflect the divine order established by the will of God and to reflect the rule of God over the world. This theological understanding of human nature underlies the arguments that homosexuality and lesbianism are wrong because they fail to achieve the ideal rule of humanity over the world, which entails the complementary relationship between a man and a woman, with the man as the ruling head over the woman. So Karl Barth, for example, argues that man cannot be man except in relationship to woman, and that woman cannot be woman except in

relationship to man.¹⁶ This is the theological basis for his condemnation of same-sex relations. The relationship between man and woman is not an interchangeable one; they have different natures. One is created to stimulate, lead and inspire, and the other is created to respond and follow.¹⁷ Thus they cannot be who they are except in relationship to each other—male and female. Homosexuality and lesbianism therefore violate this divinely instituted hierarchical order.

As heirs of this theological tradition, many within the modern Christian community feel unable to support any theological statement which moves toward a theological acceptance of homosexuality or lesbianism.¹⁸ The official position of the Catholic hierarchy housed at the Vatican, as expressed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, upholds the traditional condemnation of homosexual practices, and considers the current efforts to elicit the support of the clergy for legislation decriminalizing such practices as manipulative and detrimental to the common good of society. Bishops are therefore advised to keep the defense and promotion of family life as their uppermost concern when they assess proposed legislation. Moreover, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith advises that support “be withdrawn from any organizations that seek to undermine the teaching of the church.”¹⁹

Other Christian organizations try to keep the theological issues of same-sex relations separate from the civil issues. These organizations attempt to maintain a theological disapproval of the practice of same-sex love and then couple this disapproval with a call for tolerance of these practices in the public sphere in the name of human rights. This is evidenced in many official Protestant church statements on homosexuality and lesbianism, in various theological and exegetical writings, as well as in the statement of the EWCI itself.²⁰ The EWCI res-

olution was clearly an attempt to make a resolution which was limited to the issue of civil rights, to avoid the theological furor that would have arisen had the resolution made a clear bid for the theological acceptance of the practice of lesbianism. Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, on the last day of the Seventh Plenary Conference, pointed out that the organization had “not made a theological judgement concerning homosexuality.”²¹ Due to the diverse nature of the EWCI membership, the resolution was limited to a call for civil rights to allow many members to remain within the organization and continue to participate in the ongoing discussion of the theological and exegetical issues on both the local and national level. The statement itself, however, has been taken by some as an implicit acceptance of lesbianism as a valid life-style for certain Christian women, although that was not the intent of the EWCI.

Important as it is for Christian organizations to support human rights in the secular sphere, even though they are not able to offer theological justification for those rights, in light of the current abuse of Christian religious authority within the dominant society, does not the Christian church also have a moral responsibility to begin to critique and reevaluate the theological and exegetical arguments that are being used to deny civil rights to homosexual persons? As the denial of human rights for homosexual persons is based on historically religious moral precepts, can the church hope to affirm and procure the civil rights for homosexual persons without being willing to examine the theological foundation within their own tradition upon which the anti-sodomy laws are based? One could argue that no hope of a solid basis for change on the civil level can take place without any support for that change on a theological level. Although it is important that Christians

Carl Henry on Hierarchy

There are a lot of references to women in *God, Revelation and Authority*, 5 and 6. Look *women* up in the index. I think women are great. Life would be terribly monotonous without them.

First, what is our question? Christ is the head of the church. Second, in New Testament times we have the universal priesthood of believers, male and female. Women are priests no less in that universal priests are all believers. So Paul is surely not a male chauvinist and anti-feminist when he says that the exclusive male priesthood of the Hebrew theocracy is gone forever. Christ has destroyed it. Next, prophecy in New Testament times, which is not prophecy in the Old Testament understanding but nevertheless prophecy, is the proclamation of Christ and belongs to women no less than to men in the New Testament era by the work of the Holy Spirit. “I shall pour out my Spirit upon all flesh and they shall prophesy.” And Peter says that in a sense, Pentecost is the beginning of this. That doesn’t mean inspired teaching but testimony of Christ in the New Testament. And certainly the New Testament says there is a service ministry from women, deaconesses, they’re in the New Testament. Service ministry as I understand it can be temporary or it can be permanent. I have no problem with deaconesses in the Lutheran churches as a life vocation and that sort of thing.

What that doesn’t settle is the question of women in the role of pastoral leadership in the churches, whether they should be ordained or not. Well, first the New Testament does not stipulate ordination; it does not mandate ordination for anybody. The cases of ordination are rather simple and they represent a recognition on the part of the church that the Holy

Spirit has set aside a person for a particular work. I don’t see any necessity in the New Testament for ordaining. You don’t have the same mandate—as you do in the great commission—for ordaining men who are called to ministry in the modern sense. That whole question of ordination in those universal terms is something that needs to be squared with the New Testament.

But in any case, I have read Paul many times and reread him within the last few years because I was on the committee of the Southern Baptist Convention when this issue of women’s ordination came on the floor. I cannot get around the fact that Paul seems to say that there is a basis in the order of creation and in the order of redemption for restricting the role of pastoral leadership in the church to the male or at least excluding the woman from that realm. And it is quite possible to get around this by saying this is a cultural accommodation. But if you do, I think there is a hermeneutical shift and I don’t think those who do it on the basis of an hermeneutical shift have clearly worked out the implications of what this implies for apostolic teaching generally. I might wish it were not so. I know gifted women and certainly have no objection to them teaching Sunday School classes. I know that the bottom would fall out of the mission field if it weren’t for the women who go, bless their hearts. I know many gals, even from the earlier years, seminarians and collegians who went out. They were as interested in marriage as we were. They just put it all onto the cross. So there I am. I’ve sort of wrestled with that in volume 5, I think in *God, Revelation and Authority*.

Taken from a conversation with Carl F.H. Henry by Diana Hochstedt Butler for TSF Bulletin.

continue to support the separation of moral and legal issues, it could be that in the case of homosexuality, the theological disapproval of homosexual and lesbian behavior based on unexamined interpretation of the few biblical texts which discuss it would weaken an intent to support rights for homosexual individuals. Even though certain evangelical organizations like the EWCI may not be able to resolve the theological problems surrounding homosexuality for many years to come, surely discussion can take place in church governmental bodies, as it has in such denominations as the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the UCC. The open discussion of homosexuality and lesbianism on the local and congregational level would also do much to alleviate the unfounded fears and prejudices that many Christians have for those with a homosexual orientation. The EWCI attempts to allow for such discussion and diversity of opinion by offering numerous workshops in its plenary sessions, and by encouraging discussion in local EWC chapters throughout the country.

Where does such a reappraisal begin? First, it must begin with careful consideration of those biblical texts which proscribe homosexuality and lesbianism, particularly since the traditional interpretations of these texts and their significance for the modern church have come under question in the past few decades.²² Although an article of this scope cannot hope to discuss or settle such complicated issues as the relevance of the Holiness Code and its purity laws for the Christian Church (Lev. 18:22) or the lexical problems surrounding the translation of *malakos* and *arsenokoites* in I Cor. 6:9-10 and I Tim. 1:9-10, we would like to discuss briefly the one clear prohibition of lesbianism by Paul in Romans 1:26-27, as it is often this text which leads even the most compassionate of Christian theologians, biblical scholars and ethicists to conclude that homosexuality and lesbianism are "unnatural." Why does Paul call same-sex relations "unnatural?" That is a question all Christians must ask, biblical feminists in particular. Lewis B. Smedes, in his sensitive discussion of homosexuality in his well known book, *Sex for Christians*, while affirming that Paul must be right in his rejection of same-sex relations, also comments, "I do wish we had a clearer grasp of why homosexuality is unnatural," and points out that Paul also calls long hair on men "unnatural" (I Cor. 11:14). "Nature does not speak as clearly to me about long hair as it did to Paul," Smedes writes, "but long hair and homosexuality are hardly in the same category."²³ What has hairstyles to do with homosexuality? More importantly for biblical feminists, what has hairstyles to do with a rejection of same-sex relations between women?

That the prohibition of same-sex love in Rom. 1:26-27 is related to the question of hairstyles in I Cor. 11 has not escaped the notice of certain scholars.²⁴ Just how the two are related, however, has been somewhat unclear. A recent study of I Cor. 11 by Jerome Murphy O'Conner, however, has argued that it is possibly same-sex love and gender distinction that is at issue in Paul's concern for hairstyles, and that the Corinthians' disregard for gender distinction in their dress reflects an interpretation of Gal. 3:28.²⁵ Bernadette J. Brooten, in her recent article on Rom. 1:26, has clarified the relationship between Rom. 1:26 and I Cor. 11 by indicating Paul's hierarchical world view inherent in both passages.²⁶ What is "unnatural" about same-sex relations between women and gender differentiation in appearance is that both reflect an upsetting of the hierarchical ordering of creation. Brooten writes:

The discussion of headress and hairstyle is quite reminiscent of the ancient discussions of same-sex love. For the man, the fear is that by looking like a woman a man loses his masculinity and can sink to the level of a woman.

Short hair on a woman is one of the signs of her becoming like, or trying to become like a man . . . A woman cannot sink to the level of a man. She can only make ridiculous, yet nevertheless threatening, attempts to rise to that level.²⁷

The ancient sources Brooten cites object to women either dressing like or behaving like men, especially when they attempt to imitate the aggressive sexual role usually assigned to males in the order of creation. It is therefore Paul's hierarchical definition of maleness and femaleness which leads him to reject same-sex relations between women, a hierarchical definition which he shared with the Greco-Roman writers around him who objected to women overstepping the passive sexual role assigned to them in Greco-Roman culture.

Discussions of homosexual behavior in antiquity do not parallel discussions of lesbianism in antiquity. Although there is a relationship between discussions of same-sex relations of men and women in that such behavior in both cases calls into question the order of society, the practice of homosexuality is not uniformly objected to in Greco-Roman sources as is lesbianism. On the contrary, although the common argument against homosexuality is that it is also "contrary to nature" or "unnatural,"²⁸ there are many positive arguments for it, even to the extent that it is considered by some to be more "according to nature" than heterosexuality. Robin Scroggs argues that this is precisely because it avoids any movement towards the female, and is therefore a more masculine activity which indicates a superior nature.²⁹ Scroggs also argues that the dominant form of homosexual relationships in antiquity were primarily that of an adult male and a boy or youth (i.e. pederasty).³⁰ Another view is that of John Boswell, who does not conclude that the apparent prevalence of homosexual relationships between adults and boys is truly indicative of reality in the ancient world.³¹ Neither of these authors, however, sufficiently differentiates between male and female homoeroticism in their analysis of same-sex relationships in antiquity. This discrepancy between ancient views on lesbianism and homosexuality should warn us away from subsuming discussions of lesbianism under discussions of homosexuality.

Paul's rejection of lesbianism reflects the rejection of female homoeroticism found within the literature of the Greco-Roman world. Although Paul allowed celibacy for women, which would have circumvented the male headship of a spouse (I Cor. 7:8-9, 25-35, 39-40), and although Paul recognizes the work of women in their ministry to the church (Rom. 16:1-16; Phil. 4:2-3) and permits them to prophesy in the assembly (I Cor. 11:5), "What he could not accept was women experiencing their power through the erotic in a way that challenged the hierarchical ladder: God, Christ, man, woman."³²

It would appear then that in Paul issues of sexuality are theologically related to hierarchy, and therefore the issues of biblical feminism and lesbianism are irrefutably intertwined. For biblical feminists, how one deals with the issue of hierarchy is central. Some argue that the New Testament does not support a strictly hierarchical pattern for relations between the sexes. Others argue that even if the New Testament does reflect a hierarchical world view, as that world view is not specifically Christian, there is no reason to inflict such world view on the modern church. The opinions on the significance of hierarchy for both church structure and ordination as well as sexual relations are diverse. Many denominations have in effect dismissed possible biblical mandates for a hierarchical church structure which place women under the authority of men (such as I Tim. 2:11ff) by their ordination of women to positions in which they will have spiritual authority over men in the congregation. Even the assertion that wives should sub-

mit to their husbands found in the household codes (Eph. 5:21ff; Col. 3:18), which is also based on a hierarchy which makes the husband the head of the wife (Eph. 5:23), has been called into question by certain interpreters, particularly those who wish to emphasize the notion of "mutual submission" within marital relationships.³³ Clearly, the larger evangelical community needs to reach a consensus on whether or not the maintenance of hierarchy between the sexes is important within either sexual relationships or church structures. A determination of the significance of a hierarchical world view for the Evangelical churches becomes central, particularly if it will help us in our struggle over the issues of homosexuality and lesbianism.

In the end, it would seem that if the church is going to deal with the issues of sexuality it is also going to have to deal with hierarchy. We need to grapple with the possibility that our conflicts over the appropriate use of human sexuality may rather be conflicts rooted in a need to legitimate the traditional social structure which assigns men and women specific and unequal positions. Could it be that the continued affirmation of the primacy of heterosexual marriage is possibly also the affirmation of the necessity for the sexes to remain in a hierarchically structured relationship? Is the threat to the "sanctity of marriage" really a threat to hierarchy? Is that what makes same-sex relations so threatening, so frightening? Certain theologians and ethicists have begun to ask these questions.³⁴ Evangelical Christians need to begin to question their unexamined positions on sexuality and hierarchy, particularly if they wish to have a voice in the call for equality for all men and women, not just a few.

¹ For a discussion of the proceedings of the Seventh Plenary Conference of the EWCI, see *Update: Newsletter of the EWC* 10 (Fall 1986) as well as Anne Eggebroten, "Handling Power: Unchristian, Unfeminine, Unkind?" *The Other Side* 22 (Dec. 1986), pp. 20-25.

² Quoted by William O'Brian, "Handling Conflict: The Fallout from Fresno," *The Other Side* 22 (Dec. 1986), pp. 25, 41.

³ Brief of petitioner Michael J. Bowers, Attorney General, on Writ of Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit; Dec. 19, 1985; Bowers vs. Hardwick, no. 85-140, pp. 20-21.

⁴ Brief of the Amicus Curiae, American Psychological Association, American Public Health Association, p. 8ff.

⁵ Augustine, *The City of God* XIII, 13; XIV, 19.

⁶ Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence* I, 6, 7.

⁷ Augustine, *On the Good of Marriage* II.

⁸ Augustine, *Confessions* Bk. VIII, XI.

⁹ Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence* I, 4, 5.

¹⁰ Augustine, *On the Good of Marriage* XIII, 15.

¹¹ *Summa Theologica*, Pt. II, Ques. 154, art. 11.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Summa Theologica*, Pt. II, Ques. 154, art. 12.

¹⁴ Luther, *Sermon on the Estate of Marriage*, 1519.

¹⁵ Luther, *Commentary on Genesis* 1:26, 27; Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis* 1:26, 27.

¹⁶ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III, pt. 4, p. 166.

¹⁷ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III, pt. 4, p. 170.

¹⁸ Karl Barth, "Church Dogmatics," in *Homosexuality and Ethics*, Edward Batchelor, Jr., ed. (New York, NY: The Pilgrim Press, 1980), pp. 48-51; Don Williams, *The Bond that Breaks: Will Homosexuality Split the Church?* (Los Angeles, CA: BIM, Inc., 1978); David Atkinson, *Homosexuals in the Christian Fellowship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979); Lewis B. Smedes, *Sex for Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 62-75; "Scripture and Homosexuality," in *Homosexuality and the Church: A Report of the Assembly Committee on Homosexuality and the Church*, Gordon S. Dicker, ed. (Melbourne, Australia: Uniting Church Press, 1985), pp. 40-53.

¹⁹ Letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith entitled "The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons," printed in *Origins*, 16:22 (Nov. 13, 1986), pp. 377-382; par. 16. This Letter is originally dated Oct. 1, 1986, but was released Oct. 30, 1986. It was signed by Cardinal Ratzinger and approved by Pope John Paul II and is therefore an accurate representation of the opinion of the church hierarchy of the Vatican.

²⁰ Lutheran Church in America, American Lutheran Church, United Methodist Church, in "Appendix B" of Brief of Amici Curiae, The Presbyterian Church (USA), The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends, The American Friends Service Committee, The Unitarian Universalist Association, Office for Church and Society of the UCC, The Right Rev. Paul Moore, Jr., on Writ of Certiorari to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, Bowers vs. Hardwick, no. 84-140, in the Supreme Court of the US, Oct. Term, 1985. See also Brief of the Amicus Curiae, American Jewish Conference. For an enumeration of recent church discussions of homosexuality, see Robin Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality: Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 1-16. Various scholars who call for a legal tolerance of homosexuality while maintaining a theological disapproval are William Muehl, "Some Words of Caution," in *Homosexuality and Ethics*, pp. 71-78; H. Kimball Jones, "Toward a Christian Understanding of the Homosexual," in *Homosexuality and Ethics*, pp. 105-113; Atkinson, *Homosexuals in the Christian Fellowship*, pp. 120-121. A few ethicists, while maintaining a clear disapproval of homosexual practice for Christians, feel that celibacy is not possible for certain homosexuals, nor is change to a heterosexual orientation. They advocate an "optimum homosexual morality." See Smedes, *Sex for Christians*, p. 73; H. Kimball Jones, "Toward a Christian Understanding of the Homosexual," in *Homosexuality and Ethics*, p. 109ff.

²¹ Quoted by Joanne Ross Feldmeth, "Fresno '86 Conference: Surviving Our Adolescence," *Update* 10 (Fall 1986), pp. 15.

²² Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), pp. 54-72; Norman Pittenger, *Time for Consent: A Christian's Approach to Homosexuality* (London: SCM Press, 1976), pp. 81-87; Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, pp. 99-129; "Perspectives on Biblical Passages Dealing with Homosexuality," *Homosexuality and the Church*, pp. 29-39. For an overview of recent literature, see "Study Report of the Assembly Committee on Homosexuality and the Church," *Homosexuality and the Church*, pp. 9-28; Atkinson, *Homosexuals in the Christian Fellowship*, pp. 4-28.

²³ Smedes, *Sex for Christians*, p. 67.

²⁴ Smedes, *Sex for Christians*, p. 67; Helmut Thielicke, "The Theological Aspect of Homosexuality," *Homosexuality and Ethics*, pp. 96-104.

²⁵ Jerome Murphy O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in I Cor. 11:2-16," *CBQ* 42 (1980), pp. 482-500.

²⁶ Bernadette J. Brooten, "Paul's Views on the Nature of Women," in *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality*, Clarissa W. Atkinson, Constance H. Buchanan, Margaret R. Miles, eds. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1985), pp. 61-87.

²⁷ Brooten, "Paul's Views," pp. 76-77.

²⁸ Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, p. 59.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³¹ John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 28ff.

³² Brooten, "Paul's Views," p. 78.

³³ See Don Williams, *The Apostle Paul and Women in the Church* (Van Nuys, CA: BIM, 1977), pp. 88ff. Scott Bartchy is also a key proponent of this view. His paper entitled "Patriarchy and Submission in Ephesians 5?" was the topic of a panel discussion of the Women in the Biblical World Section of the SBL chaired by Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Susan B. Thistlethwaite at the recent Annual Meetings of the AAR and SBL in Atlanta, GA, Nov. 22-25, 1986. Other panelists included David Balch and Katie Cannon. The session drew a crowd of over 100 scholars, which is evidence of the keen interest in the topic of hierarchy in religious academic circles.

³⁴ Tom F. Driver, "The Contemporary and Christian Contexts," pp. 14-21; Gregory Baum, "Catholic Homosexuals," pp. 22-27; Rosemary Radford Ruether, "From Machismo to Mutuality," pp. 28-32, all in *Homosexuality and Ethics*.

Japanese Christians and the Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Introduction

Regardless of the social and cultural matrix within which a given Christian community may find itself, sooner or later it will inevitably be forced to grapple with the problem of competing demands for allegiance.

Since its inception in the 16th century, the Christian church in Japan has been acutely aware of the conflicting demands of Christ and Caesar for loyalty. And although the post-World War II Constitution guarantees complete freedom of religion, there has been recently an increase in activity linked to attempts to provide official government sanction of religious values and traditions closely associated with Shintoism, Japan's major indigenous religion.

The focus of the current controversy is the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, which was established in 1869 to venerate those who had died in battle in service of the Emperor. Those killed in action were automatically enshrined as kami (divine). Over 2.4 million persons have been enshrined there, including the group of A-class war criminals from World War II headed by General Tojo. There have been repeated attempts to place the Shrine under official government sponsorship, but so far without success. However, the Christian community is alarmed by increasing support for such a move, and has been actively opposing it for several reasons. Not only would this be a clear violation of the constitutional principle of separation of religion and state, but it would have disastrous consequences for Christian evangelism in Japan. Throughout its

history in Japan, Christianity has been regarded largely as an irrelevant Western import, and has been rejected in favor of indigenous beliefs and traditions. Japanese national identity has been intimately identified with the values and traditions of Shintoism. This, of course, was most explicit in the extreme nationalism and militarism of the Emperor cult in pre-war Japan. Christians fear that the Yasukuni Shrine could become a rallying point for a resurgent nationalism which would not only have profound political repercussions in Asia, but would further alienate Christianity for being "un-Japanese."

Although still numerically small, the Japanese evangelical community is mature, and is increasingly vocal in social issues. The open letter which follows was written by a Japanese evangelical, Rev. Yoshiaki Yui, in an effort to increase understanding of the Japanese situation among North American Christians. The evangelical church in Japan needs our support and our prayers.

Mr. Yui is a graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary (M.Div.) and Princeton Theological Seminary (Th.M.), and is currently pastor of Nagatsuta Christ Church. He also teaches at Tokyo Christian Theological Seminary—Harold Netland, Tokyo.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I write this open letter out of a sincere desire to further your understanding of the present situation in Japan and to encourage you to pray for the Japanese evangelical church.

The Christian Church in Japan faces many obstacles, but a growing concern in recent years has been the problem of the Yasukuni Shrine. The Yasukuni Shrine is a major Shinto shrine where soldiers who have died are honored and worshipped as gods. Some historical background may be helpful.

Japan has a history of oppression and persecution toward Christianity. In 1549 when Roman Catholicism was introduced to Japan, those who were in power reacted by banning Christianity and severely persecuting believers. This policy was strictly enforced through 300 years of the Tokugawa regime. When Japan was again re-opened to the West, the new government that came to power in 1868 had no intention of changing the policy of banning Christianity, although pressure from the West forced Japan to allow entry of some Protestant missionaries. But whenever the Japanese Church began to grow, she was hit hard by the hammer of state-sponsored religion.

Soon after the restoration of imperial power in 1868, the attempt to revive the Shinto religion was accompanied by renewal of strong opposition to Christianity. For example, the Imperial Rescript on Education was promulgated in 1889 with the purpose of setting up a national standard of morality based upon Shintoism and emperor veneration. This document was employed by conservatives as a basis of argument against Christianity. It was clearly the nationalistic, patriotic fervor embodied in the Rescript that unified the nation and established national identity. The Japanese Church gradually yielded to the intense pressures of the government and "nationalized" Christian doctrines and programs by stripping off all Western color, and subjected itself to sheer compromise with Shintoism and emperor worship.

The Yasukuni Shrine became the pre-war rallying point of national identity, and was one of the chief symbols of the old value system. Japanese citizens were forced to worship the "deified" war dead there. The Shrine was used as a tool of totalitarian control by the government. Those who would not worship there were branded as un-Japanese and unpatriotic, and were subjected to severe punishment, including, in some cases, even martyrdom.

Following World War II, with the new Constitution guaranteeing freedom of religion and placing Shintoism on the

same level as other religions, the Yasukuni Shrine was reduced to the status of a local shrine.

However, with the great economic success of the past decades, the Japanese people have begun to search for their spiritual identity and have once again turned to traditional Shintoism for meaning. So some in present day Japan are beginning to revert to the former military and spiritual values. In Japan, reverting to the old conservative value system inevitably involves a return to a nationally supported Shintoism and the restoration of government regulation of education and other institutions.

In the past twenty years, pressure has mounted for the nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine once again. Every election year the ruling Liberal Democratic Party politicians promise to nationalize the Shrine. Although three recent attempts at nationalization of the Shrine failed in the Japanese Diet, a popular groundswell of opinion favoring nationalization makes this course of action seem nearly inevitable. There is increasing pressure to once again make the Shrine a national Shrine and a symbol of national identity and unity. This, however, would pose a great threat not only to peace and democracy in Japan, but also the propagation of the Gospel in Japan.

The trend toward a return to the old values is matched by a trend toward justifying Japan's role in World War II and the years of expansionism prior to the war. Presently, under the Ministry of Education, there are efforts to rewrite the history of Japan, resulting in teaching students the history of World War II very differently from the way it is taught in other countries. Although several years ago there was a sharp outcry from other Asian countries against such rewriting of history, no substantial changes have been made.

Many were shocked when it was revealed in 1982 that Class A war criminals, who had been executed for their war crimes by the Allied powers, were enshrined in the Yasukuni Shrine as martyrs and gods. Yet, this act is simply indicative of the broader trend toward justification of Japan's role in the war. Many Christians point out that glorification of the war dead at the Shrine was the prop used to support the pre-War spirit of nationalism of the military state. They see the present move to nationalize the Shrine and restore Shintoism as a necessary prerequisite to the future militarization of Japan.

It was Shinto nationalism which, in the years prior to and during World War II, resulted in Japan's ruling over other nations in Asia and causing immeasurable suffering. The wounds caused by the exploitation and suffering of the Chinese and other Asian peoples at the hands of the Japanese have never completely healed. Some years ago, a book was written with the title *When Justice Calls For Us*. Written by Yong Chan Pak, a Korean pastor, the book is the story of his father, Gwan Jun Pak, who refused to bow before a Japanese Shinto Shrine in Korea, when Japan controlled Korea. Gwan Jun Pak came to Tokyo and walked into the Diet building and threw a letter of protest into the chamber where the Diet was in session. He was arrested and put in prison, where he died. The author, in his visit to celebrate the publication of the Japanese edition of his book, stated:

My heart has been deeply grieved to find here in Japan a definite trend toward the revival of the old Japan in the repeated and persistent attempt to revive the nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine and worship at the Shrine by the Emperor and high government officials.

On August 15, 1985 Prime Minister Nakasone visited the Shrine for the first time in his official capacity as prime minister, and was harshly criticized by China, Korea, and other Asian countries. Unfortunately, however, no strong words of criticism were heard from the U.S. and European countries.

The Yasukuni Shrine issue makes Japanese Christians realize how shallow democracy really is in Japan. Religious freedom and separation of religion and state are ideas fostered by democracy. To take away spiritual freedom is to deprive of all freedom. In 1971, some in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party stated, "Japan has become very prosperous economically, but as a result has lost its humanity; materialistically prosperous but spiritually and morally poor. The way to return to this humanity is to champion the Yasukuni Shrine." This is clearly a case of politics reaching its hands into personal and spiritual affairs which are out of its sphere of concern.

Japanese Christians fear the loss of religious freedom which has been enjoyed since the destruction of the military regime

in 1945. We believe that in facing the Yasukuni Shrine issue we are engaged in spiritual warfare with the principalities and powers of evil (Eph. 6:15), who are seeking to frustrate the task of evangelization of Japan and the world. We desperately need the prayers of our brothers and sisters worldwide, as we struggle to find the most appropriate way to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ here in Japan. Please pray that we will be uncompromisingly faithful to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and that we will not repeat the mistakes of the past, as we endeavor to bear witness to our Lord in Japan today!

**For the Sake of the Kingdom,
Yoshiaki Yui**

The Pain of the North American Heart: Reflections on A Recent Ecumenical Student Gathering

by Donald Persons

We need to reflect long and hard about the events of the last several months in which U.S. young adults and theological students gathered to better discern their role in the U.S. ecumenical movement. The young adults & students met in the context of the WCC and NCCC/USA national conference in Cleveland, OH, challenging U.S. Christians to "Embrace the World," and calling for "greater participation of a new generation of ecumenical leaders."

Two objectives were accomplished in the students' meeting. First, those in attendance were exposed to the ecumenical commitment and work of leaders of the World Council of Churches and of U.S. churches involved in the National Council of Churches of Christ. Second, we witnessed a "phoenix event" as the planning committee of the Christian Theological Students Consortium of the U.S. (CTSCUS) handed over its responsibilities to a newly formed Ecumenical Network of Theological Students (ENTS). The purpose of ENTS was suggested only in the closing worship: to foster dialogue among Christian theological students and theologically-engaged persons in the U.S. This is to be accomplished through a newsletter, pursuit of ecumenical academic forums and the continued presence of a WCC staff resource person.

At the same time, there was little discussion of a student role in ecumenism or mission in North America. Issues derived from the addition of "young adults" to the concerns of CTSCUS were poorly addressed. There was no talk about what we experience locally as young adults/theological students. Our rich ecclesial and theological diversity was not really tapped. So it becomes obvious why it was so difficult for the student assembly to arrive at a concrete purpose for its new creation, ENTS. Though the appeal for wider regional participation may first appear wanting, there is, nevertheless, a great significance in the presence of students at the meeting of the WCC and the NCCC/USA with implications for ecumenical aims to "Embrace the World." This article will attempt to draw them out.

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The Participation

The participants gathered from across the country in response to a call from the Consortium of Theological Students of the U.S., the movement originating in the Vancouver Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC, *Gathered for Life*, p. 16). Most came from various seminaries and Bible schools and cut across a vast array of denominational, ethnic, theological and even national borders. Three factors became immediately obvious:

1) U.S. theological students represent a much wider age group than merely young adults, with the average age of U.S. theological students in the early thirties. The 85 were not able to bring together under one roof the wealth of an inter-seminary movement along with the critical issues of young adults who are either students, workers or young professionals.

2) The participation and leadership of women and black students was fairly strong, but the meeting did not at all suggest the reality of the U.S. population. There were but two Hispanics and a couple of Canadian Asian guests. Where was the vast Hispanic and Asian American church? Was there a problem in inviting their involvement? Or does this suggest that Hispanics and Asians are not found in many theological institutions? If so, why? Hard questions, yes, but also ones which suggest a truth of student movements: they are useful in monitoring or at least suggesting the missionary health of the Church and its institutions. Great care must be taken in nurturing them.

Few of us had been to Vancouver or had ever participated in a national ecumenical event. This author was among the "new" people. He was also one of the many who had never found a way to get into the work of the WCC & NCCC/USA. Hence, the call to "Embrace the World" was an exciting possibility and vision, but we realized that most students did not yet have a sense of where the previous people were leaving them. We were still too mystified by the diversity of those gathered in Cleveland to be able to step forward together into our future.

"Embrace the World" in Student Perspective

It was clear in the larger forum that embracing the whole

world is painful for North Americans. It is an embrace characterized not by our imperialism or paternalism, but by our opportunity to listen and by "the strength of our Christian powerlessness" (from the keynote address, Dr. Emilio Castro). We are reconciled with a God who loves the world back to life. Looking upon the wrenching issues of U.S. domestic life and foreign affairs, we could easily despair. The U.S. people—who all Christians are called to embrace—are emerging into the latter part of this century with an agonizing pain of racist alienation, a guilt, yet pride, over our ability to manipulate the world for our own "national interests" (or, ecclesial world manipulation by U.S. church interests), economic loss for our little people, and bewilderment over reconstructing a humanity of cultural rupture and uprootedness. Indeed, it is where rugged individualism (see Bellah's informative book, *Habits of the Heart*, Chapter I) has become a vague covenant of the neighborless. Let us call it "the pain of the North American heart."

The Christian students in Cleveland stumbled across this pain in trying to agree on a purpose. We struggled for our very self-identity between a long historical legacy of U.S. student movements and the call for a "changing of the guard" which launches us directly into the heart of an ecumenism which revitalizes the Christian world mission in and through our North American context. The 85 young adults and theological students who met gave very confusing and unclear signals. Measuring the expectations of the passing generation of ecumenists against the current student disarray, the U.S. churches could be on the threshold of a major crisis at a time of wrenching challenges in U.S. national life. Will the ecumenical movement rise to proclaim the gospel (Good News) closer to the pain of the North American heart? How can students then best serve as witnesses who embrace that pain? How should theologically engaged persons understand the revival of an ecumenical seminary movement like ENTS?

A Legacy of Student Movements

This is not the first time students have struggled for a sense of purpose. We recall the Mt. Hermon 100—college people who gathered ecumenically under the leadership of evangelist Dwight L. Moody in 1886 (Wallstrom, p. 42). Then this movement helped create the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, with a watchword which thrust the churches together, later reinterpreted to mean "the evangelization of the world in (every) generation" (Robert, p. 146).

In the 1890s we saw the creation of the World Christian Student Federation, founded by John Mott. "This was the movement which was destined to produce the great bulk of the modern ecumenical movement" (Rouse & Neill, p. 341), including the IMC, Faith & Order, and Life and Work Movements, leading also to the inclusion of eastern Orthodox churches in 1911.

At the same time, there arose the Inter-Seminary Movement, to propagate mission involvement and study. In the 1920s there was evidence of growing missiological maturity and integrity. The aim was to "permeate with the Spirit of the Gospel not only individuals, but also society and international relationships" (Wallstrom, pp. 84-85). In 1948 the ISM was linked to the World Council of Churches at a time when U.S. students gathered so "that many came back to the college campuses determined to live a better life and to do more thinking along international lines" (Wallstrom, p. 70). In 1969 it finally voted to absolve itself.

If student ecumenical movements in the fifties were marked by recreation and pastoral care, students of the sixties were a full swing away from this in an emphasis with the WSCF on

social revolution and death to the status quo of social structures. In 1966, the University Christian Movement made its historic stand on civil rights (Rouse & Neill, p. 356). Developing a very distinct contrast to this social activism was what is now known as the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, wherein the depth reality of the Gospel was re-emphasized.

At Vancouver, 200 U.S. and Canadian students gathered to form the Theological Students Consortium. This was made to link seminarians together and for seminarians to have a formative ecumenical experience to take into the churches. Out of this assembly grew the U.S. version of TSC, CTSCUS, in November, 1983. In 1985 in Washington, D.C. it held a national event and it also held a Seminar for Ecumenical Training in which it had broad representation and was divided regionally for a more incarnational approach. Today, we have ENTS as the continuation of that movement.

Notice again how the shift in emphasis to unity without a basic clarity of mission (world/gospel engagement) signaled in every case the waning of student movements and the lingering of burdensome student structures. Latourette, the great church historian, on reflecting upon the history of ecumenism, concluded that "the ecumenical movement was in large part the outgrowth of the missionary movement" (Rouse & Neill, p. 353). Purpose is derived from reflection upon God's liberating and reconciling engagement with a broken world. Lack of purpose is deadly to students. We need not expect any less of a failure of the modern-day ENTS if it does not seek to serve the gospel of Jesus Christ in these days.

The Call to "Change the Guard"

The same can be said of the North American churches. Contemporary ecumenical structures continue to prove muddled, confusing and unattractive to students who demand a great sense of clarity of purpose before responding to a call to "change the guard." We want to know what it is we are called to guard! In fact, would we not rather communicate a contextually-relevant Gospel, than hold it in safety? The old ecumenical movement assembled this October 2-5 in Cleveland communicated two things to the students by its speakers and forums: 1) U.S. Christians must wait and listen to the Third World people and seek ways to relate more justly to them, and 2) U.S. churches must be re-directed to reforming U.S. foreign and domestic policy.

These points reflect a great maturity and wisdom. They have been long in coming to our ears. But they still display a crippled U.S. missiology. They fail to get in touch with the complex institutions and peoples of the contemporary United States. They still shift our primary mission away from our own communities. It reflects a missiology which exports missionaries, but not with a crucified mind or a sense that we have dealt with issues in our context and can share our brokenness as equals with the whole Body of Christ. It is interested in the mission of the other five continents to themselves, but not yet the fullness of "mission in and through six continents" (WCC, *Mission & Evangelism*, p. 66).

But the U.S. is no longer the center of Christianity, as Buhmann has pointed out (*The Coming of the Third Church*). Nor can we speak any longer of a Third World when we recognize the expansive ethnic and minority communities and religious systems now impoverished by yet re-shaping U.S. society (see Samuel & Sugden, *Sharing Jesus in the Two Thirds World*). Furthermore, there is the tremendous challenge of dechristianization confronting the U.S. world outside our ecclesial barriers, as well as all the implications in and beyond the church of the cry for the considerations of gender in personal

and public life.

One can perceive among the student participants an ever so slight shift in ecumenism out of our identification with this reality. Perhaps behind our hesitancy and lack of "official" goals is a consensus that something can emerge out of ENTS if anywhere in North American Christian life. *It must.* It is with faith and sweat and blood that the U.S. Church must newly identify itself with God in the waning moments of the 20th century. ENTS must serve this end. The theologically engaged North American ought rightly give birth to a wholly new, wholly continuous church witnessing to the Gospel in all six continents through the pain of the North American heart.

The Kairos Convocation

by Wilma Jakobsen

The time has come. The moment of truth has arrived. South Africa has been plunged into a crisis that is shaking the foundations and there is every indication that the crisis has only just begun and that it will deepen and become even more threatening in the months to come. It is the KAIROS or moment of truth not only for apartheid but also for the church.

These opening words of the Kairos Document, first published in September 1985, have proved to be more than prophetic. Since that time, the crises in South Africa has intensified, and the challenge for the church in its struggle there increases every day. The closing call of the Kairos Document to the "Christian brothers and sisters throughout the world to give the necessary support . . . so that the daily loss of so many young lives may be brought to a speedy end" led to much discussion and positive responses from churches throughout the world. It was this call which led the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (N.C.C.) to sponsor the Kairos Convocation in mid-November 1986.

The aim of the convocation was to focus and reflect on the question of what solidarity with the suffering majority of God's people in the South African population requires of U.S. Christians. With this aim in mind, a diverse group of approximately two hundred people gathered at Chicago Theological Seminary for the Kairos Convocation. A number of South Africans were present, including guest speakers Rev. Frank Chikane of the Institute for Contextual Theology, Dr. Gabriel Setiloane and Rev. Malusi Mpumlwane, both from the Religious Studies Department of the University of Cape Town. Other South Africans included those presently studying in the U.S.A., as well as those exiled from their homeland. Many of the Americans present had been active in South Africa at different times. The ecumenical nature of the conference demonstrated by the wide variety of denominations and perspectives reflected, with about ten percent being evangelical.

The Kairos Document, issued by a large group of South African lay and professional theologians, arose out of a concern to discover how to respond as Christians (especially as pastors in townships) to the intensification of repression, violence and civil war in their country. The document first analyzes and critiques what it terms "state theology," the dominant ideology of the Afrikaner government and church, and

Bellah, Frank, ed., *Habits of the Heart*, (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1985).
Buhlmann, Walbert, *The Coming of the Third Church*, (Slough, England: St. Paul Publications; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976).
Robert, Dana L., "The Origin of the Student Volunteer Watchword: The Evangelization of the World in this Generation," *The International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 8-86, (Ventnor, NJ: Overseas Ministries Study Center, 1986).
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Samuel, Vinay and Chris Sugden, eds., *Sharing Jesus in the Two Thirds World*, (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1984).
Student Mission Power: Report of the First International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, (Pasadena, CA: The William Carey Library, 1891).
World Council of Churches, *Gathered for Life* (Official Report; VI Assembly, Vancouver, Canada), (Geneva: WCC Publications; Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1983).
Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation (A Study Guide), (Geneva: WCC Publications), 1983).

"church theology," which refers to the tendency of the white English-speaking churches to indulge in much talk but little concrete action. It then explores "prophetic theology," which outlines the direction the churches should move to make an authentic response to the crisis (yet—also kairos—opportunity) which the situation in South Africa presents.

The structure of the Kairos Convocation reflected that of the document, and thus the plenary sessions focused on state theology, church theology and prophetic theology, with each major address followed by responses from a panel reflecting different backgrounds and ideologies. Each session began with expository Bible study by Dr. Thomas Hoyt of the Hartford Seminary Foundation. The Bible passages related directly to the focus of the address, and the studies were a highlight of the conference for many. Romans 13, Revelation 13 and Luke 4:16-21 thus formed the backdrop to the major addresses, and it was exciting to hear how Dr. Hoyt set the passages into their historical context and applied them into the present times.

The plenary sessions were always followed by small group discussions, which picked up on issues raised in earlier presentations. It was here that the issues were debated more intensely, as each group contained such a wide variety of people. It was in these groups that frustrations and feelings of powerlessness were aired. It was also impressive to see the willingness to be self-critical, reflecting what the Kairos Document meant for the U.S. church as well as the South African church. This self-critique often ranked alongside the never-ending "but what are we going to *do*?" questions about South Africa.

This willingness to reflect on the need for justice here in the U.S. as a necessary aspect of support for suffering Christians in South Africa meant that the focus on "church theology" was possibly the hardest to deal with. This is because its critique of "active-in-rhetoric-lacking-in-action" churches hit home for many people present. In her main address on this topic, Dr. Sheila Briggs of the University of Southern California, said church theology is a co-opting of the church by the state; it is a praxis by which the church is not imitating the praxis of Jesus of Nazareth, rejecting the radical demand of Christ to take up the cross. She agreed with the Kairos Document that too often in church theology, reconciliation in South Africa is based on a false perception of reality, because the conflict in South Africa is not based on misunderstanding, but on two opposing realities. Church theology is ultimately aligned with the status quo, unwilling to take the risks of

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radical obedience to Christ, which was difficult to own under this self-critique of many U.S. churches.

In some ways it was easier to explore the concept of state theology because it related more to governments and less to individuals in the church. Dr. Richard Mouw of Fuller Theological Seminary placed the Kairos Document firmly in the tradition of orthodox Christianity in developing its position that apartheid is repugnant to the Word of God. Dr. Mouw emphasized the *proper* ministry of government, with the need for a *just* law and a *right* order, not only law and order. He agreed with the Kairos Document that "state theology" is based on an improper understanding of Romans 13, and that the South African government has neglected its nurturing responsibility and failed to do the work of justice. The implications for the U.S. government can be seen in the way it needs to deal with economic apartheid, and the need for a critique of the values of the U.S.

As the conference moved through times of worship and discussion, it could be said that the hallmark of the conference was intensity. The presence and participation of so many deeply committed South Africans deepened this feeling, particularly in the evening worship services. The opening night, when Rev. Frank Chikane spoke of his struggle to maintain his commitment to non-violence under experiences of severe torture, was a powerful example. Another memorable act of worship included testimony from six South Africans about life under the State of Emergency. This service led to a prayer vigil for South Africa and particularly for detainees, which lasted until 4 a.m. This underlying commitment to worship throughout the conference served to increase its impact as an event which was very meaningful to the participants.

As the conference moved on to discuss "prophetic theology" and its challenges, Dr. Cornell West of Yale University Divinity School outlined three necessary components. First, religious vision—of the imago Dei, our fallenness, and the coming of the kingdom to empower us; the Kairos Document gives hope. Second, intelligent historical and social analysis. Third, political action and praxis, to work out the options and alternatives of how to live in our brokenness of circumstances.

There was no doubt in anyone's mind that some kind of action had to be taken by the convocation. A statement was drafted by a small committee, and then distributed to the discussion groups. Opportunity was given for input from the groups, and discussion raged fast and furious about varieties of wording and ideas. Time was a limiting factor as the plenary group also discussed various options for action to be taken up as a result of the convocation. Ideas ranged from planning a mass march of protest in Pretoria, South Africa, in 1988, to convening discussion groups about the Kairos Document, the Kairos Covenant (the statement) and the convocation itself, in local church settings. Although it was not clear that an authorized follow-up could be orchestrated by the N.C.C., it was clear that the individual participants would continue their activism in local settings, using material from the convocation.

The conference closed with a very moving worship service. Participants signed the Kairos Covenant, to a background reading of the covenant made by Joshua in chapter 24. In so doing, they pledged a deep commitment to respond to the Kairos of these times, to be in solidarity with the oppressed in South Africa. The singing of the national anthem of South Africa, *Nkosi Sikelel i' Afrika* (God Bless Afrika) by this group of committed South Africans, Americans and others, marked the end of a convocation which, although it had its frustrations, yet proved to be intense, inspiring, moving and challenging. It remains to be seen what the outcome will be, but the challenge of the Kairos Covenant is there, for those who

are willing to read it and work towards justice both in South Africa and also the USA.

THE KAIROS COVENANT

An Initial Response of U.S. Christians in Solidarity with the Oppressed in South Africa

This is the time of crises and judgment—a KAIROS—for U.S. Christians.

God speaks to us today. In the prophetic cry of our sisters and brothers in South Africa we hear God's Word.

—It is a call for confession and repentance for our participation in the sin of apartheid; —It is a call to conversion, and we give thanks for it; —It is a call to understand and act in solidarity with all who are bound by the chains of apartheid; —It is a call to speak out and take action against the fears, the rationalizations, the paralysis, the policies, the structures—whether in church or society, whether in the U.S., South Africa, or elsewhere in the world—against all that contributes to continuing oppression.

The grace of God compels us to respond.

The KAIROS of these times judges our nation as well. U.S. administration support of the government of South Africa is mirrored by a domestic policy, grounded in racism, that imposes economic apartheid. Its victims are disproportionately men, women, and children of color. The majority of our people remain insensitive to the poverty and oppression of their sisters and brothers throughout the world and unaware of our complicity in the systems that inflict and prolong their suffering.

Called to a new radical commitment by the KAIROS of our times and in active solidarity with our oppressed sisters and brothers in South Africa, we pledge in the name of Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected:

—to tell the truth about the evil of apartheid in South Africa and work to abolish it; —to offer increased support to the people of South Africa in their own struggle; —to support the peoples of southern Africa who are victims of U.S. and South African political, military, and economic destabilization; —to speak the truth of justice in our churches; —to fight racism, sexism, and economic injustice in our own society; —to challenge our social and political structures to send clear messages to the South African government: we will not as a nation tolerate apartheid, and we will encourage all other nations to stand together against it; —to renounce a self-centered U.S. lifestyle that exists at the expense of blacks in South Africa and other oppressed people in our country and throughout the world.

The hour is late. The judgment of God is at hand. God asks us to love more deeply, work more diligently, risk more courageously. We give thanks to God for this opportunity to help prepare the way for the gift of a reign of justice in which the present signs of death will be swept away and God's new Life will fill us all.

Bibliography: Books on South Africa

by Kathy O'Reilly

Move Your Shadow, by Joseph Lelyveld, Times Books, 1985. One of the best books about South Africa, this Pulitzer prize winning account was written by the New York Times' correspondent to South Africa. Archbishop Desmond Tutu aptly describes the book as "a searing indictment of South Africa's apartheid system."

Crossing The Line, by William Finnegan, Harper and Row, 1986. What happens when a California "surfie" and world traveller finds himself teaching in a Cape Town "colored" high school for a year? The answer's in this articulate account of apartheid at all levels, especially education.

The White Tribe of Africa, by David Harrison, Macmillan, 1981. Tells the story of the white Afrikaners, who currently rule South Africa. A well written and researched account of how the Afrikaners got into power and why they are so reluctant to surrender it. The book arose out of a five-part BBC television series.

The Apartheid Handbook, by Roger Omond, Penguin Books, 1985. An excellent resource to help you wade through the myriad insidious policies of apartheid. The book is usefully structured in question-answer format and provides valuable information on issues ranging from health and education to the military, the press, the church, prisons, etc.

Freedom Rising, by James North, Macmillan, 1985. Subtitled "Life under apartheid through the eyes of an American on a four-year clandestine journey through Southern Africa." The author links current events and personalities with the history of South Africa and apartheid. Excellent chapters on the "bantustans" or homelands, and the mining superstructure.

Soweto: The Fruit of Fear, by Peter Magubane, Eerdmans, 1986. A pictorial recollection of the 1976 uprising in Soweto, captured by photographer Magubane. About 700 people died in the uprising; Desmond Tutu provides a foreward.

Cry, The Beloved Country, by Alan Paton, C. Scribner and Sones, 1948.

The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist, by Breyten Breytenbach, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1985. The hellish life of South African political prisoners, as experienced by Afrikaner dissident poet Breytenbach.

Nelson Mandela, by Mary Benson, Penguin Books, 1986. One of three or four books detailing the life of the ANC leader and prisoner for life.

Apartheid is a Heresy, ed. John W. de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio, David Philip/Eerdmans, 1983. Includes essays by Allan Boesak, president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and Afrikaner theologian Beyers Naude, also Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The book serves to "clarify the issues and to challenge the Churches and their members to decide for or against the Gospel of Christ's reconciliation."

Hope and Suffering, by Desmond Tutu, Eerdmans, 1983. A collection of sermons and speeches by the Nobel laureate and Archbishop of Cape Town. "My vision is of a South Africa that is totally non racial," he writes. "I am an unabashed egalitarian and libertarian because God has created us freely from freedom."

Resistance and Hope, ed. Charles Villa-Vicencio and John W. de Gruchy, Eerdmans, 1985. A collection of essays in honour of Beyers Naude, the Afrikaner theologian who has been banned and has suffered greatly for his unwavering anti-apartheid stance. A part from the editors, contributors include Buti Tlhagale, Frank Chikane, Allan Boesak, Gabriel Setiloane, Desmond Tutu and others.

Cry Justice, John de Gruchy, Orbis Books, 1986. An inspirational collection of prayers, meditations and readings from South Africa; to be read alone, or studied in groups. There are 31 sets of readings, so the book can be used for one month's private devotions. *Cry Justice* ends with a "love feast," a eucharist celebration.

Walking on Thorns, by Allan Boesak, Eerdmans, 1984. Seven sermons and a letter to the South African minister of Justice, by Boesak. "If they kill us it is not because we have planned revolution. It will be because we have tried to stand up for justice, because we have tried to work for true peace."

The Unquestionable Right to Be Free, ed. Itumeleng J. Mosala and Buti Tlhagale, Orbis Books, 1986. Subtitled "Black Theology from South Africa," this book features essays on many aspects of black theology and how the system of apartheid has affected it. Areas covered include the historical origins of black theology, current themes and emphases, a township perspective on violence and the use of the Bible in black theology.

The Kairos Document This historical and timely commentary addresses the "Kairos," the moment of crises the South African church faces. First published in 1985, the document offers a critique of state, church and prophetic theology, as well as a challenge to action.

A recent edition includes the Harare declaration and a call to prayer for the end of unjust rule. Write Theology in Global Context Program, 22 Tenakill Street, Closter, NJ 07627.

Suggested Resources

Evangelicals for Social Action publishes a monthly news/prayerletter called *Intercessors for Peace and Freedom in South Africa*. The letter provides analysis of recent news events, interviews, prayer topics and resource information. It promotes a non-violent approach to the crises in South Africa and calls concerned Christians to respond from the basis of prayer. No subscription fee. Write Evangelicals for Social Action, 712 G. Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003. Phone (202) 543-5330.

Africa News—a bi-weekly publication reporting on the whole continent, but with lots of news of South Africa. Write 720 Ninth St., Durham, NC 27702. Phone (919) 286-0747.

AF Press Clips—this is put out by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of African Affairs. Features press reports from the U.S. media. Write U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520.

The International Defence and Aid Fund—serves to provide financial aid to those South Africans facing legal action due to their opposition to apartheid. Also aids families of apartheid's victims. The IDAF has extensive resources to offer—books, posters, records, photo exhibits, covering a wide range of issues. Write for their information package and catalogue of publications, P.O. Box 17, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Kathy O'Reilly is a South African writer living in Pasadena, CA.

Amnesty International—published a South Africa briefing in March 1986, covering areas like detention without trial, banning, torture. Write Amnesty International USA, National Office, Publications Dept., 322 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10001.

The Southern Africa Media Center/California Newsreel, offers a number of films and videos for rental or purchase. Highly recommended: Witness to Apartheid, Nelson and Winnie Mandela, and South Africa Belongs to Us. For a brochure,

write California Newsreel at 630 Natoma Street, San Francisco, CA 94103. Phone (415) 621-6196.

The American Friends Service Committee recently released "South Africa Unedited," a half-hour documentary on repression and violence in South Africa, and interviews with a number of anti-apartheid leaders. Write AFSC, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102-1479. Phone (215) 241-7060.

The Voice of Outsiders: Is Anybody Listening?

by William Dyrness

It is just possible to travel to Atlanta without visiting the South. Almost 5,000 of us did it in November for the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature. Outside of the southern accents of the staff, a few sides of grits and the ever-present iced tea, we might have been in Denver or Buffalo. Beyond that, papers on the structure of Nahum or Derrida's deconstructionism are not calculated to instill a sense of place.

But by the happy foresight of the local hosts of the section of Arts, Literature and Religion, some of us escaped this place-warp. For three splendid hours one afternoon (was that Sunday?), we moved our discussions to the Atlanta College of Art, to focus on an exhibition in progress there: "Revelations: Visionary Content in the Work of Southern Self-Trained Artists."

There we saw the South—or at least that vast rural South with roots reaching deep into Scripture, Indian traditions and even African religion. Stone, paper, and corrugated tin were covered with obsessive graffiti, tortured crucifixes and voodoo charms. One, Mary T. Smith inscribed her paint on tin with: "The Lord know your hart; I love to bee for the Lord, he know the good (sic)." Here Mary speaks for the nameless host of faithful who paint "Jesus Saves" everywhere along southern two lane highways—the same ones who unfurl giant banners reading "John 3:16" on Monday Night football. Many of the visions were apocalyptic in character, like "The Giant Destruction Ray" (by Prophet Royal Robertson) and "The Road to Eternity" (by Reverend Howard Finster). Some, like Nellie Mae Rowe, recall childrens' drawings of fish and birds. For all the visions were supernatural in meaning. As Nellie says, "If you ask the Lord, he'll bring you out of a lot of things. But I'll tell you this: this world is not my home . . . It's just like in that song, 'come and let me go to the Land where I'm bound,' 'cause there's peace and joy in heaven."

In the lecture which followed, writer Tom Patterson (Director of the Jargon Society (!)), with obvious affection led us on on an extended slide tour of some of the settings for this art. We met the late Eddie Owens Martin (a.k.a. St. EOM) maker of an entire imaginary village, the Land of Psaquan. My favorite was Reverend Howard Finster who has made his property into Paradise Garden and the World's First Folk Art Church. The structures are constructed with thousands of found objects, broken pottery, mirrors and old television parts and

is richly annotated with Scripture texts.

What was going on, I wondered through all this, in the heads of my colleagues with their Chicago and Harvard Ph.D's? Here was an earthy obsessive reality light years away from the rarefied discussions of Bronze Age Archeology across town. Somehow I felt more in touch with life that afternoon than at any other time of the three day conference. "Strange" and "unreal" are after all in the eyes of the beholder. I doubt on any absolute scale that Howard Finster is any "further out" than Hans-Georg Gadamer. Flannery O'Connor was once asked why she so often wrote about freaks: "I say it is because we (in the South) . . . are still able to recognize one. To be able to recognize (a freak) you have to have some conception of the whole man, and in the South the conception of the whole man is still, in the main, theological."

Ironically, Nathan Scott, AAR President, the final night of the conference called for a polyphonic dialogue (or multi-logue) in which we learn to know ourselves by hearing other voices. I wish Scott had been to our Sunday Testimony Meeting, for he would have seen Reverend Finster's sign in Paradise Garden:

I took the pieces you threw away and put them together
(sic) by night and day. Washed by rain. Dried by sun.
A million pieces all in one.

I sometimes felt as if we were intellectual Marthas, so busy collecting and classifying voices that we listen to none of them. Indeed it could be we miss some of the most vital cries from outside our walls. These may be the most important, for they speak of integration and re-connection with our past, each other, and most of all with our God. They may turn out to be the Marys who have something clear to say because they have sat at Jesus' feet.

But I can hear someone saying: This is all very well, but is this art? Interestingly this exhibition is only one of several major shows in the last few years focusing on naive or outsider art (not even properly called "folk art" because it has been handed down from generation to generation). Even the experts are recognizing a vitality and a connection with our roots that the world of art has long since lost. There were reports of art students who are turning to these primitives for inspiration in the face of vacuity of accepted teaching. I find this all very exciting; I only wonder how long it will take theologians to recognize their own parallel emptiness.

William Dyrness is Professor of Theology and Culture at New College Berkeley.

BOOK COMMENTS

Preaching Paul

by Daniel Patte (Fortress Press, 1984, 95 pp., \$4.95). Reviewed by Andrew Trotter, Director, Christian Study Center, Elmbrook Church, Waukesha, WI.

Daniel Patte, professor of New Testament at Vanderbilt University and ardent champion of structuralism as a method of biblical exegesis, has written a concise, readable book giving his insights on how one should "preach Paul." His main audience is, of course, preachers, but it should not be limited to them.

Patte believes preaching is more than just speaking from the pulpit of a church and stresses the witness character of all Christians everywhere as they "witness to the gospel by and through their own 'speeches' [daily conversations]" (p. 9). He accomplishes his goal of writing in such a way that the layman

can benefit from his work, and pastors should not shrink from giving this book to lay people. It does not deal with such things as method and technique but rather attempts to "present as clearly and concisely as possible the main features of Paul's teaching so as to focus the discussion upon its implications for preaching and witnessing to the gospel in contemporary situations" (pp. 9-10).

The book is not exhaustive, as one can see from its length, and it is not intended to be so. It is by design a condensation of Patte's much more comprehensive *Paul's Faith and the Power of the Gospel: A Structural Introduction to the Pauline Letters* (Fortress Press, 1983) and reference should be made to that book for deeper study. *Preaching Paul* is built around fifteen theses Patte sees as descriptive of the "characteristic features of Paul's faith for proclamation" (p. 17). Each thesis is followed by a series of "Notes" reviewing various Pauline passages and defending the theses from them.

Paul's faith is portrayed in this work as "fundamentally characterized by three inter-related features. It is charismatic, typological, and eschatological" (p. 16). It is charismatic in that it displays a belief in believers directly discovering, through faith, "revelatory manifestations of God in their experience," and eschatological in that "no believer can claim to have the complete and final revelation;" this will come only at "the time of judgment, when Christ will return" (pp. 16-17). But this content of the message is not proclaimed by Paul simply through speaking; fundamental to Patte's book is that Paul transmits the gospel not only by communicating the facts of the gospel (the message about Christ's death and resurrection) but also by "helping others to recognize manifestations of God, or Christ, in their experiences, and to understand how they should respond to these manifestations of the divine" (p. 17). A view of God's power "bearing down on [people] in uncontrollable and unpredictable ways" (p. 19) is essential to Patte's presentation of Paul's gospel; it is at these times of awareness of the numinous, that we must learn as preachers how to proclaim God's manifestations in the presence of our hearers and how to discern just what are and what are not manifestations of God in the first place (p. 19).

***Jesus: The Death and Resurrection of God* by Donald G. Dawe (John Knox, 1985, 205 pp.). Reviewed by Clark H. Pinnoch, Professor of Theology, McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario.**

The first thing to point out about this book is that it is not aptly titled. It is clear from the way it begins and ends that the subject it treats is the finality of Christ in relation to the problem of religious pluralism. This is a topic Professor Dawe has written about before, and it is one which obviously concerns him greatly. As a Christian he believes that Jesus is Lord of all, but when he looks at the world he does not see the great world religions disappearing. Furthermore he relates to us a moving religious experience which he

had at the Sikh temple in Amritsar, the genuineness of which he is not capable of doubting. So this is a book about the finality of Christ in a world of religions despite its title.

Therefore what Dawe is after is a Christology which, while not sacrificing the uniqueness of Christ, will nonetheless be able to let us think positively about the other great world religions. With Küng he admits to wanting to think of them as the ordinary means of salvation (p. 149). To this end Dawe gives us a solid section of Christology in which he presents Jesus as the representative of humankind and also the promise of its future. The present title refers in fact to part one of the book but not to the whole of it. Typical of a learned professor, it is not always clear to the reader why certain information is included, but the gist of this second Adam Christology is clear enough and helpful in any context. The problem is that the exegetical evidence falls short of what he wants it to prove in the area of the religions.

The key move comes in part two of the book. Dawe wants us to believe that a fresh way to read the scriptures in Christology would be to think of an effect of the work of Christ as involving "the encoding of new being" on the whole human race (p. 145). Because of God's reconciling act in Christ we can expect to discern a death and resurrection pattern everywhere, and when we do we may conclude that God is at work there redeeming humanity. It is as if God has stamped the race with a new genetic imprint as a result of the cross and resurrection (p. 147). To quote Dawe, "This power of new being, encoded in Jesus, is at work wherever men and women give up their present centers of security in trusting openness to the transcendent" (p. 148). Thus the world religions have Christ working in them even now. In this way Dawe believes we can retain the finality of Christ and still see in the other religions the means of grace.

By way of response, I would want to identify with Dawe's concern that we relate meaningfully our belief that Jesus is the only Savior with the fact that multitudes have never heard this message and never been able to make any decision positively or negatively about it. I think we do need to say something sensible about this problem. But I cannot find in the New Testament the idea of God encoding the race with the cross and resurrection dialectic. It is surely wishful thinking on Dawe's part and not a direction which the scriptures themselves take. Surely the NT is very clear that the Spirit has been poured out in power upon believers for the express purpose that they should be enabled to bear witness to Christ unto the ends of the earth. The fact that Dawe cannot believe that Christianity will replace the religions is neither here nor there (p. 154). What God plans to do about Islam, for example, is his business. Maybe a dramatic change is just around the corner. If we are going to guess, we may as well guess in the biblical direction, not against it. What we know is that God has empowered the church to move in the strength of the Spirit to bring salvation and deliverance to sinners dwelling in darkness. To think that

the world religions are a means of grace goes contrary not only to scripture but also to evangelistic experience working among them, Dawe's own experience notwithstanding.

This still leaves the problem which Dawe and I are both worried about. How do those who have never heard the strong name of Jesus participate in his redemption? Are they simply excluded in their millions? For me the answer lies in the direction of I Peter 3:19 and 4:6 where the apostle seems to indicate that the unevangelized are given a revelation of Jesus Christ after this life if they do not receive it before. Lacking in complete certainty exegetically, this solution at least enjoys probability and does not stretch our credibility the way Dawe's does. There is a problem here which we need to work on. I did not find this book much help in its resolution.

Heaven and Hell: A Biblical and Theological Overview

by Peter Toon (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986, 223 pp., \$8.95). Reviewed by Colin Brown, Professor of Systematic Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary.

This is a book which delivers what its subtitle promises. It gives an overview first of what the Bible has to say about heaven and hell and secondly what theologians down the ages have had to say on the same subject. It is a book, the author is at pains to point out, that is not intended as "a contribution to scholarly debate." Rather it is presented as a basic textbook for college and seminary students and as a handbook for pastors, preachers and teachers.

The author sees himself as standing in the tradition of Anselm's *credo ut intelligam*: he seeks understanding from the standpoint of faith. Scripture is the record of God's self-revelation and a unique source of information concerning heaven and hell. Hence, this study is essentially exegetical. It deals with the interpretation of biblical pronouncements and the evaluation of theological opinions in the light of this interpretation. Peter Toon shuns speculation. He desires to base his interpretation on explicit statements rather than general considerations concerning (e.g.) the character of God, christology, the nature of time and space. Thus he is uncomfortable with the view which he associates with T.F. Torrance, Murray Harris and F.F. Bruce, that at death the believer is clothed with a resurrection body. This view does not quite rank as a heresy. But Toon rejects it because it "does not seem to give sufficient prominence to the fact of the End and the great consummation of God's salvific work" (p. 128).

Toon strives for balance and sensitivity in presenting the arguments for and against the annihilation of unbelievers, endless punishment and universalism. He concludes that annihilation is not a Christian doctrine and that biblical universalism does not mean the salvation of all but the universal offer of salvation, leading to universal judgment and the recognition that God is truly all in all. Heaven is both a place and a state. Hell is to be thought

of in terms of loss of beatific vision and "possibly" pain experienced through the senses, though we must "recognize always that we are speaking figuratively" (p. 201).

The strength of this book is also its weakness. Its strength lies in the way that the author assembles and lays out in a clear fashion a mass of pronouncements on heaven and hell. As such it is a lucid guide book to key texts on these subjects and to such related topics as the lake of fire, soul sleep, annihilationism and sundry forms of universalism. But herein lies the weakness. For what we are given is exegesis without hermeneutics—or rather, exegesis which does not attempt to come to terms with hermeneutical questions.

Of all the theological issues, none bristle more with hermeneutical questions than the subject of heaven and hell. What is the nature of the language used? How do space-time concepts apply? How do we think of God in relation to heaven and hell? Despite Toon's efforts to be guided by explicit scriptural pronouncements, some of his own judgments are tacitly affected by hermeneutical considerations. He recognizes that language about hell is figurative. His dismissal of the above noted views of Torrance, Harris and Bruce is not based on precise exegesis of passages like II Cor. 5, but upon general considerations about assumed incompatibility with his understanding of the End-time. Likewise the discussion of annihilation is not settled by exegesis but by a series of warnings to those "who might be tempted to abandon the traditional view too easily" (p. 179).

All this raises the questions of whether hermeneutics can be left to the realm of scholarly debate and whether we do a service to students, pastors and teachers (and those who they teach) if we try to do exegesis without hermeneutics.

Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma

by C. Eric Lincoln (Hill and Wang, 1984, 282 pp., \$17.95). Reviewed by Mark Bishop Newell, Ph.D. candidate, University of Notre Dame.

In 1944, Gunnar Myrdal's *American Dilemma* concluded that the high Christian ideals embodied in the American creed were in serious conflict with the way Americans behaved, especially in regard to relations between racial groups. Not a new idea then, it pervades American society today and is the organizing theme of *Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma*. C. Eric Lincoln here publishes eight essays, previously delivered orally in various forums, which treat the dilemma in the context of black religion and the Black Church in particular. This is at once a tantalizing, energetic account and a constantly annoying one.

Lincoln tantalizes the reader with his candor and insight right from the outset. Noting the strangeness of our dilemma, he refers to James Watt who lost his job as Interior Secretary on the heels of an embarrassing remark about "a Black . . . a woman, two Jews and a cripple." "Our outrage," says Lincoln, "was

more because Mr. Watt embarrassed us by 'going public' with some of our most deeply held private sentiments" (xii) since many of us seem to care about the poor and disadvantaged only in the abstract. The first three chapters attempt to give some perspective to the dilemma, and then to trace the racial factor shaping American religion and how it led to the formation of the major black denominations. This carries the story to the mid-twentieth century and the next four chapters deal with black ethnicity and religious nationalism, American pluralism, blacks in relation to Mormons, Muslims, and Jews, and the role of the courts in settling the race issue. He concludes with "Moral Resources for Resolution," primarily emphasizing the role of M.L. King.

By far the most complete and helpful chapters from a historical standpoint are the four dealing with comparatively recent events, and the best of these is the fourth on black ethnicity and religious nationalism. Here, Lincoln is at his best in explaining the role of the Black Church as "the spiritual face of the black subculture" wherein "whether one is a 'church member' or not is beside the point" (p. 96). The religious factor is then related to ethnicity which is concerned with racial and cultural heritage, and to nationalism which takes several conflicting and confusing political roles. This chapter does a masterful job of explaining how religion (M.L. King, Leon Sullivan, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference) related to Black Power, the Black Manifesto, and individuals such as Malcolm X. His appeal is "not to the Black Church but to America" (p. 117) and to the white church who thinks the problem is solved. "It is an illusion, and the great tragedy of our dilemma is the persistent notion that, having made our ritual ablutions, we are entitled to the peace of the blessed" (p. 118). Taken together, these middle chapters provide an excellent survey of the Civil Rights Movement and the integral relationship between black churches and American society since World War II.

Unfortunately, there is much that is persistently annoying throughout this book—the negative sort of annoying things that detract from the book's prophetic message of reminding us that racism persists in America and in our churches and needs to be constantly crushed. While the treatment of recent history is fairly solid, early chapters covering events before 1900 are too sketchy. For detail, Albert Raboteau's *Slave Religion* is better, and relevant chapters in Ahlstrom's *Religious History of the American People* provide a better survey. Documentation is thin, with most primary sources quoted second-hand. Similarly, the "selected" bibliography omits too many major works such as the *Harvard Guide to American Ethnic Groups* and important authors like Nathan Glazer. By ignoring Glazer, Lincoln apparently ignores his discussion of affirmative action. As a result, the chapter on legal remedies of the dilemma, while helping us really feel the tragedy, fails to address the slender legal thread on which affirmative action goes too far. Here is a basic inconsistency in Lincoln's thought, for while

he can argue in one context that children can hardly be held responsible for behavior of their ancestors (p. 150), on affirmative action he implies the opposite, viz., that remediation ought to have no limits in correcting past injustices (p. 207). Stylistically, the second person plural is rampant, bothersome terms like "Blackamerican" seem to contradict the basic theme by setting an ethnic group above America, and vaguely defined terms like "White Church" give the book a persistent lack of precision. Many of these annoyances may stem from the book's genesis in oral presentation, and one wishes that Lincoln had done a better job of revision for publication, replacing rhetoric with clear, concise argumentation.

Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms, Drawn Principally From Protestant Scholastic Thought

by Richard Muller (Baker, 1985, 340 pp., \$14.95). Reviewed by Bradley L. Nassif, lay theologian of the Antiochian Orthodox Church, and Ph.D. candidate, Fordham University.

This book gives us the meaning of Latin and Greek theological words. The words themselves are extracted mainly from the vocabulary of "Protestant Scholasticism" which flourished in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The dictionary also includes words which originated from the patristic and medieval church insofar as those terms were received by the Protestant scholastics.

Muller gives two reasons for writing the book: "first, the accurate presentation of the vocabulary of Protestant orthodoxy, and second, the needs of students in their encounter with works currently accessible in which the orthodox or scholastic Protestant vocabulary appears." For these reasons, the author intends the dictionary to be used by students and professors as a companion to the classical writings of Protestant scholasticism, and its modern exponents such as the textbooks of Charles Hodge, Francis Pieper, Louis Berkhof, Otto Weber, Karl Barth and others. The goal is to illuminate the theological meaning of the Greek or Latin phrases that are sprinkled throughout these books.

The layout of the text is broadly structured in the prevailing dictionary format. The terms are alphabetically arranged and cross referenced. The length of the definitions range from very brief to extensive. Where appropriate, some terms are traced back to their philosophical roots and particular historical contexts. A splendid example of this can be found in Muller's definition of the trinity (*trinitas*). The Latin word is first translated and defined. The author then takes four pages to summarize the church's reflection on the trinity starting from the patristic and medieval church on through its later Protestant scholastic equivalents and elaborations. Related terms and controversies over the trinity are introduced and summarized along the way. Whenever this approach is used, it enables the dictionary to serve as a brief handbook to theology and the history of Christian

thought. Muller's glimpses into Eastern Orthodox thought, which are scattered throughout the dictionary, are refreshingly accurate. Understandably, however, the meaning and history of the Greek terms are not always thorough, since Protestantism itself had a limited exposure to Byzantine theology.

The dictionary also clarifies the similarities and differences between the two great systems of Protestantism, the Lutheran and Reformed traditions. Arminianism is treated as well. The reader can learn the theological comparison of these groups by reading key terms such as the will of God (*voluntas Dei*), predestination (*praedestinatio*), free will (*liberum arbitrium*), the presence of Christ in communion (*communio corporis*), infant baptism (*baptismus*) and many more.

In addition to these merits, however, the book contains certain stylistic problems and theological temptations. At times Muller's concern for accuracy outweighs the need for learning. Some terms are simply too concentrated and complex for the beginning student to understand (e.g. *communicatio idiomatum*, communication of proper qualities). Moreover, those definitions which have their foundation in patristic theology can easily lead readers to impose in their minds a rigid "patristic system" on the early church which, in fact, never existed. The patristic texts which have been quoted by Protestant scholastics often have been used as "proofs" of theological systems which were deeply alien to the real mind of the Fathers. For them, theological reflection was more a "story" than it was a "system."

These limitations, however, should not overshadow the immense value of Muller's dictionary. The author has painstakingly provided us with the means to master the technical vocabulary of the Protestant heritage. The dictionary is clear, concise and carefully nuanced. It is a trustworthy and precise reference tool that deserves wide acceptance from seminaries and libraries. The book will accomplish its goals for its intended audience with great success. It will also go far to promote a more responsible understanding of Protestant scholasticism among those who are outside the Reformed or Lutheran traditions.

Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom

by Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell (The University of Chicago Press, 1982, 314 pp., \$25.00). Reviewed by Thomas O. Kay, Associate Professor of History, Wheaton College (IL).

History is replete with examples of those persons who have stood apart from the mainstream of life, whether due to moral goodness, eccentric behavior or other unusual characteristics. The Saint, one who exemplifies the personal, positive virtues of a culture, is not only a phenomenon of Christian culture but can be found in any society exemplifying those ideals associated with the value center of the culture. *Saints and Society* is a well defined effort to get at some of the fun-

damental relationships between those persons who become set apart as saints and the society which produced and maintained them. The work of Weinstein and Bell is limited to seven centuries (1000-1700). The work makes several significant contributions to important aspects of church history.

The study first looks at sainthood in terms of family structure, children, adolescents, adults and the virtue of chastity. In contrast to the much current literature about the medieval family, Weinstein and Bell assert that the Middle Ages knew childhood, that this notion pervaded all of society and that the ideals of childhood saintliness were a source of stress for the family. The call to sainthood did not know social class, place or nationality.

The adolescence of those called to be saints is seen to be rather typical of many of the concerns usually a part of family history. In the middle ages the life of piety and sainthood was often regarded as the best. Spiritually precocious youth were usually encouraged to go into the service of the church. The prevailing social values reinforced those trends and when parents seemed to support the contrary models the young person would use the ways of the church as a means of making a protest. This became a more sharply drawn conflict in the 13th century and following due to the opportunity for new careers in law, medicine and scholarship which were sometimes regarded as an option of equal value to that of sainthood. Adolescent saints did not exhibit great signs of their calling, but seemed only to serve God and the Church faithfully.

An additional chapter discusses the impact of the ideal of chastity and virginity upon the saint, male and female. A distinction is made between the completely chaste person, a virgin, and the one who as an adult enters into a pact of chastity in order to live a saintly life. The former was certainly regarded as the superior option.

Those converted to sainthood as adults often brought with them from a life of preparation additional insights for spiritual service that went beyond the more narrowly defined role traditionally entertained by the church. This tended to accent some tensions between laity and clergy. The relationship between this tendency and the reformation is suggestive. The authors comment,

The Reformation shattered this precarious balance between lay inspiration and clerical authority. Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was the Emancipation Proclamation of lay piety, the climax of a long quest for spiritual equality and individual responsibility before God. Reformation Catholicism chose the opposite solution, reaffirming clerical authority and leadership. Lay piety was to flourish only within bounds set by the hierarchy; no amount of individual inspiration or mystical communion with the God head could replace the priest at the altar (p. 119).

These observations and others from Part I are supported by 14 pages of statistical analysis based on the information gleaned from the narrative sources. The authors have carefully and coherently discussed (in readily understood language for the most part) their method and they provide a very useful verbal interpretation of the various charts and tables.

Part II deals with the piety of the saints. Who were the saints? When did they live? With which social class did they identify? What were the relationships between the male and female? It is noted that there were changes to the responses to the foregoing questions during the time covered by the author's research. These changing responses reflected important movement in social history and the values of the culture. Many of these changes were associated with the social, economic, political and religious adjustments that were a part of the 16th and 17th centuries.

While drawing a series of interesting conclusions to the whole study, the authors raise new questions and make suggestions for continuing research. Of more than usual interest is the recognition of the paradox of a saint's life and a saint's cult. The latter often became associated with material values which the life of the saint sought to deny. While medieval thinking could accept this dichotomy, the paradox was laid open by protestantism which placed the responsibility of sainthood upon every Christian.

Perhaps the most important conclusion is this:

Conversion stories, whether in childhood, adolescence, or adulthood, suggest that the time from the end of the twelfth century to the early sixteenth century formed a coherent period in the history of the family. More than in either the two centuries preceding or the two following, this was a time when affective family ties were positively affirmed, when the idea of the family as a unit of love relationships emerged as an object of reflection in both religious and secular literature. Appreciation of childhood and adolescence was an integral part of this heightened family consciousness, along with a growing sensitivity to the psychology of these two life stages. This is a different picture of the history of the family from that offered in the work of Ariés, Stone, Lebrun, Shorter, Poster, and others who maintain that the affective family emerged in eighteenth-century Europe. Our data strongly suggest that the affective family was not unknown in medieval society, that it began to come into its own in the thirteenth century, flourished in practice and theory in the fifteenth, and declined from the mid-sixteenth century through the late seventeenth. It follows that what Stone and others discover in the eighteenth century is not the first appearance of the affective family and the idea of childhood but a reappearance (pp. 245-246).

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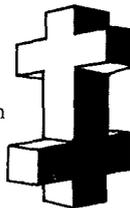
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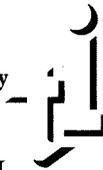
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An appendix of sources including a list of saints considered in the study, notes and indexes are useful additions to this work.

Saints and Society seems to be a signal work in many respects. It is extremely well done social history. It is an understandable and useful venture into quantitative history that does not leave the lay person befuddled by the jargon of the discipline. It has resurrected hagiographical sources for reconsideration, a project in which several medievalists have recently been involved. Once considered virtually useless for scholarly endeavors and suitable only as pious exemplaries, Saints Lives are now considered to possess authentic historical value as is evidenced in this study. Finally the work is of importance due to the collection of useful, recent bibliography of value to the scholar who would continue work in this field.

Edith Stein: A Biography

by Waltraud Herbstrith (Harper & Row, 1985, 113 pp., \$15.95). Reviewed by Kelly James Clark, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Gordon College.

Edith Stein (Oct. 12, 1891 to Aug. 9, 1942), the subject of this intriguing biography, is little known to Anglo-American Protestants. Her life was a remarkable amalgam: she was a Jewish-born German nun, philosopher and mystic who was killed in a Nazi concentration camp and is now under consideration for sainthood in the Roman Catholic Church. From a devout Jewish family, this precocious young lady embraced atheism from ages 13 to 21. In college she stumbled upon the writings of Husserl and was soon to become what Husserl called his best doctoral student ever (surpassing even Martin Heidegger). Through the influence of the philosopher Max Scheler as well as faith-full Christian friends, the Master of phenomenology's prized pupil, after experiencing moral unworthiness and despair, was shortly thereafter baptized a Roman Christian. The final step was taken after she had spent the night reading Teresa of Avila's autobiography, whereupon completion, she exclaimed, "This is the truth." To the dismay of her family she enthusiastically followed the devout life of teaching and prayer of a religion at a Dominican sisters' school. This phenomenologist soon found her interest in scholarship revived after exploring the favorable yet foreign depths of the scholastic thought of Aquinas' *de Veritate*. Through her study of Thomas she learned that the intent of faith was not merely for moral transformation, it should also lead one to the Truth. In addition Aquinas awakened in her a sense of divine mystery begun by Teresa of Avila, of the need for personal experience, of the mystical. She eventually would satisfy her desires, again to the consternation of her family, to plumb the depths of the divine in the contemplative life of a Carmelite nun.

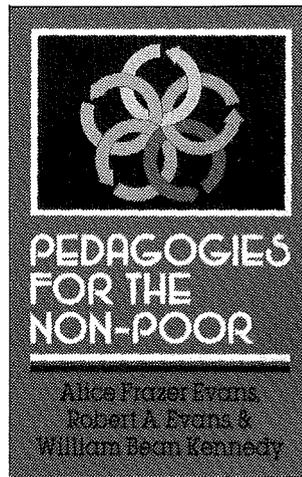
In the early to mid 1930's rising anti-Semitism obstructed her appointment to a university post, led to the neglect of her mentor's, Husserl's (a Jew, who underwent a little known death bed conversion which is re-

corded in this book), work, and caused the victimization of Jews by university students. She immediately called upon the Pope to issue an encyclical in criticism of Nazi anti-Semitism; the inappropriate reply was a benediction for Edith and her family. In 1938 news of S.S. attacks on the lives, homes and businesses of Jews in Germany reached Edith's convent and engendered a growing sense of mission that she would soon suffer her own cross. She escaped to Holland but soon requested complete identification with her suffering people and Christ crucified in a final oblation on behalf of peace. After the Nazis occupied Holland the churches strongly expressed their concern about the deportation of the Jews. In retaliation for the Church's

defiance the Nazis placed all Jewish Catholics under arrest and Edith was soon deported to her death, ultimately to her own Golgotha: Auschwitz. She had achieved, in her own words, "the peace of someone who has reached her goal."

The biography is marked by the typical tendency to make saints out of martyrs (little is recorded of Stein's post-conversion dark side). Yet her triumphant life and tragic death provide urgent and needed reminders of crucial lessons for all thinking Christians. She had an intense desire both passionately to speak and humbly to work against social injustice and she demonstrated an intense commitment to the vanishing belief that the life of the spirit entails due attention to the life

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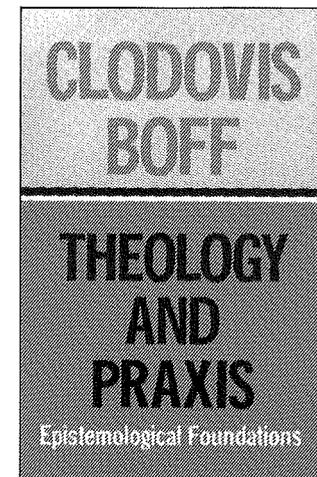
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Schools of Thought in the Christian Tradition

Edited by Patrick Henry (Fortress Press, 1984, 193 pp.). Reviewed by David Wells, Andrew Mutch Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

This book, containing ten essays, is a *Festschrift* for Jaroslav Pelikan, the Sterling Professor of History at Yale University. The

editor has tried to produce a coherent book, rather than merely having a string of unrelated essays. The essays, for example, have chronological sequence. There is an essay on Alexandria roughly in the third century (Robert Wilken); two essays are on North Africa and Jerusalem mainly in the fourth century (William Blake and Francine Cardman); there is an essay on Byzantium in the ninth century (John Meyendorf); the editor's own essay looks at attackers and defenders of icons in the eighth and ninth centuries; biblical exegesis in Charlemagne's time is discussed (Ann Matter), as is medieval Paris (Marcia Colish), ministerial education in the University of Berlin in the nineteenth century (John Stroup). Essays following one another in this kind of

chronological sequence suggest that there is an overarching theme or an underlying hypothesis which is being explicated. Is this actually the case?

The theme is this notion of "schools" which is conveyed in the book's title, so these essays supposedly are showing how Christian faith has been taught, learned and transmitted in various contexts, be they geographical or institutional. The problem with this, of course, is that *school* has a wide range of meaning and for that reason it really does not provide a focus for the book, although the editor thinks that this lack of clarity is most beneficial! Wilken observes that being in a school may suggest being part of a line of thought from the past or it may mean being part of a novel departure. The word "can refer to a certain set of ideas, a way of interpreting the Bible, a form of spirituality, a style of pedagogy, a method of theological dialectics, an institution" (p. 15), to name only a few of the nuances. These essays reflect this wide and disparate sense of meanings which the word has. For that reason Outler's introductory essay on tradition is of very little use since it is hard to tell how such a notion is actually to be related to the matters under discussion in the book such as, for example, the medieval theologies in Paris and the modern theologians at Berlin, except perhaps that all these essays are concerned with matters of the past and so in that undifferentiated sense might be said to be talking about "tradition."

It is this absence of a disciplining concept that perhaps explains some of the extraordinary *lacunae* in this book. Why ask for an essay on the school at Alexandria and not for one on its rival at Antioch? Worse still, why omit the Reformation period entirely in a book designed to honor the man who has given so much of his time to the study and publication of Martin Luther's ideas? There surely are good reasons for including an essay on the "school" at Wittenberg or the one in Switzerland in the sixteenth century. The same could be said of the period of classical orthodoxy, Lutheran and Reformed, which followed. As it stands, the reader passes directly from Paris in the Middle Ages to Harvard in the Colonial period!

The result of this, I am afraid, is that some of the fine essays in this book may be lost to specialists who ought to know about them. These essays are technical, well informed, and often present the subject matter in new ways. The essays are especially provocative for those whose understanding and experience of theological education is limited to the twentieth century context of university lectures and professionalized learning. Many of the factors which in the past have properly been seen to be part of the doing of theology have become casualties in this modern context. Wilken, for example, develops the idea of the place of virtue and the value at Alexandria of a one-to-one relationship between teacher and student; Meyendorf underscores the place of spirituality in the doing of theology in the East, Patrick the way that Liturgy shaped doctrine, and Endy underscores the way in which the "doing" of theology was neces-

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sarily related to its pastoral practice in Puritan America. Reading this book brings into focus interests in the teaching and learning of faith which have often either faded from view or been deliberately jettisoned. For this reason the book is interesting; its chief role, however, will be to service specialists in the fairly narrow areas in which the authors have written, and with perhaps one exception, have written very well.

Offense to Reason: The Theology of Sin by Bernard Ramm (Harper & Row, 1985, 187 pp., \$15.95). Reviewed by Todd Saliba Speidell, Ph.D. candidate in Systematic Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary.

Bernard Ramm's *Offense to Reason* is a commentary on the polemic of Pascal: sin is folly to autonomous reason but wisdom to the perceptive mind. Ramm's very readable book is not an irrationalist deprecation of reason; instead, it challenges modernism's attempts—from the Enlightenment to contemporary social science and existentialist literature—to account for sin in secular vocabulary. Although there is relative value in understanding these versions of "sin" or evil, suggests Ramm, the degree and scope of sin is more adequately portrayed by the Christian doctrine. Sin is not only acknowledged by Christians, however, but is universally witnessed by world religions as well as secular thinkers.

The cosmic corruption of the sin of Adam (who is both a generic and historical person) is more than direct rebellion against God; it is also manifested in personal and social, and national and international inhumanity. The adequacy of a doctrine of sin, then, is determined by its power to unmask our sinful existence in the multifarious domains of life and to summon us to responsibility before a judging yet forgiving God. Ramm examines visions of sin, from the theology of Irenaeus to the theology of liberation, and elaborates the implications of the doctrine of sin for psychotherapy, literature, philosophy, science, and religion. The doctrine of sin, insists Ramm, is simultaneously the most adequate and comprehensive rationale to account for the contradiction and disorder of human life.

Ramm's book provides a realistic, comprehensive, and hopeful version of sin. That is, he looks at the reality of evil and suffering in this world without succumbing to hopeless prognoses for humanity. In fact, his contention is that *only when we face the reality of sin do we have hope*. The confession of sin is an abandonment of autonomous attempts to explain and expiate our sinfulness. Sin is not a judgmental concept that leaves us in our misery, but a positive term that throws us upon the mercy of God. Ramm holds up a mirror to our sin, not as a doom-and-gloom prophet, but as a realistic pastor-theologian who has looked in the mirror himself.

Ramm rightly calls us to understand sin by grace, Adam by Christ, or law by gospel. He does not, however, develop this key insight, which should perhaps serve as the *leitmotif* for a constructive doctrine of sin. In-

stead, he sprinkles the theme throughout his wide-ranging exposition and evaluation of selected figures from the history of philosophy, theology, literature, and the social sciences, and in his exegetical insights into Christ's central place in salvation-history. Ramm's book would be improved with the elaboration of his Christocentric understanding of sin, possibly as its central and creative theme.

Ramm's most important contribution, however, is a positive statement of the doctrine of sin. He accomplishes this by providing a comprehensive perspective on its manifestations, an integrative assessment of its relation to various fields of human activity, and a critical survey of biblical, historical, philosophical, theological, literary, and scientific versions of the doctrine of sin. Ramm's book, which is both manageable in size and momentous in scope, would prove significant in the study of systematic theology—or in any field concerned with the problem of sin.

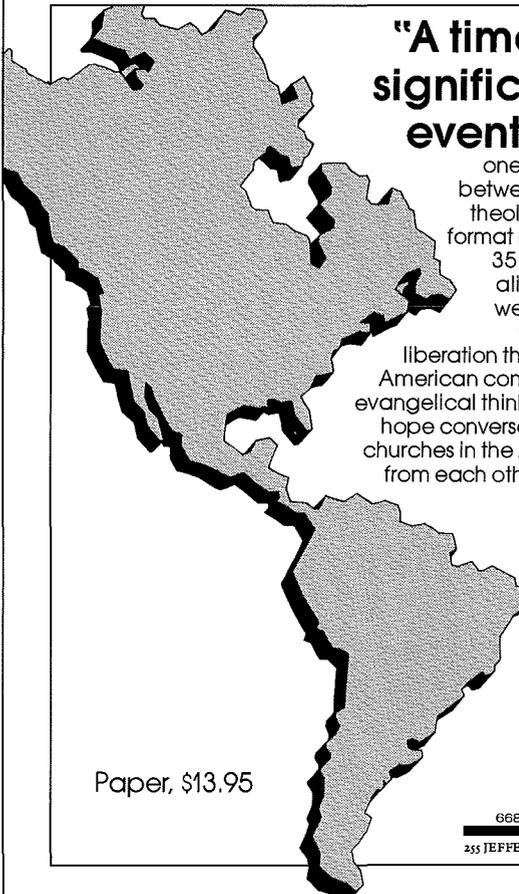
Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America

by Martin E. Marty (Little, Brown and Company, 1984, 488 pp., \$25.00). Reviewed by Bryan V. Hillis, Ph.D. student in History of Christianity at the University of Chicago, Divinity School.

In contrast to earlier efforts that "tell the story of American religion," among which Martin E. Marty numbers Sydney E. Ahl-

strom's *A Religious History of the American People* (Yale University Press, 1972) "the most expansive and successful" (p. 478), *Pilgrims in Their Own Land* is based on the assumption that "it is impossible to find a single ideological thread uniting the Americans in their spiritual pilgrimage" (p. ix). Hence in this historical narrative of American religious history, Marty looks to the main players in that pilgrimage and the dreams that drove those pathfinders. Taking up his own pedagogical challenge to re-envision American religious history, Marty has re-told the story of five hundred years of religion having borrowed the image of the unsettled wanderer or "pilgrim" from Jacques Maritain's *Reflections on America* (1958). As Marty informs us on page one of his text, Maritain regarded Americans even in their own land as "prodded by a dream," "always on the move" and with a "sense of becoming." Marty's hope is that this metaphorical image will reveal something of the spiritual quests of the pathfinders of American religion and their followers who together searched for "home," or "spheres where they might find meaning and something to which to belong" (p. x).

Starting with what he calls "the first migrants," the American Indians, Marty provides us with both the context for and the insights of America's religious visionaries. The political maneuvering of an explorer like Columbus are explained insofar as these illuminate that person's religious aspirations. Marty's concluding comment regarding this



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one that will help bridge the gap between North and Latin American theological discussion. The unique format makes what happened when 35 scholars met in Mexico come alive for others to experience as well. The reader gets involved in the inherent conflict between liberation theological reflection in a Latin American context over against mainstream evangelical thinking in the U.S. and Canada. I hope conversations like these continue. The churches in the Americas have much to learn from each other." — Duane L. Christensen

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particular spiritual pilgrim, as based on the report of his admiring biographer Bartolome de Las Casas, is that "Columbus did so many other pious things . . . one wonders how he had time to sail ships so masterfully" (p. 22). These humorous asides, together with superbly chosen anecdotes do not blur Marty's scholarly insights or historical narrative but rather flavor the material with a vitality that is informative as well as entertaining.

Marty's biographical method allows him to deal with many themes of American religious life such as missionary efforts, church state relations, ethnic groupings, communal experiments, social reforms, political intrigue, theological controversies and denominational renewals, just to mention a few. All events and people are placed in roughly chronological order though the problems inherent in writing a bird's-eye view of 500 years of religious history within a space less than 500 pages means the reader has to be aware that a strict chronological order will not always obtain. Still, a perfectly logical narrative is established and maintained throughout, even when the plethora of movements and cults of the modern era are described.

One of the most obvious strengths of the book is that Marty's religious, social, and political precis help the reader understand how reasonable and attractive these religious options were for leader and adherent alike within the matrix of the contemporary world. What is even more notable about Marty's method in this regard is that at no point, are reductionist explanations offered. Marty keeps to his task as an historian; namely, to tell the story of real people struggling with real problems and breaking new religious paths with their solutions. "Being religious" takes on a liveliness in this book that no previous monograph of this type has supplied as the reader empathizes with the pilgrim in the search for the realization of a new religious vision.

However, choosing the right "pilgrims" to tell the American religious history within the pages of one monograph is a difficult task. Marty has already been criticized by reviewers such as Robert T. Handy (*Christian Century*, Sept. 26, '84, pp. 876-878) for missing some important "pilgrim" theologians (i.e. Nevin, Clarke, Cone and Ruether) and by Louis Weeks (*Theology Today*, Apr. '85, pp. 142-144) for not dealing adequately enough with the black religion of slavery or with female pilgrims. It is also ironic that a scholar such as Marty, known for his commentary on the modern religious world, has given such scant attention to more recent developments. Even these critics though, acknowledge that Marty has accomplished his main purpose of telling the story of American religion through the efforts of its pioneers in a comprehensive and compelling manner.

Additional features of the book include its thorough index where almost any figure of religious importance in America can be located and then placed very quickly in his/her proper context by reference to the text. The ten-page "Suggested Reading" section, though far from a complete bibliography, serves as an excellent directive source. The

fact that *Pilgrims* is now available in paperback makes it an even more attractive purchase for either the private library or for use in an introductory course to the history of American religion.

There is no question about the fact that Marty's effort here will go a long way towards achieving one of his stated aims in writing the book; namely "to enlarge the cohort of readers in the field" (p. 478). The fact that a renowned scholar like Handy is also able to assert that even "veteran scholars and participants in American religious life have much to learn and savor" in this work makes Marty's achievement all that more impressive.

The Christian Hope

by Brian Hebblethwaite (Eerdmans, 1985, 244 pp., \$9.95). Reviewed by Rodney L. Petersen, Assistant Professor of Church History and the History of Christian Thought, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

"Born anew to a living hope," Peter writes (I Peter 1:3), and so we have been. However, the exact nature of that "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading" hope has been the subject of much debate and speculation in the history of the Church's earthly sojourn. Hebblethwaite maps that journey. In doing so he provides his own vision for a Christian eschatology today.

Two-thirds of Hebblethwaite's analysis is devoted to current theological reflection as affected by scientific discovery, philosophical analysis, and a sense of the world religious community. This reflection has yielded a more balanced eschatology, he believes, as earlier hope for a gradual realization of God's kingdom on earth has been countered by a fresh sense of eternity and the futurist demands of Christian hope (p. 201). In light of this admitted emphasis upon modernity, Hebblethwaite's analysis of earlier periods of the Church's speculation tends to become generalized, a problem that is compounded by a spotty although suggestive bibliography and few references.

First, though, the background of Christian hope in the Old and New Testaments is sketched. Jewish hope, initially focused upon the future of the community, becomes more cosmic and individualized by the later prophets. We are introduced to reflection on Jesus' hope and that of the diverse New Testament community as Christianity is shown to take form in the context of messianic and apocalyptic expectations. Our study focuses on classical definitions of Christian hope, summarized in the work of Lactantius, Eusebius of Caesarea and Augustine. Medieval hope is boiled down to the essentials; Reformation reflection is presented as an outgrowth of such and is hastily surveyed. A more detailed analysis of this latter period would have been helpful for an appreciation of later perspectives. Hebblethwaite relies upon T.F. Torrance's trichotomy of eschatologies (faith, hope, and love) in Luther, Calvin, and Bucer respectively. Little is done with the way in which religious self-identity, eschatological expectation and exegetical methodology in-

ter-penetrated either here or in earlier periods.

Modernity begins for Hebblethwaite with the Enlightenment. The challenge to classical eschatology comes in at least three areas: the idea of progressive revelation (Lessing), a stress upon the moral import of biblical hope (Kant), and a fresh effort to distinguish the divine in biblical imagery from historical context (Semler). These areas become the foundation for further reflection, particularly in the beginnings of a Christian social theology. Scant attention is given to millenarian and revivalist hopes (which rest "on a complete failure to discern the nature of biblical prophecy, let alone the apocalyptic literature of late Judaism and the early Church," p. 128). Hebblethwaite hastens on to the twentieth century, to 1) reactions to liberal theology 2) Roman Catholic reflection and 3) contemporary Protestant theology. A deficient sense of transcendence in the nineteenth century (the "liberal equation of the Kingdom of God and a perfected human world on earth") has been readressed in the twentieth by "reintroducing the idea of eternity" (p. 151). Balanced Christian hope may be seen in the future-oriented work of Moltmann and Pannenberg (pp. 184-189) together with the impact this has had upon "this-worldly" hope seen in liberation theology (cp Berkhof, p. 194).

Having surveyed the past, Hebblethwaite further outlines his perspective derived from the revealed nature of God, the demands of theodicy, moral and religious plausibility. Three points may be noted. It is universalist in hope yet affirms the possibility of final separation, interpreted as annihilation (p. 216). Hebblethwaite appreciates Barth's christological reinterpretation of predestination but argues that his complicated reasoning is not necessary if one can "dispel the notion that all is fixed in advance" (p. 138). Nevertheless, having summarized the work of Baillie, Robinson, and Hick, Hebblethwaite notes the "weighty objections" of Travis (pp. 194, 215-17) to universalism (*Christian Hope and the Future of Man*, 1980). Second, critical of traditional ways in which final separation from God's love has been conceived (p. 213ff.), Hebblethwaite explores dimensions of "pareschatology," i.e., "the intermediate state beyond death and prior to the final consummation" (p. 218). Such sanctification as occurs here is offered as a speculative solution to the problems of unbelief and misbelief (p. 219). Roots for an expanded vision of purgatory are laid by Hebblethwaite in the context of biblical hope and in the theologies of Clement of Alexandria and Origen (p. 49). Finally, contemporary Protestant thought, affected as it is by current evolutionary and cosmological reflection, must affirm a continuing creative process in God's future (p. 224), postulating "further, new creative acts of God, if man is to have a future not only beyond the death of individuals, but also beyond the heat-death of the universe" (p. 176). Here Hebblethwaite's thought is processive in nature if not, strictly speaking, process theology, a movement with a generally deficient sense of Christian hope (p. 183).

Christian hope in its traditional categories

is affirmed (excepting millenarianism), if speculatively explored. Jesus Christ remains in his historical incarnation and resurrection the "central pivot" (p. 223) of a consummation (p. 225) that affirms continuing individuality (beatific vision) and union (communion of saints and Kingdom of God). However, the question that confronts the reader is what to make of Hebblethwaite's imaginative reflections, particularly in the areas noted above. He freely cites the agnostic caution offered by Paul (I Cor 2:9) in terms of heavenly speculation, a word that might be offered here. Hebblethwaite's proposal is clearly imaginative. In the end one is confronted by the question of the validity of trajectories of hope beyond the explicit letter of Scripture. Yet, the proposal does not lose in intelligibility because of the generally sound analysis, historical perspective and theological scope. This study will prove helpful as a summary of Christian hope for the interested lay person or beginning theological student. It is generally fair, excepting a too quickly eliminated millenarian vision. One is challenged on a topic that will only continue to become more central in Christian discussion as our global community with its varying religious traditions becomes one before apocalyptic problems and possibilities.

BOOK COMMENTS

Marxist Analysis and Christian Faith
by Rene Coste (Orbis Books, 1985, 232 + vii pp., \$11.95).

Rene Coste is a Catholic, and a professor of social theology at the Institute Catholique in Toulouse, France. This work was originally published in a French edition in 1976. In it Coste pays attention to large-scale contemporary development within Marxism and is not so tied to specific intramural disputes within Marxism as to be outdated today. And although much contemporary liberation theology is rooted in Marxist concerns or conceptions, this is not primarily a work on liberation theology. It is primarily about what Coste takes to be mainstream Marxism and whether a Christian can accept such teachings and still be a Christian.

Valuably, Coste's work shows an independence and acuity of judgment. Though a Catholic, Coste cites as his most important theological influences Karl Barth and Nicholas Berdyaev. And though he avows a strong egalitarianism in his introduction, in his conclusion Coste writes words of caution to a group of fervently Marxist worker-priests that suggest Coste's own misgivings about Marxism: "Have they really understood that the Marxist critique of religious alienation wants not only to question the weaknesses of the church but radically to destroy any idea of the supernatural origin of Christianity, or that Marxist materialism involves the absolute rejection of God?"

Coste is careful in distinguishing aspects of Marxist analysis and prescription and clear in his treatment of the mainstream and its

tributaries. For those interested in Marxism and Christianity, particularly as seen by one sympathetic to Marxism but more dedicated to Christ, Coste provides us with a good book.

—Paul Faber

The Church in the World: Opposition, Tension, or Transformation?

by Robert E. Webber (Zondervan, 1986, 333 pp., \$11.95).

Robert Webber presents a textbook survey of Christian thought about the church's relation to society, culture, and politics. After an exploration of New Testament teaching, he follows the theme through the history of

Christianity. In the Reformation he distinguishes policies of opposition (Anabaptists), paradox (Luther), and transformation (Calvin). After a look at social theology (liberal and evangelical) ca. 1900, Webber surveys recent opinions in the World Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, "the religious right," and the World Evangelical Fellowship. He offers balanced evaluations of the ideas he describes, and concludes with positive, timely theological formulations.

Although he sometimes condenses and simplifies excessively, Webber provides valuable information and comment as an introduction to present-day discussion. His church/world theology focuses on Christ's dominion, the challenge of demonic "pow-

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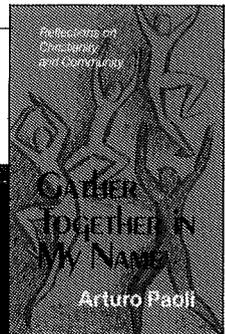
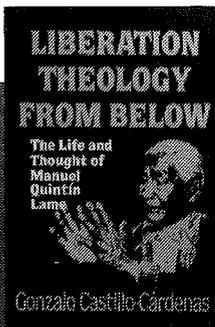
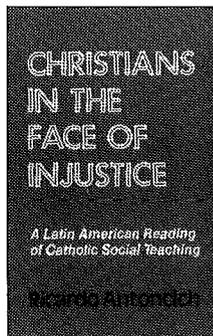
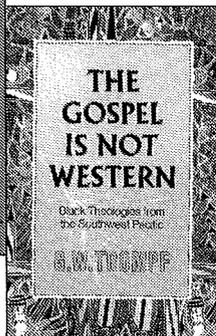
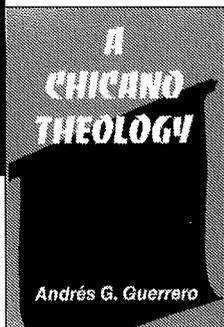
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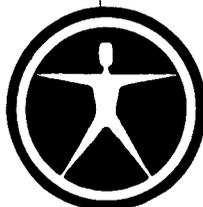
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ers," and the church's eschatological role between the times. He presents it as the biblical teaching and as a new ecumenical "convergence of thought" but neglects its history—not mentioning Oscar Cullman, Karl Barth, or Hendrikus Berkhof. Webber avoids discussing specific social issues, confining his critiques of "extreme liberation theology" and the "religious right" to theological content instead of policies.

—Jack P. Maddex, Jr.

Getting Nowhere: Christian Hope and Utopian Dream
by Peter S. Hawkins (Cowley, 1985, 133 pp., \$8.95).

The sense of expectations unmet, Hawkins believes, gives rise to utopian imagining. In this book he traces the history of the idea of utopia from its twin roots: biblical and Greek. From the former comes the conviction that human happiness is always a gift from God, from above; the latter tells us that it is in our power to build the kingdom. The tensions between these perspectives provides the focal point of this history. While the renaissance believed our nature (and thus our societies) could change, Thomas More imagined a utopia that left room for better things, open to God. In the 1880's Edward Bellamy wrote an "extravagantly optimistic" account of the year 2000. For him and LeCorbusier (The Radiant City) utopian ideas are more important than the people who live there.

So when "nowhere" becomes someplace utopian possibilities become an awful nightmare and writers (Orwell, Huxley, and Zamiatin) imagine how to avoid utopia. Can we really do it better than God? B.F. Skinner still insists we can, Walker Percy is not sure. Hawkins insists that we must repudiate the tendency to hold either purely earthly or purely heavenly hopes. By God's grace we can imagine the ideal, but we can also work toward it. Utopia is a dynamic rather than a design.

A helpful study that shows how utopian thinking inevitably raises religious questions. But are biblical hopes only from above or do God's acts in history provide the model and impetus for change?

—William A. Dyrness

On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family
by Ray S. Anderson and Dennis B. Guernsey (Eerdmans, 1985, 168 pp.).

"God has placed human persons in a created order for which the covenant love of God provides the fundamental paradigm for parenting, sexuality and marriage and the formation of family life. From the perspective of the church as the new family of God, the human family is liberated from its own failures and fears, and each person is affirmed as having a place in God's kingdom. Through Jesus Christ, to whom we are connected by grace, we are all brothers and sisters. We are family."

So write Professors Anderson and Guernsey from their perspectives as professors at Fuller Theological Seminary; Anderson of Theology and Ministry, and Guernsey of Marriage and Family Ministries and the Directorship of the Institute of Marriage and Family Ministries at Fuller.

Any Christian marriage and family counselor as well as a local pastor would recognize and be equally at home with the biblical base of this social theology. For these authors are thoroughly committed to the "authority of the Scriptures as normative" for their theological anthropology and family sociology respectively.

From their team teaching at Fuller, they produced four assumptions: (1) they are deliberately non-Cartesian (i.e. they see the task of science not as being to reduce the world to progressively smaller and more "accurate" properties as in Newtonian physics) (2) the family is systematic rather than linear in understanding of causality (3) the family is relationistic rather than reductionistic, and (4) finally, the family is fundamentally dynamic rather than static, i.e. they emphasize process rather than structure.

Standing for freedom in choosing rather than the usual scientific determinism in family development, they describe "parenting is somewhat like the 'gift of the Spirit' to which Paul refers in his letter to the Corinthian church" (p. 64). Throughout the volume, although written from a "scientific sociological" point of view, the golden threads of personal testimony and Scriptural support for their theories appear again and again. An example could be, "the role of parenting is to contextualize and historicize the self as existing before and with God" (p. 70). Or again, "parenting is accountable to the commandment of God rather than to intrinsic human or creaturely possibilities" (p. 71). In their emphasis on General Systems Theory they suggest "the viability of modern systems theory in the process of interpreting Scripture, especially in the area of biblical teaching about family roles." A student might need a modicum of socio-analytic language to understand this book, but any student would benefit personally through careful reading, especially if married and parenting children while under the pressures of supporting a family and preparing for ministry.

—John Monroe Vayhinger

To Be Human: An Introductory Experiment in Philosophy
by Xavier O. Monasterio (Paulist Press, 1985, \$7.95).

This book provides practical and clear introduction to the human philosophies of B.F. Skinner, Jean-Paul Sartre, Karl Marx and Abraham Maslow. Strangely for a book from Paulist there is no reference to a theological or religious dimension.

Within this—very serious—limitation, the book makes a useful contribution to the philosophy of the person. Monasterio explains that for Skinner, behavior is a function of environment rather than consciousness, while

for Sartre it expresses the dignity of being free. The one underemphasizes human agency; the other overemphasizes it. Marx recognized the importance of work which is socially produced, but denied existence to the individual. Most helpful is the treatment of Maslow's view that human nature is constituted by a characteristic set of needs. Set in a hierarchy, these needs suggest rather than dictate growth toward full human potential, and it may be helped or hindered by the more powerful cultural demands. While Maslow is helpful in shaping a more open and dynamic view of the person in which environmental and individual factors interact, Monasterio points out the underlying childish optimism that easily dissolves into the vacuous therapies of self-realization and peak experiences we see all around.

Monasterio seeks to move toward an integration of insights from philosophy and the social sciences but comes far short of any compelling vision of humanity, or any realistic account of human evil. We are merely urged toward a vague post-capitalism where we all seek to make ourselves a little better than our capitalist environment.

—William A. Dyrness

Selective Nontreatment of Handicapped Newborns
by Robert F. Weir (Oxford University Press, 1984, 292 pp., \$27.95).

Weir begins his study of the moral dilemmas in neonatal medicine by arguing that selective nontreatment is a continuation of the historic toleration for infanticide against handicapped newborns. He then discusses the varying views on selective nontreatment held by leading physicians, attorneys and ethicists, offering his assessment of each position. Weir himself rejects both sanctity and quality of life arguments in favor of a "best interest of the child" criterion. Recognizing the great suffering attached to some severe conditions, he seeks to assess whether the child's life is likely to represent "a fate worse than death or a life worth experiencing even with the handicaps." He attempts to delineate an approach to selective nontreatment decisions on this basis.

Weir illustrates his presentation with numerous case studies, also providing helpful descriptions and general prognoses for the severe medical conditions encountered in hospital neonatal intensive care units. He recommends that treatment/nontreatment decisions be made according to diagnostic categories and outlines the manner in which certain conditions ought to be handled. Because nontreatment decisions do not necessarily result in a quick or painless death, Weir allows that "under certain conditions it is justifiable to kill birth-defective infants who have previously been denied treatment on sound moral grounds."

Carefully tackling this most complex issue, Weir provides both professionals and interested laypersons with a systematic and informative text. He summarizes the diverse positions accurately and gives a valuable ov-

erview of the medical, legal and ethical dimensions. Both his effort to establish more solid criteria by which to make these difficult decisions and his procedural suggestions have merit. Several fundamental problems in his recommendations remain, however. In allowing for the rare case of direct killing of newborns he fails to deal with the moral responsibility for that action. By maintaining that newborns are "potential" persons who, though having a general claim to protection do not have the same moral status (or rights) as "full" persons have, he circumvents some of the most serious implications of nontreatment decisions.

—Christine D. Pohl

Saints and Sinners in the Early Church: Differing and Conflicting Traditions in the First Six Centuries

by W.H.C. Friend (Glazier, 1985, 183 pp., \$8.95).

A major misunderstanding that many people have regarding ancient Christianity is that it was characterized by a single tradition.

While there is no question that Christian orthodoxy became the dominant view of Christianity in the ancient world, it must not be forgotten that orthodoxy was forged in the context of competing views. Thus the Gnostic Marcion contributed to the development of the canon, Arius to the development of the Trinity, Apollinarius to the formation of Christology, and Pelagius to the soteriological consensus.

Friend tells us that this book is really about the sinners—the losers in the battle for orthodoxy, what he calls the "might-have-beens" of their time. These are the Gnostics and thinkers like Origen, Pelagius, Nestorius, Severus of Antioch and movements like Donatist Christianity in North Africa.

This book should be read because it reminds us first of all that the present tension in Christianity between the established church and fringe groups are not new. The origin of this struggle and even the shape of it go back to the early church. Second, the research that made *Saints and Sinners in the Early Church* available points once again to the need for an on-going scholarship. Recent discoveries in ancient thought as well as those that are bound to come from continuing archaeological exploration are a continual reminder that true scholarship never stands still. The full story about the early church, its saints and its sinners, has yet to be told.

—Robert Webber

Calvin and His Times

by Jansie van der Walt (Promedia Publications, 1985, 154 pp., \$5.00).

This summary of Calvin's life moves from his student days in Paris to his last years in Geneva. In its brevity we are clearly introduced to the scope of his work against the

backdrop of political and religious turbulence and personal tragedy. The humanity of Calvin and his age are highlighted through frequent citation of personal correspondence and reminiscence. Concerning personal tragedy, Calvin writes: "Nothing robs us of our strength and dejects us so much as the question: Why? Why did God do it?" Further on he adds, ". . . in the school of Christ we do not learn to suppress the emotions God has given us, and to become stony-hearted" (p. 86). Or note the description of Cardinal Contarini at Regensberg: "He made the sign of the cross over us so often, that his arm should surely be sore and stiff for at least two days" (p. 87).

Van der Walt fleshes Calvin out for us in a fine focused way. He is no longer the stony figure we associate with the Wall of the Reformers. Our interest is piqued by a winsome presentation that, unfortunately, lacks adequate footnotes and, therefore, full usability. While of interest for the general reader, without such notation and with little theological reflection, the study is less than what it might have been in this year (1986) of a feast of publications celebrating the 450th anniversary of the Reformation in Geneva.

—R.L. Petersen

Church and Confession: Conservative Theologians in Germany, England, and America, 1815-1866

by Walter H. Conser, Jr. (Mercer University Press, 1984, 361 pp., \$28.95).

This creative and wide-ranging book fills a long-felt need. It discusses, with considerable sympathy, the efforts of "confessionals" in Germany, England, and the United States from 1815-1866 to stand against the tides of individualism and economic change sweeping their societies. Conser argues that a common pattern emerged in each country. Neo-Lutherans in Germany (like Wilhelm Löhe, August Neander, and August Vilmar), Anglo-Catholics in England (chiefly John Henry Newman and other leaders of the Oxford Movement), and a variety of theological conservatives in America (e.g., Philip Schaff, John W. Nevin, Charles Hodge) turned to Christian traditions from the Reformation and beyond to express Christian faith. They saw both the religious liberalism and the rampant piety of their day as variations of a common fallacy. This fallacy involved the exaltation of self against community, the preference of individualistic interpretation over the authority of revelation, and the push for scientific rationalism at the expense of religious mystery. Although the conservatives differed among themselves on important issues, they also agreed that the organic connections formed by past Christian experience defined the essence of the faith.

Conser makes his case by following the same three-fold exposition for each country: setting the religious scene, describing the leading ideas of liberal and pietist spokes-

men, and then expounding the counter-proposals of the confessionals as "romantics" seems forced, given the extent of the differences among themselves. And it may not be as clear as Conser thinks that the conservative confessionals were as soundly defeated as he contends in the book's epilogue. But on balance, this is a most welcome book, recommended for its sensitive reading of neglected theological figures as well as for the strength of its comparative analysis.

—Mark A. Noll

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