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FOUNDATIONS

(Doing theology on the basics of classical faith)

PARTICIPATING IN THE SUFFERINGS OF GOD

By Patty Taylor, student at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Introduction

The mysteries and meaning of suffering cannot be discussed simply as an academic topic. Theology needs to provide a framework for knowledge and for living. My work here on Bonhoeffer's concept of "Participating in the Sufferings of God" is not so much a theological exercise as it is an attempt to examine the value of this concept for life and ministry.

Bonhoeffer's biographer, Eberhard Bethge, remembers him in his early years of teaching youthful catechism classes saying that "the hardest theological pronouncements of Barth were worth nothing if they could not be explained *in toto* to these Grunewald children" (Bethge, p. 65). This article is an attempt to take one theological theme from Bonhoeffer and explain it to myself and my contemporaries.

We will look first at the scriptural basis for the concept; second, we will observe its development in the theology of Bonhoeffer; third, we will discover how he lived out this theme on a personal level; and fourth, we will consider how all of this can have significance in the lives of believers in contemporary America.

Scriptural Basis

As is true with most of Bonhoeffer's theological themes, "participating in the sufferings of God" has strong New Testament foundations. Paul refers to it in at least three letters:

For just as *the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance*, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. (2 Cor. 1:5)

... we are afflicted in every way but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always *carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus*, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Cor. 4:8-10)

But even if *I am being poured out as a drink offering* upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. (Phil. 2:17)

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake and *in my flesh I do my share* on behalf of His body (which is the church) *in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions*. (Col. 1:24)

Of these passages, Bonhoeffer says: "Although Christ has fulfilled all the vicarious sufferings necessary for our redemption, *his suffering on earth is not finished yet. He has, in his grace, left a residue . . . of suffering for his Church to fulfill in the interval before his Second Coming.* . . . The Body of Christ has its own allotted portion of suffering. . . . Blessed is he whom God deems worthy to suffer for the Body of Christ. Such suffering is joy indeed" (CD, pp. 273, 274; italics are mine throughout article unless otherwise noted). Note that Bonhoeffer is careful to separate Christ's vicarious atonement on the cross from the suffering of the church.

As early as 1934, Bonhoeffer had written a sermon on 2

Cor. 12:9, from which are taken the following lines: "Why is suffering holy? Because *God suffers in the world through men.* . . . *Human suffering and weakness is sharing in God's own suffering* and weakness in the world. . . . Our God is a suffering God. Suffering forms man into the image of God. The suffering man is in the likeness of God" (GS, p. 182).

In these few passages, we have not exhausted the scriptural basis for Bonhoeffer's writing on the subject of "participating in the sufferings of God." As we see it developed in his theology, we will note an even broader range of Scripture interpretations from the Gospels as well as from the Epistles.

The Theme in Bonhoeffer's Theology

Christian theology in its classical phase would have shrunk from all talk about "the sufferings of God." Suffering meant being acted upon by exterior forces outside one's control and it was difficult to see how one could reconcile belief in God's omnipotence and self-sufficiency with talk about his "suffering." But there was the problem of the crucifixion which necessitated Christians saying that in some sense God suffered. Eastern orthodox theology has always held that suffering in the sense of sacrificial self-giving love is of the essence of God. God empties himself in the creation, in Incarnation and in re-creation (redemption). It seems that *Bonhoeffer was moving towards a fresh expression of this belief in his presentation of the Christian life as one of self-giving love in the real (not idealized or romanticized) world.* (Tinsley, p. 88)

Before we look more closely at the idea of *participating* in the sufferings of God in Jesus Christ, let us look at Bonhoeffer's *conception* of those sufferings. The evangelical church in America today may be guilty of regarding the sufferings of Christ too lightly. Because our churches have empty crosses, our focus is not on the suffering of Christ, but on his exaltation. Bonhoeffer does us a great service in helping us see the awful scope of our Lord's suffering in his life as well as his death on the cross.

In his Christology lectures at the University of Berlin in 1933, Bonhoeffer spoke of Jesus Christ as the "Humiliated One and the Exalted One." "In humiliation and in exaltation, Jesus remains wholly man and wholly God. *The statement, 'This is God,' must be made in exactly the same way about the humiliated one as about the exalted one.*" "The God-Man in history is always and already the humiliated God-Man from the manger to the cross" (CC, pp. 106, 107). He goes on to describe this humiliation in terms of Paul's phrase in Romans 8:3, "sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh."

In the humiliation, Christ, of his own free will, enters the world of sin and death. He enters it in such a way as to hide himself in it in weakness and not to be recognized as

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God-Man. . . . His claim, which he as God-Man raises in this form, must provoke contradiction and hostility. He goes incognito, as a beggar among beggars, as an outcast among outcasts, as despairing among the despairing, as dying among the dying. He also goes as sinner among sinners, yet . . . as sinless among sinners. . . . Luther says, "He is himself thief, murderer, adulterer, as we are, because he bears our sins." (CC, pp. 107, 108)

Jesus came of his own free will in the "likeness of sinful flesh" (Phil. 2:6, 7), in weakness, anonymously. In this incognito he provoked contradiction and hostility; he identified himself with the poor, the despairing and the dying. He even appeared as a sinner in the eyes of others; yet as the sinless one, he was the sin-bearer for all humankind. "This suffering of Christ, to which Bonhoeffer constantly returns, lacks all the nobility, honor, and splendor usually associated with the suffering of tragic heroes. But it is a necessary suffering, linked to Christ's participation in man's destiny in reality. It is neither glorious nor accidental, but obscure and unavoidable. It results from confronting the world. It is experienced not as a more or less arbitrary private ascetic act, but as companionship with those who cannot escape it" (Dumas, p. 204).

As profoundly as Bonhoeffer portrays the sufferings of Christ in *Christ the Center*, he makes no mention of the involvement of believers in his sufferings. We do not see this theme being fully developed until the 1934 sermon previously mentioned and his subsequent writing in *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Letters and Papers From Prison*.

However, the foundation for the significance of this theme in Bonhoeffer's writings can be found in his first published work, *Sanctorum Communio* (1927). Here he seeks to answer the question, "How is Christ present in the world?" His answer is that Christ exists in the world as community — the community of the church. He carries this theme further in the first part of *Christ the Center*, "Jesus is the Christ present as the Crucified and as the risen one. . . . His presence can be understood in space and time, here and now. . . . Christ as person, is present in the church" (p. 43). "This presence has a threefold form in the Church: that of the Word, that of the Sacrament, and that of the Congregation" (p. 46). "The Logos of God has existence in space and time in and as the Church. . . . The Church is the body of Christ" (p. 58, 59).

We see this theme of Christ existing as the Church coming together with the theme of Christ's sufferings in a passage from *The Cost of Discipleship*: "the church of Christ has a different 'form' from the world. Her task is increasingly to realize this form. It is the form of Christ himself, who came into this world and of his infinite mercy bore mankind and took it to himself, but who notwithstanding did not fashion himself in accordance with it but was rejected and cast out by it. He was not of this world. In the right confrontation with the world, the Church will become ever more like to the form of its suffering Lord" (CD, p. 300).

We might understand Bonhoeffer's theological reasoning for the call to participate in the sufferings of God in this way:

1. Christ exists *in* and as the Church in the world;
2. The Incarnate God suffered in the world.
Therefore:
3. The sufferings of the Church are the sufferings of God; And
4. The individual disciple is called to participate in the sufferings of God (developed in *The Cost of Discipleship*).

One of Bonhoeffer's theological arguments on the nature of reality is that "what is determines what ought to be." It is my contention that as the German Church began to experience suffering under National Socialism in the 1930's and as Bonhoeffer himself participated in that suffering both as a churchman and

as an individual, the reality of that suffering forced him to develop a theology to fit the reality. Therefore, it is not surprising to see it as a major theme in his later writings written under the full tyranny of the Third Reich.

In *The Cost of Discipleship* Bonhoeffer expounds on Jesus' words to his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:34). He summarizes this "call to discipleship" with these well-known words: "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die" (CD, p. 99). "The 'must' of suffering applies to his disciples no less than to himself. Just as Christ is Christ only in virtue of his suffering and rejection, so the disciple is a disciple only in so far as he shares his Lord's suffering and rejection and crucifixion. Discipleship means adherence to the person of Jesus, and therefore submission to the law of Christ which is the law of the cross" (CD, p. 96).

This suffering of the disciple of Christ is described by Bonhoeffer as follows: "The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. . . . The call of Christ . . . sets the Christian in the middle of the daily arena against sin and the devil. Every day he encounters new temptations, and every day he must suffer anew for Jesus Christ's sake. . . . He too has to bear the sins of others; he too must bear their shame. . . . The call to follow Christ always means a call to share the work of forgiving men in their sins. . . . *Suffering, then, is the badge of true discipleship*" (CD, pp. 99, 100).

Among many moving lines of poetry which Bonhoeffer wrote in Tegel Prison is the second stanza of "Christians and Pagans."

Men go to God when he is sore bestead,
Find him poor and scorned, without shelter or bread
Whelmed under weight of the wicked, the weak, the dead;
Christians stand by God in his hour of grieving.
(LPP, pp. 348-49)

He explains his meaning in the letter of July 18, 1944 to Bethge: "The poem about Christians and pagans contains an idea that you will recognize: 'Christians stand by God in his hour of grieving'; that is what distinguishes Christians from pagans. Jesus asked in Gethsemane, 'Could you not watch with me one hour?' That is a rehearsal of what the religious man expects from God. *Man is summoned to share in God's sufferings at the hands of a godless world*" (LPP, p. 361). To Bonhoeffer, the real Christian is the one who does not look to God as "deus ex machina," the "answer to life's problems, and the solution of its needs and conflicts" (LPP, p. 341), but the one who knows God in the "fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death" (Phil. 3:10).

Where does this suffering take place? Are disciples called out of the world to "suffer" as did those residents of the monasteries of the middle ages? By no means. "Man is summoned to share in God's sufferings at the hands of a godless world. He must therefore really live in the godless world, without attempting to gloss over or explain its ungodliness in some religious way or other. He must live a 'secular' life, and thereby share in God's sufferings" (LPP, p. 361). Bonhoeffer says the life of suffering must be lived *in this world*. He explains what he means by the "this-worldliness" of Christianity in these words: "The Christian is not a *homo religiosus*, but simply a man, as Jesus was a man — in contrast, shall we say, to John the Baptist. I don't mean the shallow and banal this-worldliness of the enlightened, the busy, the comfortable, or the lascivious, but the profound this-worldliness, characterized by discipline and the constant knowledge of death and resurrection. I think Luther lived a this-worldly life in this sense" (LPP, p. 369). So the world is the milieu of the Christian life which participates in the sufferings of God — the same world in which Jesus lived and suffered,

apart from the religious community of his time.

One of the many writers who have commented on Bonhoeffer at this point puts it this way: "By participating in Christ's being for others in worldly life, by encountering him there in the joys and sorrows, successes and failures of life in the world in which he lived and which he redeems through his incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, the Christian 'shares' in the sufferings of God at the hands of a godless world" (Phillips, p. 241).

What are the characteristics of one's participation in God's sufferings? In the following quote from "After Ten Years," Bonhoeffer uses some key words which should help our understanding: "We can share in other people's sufferings only to a very limited degree. We are not Christ, but if we want to be Christians, we must have some share in Christ's large-heartedness by acting with *responsibility* and in *freedom* when the hour of danger comes, and by showing a real sympathy that springs, not from fear, but from the liberating and redeeming *love of Christ* for all who suffer. . . . The Christian is called to sympathy and action, not in the first place by his own sufferings, but by the sufferings of his brethren, for whose sake Christ suffered" (LPP, p. 14).

The key words here are "freedom," "responsibility," and "love." The decision to follow Christ and thus to share in his suffering is one which a person makes in freedom. This is the meaning of the "if" in Jesus' call, "if any man would come after me" (CD, pp. 96-97). Bonhoeffer seems always to be conscious of humanity's freedom either to choose or to reject Christ. He himself freely chose his path of discipleship.

In his *Ethics*, Bonhoeffer describes how responsibility is inseparable from freedom and both qualities are characteristic of the selfless life. He develops the idea of responsibility under the umbrella of "deputyship," by which he means that "a man is directly obliged to act in the place of other men" (E, p. 224). The basis in Scripture for this concept is to be found in Gal. 6:2: "Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ." That is what he means in the earlier quotation by "The Christian is called to sympathy and action . . . by the sufferings of his brethren." Sympathy is not enough — action is required.

The Christian's concern for the suffering of others springs "not from fear that it will happen to us," but from the "liberating and redeeming love of Christ for all who suffer." Bonhoeffer's chapter on loving one's enemies in the *Cost of Discipleship* (pp. 163-171) expounds this theme with deep insight. We have all been Christ's enemies (Rom. 5:10).

Bonhoeffer summarizes his thoughts on suffering in "After Ten Years" in this way: "It is infinitely easier to suffer in obedience to a human command than in the *freedom* of one's own *responsibility*. It is infinitely easier to suffer with others than to suffer *alone*. It is infinitely easier to suffer publicly and honourably than *apart* and *ignominiously*. It is infinitely easier to suffer through staking one's life than to suffer *spiritually*. Christ suffered as a free man alone, apart and in ignominy, in body and spirit; and *since then many Christians have suffered with him*" (LPP, p. 14).

There is another related theme for us to consider: the imitation of Christ in relationship to suffering. Bonhoeffer deals with this quite thoroughly in *The Cost of Discipleship* in the chapter titled "The Image of Christ" (p. 337-344). "It is not as though we had to imitate him as well as we could. We cannot transform ourselves into his image; it is rather the form of Christ which seeks to be formed in us (Gal. 4:19). . . . Christ's work is not finished. . . . We now know that we have been taken up and borne in the humanity of Jesus, and therefore that new nature we now enjoy means that we too must bear the sins and sorrows of others" (CD, pp. 341-42).

Bonhoeffer was fond of complementary themes (i.e., "only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes" [CD, p. 69]). The theme which complements that of *believers'* sharing the sufferings of *Christ* is that of *Christ* sharing the suf-

ferings of *believers*. This is a scriptural theme as well:

For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. (Heb. 2:18)

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:15, 16)

Bonhoeffer expressed this theme very poignantly as a prisoner during Christmas of 1943: "That misery, suffering, poverty, loneliness, helplessness, and guilt mean something quite different in the eyes of God from what they mean in the judgment of man, that God will approach where men turn away, that Christ was born in a stable because there was no room for him in the inn — these are things that a prisoner can understand better than other people; for him they really are glad tidings, and that faith gives him a part in the communion of saints, a Christian fellowship breaking the bounds of time and space and reducing the months of confinement here to insignificance" (LPP, p. 166).

I have written in this article only of the theme of *suffering* in Bonhoeffer's writings, but there is a balancing theme of *blessing*, which is evident even in his prison writings (LPP, pp. 45f, 135, 247, 335, 374). He often uses contrasting words to indicate other balancing themes such as sorrow and joy, humiliation and exaltation, cross and resurrection, sentenced and awakened to life, weakness and power. Yet, no one would deny that the theme of suffering predominates. "While neither blessing nor suffering is an end in itself but rather contingent upon God's ordinances, we find in Bonhoeffer a definite priority given to suffering. This priority, however, is not the superiority of self-denial over life in the world, which is 'religious' asceticism. The priority of suffering is simply a recognition of the fallenness of the world" (Woelfel, p. 260).

The Theme in Bonhoeffer's Life

At times, Bonhoeffer tried to minimize his suffering, as, for example, here in a letter to Bethge: "[I reject the thought] that I'm 'suffering' here. It seems to me a profanation. These things America to Germany in June/July 1939. It meant exchanging the safety and security of a life of teaching and writing in the U.S. for the danger and uncertainty of life in wartime Germany under the tyranny of Hitler. Just as Jesus 'set his face to go to Jerusalem'" (Luke 9:51), Bonhoeffer returned to Germany. "We cannot separate ourselves from our destiny, least of all out here. . . . I have made a mistake in coming to America. I must live through this difficult period of our national history with the Christian people of Germany. I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not *share the trials* of this time with my people" (Bethge, p. 559).

In "After Ten Years," the proud, brilliant, well-traveled, cultured and respected aristocrat summarizes his position: "We have for once learnt to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcast, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, the *reviled* — in short, from the perspective of those who suffer. . . . We have to learn that personal suffering is a more effective key, a more rewarding principle for exploring the world in thought and action than personal good fortune" (LPP, p. 17).

At times, Bonhoeffer tried to minimize his suffering, as, for example, here in a letter to Bethge: "[reject the thought] that I'm 'suffering' here. It seems to me a profanation. These things musn't be dramatized. . . . Of course, a great deal here is horrible, but where isn't it? Perhaps we've made too much of this question of suffering, and been too solemn about it" (LPP, p. 232).

And yet, we can feel the depth of his suffering in his powerful poem "Who Am I?," part of which reads:

Am I then really all that which other men tell of?
Or am I only what I know of myself,
restless and longing and sick, like a bird in a cage,
struggling for breath, as though hands were compressing
my throat,
yearning for colours, for flowers, for the voices of birds,
thirsting for words of kindness, for neighbourliness,
trembling with anger at despotisms and petty humiliation,
tossing in expectation of great events,
powerlessly trembling for friends at an infinite distance,
weary and empty at praying, at thinking, at making,
faint, and ready to say farewell to it all?

(LPP, p. 348)

Before he was imprisoned, "the clearest, sharpest picture" in Bonhoeffer's life "comes from [his] exuberant sense of freedom, the incredible agility and independence with which he moved, thought and lived" (Kuhns, p. 270). His greatest suffering was in the loss of that freedom. He expresses the loss vividly in his poem, "Stations on the Road to Freedom" (LPP, pp. 370-71).

In a letter to Bethge on Feb. 1, 1944, Bonhoeffer describes himself in the role of neighbor and brother to others who were suffering after a series of heavy bombing raids on Berlin: "You may know that the last few nights have been bad, especially the night of 30 January. Those who had been bombed out came to me the next morning for a bit of comfort. But I'm afraid I'm bad at comforting; I can listen all right, but I can hardly ever find anything to say. . . . It seems to me more important actually to *share* someone's distress than to use smooth words about it" (LPP, p. 203).

In a very unselfconscious way, it seems, Bonhoeffer lived out his own words, "that new nature we now enjoy means that we too must bear the sins and sorrows of others" (CD, pp. 341-42).

On August 21, 1944, in one of his last letters to Bethge, Bonhoeffer writes a passage closely resembling his last known words (cf. Bethge, p. 830n):

The key to everything is the 'in him.' All that we may rightly expect from God, and ask him for, is to be found in Jesus Christ. . . . If we are to learn what God promises, and what he fulfills, we must persevere in quiet meditation on the life, sayings, deeds, sufferings, and death of Jesus. It is certain that we may always live close to God and in the light of his presence, and that such living is an entirely new life for us; that nothing is then impossible for us, because all things are possible with God; that no earthly power can touch us without his will, and that danger and distress can only drive us closer to him. It is certain that we can claim nothing for ourselves, and may yet pray for everything; it is certain that our joy is hidden in suffering and our life in death. (LPP, p. 391)

Contribution to the Church Today

As a community of believers entering the 1980's in America, we can be grateful to Dietrich Bonhoeffer for several important insights:

1. He reminds us that Christ continues to suffer in the world wherever any human being suffers. "Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?" Then He will answer them, saying, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me" (Matt. 25:44, 45).

2. He reminds us that as His body we share in that suffering. "If children, [we are] heirs also, fellow heirs with Christ, *if indeed we suffer with him* in order that we may also be glorified with him" (Rom. 8:17). "For you have been called for this purpose since Christ also suffered for you, *leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps*" (1 Pet. 2:21).

3. He reminds us of our responsibility to bear one another's burdens as well as our own. "Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ. For each one shall bear his own load" (Gal. 6:2, 5).

4. He reminds us that we must not judge another's discipleship. "Every Christian has his *own* cross waiting for him. . . . Each must endure his allotted share of suffering and rejection. But each has a different share. . . . It is one and the same cross in every case" (CD, pp. 98, 99). "Peter therefore seeing him said to Jesus, 'Lord, and what about this man?' Jesus said to him, 'If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!'" (John 21:21, 22).

5. He contributes new ways of thinking about "being in Christ" as a community. "This 'holy worldliness' will necessitate a great amount of involvement, reflection, and confession. Certainly it will mean different things to different people, and the comparing of 'notes' will be of the utmost importance as each Christian attempts to determine the degree to which his own life must be aesthetic or intellectual, simple or complex, meditative or occupied. Perhaps a new concept of 'Christ existing as the church' will emerge out of just this 'comparing of notes'" (Phillips, pp. 243-44).

Let us remember the words of this most wise and human of men:

One must completely abandon any attempt to make something of oneself, whether it be a saint, or a converted sinner, or a churchman, . . . a righteous man or an unrighteous one, a sick man or a healthy one. By this-worldliness I mean living unreservedly in life's duties, problems, successes and failure, experiences and perplexities. In so doing we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God, taking seriously, not our own sufferings, but those of God in the world — watching with Christ in Gethsemane. . . . How can success make us arrogant, or failure lead us astray when we share in God's sufferings through a life of this kind? (LPP, 369-70)

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INQUIRY

(Questions, proposals, discussions, and research reports on theological and biblical issues)

EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL ETHICS

By Richard J. Mouw, Professor of Philosophy, Calvin College.

During April of 1981, Perkins School of Theology sponsored a conference on Evangelism and Social Ethics, directed by TSF Associate Editor David Watson. Perkins Journal granted us permission to publish several of the papers concurrently. This essay by Richard Mouw is the first of these articles.—MLB

I am neither a missiologist nor an "evangelologist" nor even a theologian by trade. My interest in evangelism stems from the fact that my life has been shaped by a Christian sub-community which places a strong emphasis on what it thinks of as "personal evangelism" and "mass evangelism." My interest in social ethics, on the other hand, has much to do with the fact that I am a professional philosopher working primarily in the area of social-political philosophy.

Early on in my scholarly career I felt uneasy about existing patterns of divorce between evangelistic and social-political concerns. My very first published article, entitled "The Task of Christian Social Ethics," appeared, while I was still a graduate student, in a leading evangelical periodical — after lengthy negotiations with the editor, who was uneasy about some of my emphases. The Christian climate in the 1960's was not especially conducive to attempts to explore positive and non-reductionistic relationships between evangelism and social ethics. Evangelicals insisted upon assurances that one was not trying to "politicize" the Gospel. Non-evangelicals were suspicious of those of us who wanted to explore social issues from a perspective that was tainted, in their eyes, by "obscurantist" convictions and "Biblicistic" assumptions.

The past decade has finally generated some encouraging signs that we are beginning to work beyond some of the older polarizations and suspicions in this area. The Perkins conference on "Evangelism and Social Ethics," with the variety of perspectives and communities represented in its program, is a further sign of hope. The conference-planners obviously intended that an honest and broad-ranging dialogue would take place. In my own comments here I have chosen to honor that intention by speaking from a self-consciously "conservative-evangelical" standpoint — at least in the sense that I take evangelical formulations and confusions and insights as my point of departure.

What does evangelism have to do with social ethics? Or — to signal at the outset the way in which I will be understanding the two key terms in question — what does presenting people with the good news about Jesus have to do with the disciplined attempt to get clear about normative or value questions as they bear on societal or corporate life?

Some Christians would insist that there is a very intimate link between these two areas of concern. As we all know, there is a strong tradition in American Protestantism which views the Christian message as essentially and pervasively a "social Gospel." And more recently proponents of liberation theology have insisted in new and provocative ways that Christianity is at its heart a political religion. José Miranda makes the point clearly with reference to our present topic. "The word

euangelion ('the great news') makes absolutely no sense," he argues, "if we are not yearning, with all the hope of mankind, for the definitive liberation, the total realization of justice."¹

Many evangelical Christians, on the other hand, have viewed the relationship in a very different way. Consider this comment by Charles G. Trumbull, writing about the evangelistic task of Sunday Schools in the series of booklets published around 1910, entitled *The Fundamentals*:

The Social Service program, which includes so many things Christian in spirit, but which in many cases so disastrously puts fruit ahead of root, is a danger against which the Sunday School needs to guard, especially in its adult classes. The salvation of society regardless of the salvation of the individual is a hopeless task; and the Sunday School of true evangelism will not enter upon it. But the Sunday School that brings the good news of Jesus Christ to the individuals of any community lifts society as the usual Social Service program can never do. A striking illustration of this principle has been noted in the work of Evangelist "Billy" Sunday. Sunday preaches the individual Gospel of the apostolic church. He says little about social service. But the community-results where Sunday's evangelism has had an opportunity are revolutionizing. There is no social service worker in America today whose work can compare, in the very results for which the social service program aims, with that of Sunday's. And so the Sunday School of true evangelism will do an effective work in social service, but it will do it in the Lord's way.²

It is also interesting to note that the Lausanne Covenant, issued at the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization, makes no explicit reference in its paragraph on evangelism to justice or other societal concerns in its account of the nature of evangelism. But it does say that "The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his church and responsible service in the world." It is likely that the writers of this document meant "responsible service in the world" as a reference to issues having to do with social ethics. But just as Trumbull views social issues as having to do with the "fruit" of evangelism, Lausanne places these matters in the category of "the results of evangelism." Indeed, in its paragraph on social responsibility, the Lausanne document goes on to insist that while "evangelism and social concern" are not "mutually exclusive," it is nonetheless the case that "social action" is not "evangelism" just as "political liberation" is not "salvation" — although "evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty."³

These comments show that evangelical Christians have often insisted upon drawing lines of demarcation between evangelism and social-political concerns. Sometimes they have spoken of social improvements as taking place only as a result, even as an inevitable "fruit," of the evangelization of individuals. At other times, as at Lausanne, evangelicals have tried to portray the relationship between evangelism and social action as in some sense complementary — while treating them, nonetheless, as two somewhat different areas of concern.

The picture often suggested by evangelical statements of this sort is one in which we concentrate initially and primarily on introducing individuals to Christ by way of a message, in such a way that it is not necessary to understand this process in terms of the concerns and concepts of social ethics or political theology. That is, evangelicals often seem to presuppose that this process — of introducing individuals to Christ — is essentially an a-political or a-social one. Thus Trumbull suggests that once this process is completed it will undoubtedly have important social effects — as in the popular evangelical

cliche. "Changed hearts will change society" — but the evangelistic process is itself an "individual" one. And Lausanne calls for social action as a necessary complement to, but a distinct area of concern from the process of evangelizing.

I am not convinced that this picture is completely wrong-headed. But it is misleading in certain ways. As a way of pointing in the direction of some positive formulations concerning the relationship between evangelism and social action, I will offer some brief observations about the strengths and weaknesses of this commonly held picture of things.

The Individual

First, there is an important sense in which evangelicals are correct — at least as I see things — in viewing the individual as a central focus in the task of evangelism. This kind of emphasis occupies a significant place in the historical origins of almost every Protestant group — an emphasis that is captured well in Wesley's fine hymn: "Died he for me who caused his pain/ for me who him to death pursued?/ Amazing love, and can it be/ that thou my God shouldst die for me?"

There are some Christians who look with disdain on the "I"-centeredness of evangelical piety, and the closely related evangelistic call for a "personal decision for Jesus Christ." But there is nothing intrinsically wrong with a religious perspective that stresses the importance of the individual's relationship to God. As James Cone points out in his fine book, *The Spirituals and the Blues*, black slave-religion was also in important respects "I-centered." But Cone also argues convincingly that slave-religion should not be dismissed for this reason as "individualistic." The "I-centered" claims of the slave were a response to the dehumanizing threat of racism. The slave was affirming a unique core of person-hood as over against the counter-claim embedded in the institution of slavery.⁴

Black slave religion was based on a profoundly important Biblical truth — that the love of God which has reached humankind in a unique way in the redemptive work of Jesus is a love which singles out individuals. As Helmut Gollwitzer has put it, God's love "individualizes" a person "in the same way as the love of the father and mother does with each individual child, however large the number of children."⁵

The Society

But second, it would be wrong to understand the individual who is being evangelized as completely isolated from social, political and economic contexts. Evangelical Protestants have often attempted to draw too rigid boundaries between, say, the "individual" and the "social," or between our "vertical" relationship with God and our "horizontal" social relationships. Thus while John Stott insists that it is a terrible denial of human dignity for persons to be victimized by racism or hunger or unemployment, he goes on to ask: "But is anything so destructive of human dignity as alienation from God through ignorance or rejection of the gospel?"⁶

Stott is correct in pointing to the alienation from God which results from ignorance or the rejection of the gospel as a matter of serious concern. But it is difficult to see how we can think of this kind of thing as being the only properly evangelistic concern, while viewing the other matters which he mentions as "social concerns." This becomes clear, for example, when we think of what it means to evangelize the racist or the sexist or

the economic oppressor. Racism, sexism and greed are not just sins against our human neighbors — although they are at least that. They are also sins against God. Racism itself is an instrument of rebellion before the face of God. Sexism is an idolatrous practice which can serve as a means of alienation from the one who created male and female in the divine image. Economic exploitation is one way in which we reject the Gospel. To evangelize human beings whose lives are caught up in these patterns of rebellion is necessarily to view these patterns as a part of the human being's identity before the God who calls us to an acceptance of the Gospel. We cannot maintain the view, then, which Stott seemingly wants to insist upon, that racism and economic exploitation are one kind of thing — social issues — and alienation from God and rejection of the Gospel are another kind of thing — and thus fall within the domain of evangelism.

Similarly we cannot completely separate these corporate factors from our proclamation of the Gospel to those who are the obvious *victims* of corporate oppression. Again, John Stott seems to suggest that we can. Thus he asks, in an apparently rhetorical manner: "how can we seriously maintain that political and economic liberation is just as important as eternal salvation?"⁷ We can respond to this with some rhetorical questions of our own. How can we seriously maintain — especially when our evangelistic efforts are directed toward the powerless, the disenfranchised and the oppressed — that eternal salvation has nothing to do with political and economic liberation? Can we preach the good news to political prisoners and exploited peasants in such a way that the message of salvation has no essential bearing on their condition of political and economic helplessness? Were the black slaves of North America completely wrong when they failed to distinguish clearly between the freedom offered by the Gospel and liberation from the yoke of plantation-slavery?

The Jesus of Whom We Speak

Third, a similar point can be made by focusing on the one whom human beings are being introduced to in the process of evangelization. As an evangelical Christian I am especially fond of that Biblical imagery which focuses upon the mission of Jesus as the Lamb of God whose blood was shed as a payment for sin. But I find it odd that evangelical Christians seldom pay attention to the way in which "the blood of Christ" theme is spelled out in the "new song" to the Lamb in Revelation 5:

Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom human beings for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth.

The blood of the Lamb creates a new peoplehood, made up of a kingdom and priests. Because of the work of the Lamb all previous ways of deciding who is one of "our people" have been rendered obsolete. We may no longer boast of "white blood" or take pride in being "red-blooded males." All who belong to the Lamb's community have been initiated into a new order of rulers and priests. To recognize this is to stand over against present patterns of classifying and grouping human beings. And this recognition is central to the process of evangelization.

Evangelism is introducing people to Jesus. But this requires that people come to know the full scope of his authority, power and healing mission. The so-called "great commission" in Matthew 24 includes a citation of Jesus' credentials as the one who possesses *all* authority in heaven and on earth and it includes the mandate to teach *all* of the commandments of Jesus. It is not that we can first get to know Jesus, by way of evangelism, and then go on, in the area of social concerns, to

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find out that, say, racism is a bad thing. The divine judgment on racism already appears in the context of evangelization.

Evangelical Christians have rightly insisted that the Bible portrays the origins of sin as taking place in human hearts. But that sin which begins in acts of individual rebellion, as portrayed in Genesis 3, has ramifications throughout the entire cosmos. Human rebellion takes institutionalized forms. Sin becomes codified, it is woven into the patterns, institutions and structures of human interaction. These patterns, institutions and structures in turn shape and condition the human psyche. Individuals internalize the patterned actions and attitudes of previous generations of sinners.

Each human person, then, is shaped by the interactions which take place between individuality and the patterned-ness of corporate life. Sin has left a structured residue which can not be adequately dealt with by talking only in terms of "changing human hearts." No human heart stands completely naked before God, stripped of all corporate and institutionalized roles. We stand before God as racists and sexists and exploiters and victims. Evangelistic efforts, properly understood, must recognize that it is as human beings who are immersed in the patterns and roles of corporate interaction that we cry out to God: "Just as I am, though tossed about/ with many a conflict, many a doubt/ fightings and fears, within, without/ O Lamb of God, I come."

Evangelical Christians have in fact recognized what we might call the "situated-ness" of the individual in their own evangelistic efforts. When proclaiming the Gospel to skid-row drunks they have interpreted the evangelistic call as a plea for the addict to turn to Jesus *from* the enslavement of alcohol. Similarly they have viewed the evangelistic message to the prostitute and the adulterer as a call to those individuals *in* their patterns of sexual rebellion. In this sense evangelicals have engaged in what we might think of as "addiction-focused evangelism" and even "sexual evangelism." Why then can we not speak legitimately of "political evangelism" and "economic evangelism"?

The Nature of Salvation

But, fourth, this is not to say that evangelism simply *is* social action or that a theology of evangelism simply *is* social ethics. Stott is, in one sense, correct when he insists that "salvation" is not "political liberation." But, of course, neither is salvation to be identified with "freedom from enslavement to alcohol" or "liberation from sexual infidelity." Nonetheless, evangelicals have correctly operated on the assumption that for a given individual to let go of an addiction or a sexual practice may be the way in which the individual is embraced by the saving love of Christ. A person may first meet Jesus as the one whose power conquers an addiction or a perversion. But in the same sense a person may first meet Jesus as a political or economic liberator.

My own suspicion is, however, that there is a legitimate impulse to evangelical resistance to the suggestion that evangelism and social concerns are coextensive, or to the idea that the Gospel ought to be "politicized" — even though the case is often put in a confused manner. I can only briefly mention an area of concern here. Evangelicals — along with many Roman Catholics and other confessionally oriented Christians — insist that a person's intellectual response to the claims of the Gospel is an important matter. And that seems to me to be correct. Doubt and unbelief are in themselves important problems which must be addressed by evangelistic efforts. The question of what one believes concerning Jesus is one of the most crucial items that any human being can face. Evangelism is, among other things, confronting human beings with claims which must be either accepted or rejected. This is not all that is important about evangelism, of course. But it is one central concern — and conservative Christians rightly suspect that

those who would denigrate this dimension of the church's task are operating with significantly different understandings of the nature of the Gospel.

This is not to say, however, that this cognitive dimension of Christian commitment can be understood in complete isolation from the social reality in which it operates. Indeed, a proper understanding of what we refer to as "the Biblical message" or "the Christian faith" requires that we attend to a variety of "social realities." We must attempt to understand the socio-cultural contexts in which Biblical claims, and past teachings of the Christian churches, originated. We must be aware of the social milieu in which *we receive* and appropriate those claims and teachings. And we must attempt to understand the cultural contexts of the people to whom we are presenting the Gospel in the work of evangelism. Because this kind of attention to social reality is so important, we should be profoundly grateful for the gifts that the entire Christian community has been offered in recent years in the form of various explicitly "contextualized" theologies, which have promoted important sensitivities to the ways in which gender, race and class have influenced theology and evangelism.

In the opening pages of my book *Political Evangelism* I said that I could endorse the brief evangelical summary of the Gospel, "Jesus saves" — just as long as we are clear about what Jesus saves us from and what he saves us for. Jesus saves us from sin — which is more than psychic distress, or negative thinking, or intellectual confusion. Sin is a curse on the entire cosmos — in all of its individual, sexual, political, economic and cultural complexity. And Jesus comes, in the familiar words of Isaac Watts, "to make his blessings flow/ far as the curse is found." The goal of the saving work of Jesus is the renewal of the entire cosmos, and human beings are saved for participation in that program of renewal. Jesus also saves us for incorporation into that community which is a central instrument in the work of renewal, the body of Christ-followers which stands over against the rebellion of the wicked and perverse generations of humankind.

Evangelistic strategies, then, cannot be conceived and expeditious without careful attention to these and other matters. Nor can we separate these concerns from the content of the evangelistic message. This does not mean that every evangelistic word that is spoken must be an explicitly political or economic word. There are times when evangelism must begin with political proclamation; there are other times when that will be the last subject which is addressed. On this subject, too, "contextualization" is an important concern.

But the God who is the primary agent in all evangelistic activity is never aloof from, or insensitive to, the political and economic dimensions of the world which is the product of divine creation. God's heart continually goes out in a special way to those who stand helpless before oppressive and dehumanizing structures. God longs to wipe the tears from the eyes of the widow and the orphan, to heal the loneliness of the sojourner, to silence the mourning of political prisoners, to transform the groans of the poor into laughter. This is the God who commissions us to be agents of the rich and complex work of divine liberation. Evangelism must be an integral part of that total work of renewal.

What these observations, taken together, suggest is that we cannot divorce a common concern for a disciplined investigation of the corporate dimension of human life from our engagement in the task of evangelism. Evangelistic activity is one important task of the people of God, one which cannot be properly engaged in apart from the communal exercise of the gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are many, and each of them is many-faceted. But not one of these gifts can be completely stripped of social ethical concerns; indeed social ethics is itself an important way of exercising these gifts. The task of evangelism must be under-

girded — to expand upon the list in I Corinthians 12 — by the utterance of sociological wisdom and political knowledge, by economic faith and corporate healing, by legal miracles and by a prophesying which focuses upon the structures of human interaction, by a distinguishing among the spirits that are at work in the broader patterns of cultural life, and by the use and interpretation of tongues that speak to the issues of justice and righteousness and peace — for “all these are inspired by one and the same Spirit.”

NOTES

¹José Porfirio Miranda, *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Op-pression*, trans. John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974), pp. 246–247.

²Charles Gallandet Trumbull, “The Sunday School’s True Evangelism,” *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* (Chicago: Testimony Publishing Co., n.d.), Vol. XII, pp. 61–62.

³Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, eds., *Mission Trends No. 2: Evangelization* (New York: Paulist Press; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 241–42.

⁴James Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), pp. 67–68.

⁵Helmut Gollwitzer, *The Christian Faith and the Marxist Critique of Religion* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), p. 112.

⁶John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1975), p. 35.

⁷*Ibid.*

ACADEME

(Reports from seminary classrooms, special events, and TSF chapters)

NEWS FROM TSF CHAPTERS

By Tom McAlpine (TSF Associate Staff and Ph.D. student in Old Testament, Yale University) and Mark Lau Branson (TSF General Secretary).

Princeton Theological Seminary

The Princeton Seminary Fellowship seeks to nurture and encourage the spiritual vitality of the seminary community by sponsoring specialized group meetings to enrich the students’ personal lives and their ability to minister to the spiritual and social needs of the world. In its second year of existence, PSF serves as an umbrella organization for a variety of groups and activities. For example, eight “fellowship” groups of about ten students each meet weekly for Bible study, prayer and mutual encouragement. A bi-monthly “praise service” provides an informal time of worship, singing and prayer. Two weekly theological discussions draw faculty and students together for papers and discussion. A Cross-Cultural Missions Group sponsors activities to focus prayerful concern on world-wide needs and to aid students who are preparing for cross-cultural ministry, and it is seeking ways to encourage healthier relationships between international and American students.

At the request of the Princeton student senate, PSF is planning an all-school retreat which will host Professor Richard Lovelace (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary). This and other group activities indicate how PSF seeks to reach beyond its own members in order to serve the entire seminary community.

Also at Princeton Theological Seminary, the Theological Forum sponsors lectureships which encourage students to interact with evangelical thought. Speakers in the fall have included Mr. Wayne Alderson on “Christ, Labor and Management:

Peacemaking in the Working World,” Dr. Tony Campolo on “Biblical Personhood” (co-sponsored by the Women’s Center), and Rev. Earl Palmer on “The Power of Expository Preaching.”

Yale Divinity School

During November, sixteen students met with Professor Richard Hayes and TSF’s Tom McAlpine to discuss possible goals and the formation of a group. The following week, a second meeting provided fellowship, singing, and small group Bible study.

Harvard Divinity School

Graduate and Divinity students have begun meeting weekly for discussions that encourage integration of studies, faith, and personal growth. The issue of “wholistic lifestyle” has provided the focus during the fall. The academic environment promotes isolation and ambition. How can values such as cooperation, mutual support and sharing counter these values? This semester’s discussions will center on the unique dimensions of “Christian thinking.” Of special note in November was an ecumenical dialogue on “Liberal/Evangelical Theology — A False Dichotomy?” which included Professors Kaufman and Niebuhr of Harvard and Professors Lovelace and Wells of Gordon-Conwell (There will be a special report on this meeting in the next issue of *TSF Bulletin*).

Wesley Theological Seminary

This new chapter in Washington, D.C., received its charter during the fall. Students used the campus newsletter, an article about TSF which had appeared in *The Christian Century*, and Branson’s “Open Letter to Seminarians” to inform the seminary community about the organizational meeting. Professors Beegle, Logan and Pike are providing encouragement and suggestions. Weekly hour-long meetings provide time for fellowship and theological discussions. Monthly forums feature lectures, such as Professor Logan’s “Evangelicalism in the Nineteenth Century,” which drew over fifty students. Other topics on the agenda include world religions, the quest for a “Christian” social ethic, and evangelical perspectives on biblical inspiration.

Perkins School of Theology

The Athanasian Society, which serves the seminary community by providing lectureships and panel discussions relevant to biblical and theological studies, hosted three fall meetings. Perkins student Vaughn Baker offered a critique of Professor Charles Wood’s *The Formation of Christian Understanding* (Westminster), which was followed by a discussion with Wood. Union Seminary (New York) professor Gerald Sheppard lectured on Old Testament studies at a convocation and on “Pentecostals and the Politics of Inerrancy Language” at the Athanasian Society. More recently, Perkins professor and Athanasian Society faculty advisor Albert Outler, Pentecostal Holiness minister Vincent Synan and Fr. Paul Hinnebusch discussed “Charismatic Renewal in Mainline Churches.” Spring meetings include a symposium on the relationship between evangelicals and the Moral Majority, and a lecture by Fuller Theological Seminary professor Bill Pannell co-sponsored by the Black Seminarians during a week-long event, “Evangelism and Social Action in the Black Church.” In the fall of 1982, the Athanasian Society will be host to Ron Sider.

The Wesleyan Fellowship at Perkins sponsors bi-weekly meetings which emphasize spiritual life, ministry, and issues in contemporary evangelical theology. Small groups, modeled after John Wesley’s “bands,” provide ongoing fellowship as well as opportunities for service projects. Carl F. H. Henry will be the speaker at a spring banquet, and a visit by Waldron Scott will be sponsored by the fellowship next fall. David Watson, a *TSF Bulletin* editor, is the faculty adviser for this group.

ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR EVANGELISM TRAINING

Every March Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship sponsors an evangelism project in Fort Lauderdale during the so-called "student invasion" of south Florida. This year one part of the project will be a course, "Field Seminar in Evangelism," offered for academic credit through Westminster Theological Seminary's Florida Theological Center.

The week-long course will include 10 hours of in-class presentations, 20 hours of on-the-beach training, and additional reading and writing assignments. Five plenary sessions will focus on the gospel basics, like the message, messenger, methodology, and contextualization. Five elective workshops will focus on various problems (and opportunities) encountered as one presents the gospel, such as the need for audience analysis, theological translation of gospel jargon, and the practical transferability of beach evangelism strategy and skills for use in other settings. This course is designed to help the graduate student gain proficiency in communicating the gospel to people at the point of their felt needs.

One can take this course for any *one* of these weeks: March 7-13, 14-20, 21-27. For more information and applications, write Dietrich Gruen, 3006 Hayes St. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418.

INTERSECTION

(The integration of theological studies with ethics, academic disciplines, and ecclesiastical institutions)

THE PUBLIC FACE OF EVANGELICALISM By Jim Wright, M.A. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, M.S. Indiana State University, news director at WVTS radio in Terre Haute.

New ways of interpreting and responding to the political religious right came out of a recent conference on "The Public Face of Evangelicalism." The diverse group, including a tree farmer from Maine, an Inter-Varsity staff member from Texas, a college professor and his wife from Tennessee and scores more gathered November 13 and 14 at Huntington College, near Fort Wayne, Indiana. Most of those on the program were evangelical historians from around the country, with a couple of well-known journalists, a politician and an attorney thrown in for good measure. The featured speaker was Jerry Falwell's right hand man, former NBC correspondent and now Moral Majority's spokesman, Cal Thomas. His interaction with the other participants undermined some stereotypes of the right and provided glimpses of movement on its part. The discussion of particular issues, such as the

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right's historical counterparts, its priorities, and its response to pluralism, made black-and-white judgments harder to make.

Thomas, the witty, intelligent spokesman for the group most often associated with the political religious right, seemed more in step with the evangelicalism of his audience than the fundamentalism of his employers. Claiming he's a conduit between the right and secular and evangelical intellectuals, Thomas did espouse the Moral Majority's now familiar refrains: pornography must go; get drugs out of the schools and off the street; and secular humanism will be the ruination of America. Yet there were hints, on occasion, that Thomas is trying to use his influence to make the Moral Majority more acceptable to those evangelicals in the political center. Under questioning, he stated that the "Christian Bill of Rights," a tract that affirms the need for a strong military and suggests banning treasonous writings, is no longer being mailed. "It died a well-deserved death," Thomas said. One of his big concerns was the issue of abortion. Because the Reagan Administration has failed so far to set up a social agenda to tackle abortion and other issues, Thomas said the Moral Majority is getting more and more disenchanted with Reagan. He implied that civil disobedience on the part of the Moral Majority is not out of the question if the Reagan Administration does not begin to come around. As these and other comments at the conference show, the right is still in the process of deciding where it should go and what strategies it should use.

Those attending the conference also heard divergent evaluations of where the religious right is coming from, what it is, and what it is doing. Historian Donald Dayton carefully compared the current evangelical efforts to change life in America to the Ante-Bellum Evangelical Movement of the nineteenth century. He concluded that the present movement is less involved with life than the earlier one. It is less concerned about the plight of the poor and the need for world peace. It is more interested in being super-patriotic than questioning the sometimes questionable foreign policy of the United States. But colleague Denny Weaver took exception to Dayton in his response, saying it's difficult to compare one century with another. Furthermore, "it's a value judgment, not an historical judgment, on which movement is superior."

There was also disagreement about the nature of the right. Throughout his talk Thomas emphasized that the Moral Majority is a political, not a religious organization. Yet others disagreed, including Christian Legal Society President Lynn Buzzard. He said the Moral Majority is not really a political movement: its philosophy is not rooted in political theory, but in Judeo-Christian principles. Then Phillip Loy of Taylor University observed that politics is traditionally defined as a group struggle for power; if so, can one therefore be just and right and still be political? Loy said maybe we should "rethink politics as the search for the public good."

But what is the public's good? A big issue at the conference was that of the right's priorities. The consensus from several of the papers seemed to be that the political religious right should be tackling issues more important than America's ties with Taiwan and the rights of homosexuals. Michigan legislator Paul Henry suggested that for the Moral Majority to oppose giving the Panama Canal back to the Panamanians was to trivialize the Gospel. Buzzard echoed Henry's concern, saying the political religious right needs a bigger agenda. They need to start with racism and concern for the poor, then move on to the personal rights they feel are being violated (e.g., spread of pornography). Buzzard added that the Moral Majority may be simply a cultural movement "taking its cues from the community and not Scripture." The general consensus among the speakers was that the Scriptures call upon Christians to address themselves to issues of injustice, especially in the area of the oppression of the poor. It should be noted that Moral Majority's spokesman Cal Thomas

wasn't about to dodge this issue; he said Christians do have a responsibility to alleviate poverty. But he emphasized that the task should be attempted, not through government institutions but through individual volunteerism. Thomas claims that the government's working on poverty only makes the matter worse.

The Moral Majority has often been accused of not understanding the delicate nature of pluralism in America, so naturally that topic received some attention during the conference. Thomas emphasized that the Judeo-Christian ethic has a "better track record" than secular humanism, and so its values should win out. Buzzard made the observation that there is a version of pluralism definitely unacceptable to believers; a version that accepts any idea as long as it's *not* based on Christian principles or the nation's religious tradition: a pluralism "that allows for the teachings of Marx, McLuhan or Camus, but not Christ or Paul." To illustrate that unacceptable pluralism was already at work, Buzzard added that in one major American city a resident must now have a permit to hold a home Bible study.

One of the more theological position papers was read by historian Robert Clouse. Clouse pointed to an underlying confusion in the Moral Majority leadership. They want to maintain a traditional post-millennial vision of America, emphasizing the importance of its role in Christianizing the world. Yet they are essentially pre-millennial in eschatology, attaching importance to Israel in the end times. Clouse says they cannot have it both ways. If they are essentially pre-millennial then they must conclude that America is just another world power.

Although discussion on the political religious right dominated the conclave, some attention to other public representatives of evangelicalism served to provide balance. United Press International correspondent Wes Pippert, who covered President Jimmy Carter, spoke highly of the Georgian's personal faith in Christ and his commitment to utilize Christian ideals in domestic and foreign policy. Pippert said Carter's ideas on human rights were shaped by his understanding of God's word. Yet Pippert saw a weakness in Carter's failure to surround himself with sufficient evangelical policy makers and his unwillingness, outside of church attendance, to engage in evangelical fellowship.

Historian Richard Pierard focussed attention on Billy Graham, examining the socio-political changes in the evangelist's thinking. On the issue of racism, Pierard described Graham's transformation from a traditional segregationist into a model integrationist, though one who sees his role in the struggle as that of a pulpit preacher, not a street marcher. On the issue of Communism Graham has moved away from his earlier hardline position. On Christianity and America, Graham used to identify the Gospel with American culture, but now says the Gospel cannot be identified with any particular culture. Pierard observed that Graham does still slip on occasion, as, for example, when he retracted his criticism of Falwell for identifying the Gospel too heavily with America's culture. He apologized to Falwell when the press printed the rebuke, saying journalists were trying to drive a wedge between them.

Those attending the Huntington conference came away with a clearer, deeper understanding of how evangelicalism and the religious right are perceived by the nation today. The conference had a moderate evangelical slant and included much criticism of the political religious right, especially the Moral Majority's failure to address the issues of racism and the poor. Yet the remarks of John Oliver of Malone College raised an important question. He said Falwell does not have it all together, but neither does the evangelical left as when some of them call for the acceptance of homosexual activity as a viable lifestyle and allow for abortion under the label of choice. Should we impugn our Christian brothers and sisters on the right if we have confusion and failure on both sides? Such questions as these, raised at the Huntington conference, need much continuing discussion.

GUARDING THE ASHES OR TENDING THE FLAME: WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY 1981 ANNUAL MEETING **By Donald Dayton, Assistant Professor of Historical Theology, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.**

A continuing search for a distinctive identity was in evidence as over 200 scholars gathered at Asbury Theological Seminary (Wilmore, KY), November 6-7, 1981, for the 17th annual meeting of the 1700-member Wesleyan Theological Society. President-elect Paul Bassett of the Nazarene Theological Seminary had put together a program asking whether there was a specifically "Wesleyan mode" in the several theological disciplines. Papers were presented on Christian education, Old and New Testament studies, and systematic and historical theology.

The meeting in some ways revealed a tradition repositioning itself on the theological map. The papers on biblical studies surfaced both a growing openness to modern modes of biblical interpretation and a parallel impatience with an "evangelical" resistance to such that had apparently been more influential on an earlier generation of Wesleyan scholars. Even a more conservative and less well-received paper by Gene Miller, Dean of Gulf Coast Bible College (Church of God, Anderson, Indiana) affirmed that "honest, critical study of the New Testament" should enhance faith rather than undermine it. Professor John Hartley of interdenominational Azusa Pacific College built bridges to "form criticism" of the Old Testament by working with the "inductive" or "English Bible" hermeneutical tradition popular in the Wesleyan schools (derived from approaches developed in an earlier generation at Biblical Seminary in New York as a way through the fundamentalist/modernist controversies). Sherrill Munn, reflecting in part some theological struggles at Northwest Nazarene College, was even more emphatic in responding to Hartley, arguing that an earlier Nazarene resistance to critical scholarship was "incorrect" and "prejudicial," as well as contributing to unnecessary barriers between theology and biblical scholarship.

There was more debate about the existence of a distinctive "Wesleyan mode" of biblical studies. Munn feared that a rush to find one might run the risk of distorting the reading of the biblical material in traditional directions. Hartley argued that the Wesleyan tradition supported a "synergistic hermeneutic" that allowed a greater recognition of the role of the interpreter and the creative role of the Holy Spirit. Others argued that the Wesleyan tradition has contained perceptions of the inter-connections of biblical themes that were demonstrably correct and needed broader articulation. Illustrative of the latter was the fact that Daniel Fuller had, after a long struggle with "dispensationalism," recently come in *Gospel and Law* to an essentially Wesleyan position without any awareness that this position had been characteristic of the Wesleyan tradition. Several skeptical questions from the floor pressed hard for concrete cases where a scholar's biblical interpretation *should* be influenced by his theological tradition.

The theological papers revealed some uncertainty about how to retrieve and restate the Wesleyan tradition in our own times. United Methodist Carl Bangs of St. Paul School of Theology, working in the tradition of historical theologian Jaroslav Pelikan, pointed to complexities in the Wesleyan tradition: the dual roots in English Puritanism and "high church" Caroline Anglicanism; its "tripartite" multifaceted ecclesiology expressed in local societies, the annual conferences, and the episcopacy; its complex integration of love and justice, justification and sanctification. Calling attention to the danger of "guarding the ashes rather than tending the flame," Ray Dunning of Trevecca Nazarene College, currently at work on a Wesleyan systematic theology,

argued that Wesleyan theology is characterized by a soteriological concentration that integrates the Protestant version of "faith alone" with the Catholic vision of "holy living"—all set in the broader context by the Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace. A response to Dunning was made at several points by Irish Methodist Billy Abraham of Seattle Pacific University (author of the just published *Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture*, which critiques the dominant "evangelical" concepts of inspiration in favor of a more Wesleyan paradigm). Abraham argued especially for the Wesleyan affirmation of "reason" and for a recovery of natural theology as appropriately at home in the Wesleyan tradition. President Leon Hynson of Evangelical School of Theology in responding to Bangs emphasized the ethical and teleological character of Wesleyan thought, arguing that it has focused as sharply on "orthopraxis" as "orthodoxy." This range of issues seemed to set the agenda for the society's future efforts to articulate the Wesleyan theological tradition.

Other papers moved off in a different direction. Dean Wayne McCown of the interdenominational Western Evangelical Seminary dealt in his banquet "presidential address" with the problem of passing on faith to the next generation; he called particularly for the integration of adult disciplining relationships into the spiritual guidance of children and youth. Nazarene Wesley Tracy, editor of the *Preacher's Magazine*, surveyed the ambiguities of Wesleyan traditions of Christian education in both theory and practice; he emphasized in particular the Wesleyan tendency to collapse evangelism and education and the resulting impact on the rise of the Sunday School movement.

Attention at the meeting this year was concentrated on the papers, but there were other issues in the background. The society authorized a study of the doctrinal statement to see whether it should be simplified to be brought into line with the single article of the Christian Holiness Association. This body, which sponsors the WTS, several years ago rewrote an earlier statement that had been largely modeled on the National Association of Evangelicals to permit wider participation of those Wesleyan bodies not identified with the strict "evangelical" traditions of the NAE (i.e. the Salvation Army, The Church of the Nazarene, The Church of God, Anderson, IN, etc.). Also in evidence at this WTS meeting was more concern, reflected in both program and attendance, with the society's relationship with the broader Methodist traditions. Upcoming international theological meetings and bicentennial celebrations of the founding of Methodism promised more intermingling of the range of Wesleyan theological traditions.

Asbury Seminary Old Testament Professor David Thompson (Wesleyan Church) is the new President-elect and program chairman for next year's meeting (to be held at the Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs the first weekend in November). Nazarene New Testament scholar Alec R. Deasley is the new editor of the society's semi-annual *Wesleyan Theological Journal*.

SCUPE CONGRESS ON URBAN MINISTRY

The Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education (SCUPE) will hold its third Congress on Urban Ministry April 22-24, 1982 in Chicago, Illinois. SCUPE, an educational organization cooperating with nine seminaries in the Chicago area, offers students training in urban ministry. The national Congress has as its theme: "Anticipating the Future of Urban Centers." The Congress will explore three topics in light of the theme—Food, Work, and Shelter/Land. Planned for both clergy and lay participation, the Congress will include each day two plenary sessions, a number of workshops highlighting specific ministry models related to the day's topic, and creative strategy sessions.

Address all inquiries about SCUPE or the Congress to Dr. David J. Frenchak, SCUPE, 30 West Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60610.

THE TYNDALE FELLOWSHIP — THEN AND NOW.

By R. T. France, former Warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge; now Senior Lecturer in New Testament Studies at London Bible College.

Our brochure states that TSF "encourages students to work toward academic excellence within their schools and to advance an approach to the Bible that seeks to be both intellectually sound and based in a commitment to its authority and relevance." That purpose was inspired largely by the British Tyndale Fellowship. Scholars like F. F. Bruce, I. Howard Marshall, John Goldingay, Anthony Thiselton and R. T. France are active participants in this scholarly community. The Institute for Biblical Research here in North America is a closely-related sister movement. Professor France's article, adapted from the British Christian Graduate, provides an appropriate introduction to their organization. (It should be noted that the "UCCF" is the British counterpart to Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in the U.S. References to Inter-Varsity Press are to the British publisher, whose books are often published in the U.S. by Inter-Varsity Press here, as well as by Eerdmans and Baker.) — MLB

A decade or so ago an evangelical theological student at a British university was advised by a much-respected Professor that there would be little point in a man of his views doing research for a PhD in biblical studies, despite a clear first-class degree. Today that student is a lecturer in that same university (under a different Professor!), with a PhD and a growing international reputation — and he is still an evangelical.

That, in a nutshell, is what the Tyndale Fellowship is all about. In the early forties (so I am told; I was not particularly interested in such matters then) the climate in university circles was almost uniformly hostile to evangelical biblical scholarship, where it was noticed at all. Students of evangelical convictions who wanted to specialize in biblical studies tended to find their way in via the "safe" areas of ancient history and linguistics. Biblical criticism, interpretation and theology as such were almost "no go" areas, the preserve of the liberal establishment.

It was then that several senior members of the UCCF family dreamed their dreams, and from these dreams came Tyndale House, Cambridge, as a centre for evangelical biblical scholarship, and the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research. It was hoped that two results (at least) would follow, and would between them change the climate — books, and scholars. The books and articles have appeared in ever increasing number, some through the channels of Inter-Varsity Press (notably the *New Bible Dictionary* and the *Tyndale Commentaries*), many more in the wider sphere of academic theological publishing. And the scholars, both those who have lived and worked at Tyndale House and who have been inspired by their association with the Tyndale Fellowship, are now scattered all over the world, teaching in secular universities as well as in evangelical colleges. Many of them hold positions of respect and influence in the professional societies for their respective subjects. It is now a very different world for the evangelical theological student.

The Tyndale Fellowship has now some 270 members, elected as evangelicals engaged in research and/or teaching in university or college in biblical and theological subjects. Its doctrinal standpoint and basis of membership is the UCCF Doctrinal Basis. It publishes an annual *Tyndale Bulletin*, and holds several conferences each year on a variety of biblical and theological subjects. Its specialist study groups, especially

the Old Testament and New Testament groups, have over the years been the launching-pads for a number of significant joint publications, and have stimulated many more individual pieces of research. Tyndale House provides a centre where evangelicals can share and shape their ideas and researches, and a unique specialist library of which we are, we believe, justly proud.

So there is cause for satisfaction over the developments of the last 35 years. The vision of the founding fathers has been amply vindicated, and God has given the increase. Evangelical biblical scholarship is alive and well, and it is becoming increasingly recognized.

But recognition can have its dangers. It is comforting for an evangelical scholar to have his work praised by the establishment, and the temptation will always be there to write what will be acceptable rather than what is truly evangelical. Now there is no necessary incompatibility between the two, and our hope is that in doing our work honestly and well as evangelicals we shall carry conviction in the wider world of biblical scholarship. But in practice it doesn't always work that way, and the result can be a tension within the individual scholar's mind and within the ranks of a group like the Tyndale Fellowship.

If it were a simple matter of being acceptable versus being evangelical, the decision would be clear, if uncomfortable. And that, of course, is how it often seems to those who are not themselves involved in the world of biblical scholarship. To the outsider it may seem a straightforward matter to define an evangelical position in terms of certain clear-cut critical views to which evangelicals have apparently always held, often at the cost of some ridicule. But when evangelicals question whether these views were the proper or necessary results of a truly evangelical scholarship, it is not good enough to retreat to a defence of the familiar landmarks on the grounds of evangelical tradition alone. Such questions oblige us to ask ourselves what constitutes a truly evangelical approach to biblical scholarship.

Basic to any evangelical approach properly so-called must be the conviction that the Bible is authoritative and true.

It is authoritative in that evangelicals come to the Bible as the Word of God, and are therefore prepared to conform their ideas to whatever they find the Bible to be teaching, even if this leads them to abandon either their inherited traditions or the accepted tenets of secular society. In particular, they will be careful not to impose on the Bible an alien thought-world which has no place for a living God, but will interpret it in its own terms.

It is true because it comes from God who does not lie. Evangelicals will start with the conviction that the Bible's teaching is neither false nor self-contradictory. They will interpret its writings with due attention to their historical and cultural particularity, but what they thus find it to declare they accept as God's truth, with an inner coherence and unity which overrides the very diverse form of its literary expression.

Members of the Tyndale Fellowship are, then, committed to an acceptance of the divine inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture, both by the terms of their doctrinal basis, and because this belief is essential to evangelical theology. But does this belief carry with it any guidance as to the interpretation of the Bible's literary form? Does it, for instance, allow or preclude the possibility of pseudonymity, or of a non-chronological order of narration? Is it simply a matter for literary decision whether a passage is to be interpreted as literal or symbolic or as a "mere figure of speech," or does divine inspiration place limits to the freedom of human language and literary conventions?

In facing such questions (and they are not new) evangelical scholars are pulled several ways. They hear the stirring call to "man" the barricades and to stand where the saints have always stood; they fear to lose valued friends and to be misunderstood; they feel the seductive appeal of respectability and of hobnobbing with the great; they savour the heady excitement of pioneer-

ing radical new approaches. They must face up to these and other pressures, and decide where the path of responsible scholarship lies, scholarship which will be true to God and to his word, true to the legitimate demands of critical rigour, true to the position of trust in which they stand in relation to the church at large. It can prove a lonely and uncomfortable position to hold.

The pressures and tensions which face the individual scholar are naturally also reflected in a group such as the Tyndale Fellowship; for while we start from an agreed commitment to evangelical doctrine, we cannot lay down the results of our researches in advance, and so we are not always agreed on what that doctrinal commitment implies for our interpretation of the human words in which God's word has come to us.

But the value of such a fellowship is that we can think and work and pray together, learning to understand and respect one another's attempts to explore and articulate God's revelation, questioning, where necessary, the validity of one another's approaches, and encouraging one another to develop a truly evangelical biblical scholarship in the context of today's debates.

It is, we believe, a vital task. Biblical scholarship at large needs the contribution of thoughtful evangelicals. And the churches need a sensitive lead in understanding and obeying the Word of God.

Biblical scholarship is not a luxury for evangelical Christians. For the sake of our own discipleship we must learn to be responsible in our use of the Bible which we claim as our authority. If evangelicals do not try to answer the many questions raised by modern biblical study, others will, and the results will be felt far beyond the world of academic debate.

This is the task to which the Tyndale Fellowship is committed. We want to be good scholars and faithful exponents of evangelical truth. We hope for the prayers and understanding support of our fellow Christians in this, so that the gains of the last 35 years will lead to further advances, for the benefit of the church as a whole.

THE LONDON INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANITY

The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, a new non-residential Christian community in central London, will hold its Inaugural School April 19-June 25, 1982. Directed by John Stott and Andrew Kirk, the Institute is being created in response to questions concerning the lordship of Jesus and the mission of the church. What does it mean in a largely non-Christian society to confess that "Jesus is Lord," and to bring every part of our being under his rule? As secularism corrodes the formerly Christian culture of the West, how can new forms of mission be developed to encourage lay Christians to penetrate non-Christian society more deeply and creatively as its salt and light? The Institute will offer courses in Christian faith, life, and mission to people in the professions, in business, and in industry. Students will meet together five days and one evening per week for worship, lectures, tutorials, and seminars, and will be encouraged to participate in a mission project. For more information, write: The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, 12 Weymouth St., London W1N 3FB, England.

Occasionally TSF will cooperate with other publishers or organizations in order to (1) let our readers learn about opportunities and resources, and (2) obtain access to other mailing lists so *TSF Bulletin* can become more widely known. If you do *not* want your name and address included in these exchange arrangements, please let us know.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

(Probing questions, suggestions and encouragement in areas of personal and spiritual growth)

THE SEARCH FOR SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

By John W. Ackerman, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in New Castle, Pennsylvania.

When I was in seminary, the closest I ever got to personal help with my spiritual life was being a part of a group who would meet for Bible study. There were no courses or books offered by the faculty about prayer. In the pastorate, it has been rather tough sledding. From time to time I have read books and had groups of laypersons and clergy who would gather for discussion and a prayer group, but until five years ago I had not stumbled on to the fact that there is a fifteen-century tradition of spiritual direction or formation. Henri Nouwen mentioned that to grow spiritually you needed "the Bible, silence, and a spiritual guide." The Bible I knew. Silence I could guess about, but what was a spiritual guide? I found that the Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C. not only required their members to be under the spiritual direction of another member but offered a program for spiritual direction for those outside of Washington, D.C. Wonderful! I found someone who would listen — someone who had some experience helping people respond to the Spirit's leading. Then I found that most Roman Catholic priests and certainly all monks and nuns went through an extensive program of spiritual formation. Why not evangelical Protestants?

I have found that Inter-Varsity recommends a "prayer partner" for every new Christian. Some seminaries are now offering courses and sometimes a director to encourage the spiritual growth of the students. Nouwen, who was swamped with requests at Yale for his courses and private direction, emphasized to the Clinical Pastoral Educators, "Thus the spiritual life of the minister, formed and trained in the school of prayer, is the core of spiritual leadership" (*The Living Reminder*, p. 73).

Our Presbytery has started offering spiritual direction to students "under care," but what can you do if you do not have a judicatory or seminary to offer help and want more than the "blind leading the blind"?

First, intellectual knowledge is helpful. Saint Theresa, who for many years suffered under poor direction, said that a guide of souls needs a background of knowledge about spirituality as well as personal piety. Most of us are limited to the knowledge of our own experience and the few people who have shared with us intimately; but there are patterns of spirituality that can be described. Some personality types pray one way, others in an entirely different way. Preaching or teaching about prayer without knowledge about personal differences is about as responsible as a doctor saying, "Take an aspirin and go to bed" for every ailment. Kenneth Leech's book, *Soul Friend* (Harper, 1977), is a well-written history of spirituality and contains a description of what spiritual direction has meant in different portions of the church. Richard Lovelace's *Dynamics of Spiritual Life* (IVP, 1979) is an attempt at a unified field theory of spirituality that is catholic and evangelical. He says, "The relationship of believers to the Holy Spirit is the most important experience of fellowship they have, but is also the most exclusive. It requires careful cultivation until a careful recognition of the Spirit

is established as a constant attitude of the heart" (p. 215).

Second, you will probably need someone with whom to talk or write. Much can be done through the mail. The Church of the Saviour works primarily that way with a bi-monthly report. Others need a support group and others a one-to-one accountability. A seminary professor, a local pastor or an older student may be able to offer guidance. A good director will not attempt to lead you to his or her own theology or style of prayer, but instead help you to focus on where the Spirit is leading. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit is the director and mature souls do not need permanent direction. Most of us beginners need another person or a group just to discipline ourselves to the necessary time for quiet. A retreat can provide an opportunity for extended silence and a time for reviewing, alone or with a group, what God has been saying over a period of time. Seminary students may wish to initiate such retreats for their campus. Roman Catholics excel at a directed retreat which is a biblically oriented structure of private prayer followed by a talk with a director. The essence of good one-to-one direction, says William Connolly, are two questions: "Do you listen to the Lord when you pray? Are you telling Him how listening to Him makes you feel?"

Third, we need help in listening to others. Clinical Pastoral Training helps pastors to listen to others, but in my experience almost exclusively on a psychological dimension. "Just as verbatim reports of our conversation with patients can help us to deepen our interpersonal sensitivities, so a continuing evaluation of our spiritual life can lead us closer to God (Nouwen, *The Living Reminder*, p. 71). We need to evaluate our own spiritual life, but we also need to help develop discernment in listening to others. Sharing case studies where the focus is on spiritual guidance is very helpful. Most of us need to train our hearts to hear and sensitize our hearts to pick up the movements of the Spirit in the heart of the other. Most of us need practical clinical help in overcoming our blind spots.

For many students and pastors, finding others to help you grow spiritually and to help you be a good listener to others will be very difficult. "Therefore, it is sad that most ministers have more hours of training in how to talk and be with people than how to talk and be with God. There are even seminaries that the question of how to pray is not a question to which the faculty can respond" (*Ibid.*, p. 69). God encourages us to "take heed to yourselves" (Acts 20:20), not simply for your own formation but "to feed the flock of the Lord which he has obtained with his own blood."

TSF Bulletin does not necessarily speak for Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship on matters dealt with in its brief articles. Although editors personally sign the IVCF basis of faith, our purpose is to provide resources for and encouragement towards biblical *thinking* and *living* rather than to formulate "final" answers.

WHERE ARE THE TSF GROUPS?

Is there a group of students meeting on your campus to discuss Theology? Ethics? Spiritual Formation? Theological Students Fellowship would like to assist in developing a network of such groups in order to help make helpful resources (publications, conferences) conveniently available to seminary and religious studies students. Please write and let us know what is happening on your campus. Theological Students Fellowship, 233 Langdon, Madison, WI 53703.

EDITORIALS

(Opinions, options, and olive branches)

MAINLINE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: A LOSS OF FOCUS

By Clark H. Pinnock, Professor of Theology, McMaster Divinity College.

The unifying center has fallen out of non-evangelical theological education, according to the spring, 1981 issue of *Theological Education*, the semi-annual publication of the Association of Theological Schools (the accrediting agency for most seminaries in North America). With astonishing candour Edward Farley of the Divinity School at Vanderbilt University acknowledges that mainline theological education is trapped in a *cul de sac* because the basis on which it used to rest has been shattered. We would do well to take note of what he says both because it confirms the recent evangelical view of the matter and because it may present new possibilities of dialogue in the future.

It seems, according to Farley, that the traditional seminary curriculum has rested on belief in the infallible authority of the Bible. Therefore it was founded upon scriptural teaching, and went on to explore the development of doctrine and confession, issuing in instruction concerning the preaching of the gospel and pastoral care. There was a common understanding about the content of the Christian message, and all the various segments of the encyclopedia contributed to its explication. The Bible gave the content of revelation. Passages were exegeted often from the original languages. Church history looked into the historical roots of one's denomination. And all of this was related to parish and missionary life. In short, traditional theological education has focus, coherence, and direction.

But it does not have any of these things any more, says Farley. Why not? Simply because its basis in the authority of the Bible has been shattered. The traditional pattern has been undermined by the negative impact made by some aspects of critical historical study. The foundation stone of the whole edifice has crumbled and the whole structure is giving way. There is no sure knowledge of divine revelation to study and apply any more. There is no material for normative systematic theology and no need to defend the faith. The authority formerly thought to underlie the whole enterprise has been relativized and dissolved away. We have no longer an infallible divine teacher in the Scriptures, but only a cacophony of human voices. Therefore the members of the faculties are less like an orchestra playing the same concerto as an orchestra tuning up with each playing his own cadenza at odds with his neighbors.

The result is what Farley calls "the dispersed encyclopedia." Chaos would be another word for it. One does not study theology at seminary, but encounters a multiplicity of subjects and methods which do not hang together. There is no longer a paradigm of unity holding things together, but only increased specialisation and distance. The faculty is made up of scholarly specialists owing allegiance to their independent sciences and guilds. If one is seeking for a unified view of the Christian message and mission, the result is non-sense. There is no rationale or common understanding running through the program. Coherence is lost.

The effect of this dismal state of affairs on various people is predictable. Students experience theological education as a miscellany of courses, unintegrated with each other and often at odds. Each course has to do everything since one cannot de-

pend on any other course building on it. Students naive enough to expect what laity generally still assume, namely, an integrated education into the glorious mysteries of the faith, are sadly disappointed and disillusioned. When they turn into graduates, they find very little to use because seminary was mostly an introduction to a variety of scholarly endeavors. What are they to do? They could try to continue the research interests of their professors, but then that is not what ministry is about. They are forced to close the book on these technical studies and discover some practical help in ministry wherever they may. They quickly learn that the tentativeness and questioning spirit so natural in the seminary goes over like a lead balloon in the congregation, where curiously enough people still expect the pastor to believe the gospel. The new system works a little better for faculty insofar as it allows them to get on with their research and writing, which has its own rewards. But even they get lonely because the distance between their scholarly discipline and the next one is so wide. Some even feel badly that their competence has to be measured as a specialist rather than a theologian. The faculty find themselves as dispersed as the curriculum itself. All and all it is not a pretty picture which *Theological Education* paints.

The only answer that emerges from this quarter is sociological. One can try to get some unity back by choosing to stand in a church matrix and work as if that tradition were true. Bracket the truth question and pretend to be good Presbyterians and Baptists. The difficulty is that this gives the appearance of playing a game, since the principle of secular criticism is still lurking there. Deciding to be a Lutheran is not quite the same as standing on the Word of God, though I suppose it is better than nothing. Can we find our unity in "praxis" (the latest in-word)? Not really, since what that means is as unclear and diverse as theology itself, everything from gay liberation to political insurgency. The crisis really is a deep one. Strong witnesses to Christ can only come out of a system like this by accident or by drawing on their own resources. The future of the churches saddled with theological education like this would not seem to be bright.

Without wishing to be triumphalist in any way, I think the evangelicals have a good solution to this problem. There are still in our great seminaries, like Fuller, Gordon-Conwell, Trinity, Westminster, Dallas and many more, faculties and student bodies of considerable size whose confidence in the authority of the Bible and whose belief in a confession of faith (howbeit often of an exclusive sort) remains strong. The unified paradigm has not been shattered and the rationale has not vanished. While it is true that many issues in soteriology and eschatology which formerly would have been settled are left open, the substantial core of confessional Protestant belief remains strong and vigorous. Not an academic matter only, these schools are also in close agreement about the "praxis" angle, promoting world missions, church growth, and social justice in decent proportion. Evangelical theological education with all its faults and growing pains would seem to represent hope in this situation we have been describing. There are dozens of institutions where students can encounter a unified vision of faith and a focussed concept of the mission of the church.

There must be no pride about this however. "Let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall." There is no guarantee in stone that says an evangelical seminary will always be sure of these things. A good school can go bad, and a bad one can become good. We ought simply to be thankful to God that a sound witness exists in the midst of a great deal of declension. Furthermore, we owe it to our colleagues in the mainline stream to explain to them how it is we are able to keep our confidence in the theological center when they do not see it. If we do not try to do that, they can only suppose that we hold to our faith blindly and have nothing substantial to offer them.

Published concurrently in Christianity Today.

REVIEWS

(Notes and critiques on recent books and periodicals)

REVIEW ESSAY

EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS: A SURVEY OF RECENT BOOKS (Part III)

By David Lowes Watson, Assistant Professor of Evangelism, Perkins School of Theology.

The theme of the meeting of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism at Melbourne in May 1980 was that of future hope for an expectant church and world. It is the hope of a church on the move, and this mobility is poignantly articulated in Vernard Eller's new book, *The Outward Bound: Caravaning as the Style of the Church* (Eerdmans, 1980, 104 pp., \$3.95). This is a real nugget; brief, at times winsomely personal; and a *cri de coeur* for the church to let God, for a change, speak through the gospel. Eller's model for this is the church as "caravan" rather than "commissary." The church which sees itself as commissary is a divine franchise, licensed to dispense heavenly graces. In an age of super burgers and sundry mcnuggets, the caricature is incisive and painfully accurate. The church as caravan, on the other hand, is a group of people seeking a common destination, inviting others to join them on the move. Which brings us, of course, back to eschatology as the crucial dimension of evangelism: in our time.

To be needed towards that which is new and unknown impels the believer towards a radical faith — the costly grace which Bonhoeffer advocated and exemplified. In a brilliant chapter, Eller takes us through one of Robert Browning's poems, "Bishop Blougram's Apology," in which the bishop, representative of "commissary" Christianity, opens himself up to a non-Christian humanist, and reveals that he has calculated his faith to the point of leaving no room for seeking the kingdom. The same contrast is drawn in the following chapter with the piercing title, "Success or Fidelity." We must evangelize, suggests Eller, through body language — language, that is, of the body of Christ. If we invite someone to church, that person must feel in the presence of God; not because of a self-conscious, aggressive display on the part of the congregation, but through the quiet assurance that those who worship in that place no longer have control over their own lives; that God is God, because these people have been called and commissioned (pp.61ff.).

The *cri de coeur*, however, comes in the closing pages. Eller, long an apologist for Jacques Ellul (see, for example, "How Jacques Ellul Reads the Bible," *Christian Century* 89.43 [November 29, 1972]: 1212-1215), refers to the "Meditation on Inutility" with which the French lay theologian concludes his study of *II Kings*, *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man* (Eerdmans, 1972). Ellul argues there for the role of the unprofitable servant in the church, and Eller quite simply invites us to accept such a role. Our service for God is, after all, useless. It is useless in that any accomplishment on our part is wholly by grace; and useless in that what

we do for God must be free of any accommodation to human criteria for success. Indeed, a church on the move has no time to evaluate its performance. Its only objective is to press towards the New Age. We do not gather people into congregations: we lengthen our caravan.

Two books which do much to lock the church into this role introduce us at the same time to a promising new series: Laity Exchange Books, published by Fortress, general editor Mark Gibbs. The first to appear at the end of 1980 was **Richard Mouw's *Called to Holy Worldliness*** (144 pp., \$5.50). As we have noted, the eschatological image of the caravan church necessarily implies a Christian presence in the world, since to pass through a place is unavoidably to be part of it for a while. The consciousness of one's surroundings is in fact much more vivid when one is on the move than when one is settled, and it is precisely this sensitivity to our surroundings which impels us to a social witness. Our theology, argues Mouw, has clear implications for the society in which we live and work, as well as for our personal piety, and the people of God are therefore called to minister to social structures as well as to persons. The question is, how to set about this in the practical terms of day-to-day living.

In a few bold strokes, Mouw first of all establishes that there is a distinctive role for laity in the witness of the church. This is not an anti-clerical position, he is quick to point out, but is merely to state the obvious; that people who are not ordained have a different furrow to plow in the world than do ministers of the church. There is a strong case to be made for a theology of, for and by the laity; a theology of engagement in the world which, for the most part, clergy do not experience first-hand. If this is given an appropriate priority, the church emerges clearly as an organism, not an institution. The people of God in the world are a theocratic community, called into being by God as a nomad church; and any undue emphasis on the clergy to the exclusion of the laity tends to focus on the static nature of the institutional church rather than on its nomadic mobility.

Mouw presses the point. To belong to the theocratic community of the people of God further implies a dual citizenship in the world. To discard the protection of an established and stationary institution exposes the people of God to the realities of their surroundings, and the question which therefore looms large for the *laos* is how to behave in an alien and even hostile environment. Mouw cites three prooftexts which he has found over the years to be the essence of a scriptural guide: the answer of Jesus about the propriety of paying Roman taxes (Matthew 22:21, Mark 12:17, Luke 20:25); Jesus' comment to Pilate that his kingship was not of this world (John 18:36); and Paul's portrayal of civil government in Romans 13:1-4. In each of these, Mouw discerns that the appropriate worldly attitude for Christians is one of subjection to the demands of their dual citizenship — but, critically, a subjection accepted only before Christ.

Very much in evidence at this stage of the argument is Calvin's "third and principle use" of the law, whereby Christians can "learn more thoroughly each day the nature of the Lord's will to which they aspire" (*Institutes* 2.7.12, LCC edition, 1:360). But whereas this is often interpreted individually as a help for believers in their pilgrimage, Mouw rightly applies it as

God's positive involvement in the world (cf. Alfred Krass's discussion in *Five Lanterns at Sundown* [Eerdmans, 1978], pp. 131ff.). The people of God in exile are not alienated from God's creation, only from human sin. More important, the Christian message is that God, human sin notwithstanding, is very much involved with the world, including its social structures and systems; the corollary of which is that Christians must also be thus involved. Mouw rejects the alternative stances of pious agnosticism (God works in mysterious ways — far too mysterious for us to try to understand) and of social dualism (radical opposition to the worldly powers of death and destruction, because they are irredeemable). He opts instead for a holy worldliness which seeks to discern God's will in the world at every level of human existence, and to live accordingly. This will inevitably lead to an involvement with the poor, for this is where the call of Jesus takes us. It is a call to a world which God has not abandoned; and so, neither must we.

This is a most important book for any who are troubled by the sort of Christian witness which seems to limit God to personal salvation, when God is patently at work throughout the world. It is an excellent primer for a faithful Christian lifestyle.

The second book in the series is authored by **Mark Gibbs** himself: *Christians with Secular Power* (Fortress, 1981, 136 pp., \$4.95). This takes the same theme as Mouw's book, but gives it a very specific focus: how do Christians who wield secular power carry out their witness; and how do the rest of us in the church give them supportive understanding? The opening word is firm and direct. "God's calling is not only to be faithful in our church membership, our family responsibilities and our personal relationships, our neighborly duties . . . but also in our occupational responsibilities, whatever the job may be. This is primarily a matter of serving and relating the gospel to the structures of modern life in which we are involved, not just being pleasant and kind to fellow workers" (p. 8). Christians concerned with military, political and economic power — in short, those who provide practical leadership for human society — are under pressures today which make many of them "long for the day when they can cultivate their gardens." But withdrawal is no option for those who, in their discipleship, must affirm above all the grace of God. Keeping out of the "murky situations of public life by escaping into the so-called morally safe jobs" is not a stance of Christian love any more than is a stance of total revolution. There must be courageous compromise with the world, in which the Christian witness is given over completely to the grace of God, operative in the world, *just as it is*.

The steps for such people of power, suggests Gibbs, are twofold. First, they need to be realistically informed about the sinfulness of the world in which we all live. There can be no selective versions of human sin, which stress minor misdeeds and ignore major evils. Torture in oppressive regimes; prison conditions in the United States; local conditions in countries like South Africa, where companies might have subsidiaries which rely on the cheap labor afforded by apartheid; the displacement of poor farmers in Latin America to provide land for luxury cash crops to be exported to the United States; these and many more such scandals are matters of record which can easily be verified. They should be. Second, the church needs to offer more

than a simple commitment to Christ. "We have too many corporate executives with a Sunday-school understanding of their faith" (p. 33). The church must also provide theological meat for spiritual growth. This can come through more substantial preaching, through education with more bite, through informal local discussion groups, and through the local church limiting its demands on the laity for what amounts to ecclesiastical self-maintenance. There should be Christian "think-tanks" to match their secular counterparts — groups in which laity with power can freely and confidentially discuss their secular responsibilities in dialogue with theologians. Gibbs points to a number of projects throughout the world which are pioneering such work, but notes that such concepts have yet to impact the United States.

Some of the most helpful chapters in the book are directed at specialized groups: politicians (we need to understand what it means to "muddy their hands on behalf of the rest of the country," p. 64); business executives (we need to understand the complexity of responsibility in national and multinational corporations before we censure their insensitivity to the "sovereignty of inequality in the American system," pp. 76-7); labor union leaders ("I suspect that we have never assessed how much Christian social-action thinking has suffered in the last ten years because it has been rather too much a matter of clergy and academics and environmentalists," p. 89); the police and the military (often enough "the stage is set for politicians to paralyze police if they are good and control them if they are not," p. 93); and how people with power might relate more positively with the institutional church ("there are literally hundreds of excellent facilities in the United States dedicated to the education and further education of the clergy . . . but only a handful of places where one can learn, in depth, about the ministry of Christian politicians," p. 113). The book concludes with some perceptive "prayers for powerful laity," and with some helpful annotated bibliographies.

Gibbs does not set out to offer instant solutions to any of these dilemmas. Indeed, a secularly-powerful layperson might read through his book and feel that it merely expresses, albeit lucidly and tellingly, what he or she already knows. But as an agenda for the church and its evangelistic outreach, it breaks some hard ground, and does much to overcome the moribund reaction against Christendom which has too long provided an excuse for those of us inclined to be socially lethargic. Future volumes in the series will be eagerly awaited.

Addressing the same issues, but from a different vantage-point, is **William K. McElvaney's Good news is bad news is good news** . . . (Orbis, 1980, 132 pp., \$5.95). This is essentially an application of Third World and minority liberation theologies to the North American middle class Christian. The first part of the book provides a good introduction to the theological method of *praxis*, and proves interesting not least because of the author's progression from an existentialist training. In any theology of praxis, the unavoidable starting point is the reality and universality of human suffering and oppression. Ignore this reality and, as McElvaney convincingly argues, the gospel is denied its power. For the God of our faith is partial. Our God sides with the oppressed, and Christ is to be found first and foremost among

the poor. If we wish to follow Christ, this is where we too shall find our identity and purpose.

On this premise, the book proceeds to direct the major part of its argument against those comfortable North American Christians for whom the good news may initially be bad news, but the paradox of which is in itself the good news of the gospel. Put simply, for the rich, the gospel is a message of *critical love*. God is the Radical Questioner (p. 33), and the church is the place where we come to be disturbed (p. 41). Abraham and Zacchaeus are used as paradigms of this divine disturbance, which is then given specific applications: to the insensitivity of male whiteness, for example; to the oppression of economic systems; to an indictment of burgeoning military spending and shrinking social programs (on the basis of government projections in 1977, not to mention 1981); all of which insights are drawn together in a plea for an evangelism which enlists for service at the point of obvious human need. The author makes good use of George G. Hunter III's *inductive model* of evangelism, whereby persons are invited to join the work of the church through a particular service which draws on their gifts. (Hunter's book, incidentally, is extremely helpful in the training of laypersons for evangelism: *The Contagious Congregation*. Abingdon, 1979. 160 pp., \$4.95).

Some readers may find that McElvaney tends to exhort rather than evangelize, and unfortunately he trots out the old chestnut that when we are truly the church, everything we do is a form of evangelism (p. 85). But if any church is *not* doing what McElvaney presents so powerfully as the path of discipleship, his book is nothing less than an indictment. For this diagnostic purpose alone, it is important reading.

Argued even more pungently is Bishop **James Armstrong's From the Underside: Evangelism from a Third World Vantage Point** (Orbis, 1981, 94 pp., \$4.95). The bishop has less patience than McElvaney with what he perceives to be perverted evangelistic practices in the United States. Evangelism cannot avoid the pain of a gospel which is incarnational, nor can discipleship be cheap in a world where people are in poverty, oppression and imprisonment. It is this call which is coming loud and clear to us from "the underside" of the world, and it is nothing less than the call which was seen by the early church to have come from a cross. The words on these pages have no leniency for those who enjoy freedom and affluence. "There is more — far more — to Christian evangelism than creating a climate in which multitudes of people, or even a few, 'come forward' during the singing of 'Just as I am' or simply 'join the church.' There is more — far more — to Christian evangelism than a mushrooming congregation of talk-alike, think-alike, look-alike enthusiasts in a homogeneous Sun-belt suburb" (p. 26).

This gives a fair indication of the polemical nature of this incisive monograph, and it is worth reading not least because it enters the jousting between liberationists and conservative evangelicals with some gusto. Too often these disputes are disguised as afternoon tea, with salt slipped into the sugar bowl and mustard into the chocolate cake. Here is an honest protagonist, inviting Church Growth leaders such as Donald McGavran, Peter Wagner, Win Arn and Robert Schuller "of the famous and glittering Garden Grove Community

Church" to answer some very direct questions (p. 41). There is little time wasted in pleading that positions are not properly understood, or that arguments are being misconstrued. Armstrong asks the questions unequivocally. *Can* we have a Glass Cathedral and a South Side Chicago slum on the same planet, never mind the same country, and claim that our message is consistent with the teachings of our Lord? If so, the bishop wants to know why and how.

It is not that Armstrong confuses the gospel with a utopianism. Quoting José Casal, a Cuban Methodist leader who was converted two years after the Castro revolution, and who stayed in Cuba when most other Methodist preachers had left for the United States, the point is made tellingly: "We must never forget that the Revolution is not the kingdom of God. The Revolution may be a sign of the kingdom, but not its fulfillment. . . . God told me not to run away from my country. He told me to be a part of Christianity's role here. In Jesus Christ I will be so until the day I die" (p. 73). A more detailed example is offered in the Korean Methodist Church which will celebrate its centennial in 1985, by which time its goal is to have one million members and five thousand congregations. They are more or less on schedule for this, but Armstrong goes on to list some additional — and anomalous — statistics: that alongside this rapid growth, there are those who have suffered for regarding the Word as Deed, who have paid the price of discipleship in a police state, and whose witness is more powerful than the projected one million who will join the church (pp. 48ff.).

This is not easy reading for those of us who would be hard put to remember the last time we were laughed at for being a Christian, still less endangered. Armstrong notes that, before Orbis accepted his manuscript, two publishing houses turned it down on the grounds that "it was not in keeping with current evangelistic emphases in the United States" (p. xiii). One may not agree that the author has provided an alternative evangelistic strategy; but he has made very clear to us the evangelistic challenge of the gospel.

In all of these polemics, the student of evangelism and missions can take note of two encouraging developments. The first is that, in the practice of accountable discipleship, positions of considerable theological divergence are increasingly finding a common witness and outreach. Bishop Armstrong, for example, quotes the *Response to Lausanne* and refers glowingly to evangelical writers such as Jim Wallis (pp. 17-18, 22). Edward Dayton and David Fraser include a substantial and balanced overview of evangelical and nonevangelical theology alike as a necessary foundation for their task (*Planning Strategies*, pp. 55-105). And many more examples could be cited.

The second encouraging sign is that, in the priority now being given to eschatology as a necessary dimension of the church's evangelistic task, countless ways are being opened for genuine inter-denominational, inter-theological, and inter-religious dialogue. Under the threat of the promise of Christ's New Age, the commencement of the Wedding Feast, there are many unworthy servants who are beginning to brush up on their table manners and dinner conversation. And it's high time we did.

Some of this material will also appear in the Perkins Journal.

BOOK REVIEWS

Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel
by Millard C. Lind (Herald Press, 1980, 232 pp., \$9.95). Reviewed by P. C. Craigie, Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Calgary.

The reader of the Old Testament is familiar with the preponderance of military material in the constituent books; for many readers, this dominance of martial matter is one of the most disturbing features of the entire Bible. Not least worrying is the declaration that "Yahweh is a Warrior" (Exodus 15:3): how are such affirmations to be understood and how do they relate to the concept of the "Prince of Peace"? This ancient epithet for God is the title of Millard Lind's book on the theological problem of warfare in ancient Israel.

At the start, it must be stated that this is a work of technical biblical scholarship. Lind is entering into an old and continuing debate in Old Testament scholarship that has involved the writings of such distinguished scholars as Schwally, von Rad, Smend, Weippert and others. The debate as to the nature of Israel's "holy war" is a difficult one. Inevitably, given the nature of the subject, it involves engagement with some of the most complex issues of current literary and historical criticism. Lind enters the fray in its own terms; that is to say, while arguing his own distinctive hypothesis, he writes from a position firmly within the methodology and perspectives of contemporary Old Testament scholarship.

Lind's view, essentially, is that Yahweh's role as a warrior is crucial to the understanding of war in the Old Testament. Consequently, "holy war" is not basically a human activity, but a divine miracle; human participation is downgraded or underemphasized, whereas divine action is the key to understanding the essence of warfare and victory. And the focal point, from which all biblical warfare must be assessed, is the most crucial event in the early history of Israel, namely the Exodus. In a sense, the escape through the Sea was a battle, celebrated in a great victory hymn (Exod. 15:1-18); yet the battle and the victory were the Lord's, and human participation was not significant. This event shaped the fundamental manner of understanding warfare in later theological reflection and practice; it was not merely a theological retrojection to the early period from a later age.

Thus Lind argues a case that comes to grips with the current analyses of this complex biblical topic. His proposal shares some features with other hypotheses, but is distinctive in its emphasis on the centrality of Yahweh's miraculous participation in human history by granting victory, and in its consistent lack of emphasis on human participation in conflict. The case is developed through the Torah and the Former Prophets; it is not developed with respect to the late biblical period and the exilic and post-exilic prophets. Nor is the hypothesis carried through to the New Testament, though a few indications of its implications for the New Testament are noted at the end of the book.

This book takes on particular interest in view of the author's background. He is a professor and minister in the Mennonite Church, and his

book is published in that Church's "peace shelf." In this context, the book may raise expectations that are not fully meant. All Christians, not least those in the traditional peace churches within Christianity, must somehow come to an understanding of the difficult war material in the Old Testament. And the sub-title of this book, *The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel*, might at first promise a happy solution to these ancient dilemmas. But the book offers no simple solutions; to say this, however, is not to criticize it, for that is not the book's task. It is essentially a prolegomenon, as its author recognizes; more work of a primary nature needs to be done along the same lines to complete the hypothesis for the Old Testament as a whole. And then there must follow a more broadly based application of the book's insights to the wider discipline of "biblical theology." But the rest of the task is well worth carrying out, for this work has established a good foundation in the scholarly dimensions of the topic. It must now be transmitted in more general and less technical form to a general readership.

But even at the level of prolegomenon, more work remains to be done. While I am persuaded by Lind's hypothesis in essentials, I find it still too narrow to encompass all the complexities of the topic. The book presents a theological perspective on Yahweh the Warrior from the internal perspective of the Old Testament literature, its writers and editors. But the actual history of the wars of conquest, and subsequently of the wars of the state, loom larger than some of the interpretative records of them. How are we to understand the whole history? And given the emphasis in this book on the miraculous, notably the Lord's victory at the Red Sea, how are we to understand the relationship between "miraculous" and "normative" history? Was miracle normative *in fact* (e.g. to the military commander), as well as to the interpreter of Israel's wars? And so one could go on, raising problems. But the criticisms pertain to details; when all is said and done, this book is a very worthwhile contribution to biblical scholarship. It does not make for easy reading (perhaps a consequence of its origin as a dissertation), but it does make for rewarding reading and will amply repay careful study.

Israel in Exile: A Theological Interpretation
by Ralph Klein (Fortress, 1979, 159 pp., \$6.95). Reviewed by Elmer A. Martens, Professor of Old Testament, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary.

In six chapters Ralph Klein, professor of Old Testament at Christ Seminary-Seminex, Saint Louis, Missouri, examines six literary works from the exile in order to determine their responses to Israel's exile.

Klein's method is to ascertain what old traditions were invoked and what new concepts might have been introduced. These responses, he suggests, are helpful for moderns who need to learn how to "make the most" of disasters. He defines the present age as one of "homelessness." "One can be in exile without ever leaving the land."

Three of these literary works — Lamentations, the Deuteronomistic History and Jeremiah — depict restrained blueprints for the

future. Yahweh has become an enemy according to Lamentations. The key to the exile, for the Deuteronomistic Historian, is the sin of infidelity by Israel, especially her leaders. Jeremiah anticipates a restoration of both northern and southern kingdoms. The redactors of his book who stressed that a broken covenant was the reason for the exile showed great theological sophistication in announcing a new covenant.

Three other literary works — Second Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the Priestly writings — describe Israel's future with greater optimism. Ezekiel offers hope because of God's permanent dwelling with his people. Acting with freedom, God will bring Israel to such a point that unusual knowledge of God among the nations will result. Second Isaiah stressed the power of God to bring about new realities, and the Priestly writers (parts of the Pentateuch) depict the way earlier promises had been fulfilled as reason for hope in the future.

Klein is successful in depicting discreet theological responses. He has done his homework. Helpful insights are brought to individual passages, many of which are cited, and for some of which more detailed exegesis is given.

Klein leans heavily on redaction criticism and its results. Thus Deuteronomy is viewed as part of the Deuteronomistic History and is combed for responses to the exile in the sixth century. Jeremiah includes material said to be from D, redactors who added to and reshaped the book 30 years after Jeremiah. Thus, for example, Jer. 23:1-8 is primarily from the redactors but vs. 5-6 are genuine to Jeremiah. The priestly material from the Pentateuch is reviewed from the standpoint that the exile is part of that group's agenda. To the mind of this reviewer the connections between P material and the exile, though commonplace in scholarly research, are forced, and the conclusions quite unconvincing.

Topical treatments of biblical theology rather than full scale biblical theologies are flourishing. Klein's book, a volume in the "Overtures to Biblical Theology" series, is more pedantic and less exciting than companion volumes in the same series, such as W. Brueggemann's *The Land* and Phyllis Trible's *God and The Rhetoric of Sexuality*. Yet Klein's book is helpful in summarizing scholarly results in a non-technical fashion.

Themes in Old Testament Theology
by William Dyrness (IVP, 1979, 252 pp., \$5.95). Reviewed by Kapp L. Johnson, Ph.D. student, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, California.

Themes in Old Testament Theology by William Dyrness was written "with the intention of opening up the OT for the Christian" (p. 16). Dyrness, a systematic theologian by training, seeks to write an Old Testament biblical theology which he understands to be the study of the "leitmotifs of Scripture as they develop in the course of God's dealings with people in the biblical period" (p. 16). With the completion of this work, Dyrness remarks, "Clearly my own theological reflection has been profoundly affected and my whole approach to theology altered." (p. 11). Thus he joins a growing and distinguished group of systematic theologians whose training and theological reflection have

been influenced by their study of the Old Testament, Pannenberg and Schwarzwaller to mention two of the more well known.

The book is divided into fourteen chapters which reflect the major themes which Dyrness sees developing in the OT. These chapters are not to be seen as separate from one another, but rather "the ideas and institutions discussed in individual chapters are organically related and underwent historical development in the life of Israel" (p. 19). Dyrness feels that the historical character of revelation enables the topical method to help one to understand the coherence of God's program. Its chapter titles are "The Self-Revelation of God," "The Nature of God," "Creation and Providence," "Man and Woman," "Sin," "The Covenant," "The Law," "Worship," "Piety," "Ethics," "Wisdom," "The Spirit of God," "Prophecy," and "The Hope of Israel." It ends with a very useful bibliography for further reading in Old Testament theology.

Dyrness relies heavily on Mendenhall's 1954 *Biblical Archaeologist* article on Covenant for developing a background for understanding covenant in the Old Testament. From this he shows how the OT greatly expands this Ancient Near Eastern concept beyond what the original usage could have comprehended. To show this development, Dyrness discusses four covenants in the OT: the Covenant with Noah (Gen. 6), the Covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15 and 17), the Mosaic Covenant, and the Covenant with David. The theological significance of covenant lies in the fact that it is covenant which fundamentally defines the relationship between God and his people. The importance of this for Israel, and later the church, is that "history itself receives direction and significance. This is because God has entered into history and tied himself to particular events, which he promises will have everlasting consequences" (p. 125).

Dyrness clearly writes from an evangelical perspective. While quoting freely the theological conclusions of critical scholars (e.g. Von Rad, Childs, Wolff, and Vriezen), he does not share their critical views. For instance, he views the materials of the Pentateuch as dating substantially from Mosaic times, sees Adam and Eve as historical persons, and sees the whole of Gen. 1-11 as having actually taken place (as opposed to being mere legend). Written for laypersons as well as beginning theological students, the book is particularly helpful for those who wish to see how one systematic theologian sees the relationship between the Old and New Testaments by means of a typology which gives full weight to the historical character of revelation.

In light of the overall benefit of this book, a few critical remarks are in order. These concern a couple of points where Dyrness's discussion reflects a weakness in conservative *vis-a-vis* critical scholarship. Several important texts receive only enough attention to show Dyrness's failure adequately to confront critical positions. For example, although Ex. 6:1-2 is a watershed for understanding the self-revelation of God in the Old Testament, Dyrness avoids the critical issues concerning this text. There are technical difficulties in his translation and interpretation, as well as occasional overinterpretation and begging of the question. His whole discussion of what I would call "the revelation of the name" is really special plead-

ing. Similarly, when arguing in chapter three that the doctrine of creation originated early in Israel's history, Dyrness shows far too flat and simplistic a reading of the Psalms, and offers a conclusion concerning the two Genesis accounts of creation for which he cites no evidence.

Given the importance of the issues hinging on the interpretation of these texts (Ex. 6:1-2 and Gen. 1:1-2:25), Dyrness should have been more careful not to dismiss critical positions too quickly, without properly confronting the problems. It is not fair to the evangelical position to raise critical issues at all if it is not within the purview of the book to handle them adequately.

***The Apostle Paul Speaks to Us Today* by Holmes Rolston, Jr. (John Knox Press, 1979, 211 pp., \$4.25). Reviewed by Peter R. Rodgers, Pastor of St. John's Episcopal Church in New Haven, Connecticut.**

Originally published in 1951 under the title *Consider Paul*, Holmes Rolston's introduction to the Apostle Paul has been given a new life in paperback form. This is not a new edition but a reprinting. After thirty years of intensive Pauline study, Rolston's presentation still remains a useful place to begin. With little updating his chapters on Paul's apostleship, on the origin of Paul's message, on "The Wisdom of God and the Wisdom of Man," and on the Jesus whom Paul preached still can provide a useful starting point. No doubt better studies have been produced in the past three decades. But what more than justifies the reprint is Rolston's treatment of Paul's understanding and use of the Old Testament.

Rolston wrote of Paul's use of the OT before the publication of the Qumran material and before the widespread interest in the Old Testament in the New. He did not have the advantage, as do today's students, of C. H. Dodd's *According To The Scriptures* or E. Earle Ellis' *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*. Nevertheless, what he offers us, as far as it goes, is a most valuable assessment of the OT in Pauline writings. His Appendix on Paul and the OT is reprinted from Fernand Prat, *The Theology of St. Paul*. A careful study of that appendix raises the question whether Rolston has accepted too readily Kautzsch's assertion that only two quotations in Paul are definitely independent of the Septuagint (LXX) (p. 139). An actual detailed comparison of the Greek of Paul's quotations with the LXX text might underline this question and raise others. On what basis does the author assert that when Paul deviates from the LXX he is quoting from memory (p. 140)? It is an attractive suggestion, and an avenue often taken by commentators. Is it justifiable? What makes this view more tenable than, say, the "testimony book hypothesis" (the view that Christians, like the people at Qumran, 4Q Testimonia, collected together Scripture verses or passages especially useful in preaching, teaching, apologetic and evangelism)?

But Rolston's interest lies elsewhere. He examines the OT quotations in Paul for their bearing on the Apostle's understanding of inspiration. It is the genius of the book that it seeks to discover through a study of the quotations in Paul a way of understanding the nature of Scripture as the authoritative word of God for us. Paul's freedom in quotation may appear at first to be a disregard for the form or context of the text in its OT

setting. But in fact it bespeaks the disciplined freedom which Paul discovered when he began to read the OT Scriptures in light of their true meaning, Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, Rolston's treatment of Paul's quotations is tainted with a repeated polemic against a view of "a mechanical type of inerrancy." It would have greatly enhanced the value of his presentation had he spent his time not in negative criticism but in positive exploration. May we not carry further the approach Rolston has suggested? He believes that we can find in Paul's use of the OT certain guidelines for understanding the nature of inspiration. We may observe that a certain flexibility and freedom characterized Paul's quotations. Can we cull from a study of the OT in Paul the scope and limitations of that freedom in handling the word of God? Can we then apply these principles to the study of variations within the Synoptic Gospels? May the way Paul handled the word of God in its OT form provide us with a paradigm for assessing the way Matthew and Luke handled the word of God in its Markan form? How this is worked out in detail would make a fascinating and fruitful research project.

***Rudolf Bultmann's Theology: A Critical Interpretation* by Robert C. Roberts (Eerdmans, 1976, 333 pp.). Reviewed by Alan Padgett, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, Encinitas, California.**

TSF Bulletin normally reviews only recent books. But this important work by a prominent evangelical deserves, in my opinion, greater reflection on our part.

Roberts begins this work, his Yale Ph.D. dissertation supervised by Paul Holmer, by dividing the Bultmannian corpus into sermons, exegesis, and theology. While it is impossible to ignore the exegetical aspect of one who was a New Testament scholar, Roberts believes that Bultmann more clearly speaks his own mind in his theological literature. For a critique of Bultmann the exegete, Roberts refers us to Nils Dahl, *The Crucified Messiah* (1974).

In a penetrating analysis, Roberts cuts to the fundamental presupposition in Bultmann's theology: the dichotomy between existence and world. World is what is controlled, what can be possessed, what can be known, what is secure, what is an object. Real human existence is fundamentally free, uncontrolled, unpredictable, subjective, and always coming into being. This world/existence dichotomy underlies and unifies Bultmann's theology. In a masterful manner, Roberts describes and critiques all of Bultmann's thought on the basis of this dichotomy. Here we must limit ourselves to one example, the famous program of "demythologizing."

With respect to theological language, Bultmann rejects any "worldly" language about the past or about objects. Such language can only be meaningful for *my* life when it deals with "existence," with decision, with action, with the on-going. Thus Bultmann views much of the New Testament as "mythology," i.e., language that incorrectly deals with the physical (e.g., the New Testament's cosmology of the three-decker universe) or with the human (e.g., the expression of the act of faith in terms of "the world"). Bultmann's hermeneutical goal is to translate such "mythological" beliefs

into contemporary scientific terms that modern people can accept. For instance, the mythological belief that Jesus died for my sins should be translated into meaningful (read existential) terms, viz., being free from every worldly attachment.

Roberts has several criticisms of this program throughout his book, the more salient ones being: (a) that the "New Testament" worldview and the "modern scientific" worldview are not two distinct, monolithic structures which we can simply swap piecemeal without critical examination; (b) the "real" meaning of language lies not in some abstract philosophical or metaphysical explanation that we give it, but in the words themselves; (c) that the beliefs of the New Testament authors seem less attached to "mythology" of any sort, as they are to actual experiences (e.g., the Resurrection); and (d) therefore perhaps they are less improper than we think when they point to "the world" in their faith-statements.

This example is a crude abstraction from the humor, grace, sympathy, and insight that Roberts brings to his task. This book is no doubt one of the best representatives of the category, "evangelical critiques of theologians." Roberts has done an amazing job of interpreting, refining, and reconciling the Bultmannian corpus, laying out for us the structure of his thought. Moreover Roberts, unlike so many conservatives, is an understanding and sympathetic critic. He comprehends Bultmann and sees the attraction in his theology — the power, consistency, scope, harmony, and sweep of his thought. He takes care to defend Bultmann against inappropriate criticism (e.g., p. 37, 95). Most of Roberts' criticisms are fair, and not arrogant in tone (although I did notice less caution and more sarcasm as the book progressed).

I did have two criticisms of Roberts' work, which can equally well be addressed to evangelicalism as a whole. Why is it, first of all, that we are always criticizing theologians on the basis of their "presuppositions," rather than on their work in their specialty, and its results? It is often easy to criticize authors on the basis of their presuppositions and methods, so elusive and not spelled out. Yet this is a dangerous and two-edged sword that can cut both ways (cf. Barr's *Fundamentalism*). Roberts is more cautious than most in this regard, at least in the beginning of his book, but he still gives me the impression that for Bultmann, philosophy preceded exegesis (e.g., p. 21, 83f.). In reality there was no doubt a gradual concrescence, as Bultmann considered the text and the modern situation. In the latter portions of this book, Roberts gives us the distinct impression that, dealing only with methods, presuppositions, and theology, he has topped the Bultmannian corpus. Yet followers of Bultmann will no doubt object that Bultmann's edifice stands or falls with his exegesis of the New Testament — an area Roberts relegates to a footnote (p. 12), or simply derides (p. 97f.). Roberts needs to be more cautious, and more humble, in the surety of his criticisms and the bite of his sarcasm.

Why is it, secondly, that evangelicals spend so much energy on criticism? Since Roberts' book is an "interpretation" (granted, a critical one) I would have enjoyed at least a few pages of positive assessment of Bultmann's thought. Or is it possible that he has said *nothing* which

can help us follow Christ in our age? Perhaps we evangelicals fear saying anything positive lest this be mistaken for approval. At least Bultmann had the courage to apply theology and theological thinking to our times; to attempt something new, fresh, and relevant (however misguided). Of how many evangelicals can we say this?

Despite the above, Roberts has given us a penetrating and systematic interpretation. His work deserves our attention.

The Physiology of Faith

by John W. Dixon, Jr. (Harper & Row, 1979, 344 pp., \$15.00). Reviewed by John Culp, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Olivet Nazarene College.

Dixon seeks to make it possible for the Pauline phrase, "Christ in me" to be meaningful today. In order to do this, he develops a process-relation metaphysics. Modern physics, physiology, and the work of Cassirer on symbols provide the sources for this effort. The principle of relativity makes it possible to avoid an artificial isolation of human existence. Physiology describes how it is possible for humans to participate in faith in Christ. Human existence arises in the basic structures, symbols, constructed out of the "webs of particles of structured energy." That these structures develop through an evolutionary process overcomes the Cartesian problem of the mind-body relation. Dixon claims the resulting wholeness is a trinitarian perspective because a being can be more than its relations to the others without loss of the others. Since being is relation, our being as Christians is in relation to Christ. Throughout this analysis, Dixon points out the inability of a substantialistic metaphysics to account for wholeness. The tendency toward separation inherent in substantialistic metaphysics makes it impossible for Christ to be in us.

In his attempt to express Christian thought in process categories, Dixon avoids some of the terminological difficulties of Hegel and Whitehead. And yet he clearly recognizes that he must develop new terminology and formats because the traditional ones lead to misconceptions. This makes rigorous demands upon the reader.

Theologically, Dixon's position differs significantly from evangelical theology. However, he views this difference as the result of different symbolic structures rather than as the result of either attention to different issues or different answers to the issues. For Dixon, the basic problem with traditional theology is its assumption that language can explain reality. This leads traditional theologians to claim that their symbols, or doctrines, describe God and his action at least to some extent. Dixon demonstrates his approach in his evaluation of the early Christological formulations as brilliant attempts to express the principle of incarnation but ultimately failures because of the limits of their substantialistic language. Biblical authority is treated in a similar manner.

Dixon provides the reader with a serious attempt to overcome the limitations of a substantialistic metaphysics. At frequent points his work is very stimulating, although evangelicals will be troubled by his overall position. Yet evangelicals need to consider carefully

whether this uneasiness is due to Dixon's theological position or to their substantialistic metaphysics. The greatest appreciation for Dixon's work will come from those attracted to a process-relation metaphysics.

The importance of Dixon's work for evangelicals does not grow out of its novelty. It clearly belongs to the process tradition in theology. Its distinctiveness within that tradition comes from Dixon's emphasis upon wholeness and his utilization of Cassirer's work on symbols. The greatest value of Dixon's book may be the challenge it provides to those who seek to defend a substantialistic metaphysics as a basis for their Christian thought. If Dixon's challenge results in a comparable attempt to state the Christian faith from a self-consciously substantialistic metaphysics, his book will have made an important contribution to evangelical thought. Much of the present evangelical rejection of process theologies is doctrinal. Because Dixon and other process thinkers are claiming to provide a more adequate philosophical basis for theology, evangelicals who find the theological outcome of this process-relation basis inadequate need to demonstrate that that basis is inadequate rather than simply to raise doctrinal objections. This can best be done by critically examining, or defending, the substantialistic basis of traditional theology. If this is not done, and as long as evangelical theology retains a substantialistic basis, it will continue to be accused of being unable to speak meaningfully.

Message and Existence: An Introduction to Christian Theology

by Langdon Gilkey (The Seabury Press, 1979, 257 pp.). Reviewed by Clark H. Pinnock, Professor of Theology, McMaster Divinity College.

Why Gilkey's book is so short calls for some explanation since his last two books (which dealt with much more restricted areas of theology than this one does) were both in the 500 page range. How could a scholar of his erudition and competence handle the full compass of theological truth in half that number of pages? And why? Gilkey's own answer to this question is that he is writing an introduction for beginners, adding that he does not feel capable of producing the more massive type of systematic theology. So he has produced what he calls this "diminutive stand-in." While admiring his modesty, I would express disappointment and disbelief at his reasoning here. Gilkey is without doubt one of the very best American theologians alive and unquestionably capable of writing a longer definitive systematic theology. If he is not too busy and tired, I sincerely hope he will get down to work on it soon on the basis of a saner estimate of his own abilities.

On the other hand, I also wonder if the problem does not lie at a deeper level. Gilkey is so limited by modernity as to what he can affirm as a Christian believer that perhaps a small book really does contain it all. After all, Dale Moody's *Word of Truth* [see review in September-October issue] is long because, believing the Bible as he does, he is compelled to treat a host of topics which for Gilkey do not really stand as credible beliefs in his liberal universe. So there is symbolic meaning in the relative length of the two books. To achieve relevance

liberal theology chooses to reduce the content of its message. If compared with a humanist, Gilkey's book is full of gospel light; but when compared with Moody, it seems thin and atrophied. Perhaps our situation calls for theologians of both kinds: those who express the Christian substance despite modernity, and those who cannot say that much but say it well.

The form of Gilkey's book is based on the four basic motifs of the Apostles' Creed, and each of them is handled in direct confrontation with our contemporary experience of life and history. Like Tillich, he wishes to offer a mononomous interpretation of existence and culture which will bring out the religious dimension latent in them. This results in a process-influenced theism which still seems to be in touch with historic beliefs, but a Christology that is only functional and a Pneumatology that to my mind lacks reality. The deepest issue to be raised concerning the book is the bi-polar method employed, how Gilkey reflects upon the Christian faith in the context of modernity. In principle of course this is what we all have to do, but the crucial issues are what the revelational pole really amounts to, and how influential modern ideas turn out to be. It seems to me that revelation for Gilkey is the Jesus-story embodied in a vary fallible scripture, which turns out predictably to be very pliable and subject to revision under pressure of omnipresent modern thinking. Although I recognize that Gilkey does not wish to permit modern thought to dominate the Christian tradition, that is what happens.

I can gladly recommend both Gilkey's book and Moody's book, though on different grounds. Moody has become through his book something of an ideal evangelical theologian who combines critical thinking with conservative convictions. Yet Gilkey is still my favorite religious liberal whose work is always excellent and instructive.

Faith & Its Counterfeits

by Donald G. Bloesch (IVP, 1981, 122 pp., \$3.95). Reviewed by Gabriel Fackre, Professor of Theology, Andover-Newton Theological School.

Good theology comes from a heart strangely warmed as well as a mind thoughtfully stretched. Those who have been taught systematic theology from the works of Donald Bloesch have something to learn from him here about evangelical spirituality. *Faith & Its Counterfeits* examines with insight and sensitivity the personal Christian journey and its detours.

The picture of "true religion" takes form against the backdrop of some of its perennial corruptions. Legalism trumpets its virtue before God and its inflexible dogmatism before the world, and thus stands over against "an invincible faith in a holy God and an unquenchable love for our fellow human beings" (p. 29). Formalism substitutes religious decorum and ritualism for a "relationship of inwardness to a living Lord" (p. 39), one that may indeed be expressed with liturgical grace and power (vigorous congregational singing). Humanitarianism stresses social improvement to the exclusion of "deliverance of humanity by a divine Savior" (p. 48). Enthusiasm is the quest for, and the fondling of, spiritual experience for its own

sake. True faith includes feeling "but is more fundamental than feeling" (p. 63). Eclecticism erodes the scandal of particularity and cripples the mission of the church by syncretistic accommodation to modern pluralism. Heroism is the glorification of the noble venture of piety or action that fails to see the grace at work in vulnerability and the church that lives by the mercy of God as "the little flock of the faint-hearted" (Luther).

Each section is illustrated by exemplars and interpreters from Christian history who embody alternatives to the counterfeits. They range from Luther and Calvin through Francke, Teresa of Avila and Pascal to William Booth, Corrie ten Boom, Karl Barth, P. T. Forsyth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Mother Theresa.

Adding to the readability of this small book is the author's aphoristic style. Cadences and couplets abound. "As Christians we are called to holiness, not happiness. . . . In our quest for holiness, we shall find true happiness" (p. 19). "Salvation does not consist in the experience of the new birth but the fact of the new birth" (p. 64). "Heroes have fame; saints have infamy" (p. 63). "What the world needs is not nice persons but new persons" (p. 52).

It is a joy to read an exploration of Christian spirituality that is rooted in the solidities of Christian doctrine. The theological underpinning of the book is as sturdy as its piety. At two points, however, this theological colleague would want to sit down and discuss further some of the blueprints with the builder. One has to do with the distinction between justification by grace through faith and sanctification that is "partnership" with God. The other is the absence of exemplars (except for Bonhoeffer) and exposition of a Christian piety that has to do with systemic witness. To be continued!

Donald Bloesch is right that "The church as a whole needs a fresh infusion of the Spirit" (p. 14). This book is a gift for us to that end.

A Third Way

by Paul M. Lederach (Herald, 1980, 143 pp., \$6.95). Reviewed by Hal Miller, Doctoral student, Department of Theology, Boston College.

In contrast to the two major paths of Protestantism — following Luther or Calvin — Mennonites have taken a different way with its own characteristic set of emphases. Paul Lederach's *A Third Way* provides a good introduction to this often ignored Anabaptist stream of the Reformation. In this brief work, he attempts "to set forth in simple terms some of the key affirmations" of this way (p. 13).

His book expounds on some of the themes embodied in the 1977 confessional document, "Affirming our Faith in Word and Deed" (which is included as an appendix). As one of the chief educators in Mennonite circles, Lederach wants to express to his compatriots the essence of their common faith. He turns to issues like the starting point of biblical interpretation (is it in the OT, the epistles, or the gospels?), arguing for the Anabaptist orientation to the gospels and so emphasizing the command to "Follow me" and the centrality of discipleship. Other distinctive Mennonite doctrines such as binding and loosing ("the ban") and separation from the world also come up for discussion.

Originally delivered as a series of sermons, the work retains much of its sermonic form: simplicity of language and style, and clear division of topics. The book tends to be uneven in content, however, for some chapters seem to be mere collections of observations, while others are more coherent attempts to describe the fullness of Anabaptist faith.

Even if the main intent of *A Third Way* is to incite practicing Mennonites to recall their own faith, it is nonetheless a good way for others to begin to grasp the central affirmations and emphases of that faith. Anabaptist insights concerning discipleship and church life need to be integrated into any holistic theological agenda. But before that can happen, those insights must be understood more broadly and deeply than they presently are. Lederach's work can provide a helpful start in the direction of that understanding.

The Mennonite Central Committee Story
Edited by Cornelius J. Dyck, with Robert Kreider and John Lapp, (Vol. I, *From the Files of MCC*, 159 pp.; Vol. II, *Responding to Worldwide Needs*, 155 pp.; Vol. III, *Witness and Service in North America*, 122 pp.; Herald Press, 1980, \$3.95 each). Reviewed by Peter J. Klassen, Professor of History and Dean, School of Social Sciences, California State University, Fresno.

These three volumes provide a fascinating overview of the origin, development and subsequent worldwide ministry of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). The editors have chosen to tell their story through the use of selected primary documents, prefaced by brief explanatory comments. The result is a gripping eye-witness account of how Christian faith has found ways to address a broad spectrum of human needs.

Volume I sets the stage as it introduces the reader to the confused, disrupted and suffering world of the Russian Mennonites amid war, revolution and famine. North American Mennonites formed various agencies to provide assistance, then consolidated their efforts as they formed the MCC in 1920. Contemporary documents depict the efforts made to help the beleaguered Mennonites in Russia, then Germany and Paraguay. Parts of this saga were repeated after World War II when Russian Mennonite refugees again were given help to find homes in Germany, Paraguay and Canada.

MCC quickly expanded its horizons to include numerous educational, economic, social and spiritual needs. Sometimes it helped establish missionary agencies; at other times, it pioneered in providing medical and economic assistance. After World War II, it played a vital role in re-establishing contact with Mennonites in Russia. The volume concludes with a number of documents outlining the birth and growth of MCC (Canada). Unfortunately, those unfamiliar with this particular development will fail to get a complete picture from the very short prefatory comments.

Volume II begins with a series of documents outlining basic principles and guidelines of MCC. Qualifications expected of workers are stated in terms that emphasize commitment to the church. A major part of this volume is devoted to MCC work during and after World War II in Europe, the Middle East, China, Indo-

nesia and Vietnam. Some of the records depict well-known activities, such as the aid given Mennonite refugees in Germany during the 1940s. Fortunately, other efforts, such as relief work in Poland, are also described. Occasionally, a cryptic reference, such as the one reporting a discussion with B. H. Unruh (p. 32) about problems in South America, will be understood only by readers familiar with the background of this matter. The editors are to be commended for having included a number of documents that reflect the long-range vision of MCC leaders, as seen in the report on the acquisition of the property that became the center of the Bienenberg Bible School.

One of the most stirring accounts recorded here is that of how MCC joined with Dutch missionaries and local believers to build the Mennonite churches in Indonesia. In Vietnam and the Middle East, MCC found concrete ways to demonstrate love in societies torn by violence and hatred. Sometimes, as in China, the public witness had to be discontinued. Other themes covered include the Teachers Abroad and the Pax Programs, as well as various dimensions of self-help. Technological skill and capital have been made available to communities struggling to become economically self-sufficient.

Volume III presents accounts of efforts to develop a biblical and historical rationale for the peace position. Statements to church constituencies and government bodies are included. Some of the issues touched upon are war taxes, capital punishment, violence in our society, and the Vietnam war. Sometimes, the documents reflect an absence of consensus. Other sections of this study depict the birth and growth of Mennonite Mental Health Services, Voluntary Service, and Mennonite Disaster Service. In all instances, the reader is given a graphic description of the challenges confronted by those who resolved that the Gospel must be continuously incarnated in the daily experiences of a suffering and often seemingly hopeless humanity.

Occasionally, a little more emphasis on historical context would have been helpful. However, the editors and Herald Press are to be commended for producing these evidences of the "acts and monuments" of the concerned church in confrontation with the needs of society.

Jerome, Chrysostom, and Friends
by Elizabeth A. Clark (The Edwin Mellen Press, 1979, 254 + xi pp., \$24.95). Reviewed by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Emeritus Professor of Historical Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary.

This set of essays and translations by the professor of religion at Mary Washington College is one of the volumes in a new series of "Studies in Women and Religion." It consists of two essays and three texts. One essay is on Chrysostom's view of women and the relation between the sexes, and the other is on Christian and classical views of friendship between men and women. The texts include the Life of Olympias and two treatises by Chrysostom to men and women on spiritual marriage. Extensive notes provide the necessary scholarly documentation, and a general index completes the volume.

We must be grateful to Dr. Clark for a study of considerable interest and merit. The advance of women's liberation has naturally kindled a concern for the earlier approaches of Christians to

the man/woman relation. The fourth century, with its curious mixture of secularization and sacralization, forms an obvious target for attention. The author draws some interesting comparisons with the thinking of antiquity in which, of course, many of these Christians were nurtured. Yet the book does also show the specifically Christian (or "monastic") contribution which found expression in friendships with women as well as in the peculiar phenomenon of so-called spiritual marriages (i.e., the non-sexual cohabitation of men and women celibates).

For all its qualities, however, the book has some obvious defects. It is hard to see why Jerome figures so prominently in the essays when the texts include none of his writings. Furthermore, did Chrysostom really have women friends in the same way as Jerome? One also wonders why the story of Olympias has to be given fairly fully in the second essay when it is in any case the subject of the first text. The general statement that Christianity contributed little to the status of women (apart from equality in sexual standards) ignores the historical setting of Chrysostom's day and runs counter to the main thrust of the work, namely, that true Christianity brings with it a higher quality that transcends secular distinctions. If seen as an attainment of male status by females, this seems to be the goal of a good deal of the movement for women's liberation in modern times as well!

On the technical side an index of biblical quotations and a bibliography would have added to the books' academic value at no great cost. Whether the texts deserve this first translation into English readers must judge for themselves, but they are undoubtedly of historical interest and Dr. Clark has contributed a veritable treasury of references in eight sets of notes (798 in all).

The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America

by Barbara Leslie Epstein (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981, 188 pp., \$17.95).

Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900

by Ruth Bordin (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981, 221 pp., \$17.50).

Reviewed by Nancy A. Hardesty, writer and church historian, Atlanta, GA.

Have you wondered how abstinence from alcohol became so deeply embedded in evangelical lifestyles despite Jesus' turning water into wine and Paul's admonition to "take a little wine for thy stomach's sake"? These two books will give you a clue.

For years historians considered the temperance movement either a quixotic campaign by a bunch of religious fanatics or an attempt at social control by marginalized clerics and their female followers. Now scholars are beginning to see that alcohol abuse was a major social problem in the nineteenth century and temperance a responsible response to it.

Epstein's book is particularly interesting to those who study revivalism. In her first two chapters she shows that while men and women had similar conversion experiences under George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards, their

responses to Charles Finney and Lyman Beecher were quite different. While men viewed salvation as an achievement in response to their repentance for particular sins, women felt reunited with God despite their sinful beings. Epstein's material raises intriguing questions about possible gender differences in religious experience.

Her final chapters suggest that the women's temperance movement was a way in which women could exercise social influence despite their relative powerlessness within the "cult of domesticity."

Bordin's book is essentially a history of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. She shows how, under the leadership of Methodist laywoman Frances Willard, it became the century's largest reform organization and undertook a radical social program including prison reform, education, labor agitation, the alleviation of poverty, and woman's suffrage.

Though both books offer new and intriguing insights into temperance reform, both suffer from a lack of theological analysis. The temperance movement was indeed intertwined with revivalist impulses and the strong piety of Frances Willard. In these books one only catches glimpses of that. They do show, however, how temperance gave women especially a chance to shape evangelical culture, leaving a heritage which is still with us.

Lucretia Mott: Her Complete Speeches and Sermons

Edited by Dana Greene (Studies in Women and Religion, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1980, 401 pp., \$24.95). Reviewed by Linda Mercadante, doctoral candidate in Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary.

Foremother of the modern women's rights movement, noted abolitionist, influential social reformer and peace activist, the remarkable Lucretia Mott (1793-1880) made quite an impact on her day. Impelled by religious motives, Mott founded the first Female Anti-Slavery Society, was an American delegate to the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London (although upon arrival she was denied, because of her sex, the right to participate), and in 1848 was a founding member of the first Women's Rights Convention, held in Seneca Falls, New York. This much is well known today about Lucretia Mott.

But what is not so well known is the depth and extent of the religious convictions which informed and guided her social activism. For unlike many in her day and ours, Mott's goals were not pragmatic. Instead, she drew from her Quaker background and her own reading of Scripture a profound and joyful mission, that of helping to usher in the Kingdom of God, and in consequence developed an equally profound opposition to the "gloomy" religion of her day, and to the "priestcraft" which she felt was holding people in bondage.

Dana Greene, in her obviously careful and laborious compilation of the extant speeches of Mott, has done us a great service. For although Mott is often written about, especially in accounts of the early women's rights and the abolition movements, Mott's own voice is rarely heard. Having left no corpus of writings, Mott often appears as a saintly Quaker woman who quietly inspired others, such as the feisty

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (*The Woman's Bible*, 895-98). But now, in this collection by Irene Mott speaks for herself, and the impression is quite different.

First, Mott obviously did not remain behind the scenes: Some forty-nine speeches and sermons are included in this book, dating from 841 to 1878, and Greene conjectures that many more were not recorded or have been lost. This amount of activity is prodigious when one considers that in addition Mott fulfilled the duties of wife, homemaker, and mother of six, was hostess to numerous abolitionists and social activists, and took in runaway slaves, operating an active station on the Underground railway.

Second, although Mott was for most of her adult years an official minister in the Society of Friends, she did not confine her public speaking to this realm. Instead, her speeches and sermons were given at a wide variety of places, including anti-slavery societies, women's rights conventions, peace societies and churches of other denominations — many of the speeches being delivered at the level of world or national organizations.

Finally, it is clear from the speeches that Mott had a sizeable array of interests, including not only women's rights and abolition, but also an active opposition to military training in schools, to capital punishment, and to the injustices done to the American Indians. All this emerged from a very particular set of religious convictions.

There are two sides to Mott's convictions, one obviously informed by her love and respect for Scripture and her equally deep regard for the fundamental Quaker principles, such as the "inner light" in every person. The other side, however, was motivated by a clearly defined skepticism of the religious thought of her day. She frequently reiterated such phrases as "Truth for authority, not authority for truth" and "It is not Christianity but priestcraft that has subjected woman . . ." She spoke against the gloomy religious tone of the day which dwelt on the depravity of humankind, rather than on its bearing of the image of God. Because of this perspective, Mott felt impelled to oppose such things as the rigid Sabbath observance which, for example, required the closing of a city's exhibition grounds on Sunday, even though it was the only day workers had free to visit it. Because she witnessed hypocritical Bibliolatry, she tried to counter it by denying the plenary inspiration of Scripture. And because she saw people "relying on the name of Jesus" but refusing to follow his commands or example, she let herself be accused of not believing in the divinity of Jesus, in order to insist upon the divinity, or innate goodness, latent in every person.

These factors may well bother the reader of Mott's speeches and sermons, as they bothered me. But they must be read against the background not only of what Mott was opposing, but also of what she felt was being accomplished. Mott expressed the conviction that she was living in the last days, when the Kingdom of God on earth was being ushered in. Her profound optimism was not unfounded. In spite of the great persistence of herself and the other abolitionists, Mott admits that in fact they all were greatly surprised at their success. But if one evil could be toppled, maybe others could as well. "The overthrow of the horrid sys-

tem of human slavery was unexpected to us all. . . . When we see that the great mountain of slavery is cast down, we have great reason to believe that war also will be removed for there are none but have a natural love of Peace. It only needs an earnest desire and prayer on the part of all the people" (p. 377).

This optimism that God's plan was being fulfilled illuminated all Mott's actions and accounts for her apparent blitheness in opposing some of the traditional religious doctrines, practices and structures. She felt that many of them did not conform to God's standard of truth; and since that standard was now being realized, they would be done away with.

Any reader interested in the effect of culture upon religious belief will profit from Greene's careful work, especially if a history of the period, such as Eleanor Flexner's *Century of Struggle* (Belknap, 1975) is read alongside. But in addition to this analytical approach or to the purely historical interest that this book serves, there is something else that can be gained from Mott's speeches and sermons. It is encouraging to follow the life and hear the words of a person who gently but firmly, in spite of societal and personal obstacles (which certainly included her sex, even more than it would today), continued to hold fast to and act on her fundamental beliefs throughout an entire lifetime. By basing her social activism upon these beliefs — which to Mott were distinctly Christian ones — rather than simply sanctifying her political actions by pinning approved beliefs onto them, Mott avoided the deep discouragement that otherwise can result from pragmatic social activism.

The Reconstruction of Morality

by Karl Holl, edited by J. L. Adams and W. F. Bense (Augsburg Publishing House, 1979, 160 pp., \$4.95). Reviewed by Peter H. Davids, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry.

This work consists of a series of lectures on Luther's ethic originally presented in 1919 by Karl Holl, one of the leading figures in the "Luther Renaissance" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The attempt of this movement was to get behind Lutheran dogmatics and Lutheranism to the thought of Luther himself. This book is one of the major steps in that direction, so it is important as a document of Lutheran theology as well as an essay in ethics.

The work itself has three basic parts. The first is a twenty-eight page introduction by the editor which discusses Holl's contribution to ethical study, elucidating Holl's own development and pointing out his argument with Troeltsch. While fascinating to a person somewhat versed in ethical and theological terminology, this part will be rough going for a novice in the field. The second part works through Luther's development, beginning with his Psalms Lectures of 1513-1515, jumping back to his earlier positions, and then moving forward to his Romans Lectures of 1515-1516. The text is not simple, but it is easy enough to follow for a theological student; it would have been even easier if Holl had used a strict chronological development. The third part presents the form and content of Luther's definitive

ethic, showing the reasons behind his positions on a wide variety of social and political issues. The discussion is clear and entices the reader to interact, but one would wish it were fuller. A lecture only begins the process which a major monograph could not fully cover.

As a presentation of Luther's ethic, then, this work is fascinating, but is Luther's ethic still relevant today? The answer must be affirmative, for as one reads one forgets that Luther lived 450 years ago; instead one hears modern questions. Luther's ethic grew out of his monasticism and the absolute call of God. But he rejected casuistry and legalism for an ethic of love and freedom. He avoided individualism by his reference to the believing community as the context of practicing love and listening to God. In all of this Luther was very close to the Anabaptist position (cf. K. R. Davis, *Anabaptism and Asceticism*), a position Holl unfortunately understands very poorly. Luther, however, also tried to come to grips with an ethic for society and the process of social change. It is in this area that many of his more controversial positions were taken. Yet they rarely are understood in the context of his wider ethic. Thus this work is of value for anyone interested not just in a personal ethical orientation, but also in social change. It is better to interact with Luther and argue with him than to repeat his development in ignorance. For those who want a guide to his ethic, Holl's work is a must.

Paul Tillich's Radical Social Thought
by Ronald H. Stone (John Knox Press, 1980, 180 pp., \$7.95). Reviewed by Jay M. Van Hook, Professor of Philosophy, Northwestern College, and Visiting Fellow, Princeton University.

Paul Tillich's Radical Social Thought is a highly readable presentation of the development and articulation of Tillich's social and political thought from his early years until his death in 1965. Roughly two-thirds of the book deals with Tillich's German period (which ended shortly after Hitler came to power in 1933) and with his early years in America; the remainder treats the more well-known works of his American period. Stone's discussion of the German period is the most interesting and useful part of the book. This is due, in large measure, to the fact that Tillich's social thought was basically shaped by the time he left Germany, but also to the fact that Tillich was more politically active during his early years. In his later years, Tillich was persuaded by friends and colleagues that the "religious socialism" of his post-war German days was not relevant to the American situation. Stone notes that for Tillich personally, "political action" was always primarily a theoretical activity. Nonetheless, Tillich's outspoken critique of fascism and his defense of the Jews cost him his professorship and compelled him to leave his homeland.

Stone engages neither in detailed criticism nor in vigorous argument in support of Tillich's social thought. His book is primarily descriptive and interpretive; but its tone is warmly supportive and he acknowledges that "Tillich's social thought includes very little from which I could dissent" (p. 153). One important merit of

Stone's study is the careful way in which it correlates the development of Tillich's social thought with the unfolding drama of the German political situation in which he lived and worked. The portrait which emerges of Tillich is that of a concerned Christian mind seeking responsible political options in a situation dominated by demonic forces.

While Tillich frequently described his political philosophy as "religious socialism," it should be noted that he consistently refused to give any form of government or particular regime an unqualified endorsement. He pointed out the potential for evil in communism as well as in capitalism. One of the best statements of his view of the relation of Christian faith to politics is found in a formulation of several "Protestant Principles" which he published in 1942. In these he asserts that Protestantism "affirms the absolute majesty of God alone and raises prophetic protest against every human claim, ecclesiastical or secular, to absolute truth and authority." He goes on to say that the Christian message cannot be bound to the life or law of any church in history. He sees Protestantism, further, as affirming "the independent structure of the different spheres of the cultural life" and as protesting "against encroachments upon their autonomy by churches and states." Finally, he argues that Protestantism rejects any final system of Christian politics, but "applies the Christian message to every historical situation as the principle of criticism and demand" (pp. 99-100)

Evangelical Christians have tended, quite understandably and justifiably, to be rather severe in their criticism of Tillich's theology as a whole, and in particular of many specifics of Tillich's doctrines of God and Christ. A reading of Stone's book should impress upon theological conservatives the possibility of appreciating Tillich's social thought without feeling any compulsion to accept Tillich's whole theological system. The issues of authoritarianism, idolatrous nationalism, racism, and injustice (and the established Church's general indifference to these evils) with which Tillich struggled are issues which still confront Christians in the 1980's. *Paul Tillich's Radical Social Thought* is highly recommended for theological students and, indeed, for all Christians concerned about social and political responsibility. Stone's work provides valuable insight not only into Tillich's thought, but also into the historical context in which that thought was shaped.

Faith and the Prospects of Economic Collapse
by Robert Lee (John Knox Press, 1981, 170 pp., \$6.95). Reviewed by Douglas Vickers, Professor of Economics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Robert Lee has placed heavily in his debt all those who, conscious of the jarring disharmonies and the dangers of deflationary collapse in our economy, wish to bring to bear on them the evaluative thought forms of Christian belief. In this brief and well written book, in a compelling argument simply told, Lee has alerted us to the ways in which excessive indebtedness in the system — debt incurred by governments, consumers, and industrial cor-

porations — along with the too rapid creation of money that that brings with it, threatens an inflationary explosion which, as he sees it, can lead to collapse, bankruptcy, economic retribution, and the hard times of readjustment. This, however, can point the way to a "new beginning" whose form is shaped by the ethic inherent in the Christian hope, an ethic of care, concern, and commitment, from which Lee coins the neologism "concarement." He calls for a new lifestyle of "voluntary simplicity," presenting a fourteen point "Lee's Pledge" which gives directives to that end.

The economic analytical apparatus of the book is thin. The author's justification for writing is that "economics is too important to be left to the economists." With a not very certain step, rather less secure than would satisfy the demands of rigorous economic analysis, the author sees the excessive creation of money as the root cause of inflation, though he does try to come down between, as he sees them, "the two reigning schools of economic theory, the Keynesians and the Friedmanites." He apparently recognizes that there are a number of contributing causes of inflation, and he acknowledges the relevance of wage and salary increases that exceed the ability of the economy to pay them, as determined by the rate of increase in average national productivity. Indeed, it is rightly acknowledged that in recent years the productivity of the American workforce (average output per unit of labor input) has been rising at a much lower rate than that of our principal international competitors. But in the absence of an adequate analytical underpinning in economic theory, the work contains no recommendations for a viable "incomes policy" which might deal with the disequilibrating forces. Ignoring the literature on income policies, the book can only inveigh against "wage-and-price controls" which, of course, are quite a different matter.

Consumerism, the credit binge, implicit materialism, the buy-now-pay-later syndrome, the excessive escalation of expectations, the money-creating potential of the banking system, and government financial profligacy have led to inflation which, if once the public's confidence in the currency and the soundness of economic relations were to collapse, would bring the whole structure tumbling down like a pack of cards. It has happened before, as the author points out, in the German inflation and collapse of the 1920's and other instances. Needed is a rediscovery of the "work ethic," a rehumanizing of work and a recovery of productivity. In particular, Lee calls for the surrender of the misguided "ego-ethics" which, in the face of possible hard times, is primarily concerned with individual self-preservation and comfort, and an embrace of "eco-ethics" which commits itself to the welfare of the collectivity, the entire family of inhabitants of the spaceship earth, and a recapture of the biblical idea of stewardship and societal responsibility.

Lee's writing is touched with a humaneness and a sense of the sanctity of the ordinary. He makes his points compellingly (as when he tells of the Puritans who "drank a pint of yeast before going to bed at night to make them rise early in the morning for work"), and though the work lacks any clear discussions of the foundations of biblical anthropology which might explain our predicament, many of the relevant thought forms are implicitly there.

The Impossible Dream: The Spirituality of Dom Helder Camara

by Mary Hall (Orbis, 1980, 96 pp., \$4.95). Reviewed by Marc Benton, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Coalport, Pennsylvania.

The Spirituality of Dom Helder Camara is a very ordinary book about a very extraordinary man. The author, Mary Hall, is a nun who teaches at Selly Oak and Oscott colleges in England. Her writing is clear, but not outstanding — she writes in a simple narrative style, and much of the essence of the book is Dom Helder's own words, reminiscing about his past or talking about his present struggles. There has also been some effort to gather together some of the stories that circulate about this amazing Brazilian Archbishop.

I found *Spirituality* to be the sort of book that crept up on me. It begins with narration of Dr. Hall's journey to meet Dom Helder; Dom Helder does not really appear for the first quarter of the short book. This first section simply sets the tone, and is not absorbing reading. Once Dom Helder began to speak, however, I became aware that here was no typical human being (or Archbishop for that matter): his words were full of the insight and wisdom of God. He seems to slip easily and unpretentiously from the natural world to the supernatural and back again. His concern for the poor and oppressed seems to rival that of his Master — he speaks out fearlessly, despite the fact that his views are very unpopular with the military and the land-owning upper class in Brazil. He gives of his time and money freely. His simple lifestyle and zeal for God are a challenge for us all.

The photo on the cover of the book sums him up well: a small, intense man, he looks younger than his 72 years, still full of vigor, but tired out by the demands of being Bishop of such a troubled area; his deeply lined face and tiny doubled-up fists are symbolic of the spiritual and political struggles he has faced since his ordination at the age of 22.

A good bit of his spiritual depth and stamina comes from his early morning prayer times. He still maintains a very rigorous schedule: bed at 10:30 p.m., up at 2 a.m. to pray and prepare for the day's work, back to sleep at 4 a.m. for just one hour, then up to get ready to celebrate Mass at 6 a.m. *Spirituality* is full of such details about the personal life of this remarkable man of God. The book leaves the reader with a sense that he has spent some time with one of today's Saints. There is a genuine humility which runs very deep in Dom Helder. One example from the book will suffice:

I consider there is no need of words to talk with God, so I think to myself, "Lord, I would like to lend you my eyes, ears, mouth and hands." . . . It is good, so good to look at the world, at mankind, when one lends one's ears to Christ. There is never a possibility for hatred, never a possibility but to love, to love largely, grandly, fully. Even when applause attends my efforts, it is easy to defend myself. I think — very softly and low — "Lord, I know the little donkey which brought You on Your triumphant journey to Jerusalem. It makes me happy that I can carry Christ to the world."

The Spirituality of Dom Helder Camara is a book well worth reading. Mary Hall does at

adequate job as author mainly because she is accidental — her primary task was to step aside and let Dom Helder himself be seen. The hours I spent with this book, pondering this remarkable man and his ministry to the poor of Brazil, are still transforming my own ministry. He is one of those in whom the light of Christ shines most brightly today, a witness to the Church and the world that Jesus lives and reigns.

The Struggle of Prayer
by Donald G. Bloesch (Harper & Row, 1980, 180 pp., \$9.95). Reviewed by William B. Oglesby, Jr., Union Theological Seminary in Virginia.

The central thesis of this book is that prayer is dialogical and not mystical. The author, Donald Bloesch, is Professor of Systematic Theology at Duquesne Theological Seminary and is well known for his many publications. He is convinced that the current renewal in mysticism threatens the concept of encounter in prayer. His fear is that "authentic biblical, evangelical prayer is now in eclipse" (p. 11), being replaced by a "mystical lifting of the mind to God" (p. 6). The crucial difference, as he sees it, turns on whether the purpose of prayer is to struggle with God or to become one with God: The burden of the book is to demonstrate the validity of the former and the heresy of the latter.

Bloesch has researched the matter well. His references range from the Hebrew prophets across the history of the Church, with his primary sources being Luther, Richard Sibbes and P. T. Forsyth as he cites evidence to support his thesis. Again and again the refrain "prayer consists in wrestling with God and with ourselves" (p. 133) is heard in one form or another. The argument is most tenuous in the notion of prayer "changing God's mind." He notes that Luther and others quoted Scripture to God to "force" a particular response (cf. p. 79 *inter alia*) but at the same time cautions that "there is a difference between asking God for spiritual discernment . . . and putting God to the test" (p. 82). For Bloesch, "prayer is always work . . . the highest work possible for a Christian" (p. 149).

This is an important book, and will certainly prove to be a resource for those who are concerned with the meaning of prayer. Bloesch makes his point quite clear and his arguments are persuasive. Even so, the fact that the argument is meticulous is both a strength and a weakness. It is impressive, but at times tends to become a bit labored. And, although Bloesch notes that there are mystical dimensions in prayer, at the same time his emphasis on the necessary struggle makes it hard to find space for a true movement toward unity with God in prayer.

In sum, this is one part of a continuing discussion on the nature and meaning of prayer. As Bloesch says, the book is "intended as a theology of prayer and not as a practical guide for the development of the life of prayer." As such, it will find its way into theological exploration which, if it is translated into practice rather than remaining theoretical, will enhance the spiritual life of the one praying.

The Two-Career Marriage
by G. Wade Rowatt, Jr. and Mary Jo Brock Rowatt (Westminster Press, 1980, 119 pp., \$5.95). Reviewed by Donald M. McKim, Assistant Professor of Theology, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

Tremendous increases in the number of two-career households in recent years makes the need to reflect on the problems and possibilities of such situations acute. The authors, veterans of a two-career marriage, give us a fine introduction to the agonies and joys of this arrangement.

Wade and Mary-Jo Rowatt present two-career marriages in a very positive light. They stress the twin themes of commitment — of the couple to each other and to their children — and freedom — for wife, husband, and children — as keys for making the two-career family work. They discuss the advantages of this structure financially, to the family, and in terms of freedom and growth. At the same time they are sensitive to children's needs, holding that children have the right to both a mother and a father who devote quality time to them. The Rowatts are concerned also with the problems of pregnancy in the family relationship, the issue of child care, and the identity formation of a young child which springs from the way the child observes female/male relationships in the nuclear family itself.

The chapters on "Who Does the Dirty Work?" and "Where Does All the Time Go?" deal quite helpfully with how to handle those routine chores that just *have* to be done and the daily time demands families face in doing them. The Rowatts' practical advice: sort out, spread out, and farm out the dirty work. They suggest that families take time from the midst of all their demands to set long-range goals and adopt workable priorities. The stress should always be on quality time and not merely on the quantity of time spent together. Also in this regard, the Rowatts advocate shared parenting responsibilities and complete job sharing around the house so that traditional pictures of "woman's work" or "man's work" are shattered.

The final chapter of this book deals with the church's response to employed couples. The authors stress the need for churches to be vitally concerned with the quality of family life. Churches must examine their own practices: their time demands on dual career families, their restrictive attitudes about females and males, and their discriminatory approach to dual-career clergy couples. This also means finding new and creative ways to serve families where both spouses work outside the home. The Rowatts suggest churches structure family life education, couples' enrichment and growth groups, couples' retreats and premarital counseling for couples *by* couples. These programs along with providing adequate child-care facilities and crisis counseling services are ways for churches to meet pressing needs of two-career marriages.

Two-career couples and those considering becoming such will benefit much from the Rowatts' book. Its five pages of bibliography lead to a number of other sources. Its sensitivity and optimism amid the problems gives hope to all of us who are committed to making the two-career marriage work well.

Perspectives On Our Age: Jacques Ellul Speaks on His Life and Work
by Jacques Ellul (Seabury, 1981, 99 pp., \$11.95). Reviewed by Vernard Eller, Professor of Religion, University of LaVerne.

Jacques Ellul, I am convinced, is constitutionally unfitted to write an autobiography. And I much admire him for that; he is my kind of guy. He has a problem that is encountered only very rarely in our culture of narcissism, namely "modesty." He may even suffer from that most awful malady, "low self-image." And it is certain that he is not about to join us normal people in affirming "I am *somebody!*" Ellul simply doesn't find the story of Jacques Ellul all that interesting and can't believe that other people would either. He doesn't have enough ego to make a good autobiographer. He would always rather talk about *ideas*.

So, for some of us who have had a fifteen-year curiosity about the person of our "French rabbi," this book doesn't tell all that much more than the hints and snatches we had picked up along the way. Only the first chapter of this brief, 99-page book makes any pretense of being biographical. And because it is not wholly so, we actually get only 22 pages of biography. Ellul spends an entire paragraph explaining that Karl Marx was not actually opposed to family life. Yet regarding the family of Jacques Ellul, rather late in his account Ellul writes: "My wife, who is of English nationality but Dutch birth, had just had a baby" — only that and nothing more. We learn nothing about how and when he acquired a wife, what sort of person she is, how many children they have, and what has become of them.

Ten years or so ago — in a two-page preface — Ellul told us that he had been converted to Christianity "with a certain *brutality!*" Curious! But now, the full story becomes this: "I was converted — not by someone, nor can I say I converted myself. But that is a very personal story. I can say that it was a very brutal and very sudden conversion" — only that and nothing more. As I say, he is "constitutionally unfitted"; real autobiographers *want* to become "very personal" rather than clam up at that point. Later, regarding his career in the French Reformed Church, Ellul says, "Finally, I felt that the study of theology would have to be changed. And here, I succeeded." And then he neglects to tell us what was the change needed or how he accomplished it. Most people reveal more in a Christmas letter!

Obviously, Ellul short changes us on biography because his real interest is in sharing *ideas*. The book is much more essentially a resume of his *thought* than his *life*. Yet even here, the best word to describe it is "sketch." The biography is the most sketchy; but, because the entire book is as brief as it is, it can represent only a quick sketch of his thought as well. He gives the most space to elucidating his sociological analysis of modern culture as being dominated by "technique" and spends the final 25 pages in describing the Barthian understanding of the Christian faith which he sees as being the only answer to that cultural crisis. A competent scholar-editor could have constructed that sketch out of Ellul's previous works; the ideas are all there.

This might suggest that *Perspectives On Our Age* would serve best as an *introduction* to Ellul and his thought, leading the reader into his

earlier books to flesh out this one's suggestions. But I am not sure. With the exception of two "biggies," any of Ellul's books are cheaper than this briefest one of all.

And even as "introduction" to what is essentially the same thought-world, I still prefer his *The Presence of the Kingdom* (written in 1946). For one thing, *Presence* does a better job of keeping the Christian faith in the picture all the way through, rather than introducing it as a last-chapter "answer." But also (although the timing of my reading the two may have something to do with it) my own feeling is that Ellul's early-written *prospectus* of his thought is fresher, more exciting, and more carefully done than his now-written *resume*.

There is no doubt that *Perspectives On Our Age* is a "good" book; but there are a number of Ellul's works I would recommend ahead of it.

[After writing the above review, I made a discovery that validates my impressions of the book. This book was not "written" by Ellul (with the time and painstaking care that writing a book implies); it was spontaneously "spoken." The book transcribes a series of radio interviews done by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, with the interviewer then editing them into book form. The result is not what we have a right to expect \$12 books to be. Things would have been fine, if Seabury Press had met its obligations: (1) to have been entirely "up front" about the volume's nature and origins; (2) to have published it in paperback; and (3) to have priced it in the four-dollar range.]

The Religious Dimension in Hispanic Los Angeles: A Protestant Case Study
by Clifton L. Holland (William Carey Library, 1974, 541 pp., \$10.95 paper). Reviewed by Donald P. Buteyn, Professor of Evangelism and Mission, San Francisco Theological Seminary.

The Hispanic population growth in the American Southwest during the past 15 to 20 years has completely exceeded the most expansive projections. For example, in 1950 the Bureau of Census reported 758,400 persons of Spanish surname in California. By 1970 the number had increased to 3,100,000. Projections from this, taking into account the current birth rate and rate of immigration, would indicate that by the end of the century persons of Hispanic descent will constitute 25% of the state's population.

This reality makes it virtually necessary to study this carefully documented volume by concerned church leaders. I am not aware of any other work that approaches in as thorough and competent a fashion the history, and in particular the religious dimensions, of the Hispanic people in Southern California.

The author's stated purpose is to "make a socio-religious analysis of the heterogeneous Mexican-American population of Los Angeles." Although he is never able fully to disengage from his own Anglo perspective, he does pursue his goal in a creditable fashion as a competent social scientist. He is thereby able to focus the attention of the religious community on the cultural, economic, and political factors in the Hispanic history and experience, and also the failures and inadequacies of past mis-

sionary efforts directed by major Protestant bodies. His analysis reveals as well the future potential for the Hispanic Church and suggests the correctives in attitude and approach which must characterize future missionary efforts.

The author documents the incredible struggles and the immense privation of the Mexican-American people. They were conquered militarily, deceived by ambitious and unprincipled Anglo developers, neglected by their own church, victimized continually by the often-benign neglect of American authorities and Protestant Churches. Indeed, these people have been for many years only dusky sociological shadows in the mind, and hence the strategies, of politicians, economists and church leaders.

The author validates the belief of many Hispanics in the Southwest that existing laws and political arrangements are not in their favor. Many live convinced that significant change lies only in the distant future. They live with less of everything than their Anglo neighbors, and the resulting social unrest poses serious problems for the entire population of the American Sunbelt.

The historical surveys of work among these people by Presbyterians, Methodists, American Baptists, Pentecostal bodies and numerous others accurately pinpoint areas of practice and policy that have been modestly helpful as well as some that have been dismal failures.

Consequently, this book demands the studied attention of urban mission strategists in every church that would attempt to take the Gospel, with all of its implications for meaningful change, to a company of people who will soon constitute Southern California's exploited and neglected majority.

Christian Origins in a Sociological Perspective: Methods and Resources
by Howard Clark Kee (Westminster, 1980, 204 pp., \$8.95). Reviewed by Kenneth E. Morris, graduate student at the University of Georgia.

The goal of *Christian Origins in a Sociological Perspective* is to persuade the reader of the value of utilizing sociological concepts and methods for understanding early Christianity and interpreting its documents. In it, however, no claim for comprehensiveness is advanced. Instead, an introductory chapter articulates the vision, and five ensuing chapters attempt to illustrate it on selected topics (e.g., leadership and authority in the early church, the social functions of New Testament writings, etc.).

The author evidences the highest standards of biblical and historical scholarship as well as a thorough familiarity with sociological literature. Its smooth prose combined with its tentative exploratory nature make this book well-suited for supplementary reading among theology students. More importantly, there should be no question of the value of the position it advances: the study of Christian origins does require more than an occasional obligatory sociological glance.

On the sociological side, however, this book is not without its limitations. Essentially, these limitations are due to the author's tendency to be satisfied with a kind of "conceptual sociology" that *translates* historical data normally

considered in a theological context into a sociological context, rather than truly *integrating* the two perspectives such that the resulting synthesis is richer than either alone could be. Thus, on issues as diverse as myth, conversion, leadership, and structuralism, Kee goes to great lengths to show how the historical data "fit" into sociological models; but then, when the translation has been effected, the matter is dropped in favor of another translation exercise. Too often these sorts of conceptually flamboyant exercises offer illusory conclusions. What appears to be an empirical generalization is, in fact, derived deductively from concepts posited *a priori*.

Perhaps the clearest illustration of the dangers inherent in such an approach can be found in Kee's discussion of charismatic leadership. He sets out to put sociological coordinates on the problem of leadership (e.g., What kinds of social conditions produce charismatic leaders? What kinds of people are prone to follow these leaders? etc.). Yet the effect of Kee's argument is to negate precisely that "extraordinary" quality of charisma that led Max Weber to establish it as a sociological type in the first place. The (probably unwitting) result is the propagation of a "zeitgeist" theory of leadership which, carried to a logical extreme, would suggest that a Hitler or a Jesus was "merely" the product of social forces. My guess is that if Kee had been as interested in understanding the problem of leadership as he was in showing how well sociology understood it, he would not have fallen into this predicament. By defending a paradigm more strongly than he had studied an issue, he managed mostly to reify the paradigm and obscure the issue.

It is likely that these and related limitations result from Kee's employment of "life world" as his fundamental sociological construct. Much like the term "world view," life world is not so much esoteric as it is amorphous. It is derived from the phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schutz and tends to denote everything that is "phenomenally present" to the actor. Even in the best of hands this concept borders perilously close to metaphysical reification. In Kee's usage, life world is sometimes distinguished from actual social conditions, sometimes equated with them, and at least once used interchangeably with "presuppositions." One need not be a Marxist (or a liberation theologian) to see in this conceptual ambiguity a certain potentially dangerous idealism. It is no wonder that Kee's analyses have a propensity to degenerate into correlations of concepts rather than things.

These reservations should not prevent the more casual reader from reaping the benefits of a basically well-executed and important book. Those more seriously interested in the interface between Christianity and sociology would be wise to complement their reading of this book either with more detailed historical study (even Troeltsch's *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* would be good here) or by exploring such works as *Preserving the Person* by C. Stephen Evans (IVP, 1977) which attempt to assess the social sciences from a Christian perspective. In any case, not only for the visitor it extols but also for its special application to New Testament and related studies, many will undoubtedly find *Christian Origins in a Sociological Perspective* provocative reading.

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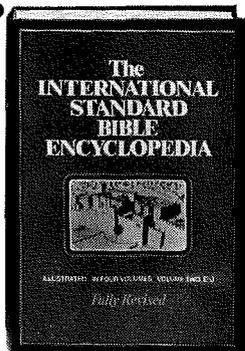
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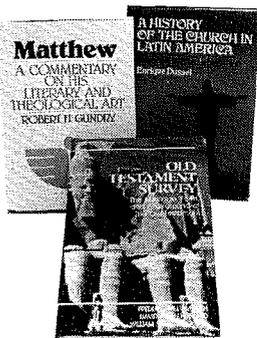
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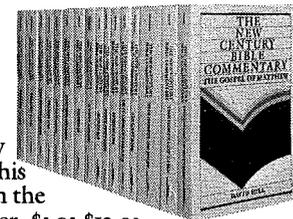
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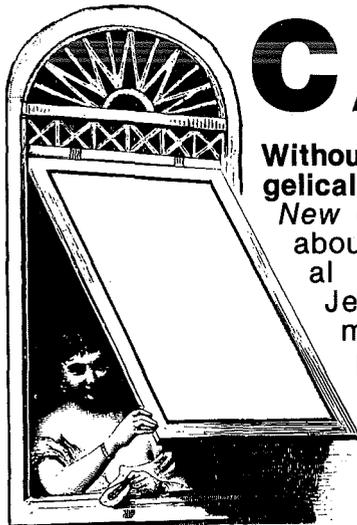
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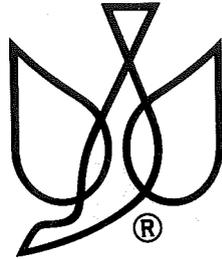
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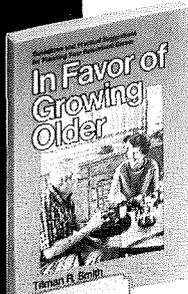
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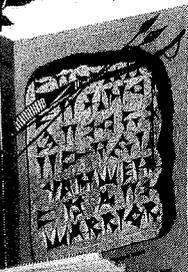
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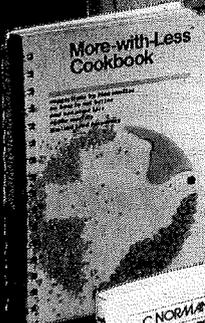


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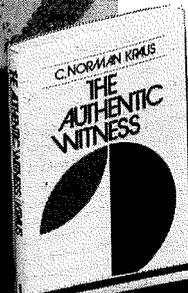
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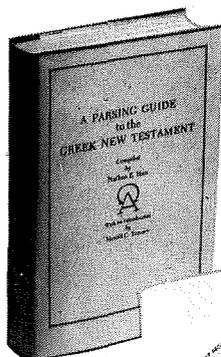
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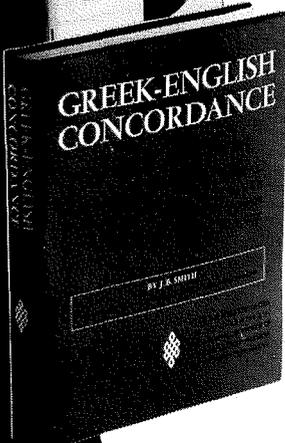
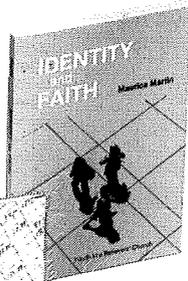


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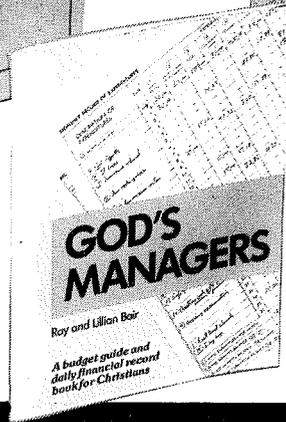
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