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# An Evangelical Approach to Scripture

by Stephen Reid

Evangelical theology and the exegesis from which it springs is based on a number of premises; prime among them is the affirmation that exegesis is not merely historical reconstruction. The goals of exegesis are social and personal transformation. Exegesis without personal transformation loses its sense of spirituality; exegesis without social transformation loses its sense of mission.

Approaches such as canon, canonical and canonical-contextual criticism present important tools for the evangelical exegetical process. The recent work on the materialist reading of Scripture also has much to commend it for evangelical exegesis. Both of these pay attention to issues of personal and social transformation. Rightly used, both can be valuable assets to those working in contemporary evangelical theology.

The argument here begins with the set of problems presented by traditional form critical and tradition history approaches. This discussion of the impetus is followed by an analysis of the theoretical presuppositions of the canon/canonical approach to Scripture as well as the materialist reading of the Bible. The next step is to begin to envision the exegetical process as part of the process of believing communities. Finally we will pay some attention to issues of method of an evangelical approach to Scripture.

## Impetus For An Alternative Approach

It is important that we not think of canon/canonical criticism as a new creation. It has roots in the form critical and the tradition history style of investigation as well as in the exegetical style of the Reformation.

From the very beginning of the form critical movement in biblical criticism there was an awareness of a relationship between the stories which come from texts, in this case Scripture, and the communities that they spring from. These communities of faith are a reflection of the personal and social transformation that comes from God's encounter with them. Canon/canonical critics agree that the documents of Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are integrally related to the believing communities.

The term used by these form critics to talk about this relationship was *Sitz im Leben*. While one could argue that this term in the work of Herman Gunkel is not sufficiently sociologically nuanced to be helpful, it nevertheless shows that Gunkel understood the role of believing communities.<sup>1</sup>

The second generation of form criticism-tradition historical analysis was heir to this sensibility about the text. Here we find the roots of the canon-contextual approach. "Canon criticism clearly has roots in tradition criticism especially as articulated by Gerhard von Rad."<sup>2</sup>

The third generation of scholars trained in form criticism and tradition criticism in dialogue with the believing communities began to notice some limitation to the movement of biblical studies, dominated by the form and tradition critical methods of exegesis. James A. Sanders has argued that there are eight factors that contributed to the rise of canon-contextual analysis: 1) There is an awareness of the growing irrelevance of biblical research in the churches. 2) At the same time there is an awareness of the theological diversity in Judaism and Christianity of the biblical period; we might add, the contemporary scene as well. 3) This approach takes seriously the issue of acceptable diversity within communities of faith. As such it represents an excellent model for ecumenical theology, which has consistently been a hallmark of evangelical theology. 4) Further, we have new perceptions of the ancient tradents. It is fairly clear that the tradents had their own hermeneutics that shaped the text. 5) These tradents have finally begun to be respected by biblical researchers as creative theologians rather than religious hack writers. 6) There is an increased awareness that the texts have been

transmitted through believing communities with particular sociological and historical contexts—*Sitz im Leben*, if you like. 7) It has become clear that the pluralism of the Scriptures is not going to go away. 8) Further, there is a commitment to Scripture such that the evangelical refuses to leave behind either biblical authority or intellectual honesty.

In the work of Brevard Childs, among others, this has meant fighting the imperialism of the historical critical method which Brueggemann notes has a tendency to relativize the text.<sup>3</sup> At the same time there is a sense that the historical critical method is not sufficiently self-conscious about the social location of its practitioners. Hence Childs is concerned that exegesis not be a handmaiden to any philosophy. "What is clear is that Childs wishes to develop an approach to Scripture which is completely text-centered, in which no constructs of an existential or historical sort become an additional step intervening."<sup>4</sup> While this is the tendency of the discipline, I will argue that we can still be in dialogue with philosophy, and in particular the symbolic interactionism of American Pragmatism as well as the Critical theory of the "Frankfurt school," as theoretical building blocks in the hermeneutics of canon-contextual analysis as well as a materialist reading of the Bible.

Just as the canon/canonical approach is a response or corrective of a certain type of biblical exegesis, a materialist reading of the Bible is a response and corrective of "idealist exegesis." The situation outlined above presented a malaise for many believing communities and those biblical students who wanted to work with believing communities. A materialist reading of Scripture is a natural outgrowth of the hermeneutics of the Confessing Church and of Rudolf Bultmann, outlined in his attempt to combat the misinterpretation of Scripture at the hands of the Nazis.<sup>5</sup>

"Idealist exegesis" is an aberration of the hermeneutics of one of the high points of the church's history. The blasphemy of "idealist exegesis" is that it maintains that despite the plurality of methods there is an orthodoxy of right interpretation. This orthodoxy of right interpretation is based on the credentials of those who do it. They become "reading experts." "Their exegesis has thus become in large measure a legitimating science, and authentic exegesis has been distorted into an ideology."<sup>6</sup>

## Community

The form critical movement and the tradition critical work of von Rad begin the process of approaching the presuppositions of canon-contextual analysis. "Canon and community must be thought of as belonging together both in antiquity and today."<sup>7</sup> This becomes the basic affirmation of the canon-contextual approach. Its theological translation is that God has spoken to the community of faith who were the earliest tradents and continues to talk to the community of faith through the traditions of earlier communities of faith. This is the hermeneutics of the Holy Spirit at work in the Body of Christ that we call the Church.

The connection between canon and community is a point of consensus for these scholars; hence it is not accidental nor surprising that the title of James Sanders' new volume on canonical criticism should be *Canon and Community*.<sup>8</sup> The persons who find a materialist reading of the Bible helpful likewise affirm the connection between canon and community. A materialist reading affirms that the past community of Scripture can and should be a contemporary conversation partner to the believing community today.<sup>9</sup>

One place where much is left to be done is the relationship between a materialist reading or a canon/canonical approach to Scripture and the material culture of Palestine and early Christianity. One of the questions for this approach is: how did these people live who wrote the text? This is the truly new frontier for what has been in the past called biblical archeology.

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## Pluralism

There is an affirmation of the pluralism within the Bible as a whole. Coupled with this is a sense that biblical texts are on the whole multivalent; hence there is no one proper interpretation of a text. This would explain to some degree the proliferation of interpretations, or "meanings," if we want to use the language of symbolic interactionism. This makes the text adaptable for the changing contexts of a given community of faith as well as the pluralism of the range of communities of faith that share the Scripture. At the same time, there is inherent in the text restraints that inhibit the abuse of Scripture, as demonstrated in allegorical interpretation.

One of the gains from Childs' canon critical approach is the recovery of the pre-critical tradition. "Perhaps the Reformation cry *sola scriptura* has unwittingly provided for subsequent Protestant exegesis an excuse for depreciating the history of Christian interpretation. Once the normative religious content is defined along the axis of a canonical shape rather than a peculiarly modern prerequisite of historical writing, then the theological wealth of not only the Reformation, but of the pre-Reformation commentators and of the Apostolic Fathers can no longer be passed by."<sup>10</sup> However, the inclusion of the pre-critical material of an earlier period should remind us of the non-critical material of the believing communities that do not write commentaries. Once we have moved in the way that Childs et al have proposed, namely, to take as serious conversation partners the pre-critical exegesis of Judaism and pre-Reformation Christianity, then feminist, Hispanic and black pre-critical

(in the methodological, not the historical sense) biblical interpretation can not be dismissed as it has been for so many years. This means that canon/canonical criticism enables the biblical student to listen to those who have been traditionally underrepresented in the resources we check in our Bible study.

The repetition of a given tradition is the first step toward canonization; therefore we search and pay special attention to repetition. We are thus able to discern the contours of pluralism in Hebrew religion and Judaism. It is the place in which the theological position of a given tradition or text becomes part of the "taken-for-granted-world" of the believing community. As such it becomes a keystone, the perception of the world for that community. However, at the same time that repetition is important for its part in the stability of the life of a given community of faith, the resignification of symbols and traditions is also a mark that is scrutinized in the canon-contextual approach. How has the community changed to warrant a change in the perception of a major symbol or tradition? Finally, we presuppose that the ancient texts have their own principles of interpretation (hermeneutics). Thus part of the task in analysis is to uncover the principles of interpretation at every level of interpretation from the most ancient to the most recent.

Sanders has properly seen what advantages this has for evangelical theology. "The perspective of canonical criticism on biblical pluralism is that it provides a built-in corrective apparatus so that we do not absolutize any one agenda, or think that we have boxed God into a set of propositions."<sup>11</sup>

## Scripture and the Communion of Saints

A symbolic interactionist hermeneutic fits well into the canon-contextual analysis and a materialist reading of the Bible. The pluralism and community are not things that existed only or even primarily in the past. Both the American Pragmatist philosopher George Herbert Mead and social theorist Jurgen Habermas hold that the social self is a result of life in a communicating community. Responsible exegesis enables the member of the community of faith to take seriously the perspective of the communities of faith. It is this taking on the perspective of the other that represents the possibility for personal transformation. The communities were able to reread the Scriptures anew in each age. This is the process of resignification that makes Scripture possible and adaptable for human experience. The past was for them the interpretation of the present, communicating community.<sup>12</sup>

In summary, there are three presuppositions. First is that canon (or texts) is related, even if in only a mysterious way, to communities. One might imagine that this means that we must ask questions about how they are related and how they shape and are shaped by their communities. This includes such mundane or exciting things as biblical archeology. Second, there is the assumption of pluralism that gives us the multivalent text which we affirm as Scripture. However, this plurality indicates that there were probably coalitions as well as some conflict which we must attend to in our exegesis. Third, each new generation participates in some resignification of Scripture, but often this is, if only subconsciously, related to previous significations.

## Community and Exegetical Process

The concepts that human reality is primarily social and social reality is perspectival and relative<sup>13</sup> are not as earth shattering as they were in the period of George Herbert Mead's work in the 1930s. These affirmations have become part and parcel of exegetical practice. However, Mead maintains that persons can take on the role or perspective of another. It is in the role taking that one comes

### Canon/Canonical Criticism

These scholars, while not agreeing on every aspect of exegesis, do form a consensus: that form critical exegesis on the whole has taken the historical critical method too far. As the form critical style of historical criticism has occupied itself with the literary prehistory of the text, several theological points have been lost. 1) Prime among these is the issue of canon itself. The Church has never affirmed as canon the hypothetical reconstruction of the pre-literary stage of the biblical text. 2) Further, the method has meant that Scripture became available only to scholars and not to the pre-critical Christians such as Luther and Calvin as well as the people in the modern congregation. In order to correct these excesses, scholars such as Blenkinsopp, Brueggemann, Childs, Sanders, and Sheppard have made two affirmations: 1) The text should be taken first and foremost in its received form. 2) Scripture is a part of the believing community and should be read as the Church works to articulate faith in the history of interpretation of Scripture.

J. Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1977).

W. Brueggemann, *The Creative Word: Canon as a Model for Biblical Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982).

B. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970).

Childs, *The Book of Exodus, OTL* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974).  
\_\_\_\_\_, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

J. A. Sanders, *Torah and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Canon and Community: A Guide to Canonical Criticism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

G.T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as Hermeneutical Construct*, BZAW 151 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980).

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closer to the truth or health. Hence, good exegesis is that which facilitates role taking.

Scripture is important in this process not only because the community of faith has said it is. Scripture and tradition, that is to say the history of interpretation of Scripture, are a reservoir of meaning from which the church and the synagogue have drunk in their process of roletaking and socialization. Therefore it is appropriate that we begin there in the exegetical process.

In order that this exegetical process have power to work with instead of against the Holy Spirit it must begin in a spirit of truth. The truth is that exegesis is always a theology of the present. "The long and short of it is that the past (or the meaningful structure of the past) is as hypothetical as the future."<sup>14</sup> There is a sense in which the past can never be so fully reconstructed that we have it before us as a totality.

For the purposes of personal and social transformation, categories such as past, present, and future are not helpful. A useful alternative is to take seriously the idea that the present is past and present combined in the emerging event.<sup>15</sup> The roletaking that can take place in the process of exegesis in the midst of the emerging event opens up to the community of faith the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

The method must ask a number of questions given the presuppositions and process laid forth thus far: 1) What is the community behind each interpretation of the text and how did they live as well as believe? 2) What are the communities that have shaped the subsequent development of the text and how do they relate to the other pluralities in Scripture? By so doing the method is paying attention to the biblical pluralism as well as the multivalent nature of many biblical texts. In answering these two questions we will pay close attention to the repetitions in a given text or trajectory of texts. 3) What perspective(s) are embodied in the texts? 4) How did those perspectives shape the community and how do they continue to shape and challenge us?

### Method

There is no consensus on what canon/canonical criticism or a materialist reading of the Bible must do. Nevertheless, some rudimentary steps can be discerned. I want to point out that good theological exegesis is informed by steps but does not slavishly follow them. One should note that there is a new appreciation of certain aspects of methods that have been used previously but not in quite the same way.

Good exegesis is like good Chinese cooking. It is not so much the steps in the process as it is the issues addressed. Issues in Chinese cooking are the way certain vegetables complement each other in taste and appearance. Likewise the method here orients the student of the Bible to certain issues, not pedantically moving from step to step.

### Materialists Approaches to the Bible

One of the assumptions of the materialists' readings of Scripture is that the text has to do with daily (i.e., material) life today as well as daily/material life in antiquity. As such, Scripture is tied to issues of struggle of the community of faith in antiquity and today. This approach is really several different approaches that share this hermeneutic. It first came to prominence with the work of Ferdinand Belo in 1974, *Lecture materialiste de l'évangile de Marc* [later translated into English *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark*]. It has found support among many European scholars such as Kuno Fussel and Michel Clevenot.

Ferdinand Belo, *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1981).

Georges Casalis, *Correct Ideas Don't Fall from the Sky* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1984).

Michel Clevenot, *Materialist Approaches to the Bible* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1984).

Kuno Fussel, "Materialist Readings of the Bible: Report on an Alternative Approach to Biblical Texts," in *God of the Lowly: Socio-Historical Interpretations of the Bible* eds. Schottroff and Stegeman (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1984).

First, we should ask about the theo poetic structures of the text. These texts are the remnant of the contact between God and a believing community, and in that respect they are theo poetic. At the same time, they have structures and literary conventions. Materialist reading of the Bible as represented by F. Belo, M. Clevenot and K. Fussel has some intellectual dependence on structuralism, and because of this their writings stress issues of structure. Nevertheless, one does not have to be a structuralist to ponder profitably about the structures of a given text as the structure tells the audience something.<sup>16</sup> The canon/canonical critics likewise pay attention to issues of structure. They discuss this in terms of repetition as we have noted earlier in this essay.

Second, we should pay attention to the pluralities of the community of faith in the interpretation of the passage and in the creation of the passage. Such will often lead us to issues of religious conflict as well as the resignification of particular themes and texts by different communities of faith in the broader world of Hebrew religion and Judaism and later Christianity.

Finally, we ask, how did these people live? This means we pay attention not only to the ideas of the text but also the material culture. More to the point, what did these people eat? How did these people work? How did these things affect the way they gave witness to God's action in their midst?

Each of these issues or questions must be pressed at every level of the history of Judaism and Christianity. I shall propose six levels of Judaism and Christianity. I hope that you will refine these as you feel is appropriate.

1. We begin chronologically with the tradition history of the text as well as the inner biblical exegesis of the passage; that is, how later biblical authors make use of the passage. 2. We look at the passage in midrash, both Jewish and Christian. This midrash includes that which we find in the New Testament. 3. We examine the use of the passage in Jewish and Christian mysticism. 4. We look at the work of the reformers such as Luther and Calvin. 5. We bring in the interpretation of our passage by a marginal group, whether Hispanic, Asian, African or feminist. 6. In order to balance this we pay attention to the way dominant European culture, contemporary and older, has made use of the passage.

This seems like an awesome task. The answer is twofold. First, exercise some prudence. Don't try to read all the reformers; pick one or two. The same is true at every level of the history of interpretation: pick one or two representative persons. Sometimes you will not find all the information you would like for your passage in a particular period, but do not be dismayed. Second, good exegesis is tied to prayer as a guide for the interpretation of Scripture.

The advantage of this evangelical approach to Scripture is threefold: 1) It brings in the underrepresented communities of faith in

### The Frankfurt School

On February 3, 1923, the Institute for Social Research was founded as part of the University of Frankfurt. From its beginning it represented a different type of Marxism. During the years 1933-1950 the members of the Institute were forced into exile for the Neo-Hegelian philosophy. These were such men as Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Thomas Adorno. They tried to provide a critical theory that could stand outside of both capitalism and Marxism as understood by the Eastern block nations. A major assumption was that contemporary societies, both Marxist and capitalist, are shaped by a bureaucracy which determines what is "acceptable" culture and behavior. Hence, for these men, theology as well as philosophy is political. The most prominent member of the Frankfurt School is Jurgen Habermas.

A. Arato & E. Gebhardt, *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (New York: Continuum, 1982).

T. Bottomore, *The Frankfurt School* (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1984).

M. Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973).

D. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California, 1980).

our examination of Scripture. 2) It puts some order to the archeological information that we have but do not know what to do with at the present time. It gives new life to biblical archeology for the person interpreting particular passages. 3) This evangelical approach to Scripture is a combination of orientations that strives to make the exegetical task more wholistic.

Nevertheless, we barter not for exegetical methods on the open market. On the contrary, exegesis has as its goal personal and social transformation; its test is in that arena. Only you can administer the test and vouch for the results.

<sup>1</sup> M. Buss, "The Idea of Sitz im Leben—History and Critique," ZAW 90 (1978) 157-170.

<sup>2</sup> W. Brueggemann, *The Creative Word* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> B. Kittel, "Development of the Canonical Approach," JSOT 19 (1980) 5.

<sup>5</sup> K. Fussel, "Materialist Readings of the Bible: Report on an Alternative Approach to Biblical Texts," in *God of the Lowly: Socio-Historical Interpretations of the Bible*, eds. W. Schottruff and W. Stegemann (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1984) 15.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> J. A. Sanders, "The Bible as Canon," *Christian Century* 1252.

<sup>8</sup> J. A. Sanders, *Canon and Community* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

<sup>9</sup> A. von Juchen, "What a Pastor Expects from a Materialist Reading of the Bible: A Letter," in *God of the Lowly: Socio-Historical Interpretations of the Bible*, eds. W. Schottruff and W. Stegemann (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1984) 7.

<sup>10</sup> G. T. Sheppard, "Canon Criticism: The Proposal of Brevard Childs and an Assessment for Evangelical Hermeneutics," *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 4 (1974) 15.

<sup>11</sup> Sanders, "The Bible as Canon," 1254.

<sup>12</sup> J. Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston: Beacon, 1979).

<sup>13</sup> A. Smith, Jr., *The Relational Self: Ethics and Therapy from a Black Church Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982) 67.

<sup>14</sup> G. H. Mead, *The Philosophy of the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982) 12.

<sup>15</sup> Mead, *Philosophy of the Present*, 23.

<sup>16</sup> Fussel, "Materialist Readings of the Bible," 21.

# Epistemological Foundations For Science and Theology

by Paul Hiebert

Christian theologies, like other systems of human thought, emerge in different historical and cultural contexts. To be sure, Christians seek to root their theologies in the revelation by God of Himself in history, particularly as this is recorded in the Bible. But this does not preclude the fact that they are deeply influenced by the cultures in which they live.

It should not surprise us, therefore, that theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were influenced by modern science which had captured western thought with its obvious successes. Many, in fact, came to see theology as a kind of science. For example, Alexander (1888:1:1) defined systematic theology as "the science of God." Wiley, Pipe, Wakefield, Hovey, Shedd and Hodge did the same (Wiley 1960:1:14-15, Shedd 1889, Hodge 1928:15-17). Chafer (1947:v) noted that "Systematic Theology, the greatest of the sciences, has fallen upon evil days." Strong defined theology as "the science of God and of the relationships between God and the universe." He added,

If the universe were God, theology would be the only science. Since the universe is but a manifestation of God and is distinct from God, there are sciences of nature and of the mind. Theology is 'the science of the sciences,' not in the sense of including all these sciences, but in the sense of using their results and of showing their underlying ground (1972:1)

More recently, Griffiths (1980:169-173) has sought to show that theology is indeed a science.

Often this definition of theology as a kind of science meant no more than that theology was an orderly and systematic pursuit of knowledge. Theologians have long emulated philosophers in this. But in many instances there was an attempt to build theology on the apparently solid epistemological foundations that seem to make science so certain and trustworthy. In any case, however, we as Christians use the term "science," its definition and nature is largely controlled by the modern natural scientists.

In the past decades a radical change has been taking place in the epistemological foundations of science, a change in the way science itself is perceived. This change has profound implications for those seeking to integrate science and theology, and, indeed, for theology itself, for the epistemological crisis in the sciences raises questions about the epistemological foundations of theology and about the relationship of science and theology.

The crisis has not yet been resolved in the sciences. Because of this, and because I am not a trained philosopher, this article is more a set of questions than of answers. It is easier for us to stay within the fields of our specialization, but this limits us to narrow questions and to piecemeal answers. We dare not avoid the big questions for fear of being wrong. The consequences of the current epistemolog-

ical crisis are far reaching, and will affect us as Christians whether we examine them or not.

A word about my assumptions: I am committed to the full authority of the Scriptures, and to an evangelical anabaptist understanding of Christian theology. I am also an anthropologist and missionary seeking to understand our modern, pluralistic world, and to make Christ known within it.

## The Crisis

In its early stages, science was based largely on an uncritical form of realism. While most philosophers and theologians argued from positions of idealism, scientists, with a few exceptions, "assumed that scientific theories were accurate descriptions of the world as it is in itself" (Barbour 1974:34). Scientific knowledge was seen as a photograph of reality, a complete and accurate picture of what is really real. In its positivistic forms it rejected metaphysics and transempirical realities. Consequently there was little room for theology or integration. This stance seemed justified in view of the great strides made by science in its examination of nature.

The certainty of scientific knowledge, and the optimism that marked its early years were undermined from within. There were three major attacks on the epistemological foundations of naive realism, all reflecting the growing study by scientists of the scientific process itself.

First, in the physical sciences, Einstein in relativity, Bohr in quantum mechanics and others showed that the personal factor of the scientist inevitably enters into scientific knowledge. There is no such thing as totally objective knowledge. Second, social scientists began to study the psychological, social and cultural factors involved in the scientific endeavor, and demonstrated that there are no unbiased theories. Science is built on the cultural assumptions of the west, and is deeply influenced by social and psychological processes. Third, historians and philosophers of science such as Polanyi (1958), Kuhn (1970) and Laudin (1977) found that science is not cumulative and exhaustive. It is a sequence of competing paradigms or models of reality. But if theories taken as fact today are replaced by others tomorrow, what is the nature of scientific knowledge? Clearly we can no longer equate scientific knowledge about reality with reality itself. The old assumption that scientific theories have a one-to-one correspondence with reality has been shattered. We cannot have science without metaphysics. We must understand it within its historical, sociocultural and psychological settings. Whatever it is, science is not a photograph of reality.

## Where To?

Forced to leave the comfortable certainty of naive realism, scientists are now looking for a new epistemological foundation. What are their options?

To answer this question, we need a taxonomy of epistemological systems, a meta-epistemological grid by which we can compare and contrast various epistemological options. There are dangers, of

course, in creating such a grid. Any taxonomy imposes biases on the field, and overlooks the fine nuances of the various positions. Moreover, it assumes that epistemological paradigms are not incommensurable (contrary to Kuhn 1970), and that some measure of mutual understanding and comparison between them is possible (cf. Hofstadter 1980).

There are, however, greater dangers in looking at various epistemological positions in isolation, or of assuming that they are incommensurable. If comparison between epistemological alternatives is impossible, rationality is undermined, and with it science and philosophy.

The taxonomy suggested here (Table 1) is overly simple, but it may help us understand the current crisis in epistemology and some of the possible solutions. In the last column the various epistemological answers are illustrated by a parable. Several umpires stood talking after a baseball game one day when a player asked them, "Why do you call a particular pitch a 'strike'?" Each of them gave a different response based on his epistemological position.

*Idealism.* Forced to abandon naive realism, scientists are looking for a new epistemological foundation. Some, particularly in psychology and anthropology, are advocating some form of idealism. Few, however, go so far as Vedantic Hindus who deny the existence of an external world. Science, after all, began as an investigation of the world around us. Critical idealists argue that there may be external realities, but what really matters is the world we create within us. The order we perceive in the world is an order we impose on it by our categories and theories.

Most scientists, however, argue that to deny that the order we perceive does exist in nature itself, and to abandon empirical observation as a method alters the scientific endeavor beyond recognition.

*Determinism and Instrumentalism.* Most scientists are too busy studying the world around them to give much thought to epistemology. And most use deterministic models to explain their observations. Curiously, they assume that their own theories are based on rational choice. Only recently has science become self-reflective enough to call this inconsistency into question.

In response to the current crisis in epistemology, a number of philosophers of science believe that we have no alternative but to accept some form of determinism. Kuhn and Feyerabend, for example, sought to found science on solid empirical and rational grounds, but came to the conclusion that scientific decisions are based on politics and propaganda in which prestige, power, age and polemics determine a choice between competing theories. They argue "not merely that certain decisions between theories in science *have been irrational*, but that choices between competing scientific theories, in the nature of the case, *must be irrational* (Laudin 1977:3. italics in original). Carried to its logical conclusion, determinism renders human knowledge, including science, irrational and meaningless (cf Lewis 1970:129-146).

Other philosophers of science, including Laudin, argue for an instrumentalist epistemology. They see science as a "useful" way of looking at the world because it helps us solve problems. They affirm a real world, and make a distinction between systems of

**TABLE 1**  
*A Taxonomy of Epistemological Positions*

Position	Nature of Knowledge	Relationship between Systems of Knowledge	The Umpire's Response
<b>ABSOLUTE IDEALISM</b>	Reality exists in the mind. The external world is illusory. Eg. Vedantic and Advaita Hinduism.	Each system is an island to itself. Systems are incommensurable. Unity is possible only as everyone joins in the same system.	"My calling it makes it a strike. The game is in my mind."
<b>CRITICAL IDEALISM</b>	Reality exists in the mind. The external world is unknowable. Order is imposed on sense experience by the mind.	Each system is an island to itself. Systems are incommensurable. A common ground is found in human rationality which is assumed to be the same for all humans.	"My calling it makes it a strike. My mind imposes order on the world."
<b>NAIVE IDEALISM/ NAIVE REALISM</b>	The external world is real. The mind can know it exactly, exhaustively and without bias. Science is a photograph of reality. Because knowledge and reality are related 1:1 this is naive idealism or naive realism.	Because knowledge is exact and potentially exhaustive, there can be only one unified theory. Various theories must be reduced to one. This leads to reductionism such as physical reductionism, psychological reductionism or sociocultural reductionism.	"I call it the way it is. If it is a strike I call it a strike. If it is a ball I call it a ball."
<b>CRITICAL REALISM</b>	The external world is real. Our knowledge of it is partial but can be true. Science is a map or model. It is made up of successive paradigms which bring us to closer approximations of reality and absolute truth.	Each field in science presents a different blueprint of reality. These are complementary to one another. Integration is achieved, not by reducing them all to one model, but to see them all in their relationships to one another. Each gives us partial insights into reality.	"I call it the way I see it, but there is a real pitch and an objective standard against which I must judge it. I can be shown to be right or wrong."
<b>INSTRUMENTALISM (Pragmatism)</b>	The external world is real. We cannot know if our knowledge if it is true, but if it "does the job" we can use it. Science is a Rorschach response that makes no ontological claims to truth.	Because we make no truth claims for our theories or models, there can be no ontological contradictions between them. We can use apparently contradictory models in different situations so long as they work.	"I call it the way I see it, but there is no way to know if I am right or wrong."
<b>DETERMINISM</b>	The external world is real. We and our knowledge are determined by material causes, hence knowledge can lay no claim to truth (or to meaning).	There is no problem with integration for all systems of knowledge are determined by external, nonrational factors such as infant experiences, emotional drives and thought conditioning.	"I call it the way I am programmed to."

knowledge and external realities. But they deny that science gives us a "true" picture of those realities. The criterion for evaluating science is pragmatism—does it work, not is it true. We must, therefore, live with scientific (and cultural) relativism. Sukenick writes,

All versions of "reality" are of the nature of fiction. There's your story and my story, there's the journalist's story and the historian's story, there's the philosopher's story and the scientist's story . . . Our common world is only a description . . . reality is imagined (Sukenick 1976:113).

But, as Marvin Harris notes, relativism destroys science as science (1980:45). And Peter Berger points out that relativism denies any concept of truth, and in the end relativizes relativity itself, rendering it meaningless (1970:40-42).

A rejection of instrumentalism does not preclude scientists from creating and using models that they know to be useful fictions. All scientists recognize that at times it is useful to develop models for which no claims of truthfulness are made. Those in the applied sciences, in particular, often use models simply because they work. The question is not whether all mental models depict reality, but whether *any* do.

*Critical Realism.* A number of scientists now argue for a critical realist approach to science. Harold Schilling writes,

The interpretation I shall offer will be developed from the point of view of critical realism, as I believe it to be espoused by most scientists . . . According to this view science actually investigates nature itself, not just its own ideas. It achieves much reliable knowledge about it. This knowledge is communicated through systems of theoretical models . . . Science's descriptions of [nature] are . . . to be taken as "true," though not literalistically so in detail (1973:99).

Ian Barbour adds,

. . . the critical realist takes theories to be representations of the world. He holds that valid theories are true as well as useful (1974:37).

Like instrumentalism, critical realism makes a distinction between reality and our knowledge of it, but like naive realism, it claims that knowledge can be true. In it theories are not photographs of reality. They are maps or blueprints. Just as it takes many blueprints to understand a building, so it takes many theories to comprehend reality.

Truth in a map is different from truth in a photograph. Some is literal and some is symbolic. For example, a road map shows this road leading to the airport—a fact we can empirically verify. But the fact that the road on the map is colored red does not mean that the road itself is red. Nor is the city yellow.

Naive realism has no room for metaphysics. Mental images are uninterpreted photographs of reality. Determinism and instrumentalism accept metaphysics, but divorce mental images from external realities. Critical realism, as Laudin points out (1977), restores metaphysics to a central place in science, and postulates a complex dialectical relationship between external realities and mental images.

Finally, to be useful, a map must be selective. A road map must leave out information about underground pipes, overhead wires, buildings, trees, sidewalks, lawns and the like. To put everything in one map clutters it and renders it useless. The choice of what to include and what to exclude depends on the purpose for which the map is to be used, for maps are not only maps of reality, but also maps for choosing a course of action (Geertz 1972:168-169).

Critical realism is increasingly being accepted as a new epistemological base by the scientists. With the exception of a few social scientists, none are idealists. And with the exception of applied scientists, few are instrumentalists. Most are still convinced that they are in search of truth, and that their theories are more than useful fictions.

### Epistemological Foundations For Theology

The epistemological crisis in the sciences raises important questions for theology, particularly where it has tried to be a science. What are its epistemological foundations, and what is its relation-

ship to science? These questions must be distinguished from questions regarding the content of theology which must be dealt with on another level of discourse. We will limit ourselves here to the question of the relationship between theology as a system of thought and the Bible as a historical document.

*Theology as Naive Realism.* Most Christians, like most scientists, do not examine their epistemological foundations. They assume that they understand clearly and without bias what Scripture has to say. Just as naive realist scientists assume there is a one-to-one correlation between theories and a real world outside, they assume that their theology has a one-to-one correlation with the Bible. They reject the notion that their interpretations of Scripture are colored by their history and culture, their personal experiences, or even the language they speak. They are, in other words, naive realists. Or naive idealists. It is, in fact, hard to distinguish between the two, for both claim a one-to-one correspondence between knowledge and reality. Only when they are forced to leave a naive realist/idealist position is the difference apparent. Naive realists, in the end, move to some other forms of realism. Naive idealists, on the other hand, become critical or absolute idealists.

Because naive realist/idealist Christians hold to an exact correspondence between their theology and Scripture, they claim for the former the absolutes and certainty that they affirm for the latter. This raises problems when disagreements arise. Each claims for his or her own theology full and certain truth. But then those who disagree must be wrong. The result is a rejection of one another that leads to divisions. Unity is possible only on the basis of complete theological agreement. But this is achieved only if people share the same historical and cultural contexts, or if they are willing to be followers of a single theological authority. There is little room for ordinary Christians to read and interpret the Scriptures for themselves. In the past naive realism/idealism provided us with the security of both a real world and certain knowledge, but it is no longer a tenable epistemological position.

Science has convincingly shown us that there is a human element in all knowledge (Coulson 1955:84-120). Anthropologists have found that all languages have within them implicit cultural and theological biases in which are expressed the categories they form, and the world view they assume. They have also shown us that all human knowledge is molded in part by the cultural and historical context within which it is found (Hymes 1964). Sociologists have shown that knowledge belongs to a community, and is influenced by the dynamics of that community (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Psychologists have demonstrated that even so simple a task as reading and interpreting a page of written materials involves a complex hermeneutical process that varies according to the level of mental development (Piaget 1960), the knowledge and the attitudes of the reader. There is, in fact, no knowledge in which the subjective dimension does not enter in some way or other.

The growing awareness of these findings has forced scientists to realize that science itself must be understood within its cultural and historical settings. If this is true of science, what about theology? Can we claim that no subjective factors enter our reading of Scriptures? Certainly the Holy Spirit works in us helping us to understand them, and to interpret them for our particular needs. But does He totally override our human thought processes?

But if all knowledge has a subjective dimension to it, where is truth? What is a foundation we can trust? Where are absolutes? The answers we give to these questions will depend largely on the epistemological stance we take in theology.

*Theology as Idealism.* Forced to choose between human knowledge and the external world as the independent variable, as the source from which the other is derived, many theologians opt for some form of idealism. In this, human thought is seen as foundational and empirical realities as contingent. The advantage of this, of course, is that we can have objective knowledge which is certain in every detail.

Idealists argue that this certainty rests on Biblical revelation and on reason. The former, however, is a written document and a part of the external world which we can know only through hearing and reading. But this again raises questions about the subjectivity of Biblical knowledge. In the end, therefore, idealists must appeal to human reason as the final arbiter of truth.

An idealist approach to theology does provide a viable way of looking at reality. There are too many idealists in philosophy and theology to write it off lightly. But it leaves several questions unanswered.

First, it assumes one uniform system of reason for all humans. This assumption, however, is being increasingly challenged in the social sciences. Certainly, at the most fundamental level, all human minds work in the same way. They all learn languages, and seem to generate these on the basis of common processes. They are able to communicate and to understand one another even though they belong to different cultures.

But there are different types of formal logic. Mathematicians have shown that we can construct any number of non-Euclidian geometries, each of which is internally consistent. More recently they have shown that fuzzy sets, "fuzzy algebra" and "fuzzy logic" provide us with a system of reason in which the western notions of either-or-ness and the law of the excluded middle do not hold (Zadeh 1965). If there are mental universals, and there certainly are, they are at a deeper level of thought than we formerly thought to be true. Anthropologists have also shown that there are differences in the systems of logic used in different societies (Luria 1976).

Second, an idealist theology has difficulty in accounting for communication. We cannot know another person's mind directly. All communication is mediated through external events. But if the meaning of these events is what we make them to be, communication breaks down. In extreme idealism, as in Vedantic Hinduism, we are left as islands of certainty within ourselves, with no real knowledge of one another apart from a mystical experience of oneness.

Third, an idealist theology leaves uncertain the question of discerning the work of the Holy Spirit. As Christians we hold that the Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts and minds of his people, helping them to understand the truth. But how can we test whether our understanding has come from God, or from our spirit or some other spirit? We cannot appeal to Scripture, for each person can claim to have had a divine revelation regarding its interpretation. We all face the danger of molding Scripture to fit our thoughts.

Fourth, an idealist theology faces problems with disagreements. Because the final appeal is internal, there is no external reference point that can serve as an arbiter between different theological positions. The result is a combative stance that leads to divisiveness. The only real resolution lies in the conversion of one side to the position of the other. In the end, we are in danger of worshipping human reason. We are the final arbiters of truth, and those who disagree with us are wrong.

Fifth, an idealist theology undervalues the importance of history as the framework within which divine revelation takes place. It tends to be ahistorical and acultural. It has problems with taking seriously the changing historical and cultural contexts of the Scriptures and of our times. In the extreme it leads to a Vedantic view in which the external world is *maya* or illusion, and history has no meaning. But as Mircea Eliade, Stanley Jones and others have argued, the Judeo-Christian tradition is different from tribal and eastern religions precisely because it has a strong doctrine of creation of a real world apart from but contingent on God, and a strong sense of history as the arena within which God is carrying out His work. And it is the realist epistemologies that take the external world seriously.

Sixth, it is well nigh impossible to integrate an idealist theology and a realist science. The two see knowledge in a different light. Consequently, in the end we are forced to choose between one or the other as our ultimate frame of reference.

Finally, as we will see in the next article, there is a missiological question. How does an idealist Christian theology relate to non-Christian religions, particularly to the great idealist religions of Hinduism and Buddhism, and how does it affect evangelism?

*Theology as Determinism or Instrumentalism.* A deterministic approach to theology, like a deterministic approach to science, renders it meaningless. A few theologians may argue for a total divine determinism, but like scientists using deterministic models, they tend to exclude their own theologies from the picture.

Others, particularly social scientists such as Durkheim, argue that theology is instrumental. It is a useful way of looking at things,

whether true or false. It serves important functions in the society such as giving it a sense of identity, and encoding its values. As evangelicals we must reject an instrumentalist theology, because it rejects the concept of truth. In the end it leads to theological and religious relativism.

*Theology as Critical Realism.* How would evangelical theology look in a critical realist mode? In the first place it would differentiate between theology and Biblical revelation, and ascribe final and full authority to the latter as the inspired record of God acting in human history. The Bible would then be the source and rule for Christian faith and life, and the final criterion against which we measure theological truth. We would see in it the definitive record of the person and work of Jesus Christ who is our Lord.

Theology in a critical realist mode is our human understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures. Technically, we should speak of theologies, for each theology is an understanding of divine revelation within a particular historical and cultural context. Thus we would speak of the theology of Calvin, or of Luther, or of evangelicalism.

A critical realist approach to theology affirms the priesthood of all believers, and recognizes that they must and will take the universal message of the Bible and apply it to their own lives and settings. It holds that the Holy Spirit is at work in all believers, leading them, when they are humbly open to His guidance, through the Scriptures and the Christian community into a growing understanding not only of theological truth in general, but also of the meaning of that truth for their lives.

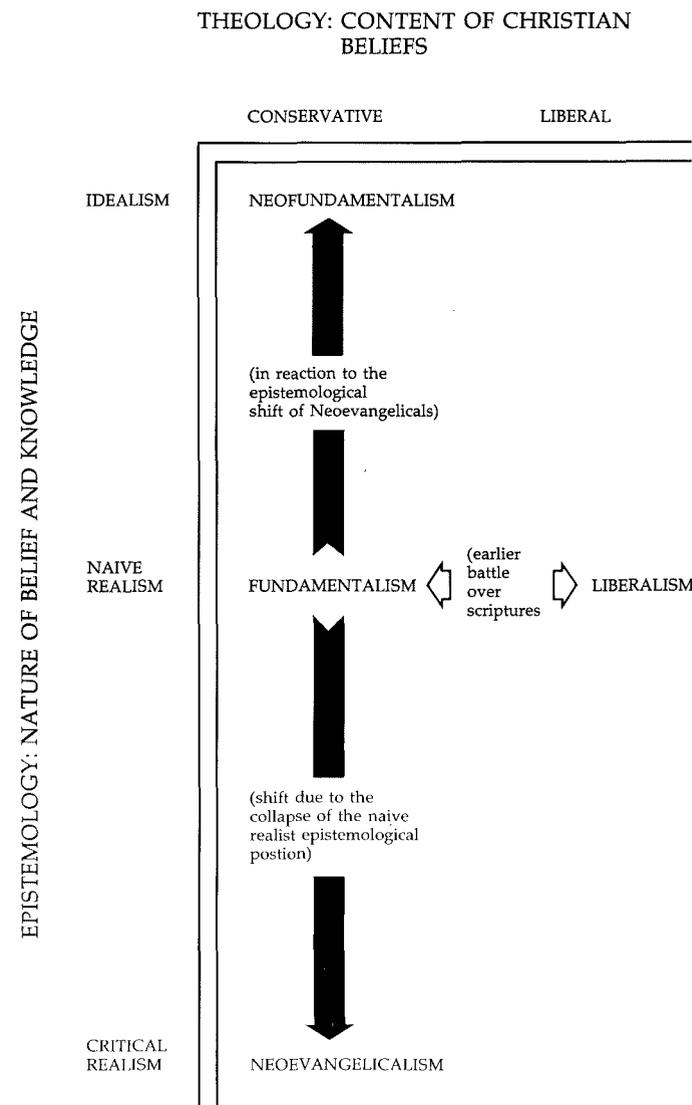


FIGURE 1  
TYPES OF CONFLICT ON THE EVANGELICAL SCENE

This means, however, that all theologies are partial and culturally biased, that truth in the Scriptures is greater than our understanding of it. There is room, therefore, for growth in our theologies, but this means we must constantly test our theologies against the Scriptures and be willing to change them when we gain new understandings. Historical realities do not change, but our understandings of them do.

Does this not lead us into a morass of theological pluralism? Yes and no. It recognizes that different people ask different questions when they go to the Scriptures, and that their cultural and historical frameworks will color their interpretations. But, as Norman Kraus points out, Paul makes it clear that the interpretation of the Gospel is ultimately not the task of individuals, or even of leaders. It is the task of the church as a hermeneutical or "discerning community."

Thus the Scripture can find its proper meaning as witness only within a *community of interpretation*. Principles of interpretation are important, but secondary. There needs to be an authentic correspondence between gospel announced and a "new order" embodied in community for Scripture to play its proper role as a part of the original witness. The authentic community is the hermeneutical community. It determines the actual enculturated meaning of Scripture (Kraus 1979:71).

Similarly, the cultural biases of local churches must be checked by the international community of churches drawn from many cultures.

There are three checks against theological error. First, all theology must be rooted in the Scriptures. Second, the Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts of God's people revealing the meaning of the Scriptures to individuals and churches in their particular settings. Third, believers and congregations must help one another discern the leadings of the Holy Spirit. They must test one another's theology, and themselves be open to critique. Just as others see our sins more clearly than we, so they see our theological errors more clearly than we see our own. The interpretation of Scriptures within a hermeneutical community must, therefore, be carried out in a spirit of humility to speak and willingness to learn.

Does this approach not lead to us to instrumentalism and a consequent theological relativism? No. Historical and experiential facts remain the same in all times and cultures. And while our interpretation of history introduces a subjective dimension, the facts of history force on us a large measure of objectivity. Critical realist theology like critical realist science affirms that while we see in part, we do see. We can speak of theological truth in an absolute sense. We see clearly the great outlines of theology—creation, fall, and redemption. In the study of Scriptures we see enough to lead us into faith and a growing discipleship. Too often it is not a lack of truth that holds us back, but our unwillingness to obey the truth we do have.

### Epistemology and the Current Evangelical Scene

An understanding of the various epistemological positions can help us untangle some of the current debates in evangelical circles, debates that often seem to lead to confusion rather than to clarity. Clearly, we must distinguish between debates over the epistemological foundations of theology and those over the content of theology (see figure 1). Because we take our epistemological assumptions for granted, we do not debate them openly. Consequently our disagreements on this level surface in debates over the contents of theology and confuse the issues.

As I see it, many young evangelicals aware of the shifts now taking place in western epistemology have moved from the old position of naive realism to that of critical realism while remaining evangelical in their *theological content*. Confusing this move as a shift towards liberalism, other theologians have reacted by asserting the certainty of theology as a comprehensive, complete system of thought (not to be confused with trustworthiness of the Scriptures as historical revelation). But in doing so they have been forced into an idealist epistemology that absolutizes ideas over historical realities (see figure 1).

To be sure, the old debate over the content of theology between conservatives and liberals continues, and we must examine it with utmost seriousness. It is here that we seek the content of truth. But

this debate must not be confused with the debate over epistemology—over the nature of our understanding of the truth. There are naive realist liberals who are just as dogmatic in declaring that they have a full knowledge of the truth as the naive realist evangelicals. There are also idealist liberals and idealist evangelicals, and critical realist liberals and critical realist evangelicals. Some Christians have moved from a conservative-naive realist position to a more liberal-critical realist position. But they must not be equated with those who have moved to a conservative-critical realist position.

One area in which the failure to distinguish between the epistemological nature and the content of theology has created a great deal of confusion is that of Biblical authority. For those who see human knowledge as a photograph of reality—having a one-to-one correspondence with it—all knowledge is in a sense factual and literal, and any difference between knowledge and reality is an error. For those who see knowledge as a map, some information may not have a literal correspondence with the visible reality, but *may communicate another level of truth*. It is, therefore, not an "error." For example, freeways on a road map may be colored red, and surface streets black. This does not mean the two are, in fact, red and black. It does mean that the roads are different in character and belong to different systems. Moreover, a map is not faulty if nonessential information is lacking. It is fully trustworthy and accurate if it serves fully the purposes for which it is intended.

A second area in which the confusion of epistemology with content has wreaked havoc has to do with focus. Idealism (naive or critical) focuses on the ultimate unchanging structures of truth. Idealist theologians, therefore, emphasize systematic theologies (theologies of the balcony). Consequently they tend to be ahistorical and acultural. Realism looks at events in the real historical world within which we live and focuses on the nature of truth in specific situations. Realist theologians, therefore, emphasize Biblical theologies that look at God's acts and self revelation in specific historical and cultural situations (theologies of the road). As we shall see in the next article, we all need both. As we read the historical record of God's revelation in the Bible we all formulate implicit systematic theologies. The difference is that realists place greater emphasis on Biblical theologies that focus on historical revelation and less on systematic theologies that look at the structures of reality.

Finally, the current confusion over epistemological foundations has led to a breakdown in communication. When evangelical critical realist theologians and idealist theologians converse, they speak of the same things, but they have an uneasy feeling that something is amiss. The idealists accuse the realists of lack of certainty for the latter differentiate their theology from the Scriptures. They tend to preface their remarks with "I believe . . .", or "As I see it . . .". Critical realists, on the other hand, are upset at the dogmatic certainty idealists claim for their knowledge, knowing that all human knowledge occurs in the contexts of culture and history. They may, in fact, agree on the contents of theological truth, but disagree on the epistemological nature of theology.

The breakdown of communication is most evident when there are disagreements. Idealists require agreement for there to be harmony. Consequently, they tend to be conversionist and polemical in their approach to those holding other theological positions. And they must break with and attack those who refuse to accept their positions. Critical realists, on the other hand, recognize that Christians will disagree in their understandings of Scriptures, and that unity lies in a commitment to the same Lord and to an obedience to the same Scriptures. They tend to be confessional and irenic in their approach to those who disagree. Moreover, they are committed by their epistemological stance to continue discussions with those who disagree with them.

When two idealists or two critical realists disagree, both sides know what is going on. Communication of some sort goes on, whether in mutual attack or mutual dialogue, because both sides are playing by the same rules. But when an idealist and a critical realist disagree, confusion sets in because one is playing chess and the other checkers on the same board.

As evangelicals we need to differentiate epistemological issues from theological ones so that we do not waste our energies and can work toward a resolution of our differences, and so we do not attack

a brother or sister falsely. We need to guard against heresy. We need also carry out the mission Christ has given us in this lost and broken world.

How do the various epistemological positions in theology relate to the integration of theology and science, and to missions and our relationship to non-Christian religions? These are questions we will explore in the next article.

To be continued in May/June TSF Bulletin.

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ETHICS

## Onesimus: A Study In Ethics

by Vernard Eller

I think I understand why so many Christians find some sort of arky-faith\* as essential to their creed. The logic, heard on every side, runs thus: If the good people (we Christians, of course) don't organize (as holy power-blocs) to bestow (read: "impose") our goodness upon the world, no improvement will ever take place and society will simply continue its slide into hell. The argument assumes there is only one possible way social good can happen.

It may come as a surprise to hear that I am quick to agree that this is the correct and, indeed, inevitable conclusion—if we are supposing that *political reality* (i.e., that of human probabilities and possibilities) is the only reality there is; that ours is not a God who takes it upon himself to intervene in humanity's public affairs. If God is left out (or edged out) of the picture, then it undoubtedly is correct that our one and only hope of social salvation is for good people with their messianic arkys to bring down the forces of evil and install a new and just regime.

If such is indeed the very fact of the matter, then, of course, we have no option but to skin the cat this way, doing it as well as we can manage. Even so, we ought to be honest enough to recognize just how forlorn a hope this is. From a theological-biblical perspective, Karl Barth (perhaps better than anyone else) has shown us how presumptuous and wrongheaded it is for any crowd of human beings to claim they have such master of, and facility with, "the good" that they can power it into place as the society of peace and justice.

Also, we have seen that the idea of "just revolution directed by the saints of God" is by no means an invention of the late 20th-century but has been tried time and time and time again. And yet, whether such revolution succeeds or fails, more often than not the

social gain is zilch—or less! The direct-action method of messianic arkys is hardly recommended by its track record.

Finally, we have heard the personal testimony of Jacques Ellul—a saint as qualified as any, both as a biblical theologian on the one hand and a socio-political scientist on the other—who labored for years in different attempts at the Christian transformation of society and came away with the opinion that the method is unrealistic and unworkable.

Nevertheless, if this be the only possible way of getting the cat skinned, we will have to go with it—no matter what. Yet honesty would compel us to admit that our hope, now, is little better than no hope at all.

I have been trying to bust us out of this closed, constricted, no-option system that says, "There is only one way; if it's going to be done, we are the ones who will have to do it out of our own resources." Hear then the gospel, the liberating word of God: "There is more than one way to skin a cat" (I'm certain it's in there somewhere, but my concordance must be faulty).

*Politics* is not the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. There is also *theology* that can speak of actual, socio-political differences made by the presence of God. There is a *modus operandi* of history different from that of the human-bound method of triumph—that, of course, being resurrection made possible by the grace and power of one who is Wholly-Other-Than-Human.

So, in this article, I want to describe how "Another Way" can and did work in a matter of radical, broad-scale structural social-change usually thought of as being the special province of revo-

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\* In his book, Dr. Eller uses "arky" as an anglicizing of the NT Greek word translated "principalities." "Anarchy" (un-arkyness), then, is essentially skepticism regarding how much good can ever be expected from arkys (power-blocs), namely, any and all human ideologies, parties, systems, or schemes claiming "principal" value in the reform or governance of society. "Arky faith," on the one hand, is, then, the common assumption of both secularists and Christians that good (God-sponsored) arkys are precisely the means by which the good of society (God's will for it) is to come to accomplishment. And "Christian Anarchy," on the other hand, is argued to be the truly biblical stance that puts its faith totally in the Arky (Kingdom) of God, consequently viewing all other arkys (and particularly "holy" ones) with dire suspicion.

lution and the class-struggle.

We already have heard but need again to be reminded that Christians can do and have done a great deal of good in the way of social service and action—and that without at all forming political power-blocs, without taking an adversarial stance toward any government or social institution, without presuming to condemn or fight anybody. Modern liberationists are wrong in sneering at these efforts as being insignificant compared to their big push to turn the world right-side-up.

In fact, although the results are neither quick nor spectacular, it may be that *social service* has a better record in effecting even structural change than has *revolutionism*. Not through pressure and imposition, but simply through *modeling*, the service-presence cannot but have some ameliorative effect upon the social structures around it. Would it be correct to say that—no matter how bad off some of these nations may be at present—there is no country into which Christian missionaries and service workers have gone that is not now better off in the way of social justice than would be their case if that Christian presence had never been there? Revolutionary liberationism is *not* the only method of effecting helpful social change. There *is* more than one way . . . However, the case study here presented speaks of a way that is much more of a “direct action” than simply “Christian modeling.”

In my book *Towering Babble* (pp. 169-79) I developed what I called “voluntary self-subordination” as being the uniquely Christian way—not necessarily for skinning cats but for accomplishing many other good ends. And just the verbal contrast between this phrase and “arky-contest” is, of course, conspicuous. But as the rubric of this concept—its most fundamental and essential statement—I cited Jesus’ solemn decree from Mark 8:34-35:

“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel will save it.”

And although we haven’t time to say more here, that book develops the idea in depth and demonstrates that it does indeed characterize the whole New Testament.

Now it is my observation that a goodly number of modern Christians are willing at least to consider voluntary self-subordination as a method of operation for their *personal, one-to-one relationships with other individuals*. However, when it comes to political reform, radical social change, human liberation, the accomplishment of social justice, or whatever you call it, they don’t see the method as having relevance or applicability at all. No, on this level, “justice” can only be spelled “political contention for equity.”

In this regard, then, Jesus and the New Testament become something of an embarrassment to liberationists. According to their view, Jesus (and the New Testament believers proceeding from him) *should* appear in the role of modern-day reformers out demanding and contesting for the just society. The trouble is they don’t fit the mold and can’t convincingly be made to do so.

The embarrassment becomes acute, then, with the realization that the early church lived in a society where the terrible injustice of human slavery was common practice. Yet, rather than fighting or even protesting this evil, the church apparently condoned it—and that not only in the life of the large society but even within its own circles. And it follows that Paul’s little letter to Philemon may represent the greatest embarrassment of all. Here, circumstances as much as force the Apostle into a direct confrontation with the institution of slavery—and he poops out completely. He makes no move to protest the injustice of the practice, speaks not one word in condemnation of Philemon’s being a slaveowner, makes not a hint of a witness to social justice and human rights.

However, I read Philemon quite differently. So I now undertake to establish this miniscule missive as the very model of social justice accomplished through distinctively Christian self-subordination. It is a picture of liberation and social change so radical that the proponents of arky-justice haven’t had a glimmer of what it’s all about.

Philemon is a most frustrating book—a brief personal note that doesn’t begin to tell us what we need to know in order to understand it. As much as we do know is this: Paul is writing to his friend

Philemon regarding Philemon’s slave, Onesimus. Yet, although he belongs to Philemon, Onesimus has just spent some time with Paul and is now carrying the letter from Paul to his master.

Philemon lives at Colossae and is a leader in the church there. Whether there or somewhere else (the book of Acts never places Paul at Colossae), Paul had apparently converted Philemon and become his close Christian brother. There seems little doubt that Colossians—Paul’s letter to the *church* at Colossae—and this note to a *private individual* in Colossae belong together. Most likely, Tychicus, one of Paul’s lieutenants, delivered the letter to the church, while Onesimus delivered the note to his master (Col 4:7-9).

At the time of his writing, Paul is in prison—although he isn’t thoughtful enough to tell us where. Because the matter has something to do with the rest of the story, we are going to guess “-Ephesus.” (Acts never has Paul *in prison* in Ephesus; but it does have him spending enough time in the city that an imprisonment would not be incredible. It is not like Paul to stay out of jail for two years in a row.) But what makes Ephesus a good guess is that it is the major metropolitan (and Pauline) center nearest the little town of Colossae, about a hundred miles off. It is, accordingly, by far the likeliest spot for a Colossian slave to try to lose himself—as well as have a chance of coming upon Paul. Then too, it is the most likely spot from which Paul would write that he hopes soon to be released and would Philemon have a guest room ready for him (vs. 22).

Onesimus, we know, is Philemon’s slaveboy (“my child, whose father I have become,” Paul calls him in vs. 10, which could make Onesimus as young as a teen-ager). The name “Onesimus,” by the way, is based on the Greek root meaning “beneficial,” “of benefit,” or “useful.” It is a name an owner might well give to a slave in the hope of its influencing his character. Paul does word play with the name in both verses 11 and 20.

Onesimus is Philemon’s slave. Yet he has just been with Paul in Ephesus rather than Philemon in Colossae. Paul opines that he has been “useless” rather than living up to his name “useful” (vs. 11). And Onesimus’ returning to Philemon raises questions as to how he will be received. Only this much the letter actually tells us. But it can hardly add up to anything other than “runaway.” We don’t know whether Onesimus knew (or knew about) Paul and so sought him out through the Ephesian church or whether he just happened to be thrown into the same jail cell with him. But in either case, he is now not only a spiritual son but even a working colleague of the Apostle.

In the note Onesimus delivers, Paul is probably asking three things of Philemon: (1) At the very least, he is asking that Onesimus be received with kindness and forgiveness rather than what would be customary for a runaway slave—which, legally, could include anything up through torture and death. (2) Surely, he is also asking that Onesimus be released from slavery (“no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother”—vs. 16). And (3) there are strong hints that Paul wants Onesimus released to come back and serve with Paul at Ephesus (“I want some benefit [some ‘Onesimus’] from you”—vs. 13 & vs. 20).

This is as much as the epistle itself can tell us. So let me now try an interpretation.

In running away from his master, the slave Onesimus was doing precisely what modern revolutionism says he should do. He was moving to effect his own liberation—get out from under terrible oppression and claim the equity of being a freeman alongside Philemon. Although it was a slave revolt of only one person, it was an entirely praiseworthy one—a blow against gross injustice and a move toward a truly just society. This is liberation theology—and a model of what all slaves should do. So, far from feeling any sort of guilt, Onesimus should have been proud of what he did.

Of course, I don’t know how Onesimus *did* feel; but let’s assume he felt good about his thrust toward freedom. Yet the evidence would indicate that, particularly after he became a Christian and began to learn from Paul, he started to have second thoughts. His way of getting liberated did not have things as “freed up” as he expected they would be. “Running away,” he must now have sensed, left something to be desired as a “freeing” action. Being a runaway slave is neither as secure nor as relaxed a position as one might hope. To have always to be looking over your shoulder to see who

is coming to get you can hardly be the truest sort of freedom. And I wonder whether anyone can ever run away, or lie, or cheat, or kill—even in the name of freedom—without feeling pangs of remorse and guilt in the process.

But more, as a Christian, Onesimus must have realized that his act of “freeing” himself had to have had a reverse effect on Philemon. Onesimus’ grab for equity would inevitably have created an adversary alignment and made Philemon “the enemy,” who now had been put down, cheated, robbed of a valuable possession he undoubtedly had acquired in all honesty. No, there were all sorts of things about Onesimus’ new freedom which just could not be right.

So, with Paul’s help (although certainly not at his *demand*), Onesimus *freely* chose another method of liberation—that of voluntary, Christian self-subordination. He decided to *go back*, to exercise his freedom by giving it up, to save his life by losing it.

And just think what this action had to mean for Onesimus. Here was a runaway slave—guilty from every legal standpoint—offering to put himself at the mercy of his offended master. His only defense is a scrap of paper signed with what he hopes is the magic name “Paul.” It is hardly likely that Onesimus stood afar off and sent Tychicus in with the note, awaiting Philemon’s response before deciding which way to move. Hardly. Onesimus must have himself handed that note to Philemon, putting not just his hard-won freedom but his very life into jeopardy, ready to accept whatever might result—fully convinced, whatever that result might be, that this was the only way to true freedom.

Consider, then, that Onesimus’ original running away had not been a truly *free* action—it was too much motivated by self-interest, a being driven by one’s own self-serving needs and desires. No, it was rather his going back, his *voluntary* subordination, his willingness to lose his life for Christ’s sake and the gospel—only this was “free” in a way no other action could be.

And Onesimus’ earlier running away had not been a “freeing” action, either. We already have conjectured what must have been the side-effects that led him to want to undo that one. But, precisely the opposite, we can be certain that his going back *did* create all sorts of freedom. And we can say that even without knowing how Philemon responded. And bear in mind that we don’t know. All we have is the note; and Scripture gives us not one word as to how it was received. And this is how it should be. Onesimus’ action was *right*, no matter what the consequences. My belief is that Onesimus would have *wanted* to go back—would have felt himself freed in going back—even if he had known ahead of time that he would be returning to slavery, torture, and execution. Yet, even at that extremity, consider the freedoms that would have ensued.

Through his act of repentance, reconciliation, restitution, and asking forgiveness, Onesimus would have freed himself from the guilt of his previous action. He would have freed his relationship to Philemon of all its animosity, ill will, and adversarial conflict. And although it does not figure into our customary calculations, don’t assume that a *dead* slave is for that reason *unfree*. No, just because he had acted as a child of God, Onesimus had guaranteed for himself the coming revelation of what his sponsor Paul called “the glorious liberty of the children of God.” And what Paul wrote to the Galatians he could as well have addressed to his Philemon-bound friend: “For freedom *Christ* has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery [slavery to what the world calls ‘freedom].” And most certainly, Onesimus is included when Paul says, “For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freeman of the Lord.” We have all sorts of arky-liberated people running around who don’t begin to know the sort of freedom experienced by the Christian slaveboy who may voluntarily have gone to his death.

Because the success of voluntary self-subordination is not measured by its outward results, the story of Onesimus is right—is the very model of Christian action—even though we don’t know what consequences there may have been. Yet this, of course, is not to suggest that the outcome had to be that of enslavement and death. Indeed, the probability is quite otherwise. Paul, apparently, was a rather good judge of character; and if he was reading his pal Philemon at all right, then Onesimus likely was soon on his way back to Ephesus with Tychicus. Again, it would take a pretty tough nut

to resist the blandishments and loving arguments of Paul’s most crucial effort in salesmanship. I don’t think there’s a chance in the world that Philemon could have held out against this one. Finally—and to my mind most conclusive—is the fact that the letter has survived.

Think about it: if anything had happened to Onesimus other than his being freed and sent on his way to Paul, who would have wanted to save the letter? It was saved, obviously. So who would have wanted it? Well, it belonged to Philemon, and he undoubtedly valued it. Yet my guess is that (except for his Christian inhibitions) Onesimus would have knocked him down and taken it, if Philemon had shown reluctance about giving it up. After all, to Philemon it was a nice letter from a friend; but to Onesimus, it was his reprieve from death and charter of freedom. What they probably did is make a xerox copy so that both could have copies. In any case, that note was preserved for some period of years until it could be incorporated as a one-of-a-kind entry in the New Testament.

“And is that the story?” Well, maybe so and maybe not. New Testament scholar John Knox is the one who ferreted out what may be its continuation. We have to go clear beyond the New Testament now; but there is more.

Fifty to sixty years after the most probable time of Paul’s writing, there was, in Syria, a Bishop Ignatius who was apprehended by the Romans and escorted overland to Rome, where, eventually, he was tried and executed. Because Ignatius was a prominent figure in the church, as his party came to (or even close to) any Christian locales, the congregations sent out representatives to visit and offer him hospitality. After he arrived in Rome, then, Ignatius sent “thank you notes” to a number of the churches that had hosted him. These letters—dated about A.D. 110—have been preserved (not in the New Testament, obviously, but as some of the earliest Christian literature outside the New Testament). One of them is addressed to the church at Ephesus (EPHESUS, note!); and therein Ignatius waxes eloquent about the welcome he had received from the Ephesian delegation headed by their Bishop Onesimus.

Hold on! Don’t go jumping to conclusions until I say. When I tell you, we can all jump to the conclusion at once. There is nothing in the way of positive proof; and “Onesimus” is not a completely rare name. Yet the place and timing are right. If our slaveboy went back to help Paul in Ephesus, he could have worked his way up in the congregation and been a seventy-some-year-old bishop at the time Ignatius came through.

More, in the first six paragraphs of his letter, Ignatius names Bishop Onesimus three times and refers to him eleven other times. And it is in this same section of the letter (and not elsewhere) that scholars also pick up subtle echoes of the language of Paul’s letter to Philemon—including one play on the word “benefit” that is almost identical to Paul’s. Apparently, Ignatius knows the Philemon letter and is teasing its language into his compliments of Bishop Onesimus. You can decide how conclusive that is in proving that Ignatius knows which Onesimus the Ephesian bishop is; but I am ready to jump. Now!

Here, we must move beyond Ignatius; but the plot continues to thicken. Scholars are pretty well convinced that the letters of Paul did not come into the New Testament one by one, from here and there. The greater likelihood is that, beforehand, someone had become interested in Paul and made inquiries among the congregations as to whether they had any of his letters and would be willing to share copies (xerox copies, of course). It would have been this earlier Pauline collection, then, that was introduced into the New Testament as a unit.

Now where would such collecting most likely have taken place? Among the Pauline congregations, Ephesus is as well situated and thus as good a guess as any. And who is most likely to have been the moving spirit behind such a project? Why not Bishop Onesimus? He has as good a reason for remembering and loving Paul as anybody (and a whole lot better reason than most). And, with this suggestion, we get a really nice answer to one of the most troublesome questions regarding the epistle to Philemon. Within the Bible, it is a unique specimen—a brief personal note addressed to a private individual on a matter involving neither the life of a congregation nor the teaching of the faith. So why should it be in the New Testament? And how did it get there in the first place?

Without recourse to "Bishop Onesimus," I don't see that those questions are answerable. With "Bishop Onesimus," they become easy. If Onesimus is the collector of the Pauline *corpus*, he would, of course, be eager that "his" letter be part of it. Likewise, the Ephesian congregation would very much want *this* letter included, as a gesture of respect and gratitude—and a matter of record—regarding their own slaveboy bishop. Yes, the very presence of the letter within the New Testament canon may be the strongest proof that the Ephesian bishop of A.D. 110 is indeed the very same person as Philemon's slave.

Earlier—under the possibility that Onesimus actually was returned to slavery and executed—we portrayed the *minimum* of freedom, liberation and justice that might have resulted from his going back. Now—whether or not it is the *maximum*—we have portrayed just how incredibly far God may have taken that slaveboy's Christ-like decision to take up his cross and go back. And Onesimus' personal rise in equity from slave to bishop is only a starter. The Ephesian congregation seems to have received the godly leadership that not only made it a strong church but may even have spelled its survival into the second century (it is not evident that all Paul's congregations lasted so long). But most of all, it may be that God used Onesimus' going-back to give us the Pauline one-fourth of our New Testament and so preserve an understanding of the faith that has been of untold value in the life and history of the church to the present day. When God is in the picture, who's to say how "useful" one "Onesimus" can be?

But more! I am ready to say that—in a proleptic, representative way—the example of Onesimus marks the truer freeing of more slaves than all the Emancipation Proclamations ever proclaimed and all the class-warfare ever waged. In this one, indeed, God sounds the death knell of slavery (all sorts of slavery) for the whole of creation for all time. There is not the slightest doubt that the Christian church—the Onesmian church—went on to become the greatest force for freeing slaves that the world has ever seen. And it strikes me that the Onesmian method of ending slavery is the only sure method of doing so. The secular way of "revolutionary arky-contest" may be quicker and more spectacular; but it is also far less dependable, carrying all sorts of negative side-effects. Emancipation Proclamations and Civil Wars may create a degree of justice and eliminate some aspects of slavery. But they also create all sorts of animosities and hatreds, leave battlefields strewn with corpses, and take us out of slavery only to put us into Jim Crow.

The Onesmian approach is much more powerful. It may take a while, but no slaveholder can forever hold out against the loving persuasions of a Paul, the loving self-sacrifice of an Onesimus, or the loving Spirit of an Almighty God. That owner actually has a much better chance of resisting political pressure and the violence of class warfare. Moreover, the Onesmian way, rather than demanding the denunciation and destruction of the moral dignity of the slaveholder, offers him a gracious way out. Onesimus was lib-

erated without Philemon's having to be demeaned in the process. And best of all, of course, to go Onesmian leaves everyone involved—slave, owners, and apostle—as brothers in Christ. The side-effects are all positive, without a trace of contention's negativity.

Yet the most essential distinction, I suggest, is this: The political struggle for liberation is posited wholly on human wisdom, idealism, and moral ability. It thinks there is only one way . . . It operates in a closed system that neither seeks nor expects anything more than its human methodology can be calculated to achieve—though seldom do the final results come to even that much. Human beings (and especially well-intended doers of good) are noted for overestimating the power of their own piety.

But with Onesimus, things are quite otherwise. Because his was a theological action taken at the behest of *God*, in the service of *God*, through the Spirit of *God*, with the enablement of *God*, and to the glory of *God*—this action invited God in and urged him to make of it what he would. And the results? Completely incalculable—even to the preserving of the Pauline gospel for the ages. There is absolutely no telling how much good, how much social change, how much freeing of slaves, how much gospel, how much kingdom, might follow from an Onesmian laying down of one's life for God.

Finally, then, consider how totally Onesimus' was "Another Way"—an anarchical way bearing no likeness at all to the accepted arky-method of skinning cats. Not one of the characteristics of arky-faith is to be found.

To be sure, slaves are freed and the classless society is formed. Yet, throughout, each of the principals (slave, owner, and attendant theologian of liberation) acts and is acted toward simply as the human individual he is—brothers three, only that and nothing more. No one (least of all the theologian directing the action) tries to use Onesimus as symbol of "the oppressed but righteous poor" whose consciousness of injustice must be raised to the point that he will join the class-struggle. Paul, rather, convinces him to quit "fighting it" and go back—even into slavery. No one (least of all the theologian directing the action) tries, conversely, to use Philemon as symbol of "the evil, oppressing, slaveholding class," exposing his injustice as a means of recruiting class-warriors to fight against him. No one (least of all the theologian directing the action) has any interest in anybody's fighting anybody, in even seeing the matter as an adversary alignment.

The problem of human slavery is, of course, a *political* one. But our "theologian of liberation," being truly a *theologian*, says, "There just has to be more than the one *political* way of skinning this cat (i.e., the way that is limited to human probabilities and possibilities). Let us act *theologically* (i.e., in a way that both obeys God and, at the same time, invites him into the action). Let's try it that way—and see where God chooses to take it."

So they did. And so He did. And just see how far it went. You know, it's true: There actually is more than one way . . .

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

## Meditative Prayer

by Richard J. Foster

Jesus Christ is alive and here to teach his people himself. His voice is not hard to hear; his vocabulary is not hard to understand. But we must learn how to hear his voice and to obey his word. It is this ability to hear and obey that is the heart and soul of Christian meditation. In this article we will seek to understand the biblical basis and the purpose of meditative prayer. We will discover how the imagination can aid us in our task and consider the three major steps into meditative prayer. We will see how learning to read with the heart can draw us into the love and life of God, and, finally, we will consider seven common problems in the practice of meditative prayer.

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### The Biblical Basis for Meditative Prayer

The biblical basis for meditation is discovered in the great reality of the speaking, teaching, acting God which lies at the heart of the scriptural witness. God brought the universe crashing into existence by the word of his command. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve talked with God and God talked with them—they were in communion. Then came the Fall, and in an important sense there was a rupture of the sense of perpetual communion, for Adam and Eve hid from God. But God continued to reach out to his rebellious children, and in stories of such individuals as Cain, Abel, Noah and Abraham we see God speaking and acting, teaching and guiding.

Moses learned, albeit with many vacillations and detours, how to hear God's voice and obey his word. In fact, Scripture witnesses that God spoke to Moses "face to face, as a man speaks to his

friend" (Ex 33:11). There was a sense of intimate relationship, of communion. As a people, however, the Israelites were not prepared for such intimacy. Once they learned a little about God, they realized that being in his presence was risky business and told Moses so: "You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die" (Ex 20:19). In this way they could maintain religious respectability without the attendant risks. This was the beginning of the great line of the prophets and the judges, Moses being the first. But it was a step away from the sense of immediacy, the sense of the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

Under Samuel the people clamored for a king. This disturbed Samuel greatly, but God told him not to be discouraged, "for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them" (1 Sam 8:7). Under Moses they rejected God's immediacy; under Samuel they rejected God's theocratic rule. "Give us a prophet, give us a king, give us a go-between, so we do not have to come into God's presence ourselves." And we do not have to look at religion in America very deeply before we see that it is saturated with the dogma of the mediator. "Give us a pastor, give us a priest, give us someone who will do it for us, so that we can avoid intimacy with God ourselves and still reap the benefits."

In the fullness of time Jesus came and taught the reality of the kingdom of God and demonstrated what life could be like in that kingdom. He showed us God's yearning for the gathering of an all-inclusive community of loving persons, with himself as its prime sustainer and most glorious inhabitant. He established a living fellowship that would know him as Redeemer and King, listening to him in all things and obeying him at all times. In his intimate relationship with the Father, Jesus modeled for us the reality of that life of hearing and obeying. "The Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise" (Jn 5:19). "I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge" (Jn 5:30). "The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works" (Jn 14:10). When Jesus told his disciples to abide in him, they could understand what he meant for he was abiding in the Father. He declared that he was the good Shepherd and that his sheep know his voice (Jn 10:4). He told us that the Comforter would come, the Spirit of truth, who would guide us into all truth (Jn 16:13).

Luke in his second volume clearly implies that following the resurrection and the ascension Jesus continued "to do and teach" even if people could not see him with the naked eye (Acts 1:1). Both Peter and Stephen pointed to Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:15 of the prophet like Moses who is to speak and whom the people are to hear and obey (Acts 3:22; 7:37. See also Deut 18:15-18; Mt 17:5; Jn 1:21; 4:19-25; 6:14; 7:37-40; Heb 1:1-13; 3:7-8; 12:25). In the book of Acts we see the resurrected and reigning Christ, through the Holy Spirit, teaching and guiding his children: leading Philip to new unreached cultures (Acts 8), revealing his messiahship to Paul (Acts 9), teaching Peter about his racism (Acts 10), guiding the church out of its cultural captivity (Acts 15).

This, in brief, forms the biblical foundation for meditation, and the wonderful news is that Jesus has not stopped acting and speaking. He is resurrected and at work in our world. He is not idle, nor has he developed laryngitis. He is alive and among us as our Priest to forgive us, our Prophet to teach us, our King to rule us, our Shepherd to guide us.

All the saints throughout the ages have witnessed to this reality. How sad that contemporary Christians are so ignorant of the vast sea of literature on Christian meditation by faithful believers throughout the centuries! And their testimony to the joyful life of perpetual communion is amazingly uniform. From Catholic to Protestant, from Eastern Orthodox to Western Free Church, we are urged to "live in his presence in uninterrupted fellowship." The Russian mystic Theophan the Recluse said, "To pray is to descend with the mind into the heart, and there to stand before the face of the Lord, ever-present, all seeing, within you." The Anglican divine Jeremy Taylor declared, "Meditation is the tongue of the soul and the language of our spirit." And in our day Lutheran martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, when asked why he meditated, replied, "Because I am a Christian." The witness of Scripture and the witness of the de-

votional masters are so rich, so alive with the presence of God that we would be foolish to neglect such a gracious invitation to experience, in the words of Madame Guyon, "the depths of Jesus Christ."

### The Purpose of Meditative Prayer

In meditative prayer we are growing into what Thomas à Kempis called "a familiar friendship with Jesus." We are sinking down into the light and life of Christ and becoming comfortable in that posture. The omnipresence of the Lord moves from a theological dogma into a radiant reality. "He walks with me and he talks with me" ceases to be pious jargon and instead becomes a straightforward description of daily life.

Please understand me: I am not speaking of some mushy, giddy, buddy-buddy relationship. All such insipid sentimentality only betrays how little we know, how distant we are from the Lord high and lifted up who is revealed to us in Scripture. John tells us in his Apocalypse that when he saw the reigning Christ he fell at his feet as though dead, and so should we (Rev 1:17). No, I am speaking of a reality more akin to what the disciples felt in the upper room when they experienced both intense intimacy and awful reverence.

What happens in meditative prayer is that we create the emotional and spiritual space which allows Christ to construct an inner sanctuary in the heart. The wonderful verse "I stand at the door and knock . . ." was originally penned for believers, not unbelievers (Rev 3:20). We who have turned our lives over to Christ need to know how very much he longs to eat with us, to commune with us. He desires a perpetual Eucharistic feast in the inner sanctuary of the heart. Meditative prayer opens the door and, although we are engaging in specific meditation exercises at specific times, the aim is to bring this living reality into all of life. It is a portable sanctuary which is brought into all we are and do.

Inward fellowship of this kind does two things. First, it transforms the inner personality. We cannot "burn the eternal flame of the inner sanctuary" and remain the same, for the Divine Fire will consume everything that is impure. Our ever-present Teacher will always be leading us into "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (rom 14:17). Everything that is foreign to his way we will have to let go. No, not "have to" but "want to," for our desires and aspirations will be more and more conformed to his way. Increasingly, everything within us will swing like a needle to the pole star of the Spirit.

Second, meditation will send us into our ordinary world with greater perspective and balance. As we learn to listen to the Lord, we gain new practical handles on life's ordinary problems. William Penn observed, "True godliness does not turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavors to mend it." Somehow we have new eyes to see and new ears to hear. We develop a truer sense of proportion so that we are able to distinguish the significant from the trivial. We discover a new serenity, an unshakableness, a firmness of life orientation. We come to live out the demands of our day perpetually bowed in worship and adoration.

### Sanctifying the Imagination

We can descend with the mind into the heart most easily through the imagination. Perhaps some rare individuals can meditate in an imageless void, but most of us need to be more deeply rooted in the senses. We must not despise this simpler, more humble route into God's presence. Jesus himself taught in this manner, making constant appeal to the imagination, and many of the devotional masters likewise encourage us in this way. St. Teresa of Avila said, "As I could not make reflection with my understanding I contrived to picture Christ within me. I did many simple things of this kind. I believe my soul gained very much in this way, because I began to practice prayer without knowing what it was." Many of us can identify with her words, for we too have tried a merely cerebral approach and found it too abstract, too detached. Even more, the imagination helps to anchor our thoughts and center our attention. Francis de Sales noted that "by means of the imagination we confine our mind within the mystery on which we meditate, that it may not ramble to and fro, just as we shut up a bird in a cage or tie a hawk by his leash so that he may rest on the hand."

Some have objected to using the imagination out of concern that it is untrustworthy and could even be used by the evil one. There is good reason for concern, for the imagination, like all our faculties, has participated in the Fall. But just as we believe that God can take our reason (fallen as it is) and sanctify it and use it for his good purposes, so he can sanctify the imagination and use it for his good purposes. Of course, the imagination can be distorted by Satan, but then so can all our faculties. God created us with an imagination, and as Lord of his creation he can and does redeem it and use it for the work of the kingdom of God.

To believe that God can sanctify and utilize the imagination is simply to take seriously the Christian idea of incarnation. God so accommodates, so enfleshes himself into our world, that he uses the images we know and understand to teach us about the unseen world of which we know so little and which we find so difficult to understand.

As we enter more and more into God's way—thinking his thoughts after him, delighting in his gracious presence—we experience God more and more, utilizing our imagination for his good purposes. If we truly delight in him, our desires will please him, which is why they will come to pass (Ps 37:4). And, in fact, the common experience of those who walk with God is that of being *given* images of what could be, not straining to concoct them. So may I encourage you to allow the Lord to give you many delightful images and pictures. You may well discover, as I did, that it is the first step to believing that it could be so.

### Steps into Meditative Prayer

While in biblical times people were well versed in how to meditate, today there is an abysmal ignorance of even the most basic elements. Hence, many of us are helped immensely by a simple description of the three basic steps into meditative prayer.

**Centering down.** The first step is sometimes called "centering down." Others have used the term *re-collection*; that is, a re-collecting of ourselves until we are unified or whole. The idea is to let go of all competing distractions until we are truly centered, until we are truly present where we are.

Begin by seating yourself comfortably, and then slowly and deliberately let all tension and anxiety drop away. Become aware of God's presence in the room. Perhaps in your imagination you will want to visualize Christ seated in the chair across from you, for he is truly present. If frustrations or distractions arise, you will want to lift them up into the arms of the Father and let him care for them. This is not suppressing our inner turmoil but letting go of it. Suppression implies a pressing down, a keeping in check, whereas in centering down we are giving away, releasing. It is even more than a neutral psychological relaxing. It is an active surrendering, a "self-abandonment to divine providence," to use the phrase of Jean-Pierre de Caussade.

Precisely because the Lord is present with us we can relax and let go of everything, for in his presence nothing really matters, nothing is of importance except attending to him. We allow inner distractions and frustrations to melt away before him as snow before the sun. We allow him to calm the storms which rage within. We allow his great silence to still our noisy heart.

Let me warn you at the outset: this centeredness does not come easily or quickly in the beginning. Most of us live such fractured and fragmented lives that collectedness is a foreign world to us. The moment we genuinely try to be centered we become painfully aware of how distracted we are. Romano Guardini notes, "When we try to compose ourselves, unrest redoubles in intensity, not unlike the manner in which at night, when we try to sleep, cares or desires assail us with a force that they do not possess during the day." But we must not be discouraged at this. We must be prepared to devote all our meditation time to this centeredness without any thought for result or reward. We willingly "waste our time" in this manner as a lavish love offering to the Lord. For God takes what looks like a foolish waste and uses it to nudge us closer into the holy of holies. Perceptively Guardini comments, "If at first we achieve no more than the understanding of how much we lack in inner unity, something will have been gained, for in some way we will have made contact with that center which knows no distraction."

Several things occur in the process of centering down. First, there

is a glad surrender to him "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev 1:8). We surrender control over our lives and destinies. In an act of deliberate intention we decide to do it not our way but God's. We might even want to visualize our bodies being lifted into the intense light of God's presence that he may do with us as it pleases him.

We surrender our possessiveness and invite him to possess us in such a way that we are truly crucified with Christ and yet truly alive through his life (Gal 2:20). We relinquish into his hands our imperialist ambitions to be greater and more admired, to be richer and more powerful, even to be saintlier and more influential.

We surrender our cares and worries. "Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you," said Peter (1 Pet 5:7). And so we can, precisely because we sense his care. We can give up the need to watch out for number one because we have One who is watching out for us. I sometimes like to picture a box in which I place every worry and every care. When it is full I gift wrap it, placing a lovely big bow on top, and give it as a present to the Father. He receives it, and once he does I know I must not take it back, for to take back a gift once given is most discourteous.

We surrender our good intentions and high resolves, for even these can harbor the seeds of pride and arrogance. Mother Teresa of Calcutta said, "Pray for me that I not loosen my grip on the hands of Jesus even under the guise of ministering to the poor." For if we "loosen our grip on the hands of Jesus," we have lost everything. And so we are to surrender all distractions—even good distractions—until we are driven into the Core.

A second thing which occurs within us as we are learning to center down is the rise of a spirit of repentance and confession. Suddenly we become aware—keenly aware—of our shortcomings and many sins. All excuses are stripped away, all self-justifications are silenced. A deep, godly sorrow wells up within for the sins of commission and of omission. Any deed or thought that cannot stand in the searching light of Christ becomes repulsive not only to God but to us as well. Thus humbled under the cross we confess our need and receive his gracious word of forgiveness.

We may want to picture a path littered with many rocks. Some are small pebbles, others are quite large, and still others are almost completely buried so that we cannot know their size. With compunction of heart we invite the Lord to remove each stone, for they do indeed represent the many sins littering our lives. One by one he picks them up, revealing to us their true character and offensiveness. To our eyes some look big and others small, but the Lord helps us to understand that when lifted the smallest pebble has the same weight as the largest boulder. Some rocks need to be dug out of the ground, and while this is painful it also brings healing. When we see the path completely clear we rejoice in this gracious work of the Lord.

A third reality which works its way into our hearts as we are being more and more centered is an acceptance of the ways of God with human beings. We are acutely aware that God's ways are not our ways, that his thoughts are not our thoughts (Is 55:8). And with an inner knowing born out of fellowship, we see that his ways are altogether good. Our impatience, our rebellion, our nonacceptance give way to a gentle receptiveness to divine breathings. This is not a stoic resignation to "the will of God." It is an entering into the rhythm of the Spirit. It is a recognition that his commandments are "for our good always" (Deut 6:24). It is a letting go of our way and a saying yes to God's way, not grudgingly but because we know it is the better way.

We might want to visualize ourselves on a lovely beach somewhere observing the footprints of God in the sand. Slowly we begin to place our feet into the prints. At some places the stride looks far too long for our small frame; at other places it looks so short that it appears childlike. In his infinite wisdom God is stretching us where we need to be on the edge of adventure, restraining us where we need greater attentiveness to him. As we follow his lead we enter more and more into his stride, turning where he turns, accepting his ways and finding them good.

**Beholding the Lord.** As we learn to center down we begin to move into the second step in meditative prayer, which is "beholding the Lord." What do I mean? I mean the inward steady gaze of the heart upon the divine Center. We bask in the warmth of his pres-

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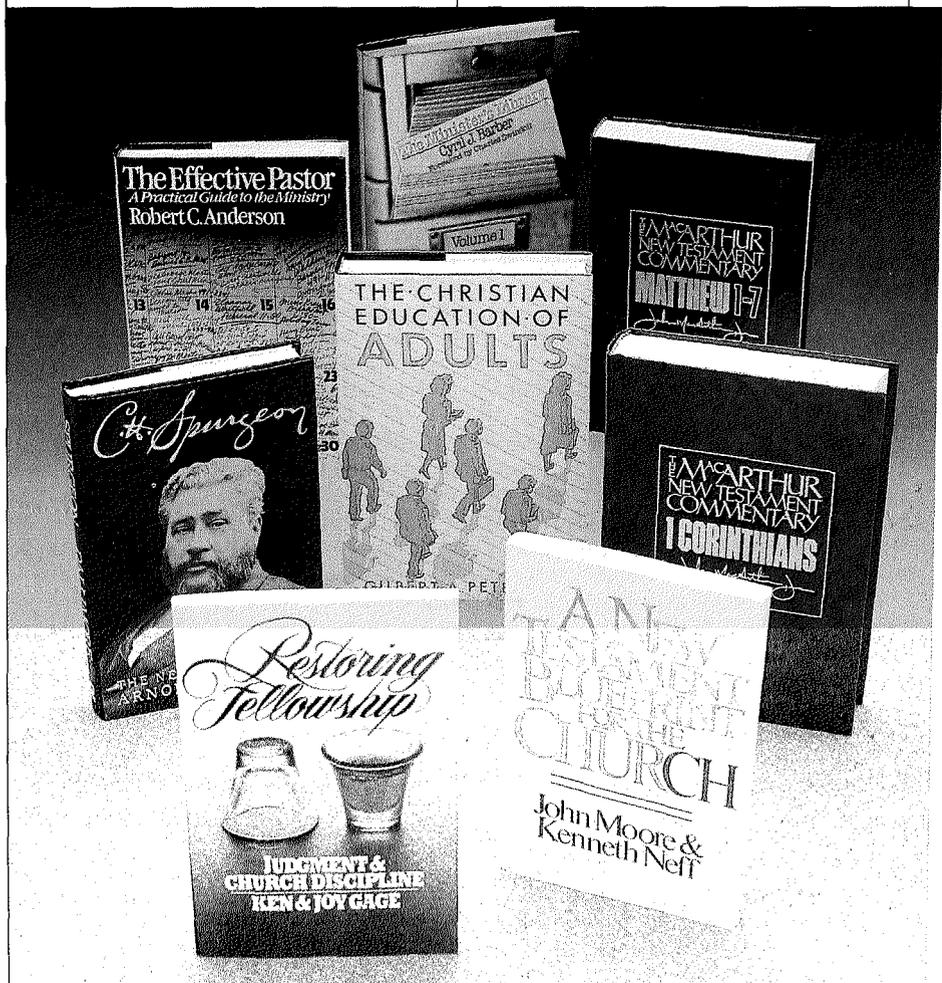
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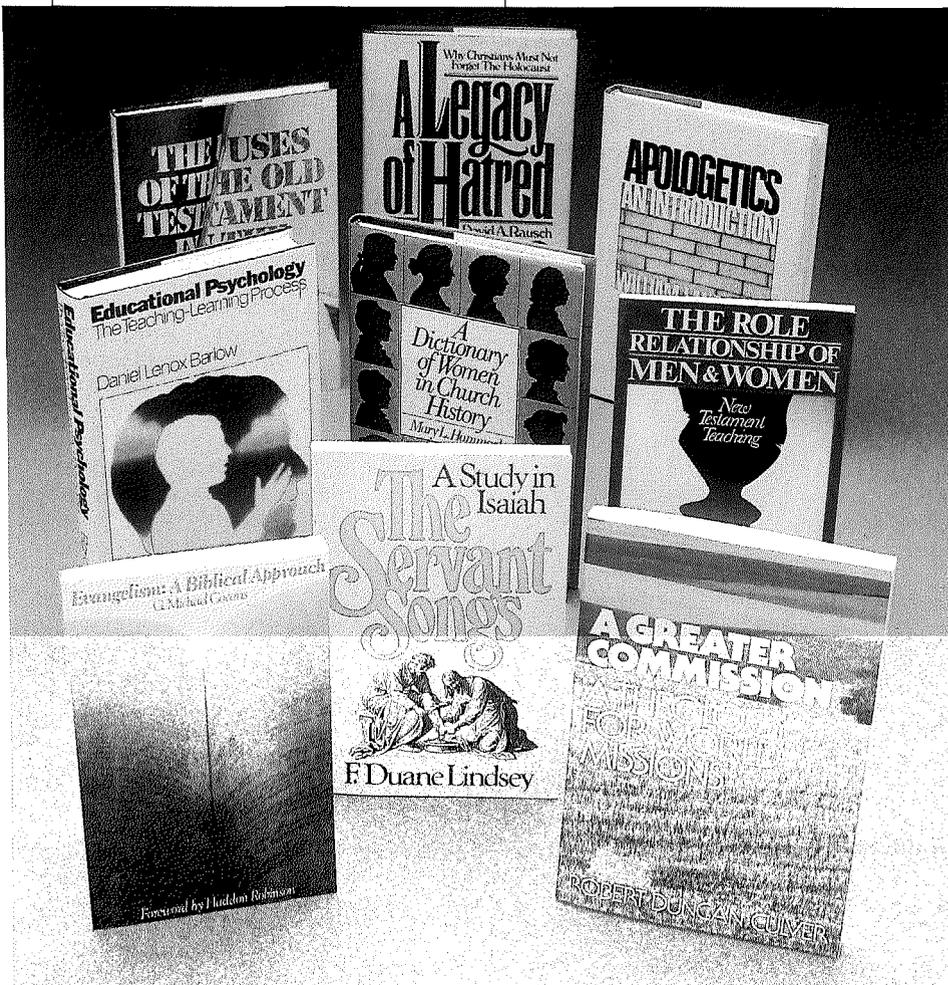
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ence. Worship and adoration, praise and thanksgiving, well up from the inner sanctuary of the soul. The fourteenth-century mystic Richard Rolle witnessed that, as he learned the gaze of the heart, he experienced real warmth around his heart as if it were actually on fire. He was so surprised at this phenomenon that he had to keep feeling his chest to be sure there was no physical reason for it. Instead of fear, as we might expect, this unusual sensation brought him "great and unexpected comfort." Fortunately for all of us, he has recorded the insights of those experiences in *The Fire of Love*.

Few if any of us will have the physical sensations that Rolle experienced, but we all can learn the gaze of the heart. There is a lovely little chorus which is popular these days, the first line of which says, "Set my spirit free that I may worship thee." And that is the yearning of our hearts as we behold the Lord. We love him, we worship him, we adore him. There are inward whisperings of devotion and homage, and perhaps outward shouts of praise and thanksgiving.

Often it seems that music is the language of beholding. "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart" is the way the apostle Paul described it (Eph 5:19). And who can hinder the spontaneous outbreak of adoration and praise? The great hymns of the church aid us in our beholding, for in an important sense they encapsulate for us the beholding of faithful Christians throughout the centuries. As we sing the great hymns we enter the communion of saints.

Many times we enter experiences of beholding that go deeper than human words can express. St. Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us "with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8:26). And often there are inward yearnings and aspirations that cannot quite be caught in human language. At times the gift of tongues, or glossolalia, becomes a channel through which the spirit may behold the Holy One of Israel. At other times one experiences what St. Teresa of Avila called "the prayer of quiet," where all words become superfluous. In silence we behold the Lord, for words are not needed for there to be communion.

Often a brief passage of Scripture will aid us in our beholding. We may be drawn to the great vision of the Lord high and lifted up recorded in Isaiah 6:1-8. Or perhaps we will want to meditate on John's vision of the reigning Christ in Revelation 1:12-18 or even in Revelation 19:11-16. We may be directed to behold the Savior cradled in the manger or dying upon the cross.

Most of all, we sense his nearness and his love. Father James Borst said, "He is closer to my true self than I am myself. He knows me better than I know myself. He loves me better than I love myself. He is 'Abba,' Father, to me. *I am* because HE IS."

Does all this lofty talk of communion with God discourage you? Do you feel miles away from such experience? Rather than attempting to scale the heights of spiritual ecstasy, are you just hoping to make it through the week? If so, don't be disheartened. Many times we all fail miserably short of the goal. Often our meditations never seem to get past our frustration over the unwashed dishes in the sink or the philosophy exam next week. But the little we have experienced reminds us that at the heart of God is the desire to give and to forgive, and we are encouraged to go deeper in and higher up.

**The prayer of listening.** As we experience the unifying grace of centering down and the liberating grace of beholding the Lord, we are ushered into a third step in meditative prayer, which is the prayer of listening. We have put away all obstacles of the heart, all scheming of the mind, all vacillations of the will. Divine graces of love and adoration wash over us like ocean waves. And as this is happening, we experience an inward attentiveness to divine motions. At the center of our being we are hushed. The experience is more profound than mere silence or lack of words. There is stillness to be sure, but it is a listening stillness. We feel more alive, more active, than we ever do when our minds are askew with muchness and manyness. Something deep inside has been awakened and brought to attention. Our spirit is on tiptoe, alert and listening.

On the Mount of Transfiguration the words of the Lord came out of the overshadowing cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Mt 17:5). And so we listen, really listen. We do not do violence to our rational faculties,

but we listen with more than the mind. We bring the mind into the heart so that we can listen with the whole being.

François Fénelon said, "Be silent, and listen to God. Let your heart be in such a state of preparation that his Spirit may impress upon you such virtues as will please him. Let all within you listen to him. This silence of all outward and earthly affection and of human thoughts within us is essential if we are to hear his voice." As I have noted before, this listening does indeed involve a hushing of all "outward and earthly affection." St. John of the Cross used the graphic phrase "my house being now all stilled." In that single line he helps us see the importance of quieting all physical, emotional and psychological senses.

As we wait before the Lord, graciously we are given a teachable spirit. I say "graciously" because without a teachable spirit any word of the Lord which may come to guide us into truth will only serve to harden our hearts. We will resist any and all instruction unless we are docile. But if we are truly willing and obedient, the teaching of the Lord is life and light.

The goal, of course, is to bring this stance of listening prayer into the course of daily experience. Throughout all life's motions—balancing the checkbook, vacuuming the floor, visiting with neighbors or business associates—there can be an inward attentiveness to the divine Whisper. The great masters of the interior life are overwhelmingly uniform in their witness to this reality. This is represented so well in the famous words of Brother Lawrence, "The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament." We bring the portable sanctuary into daily life.

To describe our movement into meditative prayer as steps may be misleading. The word may imply something a little too clear-cut, as if each step could be sharply distinguished from the others. Such, however, is not the case. All these movements interrelate and often splash over into each other. It is a living experience we are describing and, like all living experiences, cannot be defined too rigidly. The Lord is the Creator of infinite variety, and at times he may turn our little steps into one giant leap or teach us to skip or hop or run or even stand still. In all things and at all times we are to obey him.

### Reading with the Heart

One of the chief aids to meditative prayer is what is often called the *lectio divina*, or "divine reading." It is a kind of meditative spiritual reading in which the mind and heart are drawn into the love and goodness of God. Henri Nouwen recently showed me a lovely picture hanging on his apartment wall. It depicted an individual holding an open Bible, but the person's eyes were lifted upward. The idea is that in *lectio divina* we are doing more than reading words, we are listening with our heart to the Holy within. We are pondering all things in our heart as Mary did. We are entering into the reality of which the words speak, rather than merely analyzing them.

It goes without saying that Holy Scripture is the first and purest source of *lectio divina*. Suppose we want to meditate upon Jesus' staggering statement, "My peace I give to you" (Jn 14:27). Normally we would study the context of the statement—who said it, when it was said, the teaching surrounding it. We might try to reconstruct the upper-room scene. We might consider the cost at which our sacrificial Lamb is able to offer us peace. We might even resolve to face a difficult encounter with our employer or with a professor in a peaceful manner. And all these things are good to do, but note how in each case we are scrutinizing rather than entering into the experience.

In *lectio divina*, however, we are initiated into the reality of which the passage speaks. We brood on the truth that he is now filling us with his peace. The heart, the mind and the spirit are awakened to his inflowing peace. We sense all motions of fear stilled and overcome by "power and love and self-control" (2 Tim 1:7). Rather than dissecting peace we are entering into it. We are enveloped, absorbed, gathered into his peace. And the wonderful thing about such an experience is that the self is quite forgotten.

We are no longer worried about how we can make ourselves more at peace, for we are attending to the impregnation of peace in our hearts. No longer do we laboriously think up ways to act peacefully, for acts of peace spring spontaneously from within.

So many passages of Scripture provide a touchstone for meditative prayer: "Abide in my love." "I am the good shepherd." "Rejoice in the Lord always." In each case we are seeking to discover the Lord near us and longing to encounter his presence.

While we always want to affirm the centrality of Scripture, *lectio divina* includes more than the Bible. There are the lives of the saints and the writings which have proceeded from their profound experience of God. Humbly we read these writings because we know that God has spoken in the past. We read Augustine's *Confessions* and A. W. Tozer's *The Pursuit of God*, St. Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle* and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship* because we know that they walked with God, and we can learn from their experience. It is no accident that the rule of St. Benedict made *lectio divina* an integral part of daily life. This prayerful reading, as we might call it, edifies us and strengthens us. Whether we are reading about St. Francis of Assisi or Watchman Nee of China, we are encouraged in the life of faith.

### Seven Practical Problems

Over the years I have noticed that several practical concerns always seem to surface when we consider implementing meditation.

By far the most commonly asked question is what to do about a wandering mind. This no doubt reflects the fracturedness of modern society. We are bombarded by so many stimuli and our schedules are piled so high with commitments that the moment we seek to enter the creative silences every demand screams for attention. We have noisy hearts. We begin to deal with a wandering mind by understanding that the inner clatter is telling us something about our own distractedness, and it is not wrong to give the whole duration of our meditation to learning about our inner chaos. Also, I have often found it helpful to keep a things-to-do pad with me and simply jot down the tasks that are vying for my attention until they have all surfaced. Beyond this, we need at times to gently but firmly speak the word of peace to our racing mind and so instruct it into a more disciplined way. Finally, if one particular matter seems to be repeatedly intruding into our meditation, we may want to ask God if he wants to teach us something through the intrusion; that is, befriend the intruder by making *it* the object of our meditation.

A second and closely related question concerns the problem of falling asleep. It is a tragedy that so many of us live with the emotional spring wound so tightly that the moment we begin to relieve the tension, sleep overtakes us. The ultimate answer to this problem is to learn better how to get in touch with our bodies and our emotions. We need to learn that fully alert and fully relaxed are completely compatible states. I find, however, that most of us cannot learn this in an instant. And so I would counsel you that if at times you find yourself falling asleep when you are trying to meditate, rather than chide and condemn yourself you accept the sleep gratefully, for no doubt you need it. And you can invite the Lord to teach you and minister to your spirit while you sleep. In time you will discover that the problem will recede into the background.

A third major concern is the fear of spiritual influences that are not of God. It is a good fear to have, for Scripture is quite clear that there are spiritual forces which wage against our soul. But the fear does not need to paralyze us, for "greater is he who is in you, than he who is in the world" (1 Jn 4:4 KJV). While evil powers are great, Christ's power is greater still. And so before every experience of meditation I pray this simple prayer of protection: "I surround myself with the light of Christ, I cover myself with his blood, and I seal myself with his cross." I know that when I do this no influence can harm me, whether emotional, physical or spiritual, for I am protected by the strong light of Christ.

A fourth common and practical question relates to the place for meditation. To this I would like to make three observations. First, every place is sacred in the Lord, and we need to know that wherever we are *is* holy ground. We are a portable sanctuary and by the power of God sanctify all places. My second observation is, however, a bit antithetical to the first, for most of us find certain

places more conducive to meditative prayer than others. We do well to find a place of beauty that is quiet, comfortable and free from emotional and physical distractions. With a little creativity most of us can arrange such a place (and space) with minimal effort. Third, I have discovered that certain activities are particularly conducive to meditative prayer. Swimming and jogging are singularly appropriate for this interior work. A brisk walk is often enhanced by whispering the Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me") in tune to your stride. Some have found gardening a happy time to know "the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (Ps 124:8). Recently I have been enjoying periods of meditation while riding the bus; while it takes a little practice to disregard the ordinary commotion, it soon becomes a wonderful place of solitude.

A fifth question which often surfaces has to do with the length of a meditation. For the most part this is a matter of one's past experience and internal readiness. Some have lived so frantically that five or ten minutes of quietness stretches them to the limit. But in time thirty to forty minutes should feel comfortable. I would not recommend longer than one hour at any given time. Let your own needs and abilities determine your schedule. It is better to take small portions and digest them fully than to attempt to gorge yourself and get indigestion from it. I have often found it most helpful to have a longer meditation on Monday to begin the week (say thirty to forty minutes), followed by shorter morning meditations for the rest of the week (maybe fifteen to twenty minutes) and sprinkled through with brief centering meditations (no more than five minutes).

A sixth question asks what time is best for meditation. The answer to that varies from person to person and often is different for any individual at different points in his or her life. For example, in my high-school years the morning hour was especially valuable; as a college student a free hour just before lunch met my needs better; in graduate school less frequent but more extended periods were most helpful; and in more recent years the morning time again seems best. You will find your own rhythm. Find the time when your energy level is at its peak and give that, the best of your day, to this sacred work.

The seventh questions ask about posture. Again the answer lies in what fits best for you, with this one qualification. Most of us fail to understand how helpful the body can be in spiritual work. For example, if we feel particularly distracted and out of touch with spiritual things, a consciously chosen posture of kneeling can help call the inner spirit to attention. The hands outstretched or placed on the knees palms up gently nudges the inner mind into a stance of receptivity. Slouching telegraphs inattention; sitting upright telegraphs alertness. I suggest sitting in a comfortable but straight chair with the back correctly positioned and both feet flat on the ground. Richard Rolle said that in "sitting I am most at rest, and my heart most upward."

### The Wellspring of Meditation

May I call us all to the adventure of the inner sanctuary of the soul. Our world desperately needs people who have dared to explore the interior depths and can therefore lead us into richer ways of living. The Japanese Christian Toyohiko Kagawa invites each of us to experience deeply the One who offers living water: "Those who draw water from the wellspring of meditation know that God dwells close to their hearts. For those who wish to discover the quietude of old amid the hustle and bustle of today's machine civilization, there is no way save to rediscover this ancient realm of meditation. Since the loss of my eyesight I have been as delighted as if I had found a new wellspring by having arrived at this sacred precinct."

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# Strategy for Urban Ministry

by Ray Bakke

Broadly speaking, we can classify the over two billion non-Christians of the world in two categories: the geographically distant, unreached peoples, and the culturally distant, unreached peoples.

The *geographically distant* unreached peoples are those who are the legitimate focus of traditional (overseas) missionary efforts. These include the last mountain tribe or jungle village. To reach them requires the bridging of geography. By all accounts, there is still a great need for the traditional foreign mission in today's world. Fortunately, the younger churches of the two-thirds non-western world have picked up this challenge and are organizing their own sending mission agencies. The church and its mission is now a global reality.

The *culturally distant* unreached peoples are those who are not geographically different. They are found in the huge and rapidly growing cities of the world. They live next door to us but remain outside the vision and evangelistic mission of our traditional evangelical churches because they are culturally different from the dominant culture of the congregation. They will not be reached for Jesus Christ unless the existing church becomes multicultural by intention, or unless "user-friendly" churches are started by and for them.

## The Demographic Significance of Cities

Most large cities of the world will double in the next 10-15 years. The 240 World Class Cities (over one million population and with international significance) of December, 1982 will become 500 cities by the year 2000. The world net growth produces two Chicagos every month (one which is Asian). The urbanization and Asianization of the world are twin macro-phenomena of our time.

The institutions and infrastructures of cities are aging, but the median age is dropping. In the USA the median age is above 30, but in third world cities it is usually between 15 and 20. Mexico City, with a population of 18 million, has a median age of 14.2 (meaning there are 9 million babies and kids in that one city), which grows at 6.2% per year, 80,000 a month or one million a year, meaning that two San Franciscos a year are produced within Mexico City alone. Who can fail to see the challenges to the urban churches and mission agencies!

## The Structural Significance of Cities

We classify cities in typologies that have mission significance. Chicago, Bombay and San Paulo are industrial cities ("smoke-stack" cities). Washington, New Delhi and Brazilia are administrative cities (the products are power and politics). San Francisco, Rio de Janeiro and Paris are cultural cities (the chief products are fashions, trends or ideas). Los Angeles and New York are commercial cities. Soweto, Jerusalem and Berlin are globally symbolic cities, and cities like Lima or Bangkok, where one-fourth to one-half of the country lives in the one city and combines all the above roles and functions, can be called primate cities. Ministry must look very different in them. For these kinds of reasons, it is probably easier to transfer ministry models or strategies from Chicago to Bombay than to San Francisco or Paris.

Urban neighborhoods can also be classified as Integral, Parochial, Diffuse, Stepping Stone, Transitory or Anomic (Warren & Warren) each having very different structures and communication patterns, implicatory for evangelism and church programming.

Cities are pluralistic in every way, thus challenging and threatening (especially insecure) Christians. Nearly all relationships are secondary rather than primary, as in small towns or rural settings, making efficient communication nearly impossible. Actually surviving in the city requires a tuning out of most reality to avoid the emotional bleeding of a million kaleidoscopic relationships. Exis-

tential or event-centered personality types will gravitate to charismatic and liturgically exciting meetings. Relational people will look for house or small churches of high commitment that can serve as surrogate or extended family. Directional people will be challenged by high commitment churches with strong missional task orientation. Some congregations will move toward all three and beyond them to embrace other profiles.

In nearly every urban community you will find:

Business	Politicians
Commercial	Night peoples
Public	Commuters
Ethnic	Middle class
Institutionalized	Upper class
Deviant	Lower class
Derelicts	Under class
Theater	Drop outs
Student	Migrants
International	Immigrants
Professional	Elderly

(taken from *New Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*)

Some people will be in several categories, but these profiles include thousands in most cities, each with cultures or subcultures.

The urban mission of the church is almost as vast as the metropolis itself, and this may surprise most American Christians. The Holy Spirit is altering many old (and generating many new) wine-skins for urban ministry.

## Some Contemporary Urban Church Models

Models cut across denominational lines so that Pentecostals, Baptists or Catholics may have any number of the following observable models of urban churches defined essentially by forms, structures and functions. Comparing them as models is not unlike comparing a wooden spoon to a blender. There are structural differences to be sure, and there are some things each can do better than the other.

Briefly, the following 18 types or models of churches can be identified in every large city in the USA, and in many large cities abroad:

*The Cathedral*—the highly visible and symbolic center of church authority, the historic regional church.

*The Denominational Mission*—a new church development usually the intentional result of a planned strategy.

*The Ex-Ethnic Church*—a third or fourth generation church of side-street Christians, which while they may not function in the language of the 'old country', still retain cultural ethos in times of transition.

*The House Church*—the New Testament model which takes on many forms in World Class Cities from organized cells within larger parishes to informal groups of one or more families seeking to express faith relationally. This may develop into an intentional community, or may exist only briefly around the influence of a single individual.

*The Immigrant Church*—a first generation church of port-of-entry internationals where the language, customs and symbols are imported. These churches may be the spiritual 'grandchildren' of missionaries, come home to the countries that sponsored the original mission.

*The Intentional Community Church*—a contemporary, often single-generational expression of high commitment faith functioning both as a sign of the recovery of an Anabaptist vision, and in psychological response to the hunger of many urban people for a spiritual alternate.

*The International Church*—serving the temporary expatriot communities.

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*The Media Church*—where congregations function as ‘stage props’ for television, radio or educational ministries.

*The Migrant Church*—this may be a group from the South (within the country) that meets together as aliens in the familiar subculture of back home. Migrant has a double meaning sometimes, in that this church migrates from location to location in the city.

*The Multi-Language Cluster Church*—often found in transitional neighborhoods, these churches will feature several different language groups meeting separately in one building, or with different levels of interrelationships. Some of these are ‘Old Firsts’, with huge physical plants and a transcendent ecclesiological vision.

*The Old First Church*—the historic image church for boulevard Christians of an earlier era, and found at the center of county seat towns as well as major urban centers. These were the ‘flagship’ congregations for historic denominations.

*The New Style Church*—the contemporary urban expression of this model might consist of a charismatic, existentially oriented group that stresses a worship style, healing or other experiential expressions of ‘body life’. Larger than homes, they may meet in hotel ballrooms, schools, or rented halls.

*The Parish Church*—the European heritage model of church that functions to minister as chaplain to a neighborhood as much as to the persons within it.

*The Sectarian Church*—these churches may have some bizarre beliefs or behaviors and are usually urban folk who feel marginalized with or without some justification, both socially and theologically.

*The Storefront Church*—the rather unique urban expression of a portable congregation which may be a splinter group, the flock of a strong leader or the temporary home of an upwardly mobile congregation.

*The Super Church*—this is the highly organized, independent, programmatically conglomerate congregation, with strong, usually authoritarian leadership, often competitive, and a compulsive mission desire to grow and reach as many people as possible.

*The Task Church*—these congregations organize congregational activity into highly sophisticated urban mission projects, and attract activist, usually young professional and well-educated believers with strong commitments to express their faith politically, sociologically, psychologically, liturgically and sometimes vocationally.

*The University Chapel*—these chapels are the vestigial remains of a medieval curriculum in universities with a religious heritage in which theology functions as the ‘given of the sciences’ and to integrated (and control) inquiry.

### Urban Ministry Strategies

Mission action programs could be called *strategies*, not models. Models are the structures we create to enable strategies to happen. While strategies are often congregational in origin, but equally significant for the city, they may be a specialty of para-church and denominational agencies.

A list of 16 common contemporary urban ministry strategies follows:

*Arts Strategies*—The ministries of and by the urban artists that use visual, musical and dramatic arts, theatrical or open air events and productions to express and communicate the gospel.

*Age Group Strategies*—ministries and sometimes specialized organizations that isolate one age group and direct their program expertise to children, youth, or adult sectors, i.e., professional, aged, singles.

*Economic Development Strategies*—many urban ministry groups that respond to the urban poor go beyond initial relief and disaster programs to develop projects that teach employment skills or provide housing, health, education, food or financial expertise, and respond to ecological or environmental mandates.

*Ecumenical Strategies*—access to public institutions (jails, schools, hospitals, media) often requires coalitions, as do urban crisis situ-

ations where work with local political institutions becomes necessary. Beyond this, many urban ministry groups share evangelism programs, leadership development events, and combined worship at special seasons.

*Education Strategies*—ministries for alternative child development through universities in church sponsored strategies, and Christian education strategies that are usually church based as well as church sponsored.

*Evangelism Strategies*—ministries of mass evangelism, student, personal, language or media that presuppose target audiences in the metropolitan area.

*Institutional Strategies*—ministries that witness to (structurally) and within (interpersonal) hospitals, jails, universities, secondary and professional schools, homes for the aged or other institutionalized groups.

*Language Strategies*—programs or ministries that reach across culture and language barriers with literature or other media that may be used to create or express the work of new church development also.

*Lay Strategies*—ministries that seek to identify, equip and empower lay ministries within their vocations and collectively in the city.

*Media Strategies*—ministries committed to public communication processes in electronic and print media.

*New Church Development Strategies*—many local churches intentionally plan to multiply new churches, but other churches start by deliberate, para-church development strategies that expand the network of a particular group.

*Political Strategies*—the city is a political matrix and frequently a corrupt one. Churches often stimulate empowerment models around political issues with religious implications, and sometimes go beyond that to create alternative political structures that are more just.

*Recreational Strategies*—those ministries that use athletics and athletes in the city.

*Relief Strategies*—urban disasters are frequent personal and public events. From local church food pantries, clothing banks and shelter care facilities to rather massive church sponsored international caring programs.

*Revitalization Strategies*—church groups have served as the catalyst for the creation and renewal of neighborhood organizations, but at another level, there are parachurch ministries that exist for the renewal of the church and function prophetically and pastorally to Christians and churches.

*Solidarity Strategies*—this is a ministry as old as Paul, who took offerings from daughter churches to express solidarity and support for the mother Jerusalem church suffering at the moment. The church is now globally significant and the churches of the city can and do express solidarity on a broad range of concerns with believers in other parts of the world.

As in the discussion of models, this brief delineation of urban church strategies makes no pretense of completeness. Nevertheless, even a cursory glance at the ministries of Christians and churches reveals far more options than most people experience.

The mere existence of models and strategies obviously does not guarantee spiritual health and vitality. Some cities have these models and strategies in place, but are not functioning with vision, compassion, competence, and in the strong name of Jesus Christ. Programs are no substitutes for the Holy Spirit, to be sure, but more than not the signs of the Spirit’s presence known by His effects (as per John 3) will be seen in both people and programs.

Which program? Which model or which strategy is right? What is *your* program? Truly, God by His Grace has given us urban ministry resources and pastoral tool kits as large and as significantly diverse as the city itself. Urban ministry involves their discovery and deployment.

# Can Evangelicalism Resist Modernity?

by Gary Scott Smith

*American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity*  
by James D. Hunter (Rutgers University Press, 1983, 171 pp., \$27.50).

Social scientists have long contended that modernization, the process of economic and social change from a pre-industrial, agrarian society to an industrial, technological society, tends to make traditional religious beliefs less plausible and religious symbols less influential in the social structure and culture. How then, asks James Hunter, can conservative Christianity "survive and even thrive" in modern industrial America? Hunter argues that two factors explain why evangelicals—those who believe the Bible is God's inerrant word, that Christ is divine, and that individuals must accept Jesus as Lord and Savior—have prospered in America in recent years. On the one hand, they have remained

authority to private dimensions of life—church, family, and leisure—while public institutions and structures—politics, economics, education, media, and the like—come to rest upon secular values.

After providing a demographic profile of contemporary evangelicals and assessing their beliefs and practices, Hunter attempts to explain how evangelicals make concessions to rationalization, cultural pluralism, and structural pluralism. Although they have sharply resisted pressures to rationalize their theological doctrines, their world view has become highly formulated and systematized. In Hunter's view, evangelicalism has responded to modernity by "becoming packaged for easy, rapid and strain-free consumption." Both evangelism and spirituality have become highly structured and usually follow very precise methods.

The influence of cultural plurality, Hunter insists, has made contemporary evangelicals more tolerant than their forefathers ever were of conflicting views. Although the doctrinal core of evan-

gelicalism, it has several weaknesses. The first is methodological. Hunter attempts to assess the emotional, psychological and spiritual development of the average evangelical principally by analyzing books on these subjects by the eight leading evangelical publishing houses. In my judgment, this source is too limited. To discover what the typical evangelical is taught and believes in these areas, is it not necessary to sample sermons of evangelical pastors, to examine major evangelical magazines such as *Christianity Today*, *Eternity*, *Moody Monthly*, and *Christian Life* and, even more significantly, to survey the attitudes and behaviors of evangelicals nationwide? Far too often when trying to portray typical evangelical attitudes, Hunter relies on Jerry Falwell, Tim LaHaye or others who speak for the fundamentalist right-wing of evangelicalism.

The second problem is theoretical. Hunter suggests repeatedly that religion, specifically evangelicalism, can do little to affect or alter American society. Secularization seems inevitable and almost

## *Hunter's study sheds new and disturbing light upon contemporary American evangelicals.*

relatively isolated from the forces of modernity, and, on the other, they have accommodated their world view, and especially their cultural practices, to modernity. Complaining that evangelicals are frequently stereotyped but rarely understood and that few scholars have seriously studied this movement, Hunter uses the results of the Gallup polls conducted for *Christianity Today* in 1978 and 1979 and recent literature written by evangelicals to analyze this movement.

Hunter insists that the collision of religion and modernity does not simply destroy religion. Rather, out of a sort of bargaining comes "mutual accommodation, mutual permutation, or even symbiotic growth" which occur at both the institutional level and the level of world views. Hunter's analysis, however, frequently contradicts this statement. In *American Evangelicalism* the influence flows only in one direction: from modernity to religion. Religion appears to be an inert substance which reacts and responds but rarely initiates or evokes. Religion is constantly being shaped by, accommodating itself to, modernity but seems to have little effect upon the modern world view or institutional structure.

Drawing upon the work of sociologist Peter Berger, Hunter attempts to show how the processes of rationalization, cultural pluralism and structural pluralism force religious world views to make accommodations. The rationalization process, which rests upon a naturalistic world view, undermines the credibility of religious assumptions about life and the universe and encourages people to see the world in mechanistic terms. Cultural pluralism divides society into subunits with distinct cultural traditions, thus challenging the universality of traditional religious views. Pluralistic societies deprive people of the constant social confirmation they need to sustain their beliefs about ultimate reality. Structural pluralism separates life into public and private spheres. It confines religious symbols and

gelicals' world view remains essentially unchanged, he says, "it has been culturally edited to give it the qualities of sociability and gentility." The more offensive elements of evangelical faith, such as innate evil, sin, the wrath of God and eternal suffering in hell, are not frequently mentioned. Moreover, Hunter contends, most evangelicals today do not defend their faith as superior to other religions on the grounds that it is intellectually more cogent and plausible, but on the grounds that it provides more this-worldly benefits than other religions do.

Structural pluralism has also shaped contemporary evangelical character, Hunter argues. Its pressures to confine religion to the private sphere of life has prompted evangelicals to be more subjective and to emphasize how Christianity helps solve personal problems of worry, tension, depression, and loneliness. In Hunter's judgment, these accommodations have been purchased at a great price. Indeed, he is convinced that evangelicalism is being divested of the "energy and force necessary to sustain it over time."

Hunter concludes, then, that the current evangelical renaissance will be short-lived. Evangelicals have been able to resist modernity thus far chiefly because they are demographically most distant from its most powerful agents: university education, the higher socio-economic classes, urban culture, and the professions. Although evangelicals have been able to retain their doctrinal orthodoxy, their cultural style has become very different from (and implicitly inferior to) that which characterized their forefathers. Disagreeing with Jeremy Rifkin and other more optimistic seers, Hunter maintains that a third Great Awakening is "a virtual sociological, not to mention legal, impossibility under the present conditions of modernity." Hunter predicts that the popular support, socio-political strength, and ideological purity of evangelicalism will all diminish in the future as the pressures of modernity grow and evangelicals are more and more exposed to them.

While Hunter's analysis offers us many helpful

insights. It is his belief that the forces of modernity will smash everything in their path which makes Hunter pessimistic about evangelicalism's future. Yet, it is possible, as Thomas O'Dea and others have shown, for religious movements such as evangelicalism to modify or even halt the advance of these processes. The recent history of several colleges, businesses, and even individual moral and social practices suggest as much.

Third, Hunter makes no distinction between accommodation and adaptation, between modifying one's message in response to alternative viewpoints and adapting one's message to changing cultural conditions. As cultural pluralism has replaced Protestantism's dominance over American culture, evangelicals obviously have been forced to adjust their cultural style. Throughout the Church's history Christians have sought to make the gospel message relevant to their time and place. Their basic message has remained remarkably stable while the focus and style of its presentation has changed. Yet, Hunter does not allow for a distinction between doctrinal and cultural capitulation and adjustments which allow Christians to speak more appropriately and effectively to their culture.

Finally, in contrasting present day evangelical attitudes and beliefs with those of their forefathers, Hunter tends to portray earlier evangelicals as much more monolithic about issues than they were. In my judgment, he exaggerates their emphasis upon hell, sin, and God's transcendence and minimizes the extent to which they stressed this-worldly benefits of Christian belief, the intimacy believers could enjoy with God, and God's immanence and involvement with His world.

In sum, Hunter's study sheds new and disturbing light upon contemporary American evangelicals. It clearly shows how modernity has modified evangelicalism's message and style in several significant and potentially enervating ways. But Hunter's assumption that religion has little power to resist modernity and reshape culture prevents him from investigating the possibility that evangelicals and the modern secular world have been engaged in a more genuinely mutual relationship.

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# Some Recent Contributions To Biblical Linguistics

by Richard J. Erickson

*Analytical Greek New Testament* by Barbara and Timothy Friberg (Baker, 1981, 854 pp., \$19.95).  
*Preliminary Analysis* by Arthur Gibson (Blackwell's/St. Martins, 1981, 244 pp., \$32.50).  
*A New Testament Greek Morpheme Lexicon* by J. Harold Greenlee (Zondervan, 1983, 333 pp., \$10.95).  
*Semantics of New Testament Greek* by Johannes P. Louw (Fortress/Scholars, 1982, 166 pp., \$12.95).

As a source of fresh approaches to the well worked biblical material and as a tool for producing stable and often empirically verifiable data from it, the twin fields of modern linguistic and semantic theory have scarcely begun to be explored. Such basic problem areas as discourse, syntax, and lexicology, as well as the more dependent areas of exegesis and language-teaching and those disciplines which depend in turn on them, all stand to gain from expanding insights into the phenomenon of human speech. Quite apart from so-called structuralist methods of exegesis, the disciplines of structural linguistics and structural semantics have their own more fundamental role to play simply in giving us a clearer understanding of how language works. The better we grasp universal principles of language, as James Barr argued more than twenty years ago, the less susceptible we shall be to errors in our treatments of scripture—a linguistic datum—and the better able we shall be to comprehend its message. It stands to reason.

Among numerous recent publications taking advantage of linguistic and semantic theory in one way or another are the following four, each illustrating a different aspect of the business: discourse analysis and syntax, morphology, logic, and computer-assisted research.

Johannes P. Louw's *Semantics of New Testament Greek* is a stimulating argument for the thesis that semantics is more than the meaning of words, and, indeed, more than the meaning of sentences: "every separate element receives 'real' meaning only within the whole text" (p. 158). The paragraph is the basic unit of semantic analysis, since sentences, the basic units of a paragraph, have their meaning restricted by that of the paragraph; and sentences in turn restrict the meaning of the words with which they are themselves constructed. Thus, the only adequate method of determining the meaning of a word or a sentence in a given usage is to permit the larger context to eliminate the inappropriate alternative possibilities. But this implies (1) a knowledge of semantic principles and (2) skill in analyzing the flow of an argument, i.e., of discourse.

Louw spends the first eight of ten chapters discussing these semantic principles, much as Barr and others have done. His orientation in the somewhat problematic semantic theory of "componential analysis" is evident in the discussion, but his chief point is well taken: viz., we must analyze meanings and the words signifying them rather than words and the meanings they have. For there is no one-to-one relationship between words and meanings, not even within the same language, let alone between languages.

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The implication of this is that context must determine meaning. Hence Louw devotes the last two chapters (more than half the book) to the way sentences restrict word meanings and paragraphs restrict sentence meanings. Working through the examples, in the last chapter especially, exposes one thoroughly to discourse analysis, an exciting and linguistically sound method of determining the structure and meaning of a full text.

While some of the discussion assumes a technical vocabulary, the book is for the most part readable and very useful. Typographical errors, though unusually frequent (and glaring), pose no serious problems.

From discourse-analysis our attention turns to word-analysis (morphology) with J. Harold Greenlee's *A New Testament Greek Morpheme Lexicon*. This very useful publication was born of Greenlee's desire for easily accessible lists of lexical items sharing certain "morphemes and components (prefixes, root words, suffixes, and terminations)." Persons wishing a more sophisticated definition of *morpheme* will not find one provided; and while this deficiency makes no difficulty for the use of the book, it does give the title a slightly ostentatious ring. For what Greenlee has done is "simply" to divide every word listed in Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker into its component parts, including the "root" words to which each is related. We may say "simply" because it is not a complicated process; but the actual labor represented is near staggering. (Roots for individual words were all traced in Liddell and Scott, sometimes through several steps!)

Once the lexical entries have been analyzed in Part 1, the components are then in Part 2 categorized as prefixes, roots, suffixes and terminations, and indeclinables, and presented alphabetically in four separate lists. Thus, for example, as Greenlee demonstrates in a ten-page preface, if one wishes to investigate whether a given suffix always has the same meaning, a check of that suffix in Part 2 will reveal every word in BAGD containing it. Two or more components with similar meaning can be studied in all their occurrences and compared. In Louw's volume allusion was made to subtle shifts of meaning among the eight compound forms of *dechomai*; Greenlee lists 35 items containing some form of this root word. Fascinating data emerge with respect to accent patterns: of 230 verbal adjectives, 67 have forms for all three genders; twelve of these are oxytones and eleven of these oxytones relate to numerals. These few examples merely hint at the possibilities for using this lexicon. Provided the user does not expect an up-to-date discussion of Greek morphology, he or she will not be disappointed in this tool.

Of an entirely different character is Arthur Gibson's *Biblical Semantic Logic: A Preliminary Analysis*. At such a price, few readers will casually pick this one up at their local bookstore. Neither will it be read casually. In fact for those who are not initiated in logical theory (which includes this reviewer!) a thorough grasp of the book may require several *noncasual* readings, in spite of Gibson's assurances in the preface that the work does not presuppose knowledge of formal logic.

In what appears almost to be a mania for brevity, Gibson makes free use of unexplained technical terminology and notions, leaving the lay reader dazed, muddled, and frustrated. "Unexplained" is an overstatement here, but it describes the effect. Gibson frequently refers the reader to a later section of the book for the explanation of some term

or concept vital to the argument at hand; or he may give totally impractical aid in a footnote. For example (p. 40), after employing the term "quasi-tautology," he offers the following (typical) note: "'Quasi-' is here employed along the lines of P. T. Geach's use of the term (*Logic Matters*, pp. 161-5, 206f.)." Now either a knowledge of Geach's work is "presupposed" or the reader is expected to stop reading, go to the library and study Geach himself before proceeding with Gibson.

Nevertheless! Nevertheless, if a person is willing to work and wade and think and reread three or four times, there is much to learn from Gibson and much to profit by. What he wishes to give us is a preliminary application to biblical studies of G. Frege's theory of logical semantics, as interpreted especially by Geach and others (including Wittgenstein). The central core of the theory is that meaning is dependent upon use, and that a strict distinction is to be drawn between sense and reference.

Gibson shows repeatedly that in spite of the powerful effect which J. Barr's criticisms of biblical language studies had nearly a quarter of a century ago, many of the same errors are being committed today, even by scholars who have appreciated Barr and have attempted to follow his lead. The problem has frequently been a failure of logical consistency.

Thus Gibson's book is a brother to Barr's *Semantics* of 1961. Where Barr applied *linguistic* analysis to biblical study, Gibson applies *logical* analysis to biblical linguistics, and with similar negative, critical results. These results, however, can be expected to lead to further refinement of method in the discipline, just as Barr's criticisms did . . . and are yet.

With mixed feelings, then, Gibson's book can be highly recommended as a demanding (and frustrating) exercise in a sort of on-the-job education. Let the buyer beware, you might say, but let the reader stick with it.

Doubtless the most ambitious of the four projects touched on here is Barbara and Timothy Friberg's *Analytical Greek New Testament*, which itself is only the first part of a three-part, six volume research tool, now in the process of publication. A by-product, actually, of Tim Friberg's Ph.D. work in linguistics (University of Minnesota), this contribution to NT studies is an excellent and exciting example of what "computational linguistics," or computer-assisted linguistic research, can offer us.

What the Fribergs have done with the assistance of numerous colleagues is to have assigned every word in the Greek NT (USGNT?) a grammatical and (sometimes) discourse-functional "tag," an abbreviated code parsing each lexical item. These tags are printed interlinearly with the text. The parsing itself is in many cases freshly innovative, and an extensive appendix to this first volume explains the underlying grammatical assumptions of the tagging process. It is well worth reading. (Several types of "pronouns," e.g., are recategorized as adjectives, as are adverbs.)

The other two parts of the project will include a two-focus analytical concordance to the Greek NT and an analytical lexicon, both computer-produced. The four-volume concordance will list in concord all occurrences of each individual grammatical form (in the lexical focus) and every occurrence of a form satisfying a given grammatical description or tag (in the grammatical focus). Thus all occurrences of the genitive singular of *hypo-*

*mon.ame*, e.g., will be listed together, on the one hand; and on the other hand all occurrences of all nouns having a tag of N(oun), G(entive), F(eminine), S(ingular) will be grouped together. Even all question-marks are listed in concord! The possibilities for research with this tool are almost limitless. The analytical lexicon will in one volume list every grammatical form or lexical item in the Greek NT and provide a prose description of its various usages. Moreover the entire project will also be available on microfiche and magnetic tape, as well as in print-out format for computer searches specially ordered from the University of Minnesota Computer Center.

The *Analytical Greek New Testament* is important in its own right as the database for the other two parts of the project. But it will serve intermediate Greek students as a help to reading the NT text, providing both grammatical parsing on the spot and in many instances (there ought to have been and could have been many more!) indications of a term's function in the flow of discourse, the larger context.

Those interested in a more detailed description of this project may consult the Friberg's article in the volume *Computing in the Humanities* (eds. P. C. Patton and R. A. Holoien; D. C. Heath, 1981), pp. 15-151.

Obviously, these comments have merely touched on a very few of the items which have been appearing lately in this field of biblical study. It is an encouraging sign that the primary means by which God reveals Himself to us is itself having such attention paid it. Much of our misunderstanding through the centuries, not only of the Word of God but also of each other, can be laid in the lap of an ignorance of the way we humans speak.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### *An Eye for An Eye: The Place of Old Testament Ethics Today*

by Christopher J. H. Wright (InterVarsity, 1983, 224 pp., \$5.95).

Reviewed by Frank Anthony Spina, Professor of Old Testament, The School of Religion, Seattle Pacific University

Christopher Wright contends that Old Testament ethics are to be *covenantal* (Abrahamic and Mosaic traditions), *canonical* (the final text is the primary datum) and *comprehensive* (all texts are relevant and to be applied paradigmatically). His theoretical basis is further elucidated by the drawing of an "ethical triangle." The apex angle is *theology*, which involves who God is and what He has done. Starting from this premise leads to the conclusion that Israel's ethical behavior is a response to God's love and grace. Divine activity in Israel's behalf supplies the motivation for obedience—gospel precedes law. One of the base angles is *social*, which has to do with God's intention to constitute Israel as a nation. Israel's distinctiveness is to be found in every sphere, not only the religious one. Israel as a social organism then serves as a paradigm for contemporary ethical discussions. The other base angle is *economics*, logical consciousness. As a theological conception, the land was the impetus for a variety of theological and ethical emphases in Israel, from sabbath observance to leaving fields for gleanings. For Israel the land was much more than a geographical locale.

With the "ethical triangle" as his framework, Wright then discusses the principle ethical themes of the Old Testament: economics, politics, righteousness and justice, law and legal systems, society and culture, and personal ethics. This treatment requires more than citing verses appropriate to a given topic; instead, each subject is shown to be derivative of the ideas contained in the "ethical triangle" and is then worked out in terms of the

impulses, guidelines and principles which emerge from the text. The Old Testament thus provides an interpretive context in which the ethical choices for the community of faith are laid out.

Wright should be commended for making biblical ethics a function of biblical theology, for insisting on a comprehensive application of the Old Testament, for emphasizing the paradigmatic role of the biblical text, and for pointing out that Old Testament "law" is not the negative thing most Christians think it is but rather a response to God's gracious initiatives. Gospel precedes law as much in the Old as in the New Testament.

This book is worth reading and could be used with profit by college and seminary students, as well as by laity and pastors. But there are some questions which can be raised. Are the *canonical* Israel and the *historical* Israel synonymous? The attempt to wed "canon criticism" and history as presently practiced in the guild requires more effort than is evidenced in this book. Leaving aside the issue of the apparent difference between the Israel of history and the Israel of the canon, at least Wright should address himself to those who argue that the canon actually relativizes some traditions which were paramount for the historical Israel. For example, the conquest of the land and the monarchy are outside of Torah in the canon, but were doubtless part of Israel's quintessential Tradition in the historical periods. Thus, the land and the *canonical* Israel have a different relationship from the land and the *historical* Israel (which went out of existence without the land and the monarchy). Also, given Wright's insistence on the broad theoretical framework of biblical ethics and his focus on the paradigmatic, analogical and typological (the interpreter decides which) applications of the Old Testament, it would have been helpful to know whether the author believes such an approach requires a fundamentally different understanding of authority. For many Evangelicals, authority means a specific, final, irrefutable answer to a particular (ethical or theological) problem. Wright seems to advocate a somewhat more open-ended system, but does not indicate expect by implication how this relates to more traditional conceptions of authority.

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### *Tensions in Contemporary Theology*

second edition, edited by Stanley N. Gundry and Alan F. Johnson (Baker, 1983, 478 pp., \$12.95). Reviewed by Clark H. Pinnock, Professor of Theology, McMaster Divinity College.

I had read this book when it first came out in 1976, and realized how good it was then. Having read the second edition, I give it an even higher rating than before. The original material is exceedingly solid, while there has been added a magnificent 100 page section by Harvie Conn discussing liberation theologies. Along with P. E. Hughes, editor of *Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology* (1966), the only book comparable to this one, *Tensions in Contemporary Theology* symbolizes the entry of evangelical systematic theology into the wider discussion. It's out of the ghetto into the debate. The best thing for me to do is to tell the reader what's available in this large but reasonably priced volume.

There are ten chapters ranging in length from 30 to 70 pages. Conn's was so long that they had to divide it up into two chapters! Ramm and Grounds have written the first two chapters which are designed to introduce us to theology in the 60's and 70's by explaining how we got there. Ramm is sketchy, but Grounds really did his homework, and gives us a good run-down on several pacesetters like Tillich and Bonhoeffer. The chapter by Stan Obitts, philosophy professor at Westmont College, is a little different from the rest, in that

he takes on the wide-ranging discussion about religious language rather than a school of theology per se, and in effect suggests how evangelicals can try to resolve it. Until this reading I had not appreciated how sound Obitts' remarks and proposals are.

Harold Kuhn, like Obitts not nearly as well known as he should be (neither have rushed to print), conducts a knowledgeable survey of secular theology, including people such as Altizer, Robinson, and Cox, and makes some astute observations. But the book really picks up steam with the chapter by David Scaer, a Lutheran from the Missouri Synod, who sees the theology of hope as successor to death of God theology. In his view, Moltmann denies the objectively existing God of classical theology and metaphysics as much as Altizer does, except Moltmann affirms historical transcendence, the god who may be coming over the next hill of a future revolution. Admittedly this is an unsympathetic reading of what the theology of hope is saying, but it certainly caused me to look twice.

Given Geisler's recent activity in purging the ETS of Robert Gundry and defending creationism in the courts, I suppose one is not supposed to say anything nice about him. But I confess to having a great admiration for him, and his essay here on process theism explains why. I ask myself how many Christian philosophers have or even could lay out the drift of this rarified school of theology, and then have offered an extensive set of searching criticisms of it? The chapter here is Geisler at his best, and Geisler's best is very good indeed. I was even delighted at the way he tried to render classical theism so as to present God as very much in relation to the world, and not as hopeless as the process theologians say. For myself, I do not think immutability can be saved against their critique in the strong sense Geisler wants to defend—or timelessness or total omniscience either, for that matter. I tend to agree with Hartshorne that we need a neo-classical theism, but not one so radically different as the process God. I note that Ron Nash agrees on this too (*The Concept of God*, 1983, p. 22).

David Wells of Gordon-Conwell writes about the new Roman Catholic theology. He knows it very well, having done his doctorate on George Tyrrell, and written *Revolution in Rome* (IVP, 1972). The struggles the Catholics are having parallel closely our own evangelical ferment since they operate out of a classical framework and are trying to respond to modernity as we are. Wells is a good guide to this Roman maze. The only real change to this book in the second edition is this massive piece of description and critique of liberation theology by Harvie Conn. Besides telling us all about the movement and its chief personalities, Conn also agrees with the need to do theology from the standpoint of concern for the poor and the oppressed, which I suppose makes him a liberation theologian too. His criticism is that people too often reduce the salvation of Christ to politics and in effect replace Jesus' vision of the kingdom with Marx's vision of the classless utopia. I missed much reference to the 20th century barbarities performed in Marx's name, and its relevance to this theological idealism. Surely it suggests we take this work with several grains of salt.

The work ends with an essay on the conservative option by Harold O. J. Brown. With Conn's chapter just before it in this edition, it becomes noticeable that the sufferings of the poor are not prominent in the conservative option as Brown presents it. He is more concerned about commending Christian theology, as Carl Henry would, as a presupposed world view which enjoys rational self-consistency. The reader is left wondering how the truth of theology, in the sense of external fit, is to be defended by the evangelicals who are now into apologetics again. It is perhaps fitting that the book should end on a weak note, because evangelical

theology is weak precisely at commending itself as ethically and intellectually superior to the movements it is becoming more proficient at critiquing. Thus the book leaves us more or less where we are, splashing about in the water of contemporary theology and making some good shots, but uncertain in what direction to swim our own marathon. A full recovery of classical theology in contact with the challenges of our day is going to require more wisdom and commitment than we have yet accumulated.

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*The Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q.*

by Werner H. Kelber (Fortress Press, 1983, 272 pp., \$22.95). Reviewed by William A. Heth, Th.D. student in NT, Dallas Theological Seminary.

*The Oral and Written Gospel* is the first rigorous attempt to apply modern studies of oral cultures and a modern hermeneutic of texts to the New Testament tradition. Kelber's central thesis is the "the written gospel is ill accounted for, and in fact misunderstood, as the sum total of oral rules and drives." Put simply, the nature of the medium (oral vs. written) through which the sayings of and stories about Jesus have passed will determine the form and kind of knowledge preserved. It is a mistake to assume, with Bultmann, that the features, forms, content, values, and purposes of oral speech are the same when conveyed through the medium of written texts like our gospels.

In Chapter 1 ("The pre-Canonical Synoptic Transmission") Kelber concisely reviews the theses of the synoptic transmission advanced by Bultmann and Gerhardsson and critiques them in light of a new model of the pre-Markan processes of oral transmission based on current Anglo-American studies in orality. (A good number of the 452 works listed in the two part bibliography concern this research.) Contemporary theorists of orality may differ on the manner and degree of difference between spoken versus written words, but all seem to agree that oral and written compositions come into existence under different circumstances and therefore warrant separate hermeneutics. Speech is invariably socialized, and speakers and hearers share in the making and clarifying of the message. An author, in contrast, works in a state of separation from audience, and readers are excluded from the process of composition. It is fundamentally wrong to apply laws derived from written texts to the reconstruction of a predominantly oral synoptic tradition. The concepts of "original form and variants" have no validity in oral life for each speech-act is a unique event. "In orality, tradition is almost always composition in transmission." Chapter 2 ("Mark's Oral Legacy") illustrates the importation of oral forms and conventions into Mark's written gospel. Ten heroic stories (healings), three polarization stories (exorcisms), six didactic stories and six parabolic stories are examined. "Mark as Textuality" (chapter 3) discusses how Mark's new technology of writing produced a christology that was in tension with and a replacement of an oral christology. The lining up of formerly autonomous single stories and sayings into a novel unity in a written medium absorbs and transforms what it inherits. It is Kelber's conviction that Mark took to writing not ultimately to continue and preserve, but in order to uproot and transcend oral forms and values he felt would be destructive to the continued authority of Jesus.

In brief, the twelve disciples in Mark's gospel personify the principal oral representatives of Jesus whose task is to imitate the master, to model his words and his life. However, the Markan theme of discipleship failure and misunderstanding suggests

the breakdown of the imitation process. Kelber infers from this that oral representatives and oral mechanisms for transmitting traditions have come under criticism. The gospel articulates its own reason for existence (in a life-world generally hostile to written texts; cf. Papias' remarks in Eusebius' *Eccl. Hist.* 3.39.3-4) by dramatizing the breakdown of the mimetic process. Kelber also believes the christos and prophets singled out for condemnation in Mark 13 are identified (cf. vv. 5b-6. 21-22) as the early Christian prophets who perform signs and wonders and make pronouncements in the name and on the authority of Jesus. Mark is objecting to prophets who used the *egō eimi* style of speech to speak as representatives of Jesus and maximize the power of the oral medium to suggest Jesus' very presence and authority. Mark feels these prophets are misrepresenting Jesus and imperiling his status as the living Lord by maintaining his realized presence. Jesus is best safeguarded through the written medium. (I am left with the feeling that most of this reconstruction is the product of Kelber's fertile imagination and would surprise Mark if he were to read it today.)

Chapter 4 ("Orality and Textuality in Paul") develops Paul's fundamentally oral disposition toward language. Paul seems to link the word primarily not with content, but with the effect it has on hearers. Rom. 10:14-17 is the *locus classicus* of the oral hermeneutics of sound, voice, speaking and hearing. As speech, the gospel actualizes the reality of what is being spoken.

Chapter 5 ("Death and Life in the Word of God") argues that the entire form of the gospel—the construction of a pre-resurrectional, christological framework—constitutes a written alternative to the oral metaphysics of presence. The narrative coherence of Mark 14-16 does not hint at an early pre-Markan passion narrative: narrative coherence, says Kelber, is intimately connected with textuality. It indicates freedom from restraints of oral formulae and not necessarily historical closeness to the facts narrated. In contrast, Q, the earliest sayings source, does not speak of Jesus' death.

These are only some of the salient points of Kelber's multi-suggestive study. Further research by oral theorists may well suggest that Kelber's distinction between oral and written narratives is much too overdrawn (cf. D. Tannen, "Oral and Literate Strategies in Spoken and Written Narratives," *Language* 58 [1982]: 1-21). Kelber's post-70 dating of Mark will not impress many Bible scholars, nor will his belief that Jesus is merely a charismatic speaker who "risked his message on the oral medium and did not speak with a conscious regard for literary retention." Kelber surely has no regard for the evangelists as reliable traditionists (cf. R.T. France, "The Authenticity of the Sayings of Jesus," in *History, Criticism & Faith*, pp. 100-141 [ed. C. Brown; IVP, 1977]), nor is there any room in his approach for texts like John 14:26; 16:13; Matt. 28:20a. Certainly this will prove to be a controversial book and is valuable for the potential insights one may gain by looking at the New Testament through Kelber's glasses.

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*Creeks, Councils and Christ*

by Gerald Bray (Inter-Varsity Press, 1984, 224 pp., \$6.95). Reviewed by Richard A. Muller, Associate Professor of Historical Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary.

This is a useful and nicely written book which should have a salutary impact on religious and theological study in Christian colleges. Bray writes with the conviction that the theological efforts of the early church, as embodied in the creeds of the great ecumenical councils, provide not only a correct presentation of the Christian faith in its central articles

concerning the trinity of God and the divine-human person of Christ, but also a doctrinal synthesis of profound relevance to the church today. Bray also realizes that in many parts of the Protestant world today, a sense of the usefulness of history and of the value of theological answers to biblical questions is sadly lacking. All too many students of religion and theology fall into the trap of using academic critique to set aside traditional belief or, on the opposite side of the problem, the trap of ignoring academic theology because they view it as potentially damaging to their beliefs. Bray, quite successfully, moves through the problems of the canon of Scripture, of the uniqueness of the Christian revelation in a world of competing truths, of the establishment of a "rule of faith" in credal documents, of the relationship of church and world, of the triune being of God, and of the church's confession of Christ as Incarnate God, with a view toward showing the relationship of the early church's theological conclusions to the perennial questions of Christian faith.

Bray's book will be of importance both to historical and to systematic theological study. In both cases, it will not supplant standard textbooks either in early church history and doctrine or in systematic theology, but should serve as an adjunct and an aid in stimulating thought and discussion. For example, after briefly discussing modern problems with the unity of the New Testament testimony and the integrity of the New Testament canon, Bray discusses the process of the formation of the canon in the early church as defined by the early church's strong sense of the integrity of the apostolic tradition as passed on through the bishops. He also shows that the early church was able to present the New Testament witness to Christ as a unified faith, not as a series of variant perspectives and divergent theologies. Throughout his presentation, Bray takes care not to gloss over problems raised by history and by contemporary scholarship. Bray then concludes his chapter with a discussion of how a renewed sense of the unity of witness and of the canon of scripture can stimulate and undergird theological formulation today. Hopefully, this book will reach a wide audience of students, enable many to avoid the pitfalls of academic study of religion and the traps of anti-intellectual fideism, and provide many more with a basis for significant theological discussion and spiritual growth.

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*The Theology of Schleiermacher*

by Karl Barth (Eerdmans, 1982, 287 pp., \$13.95). Reviewed by Vernard Eller, professor of religion, University of La Verne, California.

Here we get three books for the price of one—and it might even be profitable to read through it three different times, each time as a different book.

The book is Karl Barth's careful and painstaking analysis of the thought of F.D.E. Schleiermacher—this in the form of class lectures delivered in 1923-24. Of course, in the intervening years, Barth followed up his Schleiermacher critique in his *Church Dogmatics* and elsewhere. Yet this present volume also includes a fleshed-out summary done by Barth in 1968, the year of his death.

For one reading, then, this book constitutes essential source material for students of Barth, Schleiermacher, and/or 19th-century Protestant thought. Any future dissertations or scholarly articles centering upon any of these three topics had better include a goodly number of footnotes referring to this book. Enough said.

In a second reading of much broader application, this book is for anyone presuming to try a hand at Christian polemic (the sort of debate Paul calls "the testing of everything" [1 Thess. 5:21] and "weighing what is said" [1 Cor. 14:29], a skill which

should be the practice of all Christian ministers and teachers and of much of the laity). Yet no Christian polemicist could do better than to read Barth-on-Schleiermacher as a demonstration of how polemic is Christianly to be done.

There are two aspects of which Barth is absolutely master: The ultimate purpose of his study is to cut Schleiermacher's thought to ribbons. Yet his first step is to understand and expound Schleiermacher's thought at least as accurately and clearly as Schleiermacher could himself. Before Barth proceeds to his critique, he wants to set up the truest, strongest, best Schleiermacher he can—giving him every possible advantage. When so much of the polemic of our polemical age works just the other way around—drawing the target so as to give us the advantage when it comes to shooting it down—I mean it in all seriousness when I suggest that reading this book would be well worthwhile for no purpose other than to learn the skill of Christian polemics.

The second aspect of Barth's skill lies in his communicating his personal regard for the intellect, honesty, dedication, and personal virtue of the man Schleiermacher—even while finding his theology a complete travesty of the gospel. This ability to maintain the distinction between the human person and that person's ideational system is surely one hallmark of Christian love. And unless Christian polemic maintains itself in Christian love it is not Christian polemic. Barth can teach us how.

The third reading of this book is just as crucial as the second. I know of no other book that could serve any better both to define and to pose the fundamental issue dividing the theological world of our day. Barth certainly is correct in spotting Schleiermacher as the source and founding genius of modern theological liberalism. Just as certainly, Barth is himself our one best modern representative of an intellectually-respectable biblical orthodoxy. Accordingly, "Barth versus Schleiermacher" becomes perhaps our best opportunity to measure liberalism's "religion from below" (theology as the effort of the human mind in formulating and explicating its own religious feelings and experience) against orthodoxy's "religion from above" (theology as the effort of the human mind in understanding a truth it is totally incapable of apprehending on its own but which has been revealed to it from the "wholly other" of God in Jesus Christ).

Even though Schleiermacher argued his liberal thesis 150 years ago and Barth his orthodox rebuttal 60 years ago, the debate is as pertinent as if the League of Women Voters had staged it today—and it is easily more interesting and informative than some they have staged but which I will not identify.

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*Evolution and the Authority of the Bible*  
by Nigel M. de S. Cameron (The Paternoster Press, 1983, 123 pp., \$4.45).

*Is God a Creationist?* ed. by Roland Mushat Frye (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983, 205 pp., \$9.95).

*What Are They Saying About Creation, Christ, The Bible and Science?* by Zachary Hayes, O.F.M. (Paulist Press, 1980, 120 pp., \$2.95). Reviewed by Kenneth Watts, Ph.D. student, Fuller Theological Seminary.

Thoughts about Genesis these days seem to lead inevitably to thoughts about Darwin. One can hardly separate considerations of the doctrine of creation from visions of monkey trials, struggles over the content of textbooks, or implicit accusations of ignorance and stupidity on the one hand and of atheism and subversion on the other.

These three books provide a helpful overview for anyone who would like to understand the various positions better. They also highlight some of

the theological issues which often get lost in the current debate.

Cameron's first thesis is that the doctrine of creation is such an important part of the biblical and evangelical world-views that to substitute an evolutionary understanding is to sabotage our theology in general. He argues that an evolutionary point of view not only excludes any idea of an original fall, but also excludes the possibility of connecting natural evil in general to that fall.

He also argues that the reasons for allowing a scientific world-view to modify our theology apply as much to the future as to the past. We reject a supernatural creation because the laws of science, projected into the past, only leave room for a natural chain of cause and effect. But those same laws leave no room for a future supernatural intervention such as the second coming.

Cameron's second thesis is that the acceptance of evolutionary theory, both by western culture and by the church, has been extremely uncritical. This he attributes to the fact that evolutionary theory has provided a working world-view for our secular culture. In line with this, he includes as an appendix an article by a biochemist at the University of Glasgow arguing in favor of a creationist interpretation of the fossil evidence, and—on the basis of information theory—against random changes leading to more complex organisms.

Due to an unfortunate tendency to oversimplify some rather complex issues (e.g., the nature of inspiration) this book may turn off some readers' interests too easily. But Cameron raises some important questions about the relationship between science and theology.

On the other side of the fence is the collection edited by Frye and subtitled *The Religious Case Against Creation Science*. The book is divided into four parts. The first focuses on the psychological roots of the conflict on both sides, the second on arguments against creationism, and the third on the possibility of accepting a Christian and a scientific world-view simultaneously. The fourth presents a Roman Catholic, a Jewish, and a Protestant perspective on the issues.

This anthology suffers somewhat from the fact that it misrepresents itself. Both the subtitle and Frye's introductory essay claim that the book will focus on the religious case against creationism, but in fact the contributors—roughly half of whom are scientists—spend at least as much time on scientific arguments. In several cases there appears to be a misunderstanding or ignorance of what creationists are actually saying.

However, if the book is taken for what it is rather than what it claims to be it is a valuable contribution, not only to the debate over creation, but to the entire question of the relationship between science and theology. Some of the essays, particularly those by Hyers and Gilkey, offer valuable insights into the theological issues. And while those by scientists tend to be naive theologically, they are helpful from their own perspective.

The third book, written from a Roman Catholic viewpoint, provides an interesting counterpoint to Cameron and Frye. Like Frye and his contributors, Hayes rejects a strictly historical understanding of creation. However, like Cameron, he is aware that there are deep theological implications to this—especially in eschatology and the doctrine of original sin.

He attempts to resolve these difficulties by distinguishing between the subject matters of science, philosophy, and theology, which he identifies as nature, metaphysics, and the meaning of human life, respectively. Thus, he would separate the theological truths about sin in passages like Genesis three or Romans five from the story which communicates them. Likewise, he sees eschatology as expressed in highly symbolic language to be fulfilled in a state that transcends our historical ex-

perience. He argues that future theology should follow the example of the past by reinterpreting theological truths in terms of a modern scientific world-view.

Hayes' position is both informed and consistent. On the other hand, he relegates the second coming to a state outside of history, and it is not clear what his approach would imply about the historicity of other supernatural interventions—for example, Jesus' resurrection. By separating theology from the realms of science and metaphysics, he leaves it with very little territory of its own.

Each of the books are valuable in their own right. Read together, they provide an unusual insight into the theology and the psychology of the current debate about creation.

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*The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*

edited by Alan Richardson and John Bowden (Westminster, 1983, 614 pp., \$24.95). Reviewed by Colin Brown, Professor of Systematic Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary.

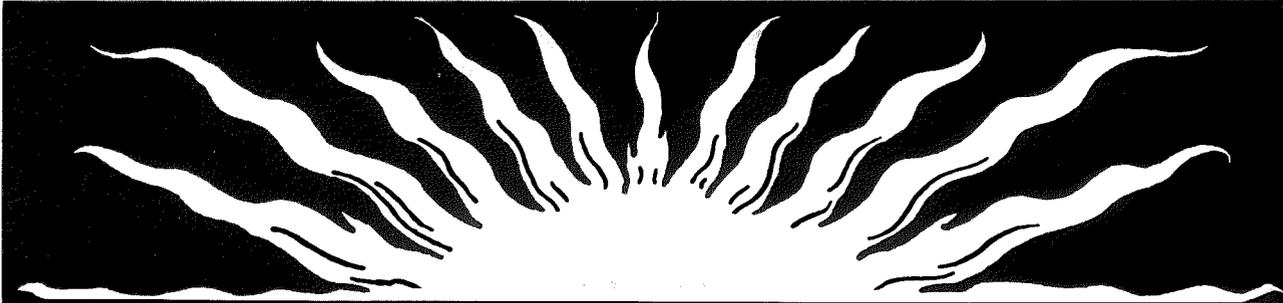
Since the late 1950s students of theology have been blessed with a steady stream of reference books giving them ready access to a vast amount of information unimagined by previous generations. 1957 saw the publication of *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by F. L. Cross. It was magisterial and authoritative. It freely used Latin, German and French. Its bibliographies referred its readers to standard works in the major European languages. Twelve years later it was followed by *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by Alan Richardson.

Richardson's work was not exactly a poor man's version of Cross. Admittedly the bibliographies were almost cut to the bone. Neither the bibliographies nor the articles relieved the serious student from having to consult Cross. But in some instances they were more up-to-date. Some of the biographical entries did little more than give dates and state their subjects' interest in the broadest of broad terms. Nevertheless, Richardson's *Dictionary* was a useful standby. It provided the student, minister and teacher with a means of ready reference to people, ideas and movements in a slim, elegant volume.

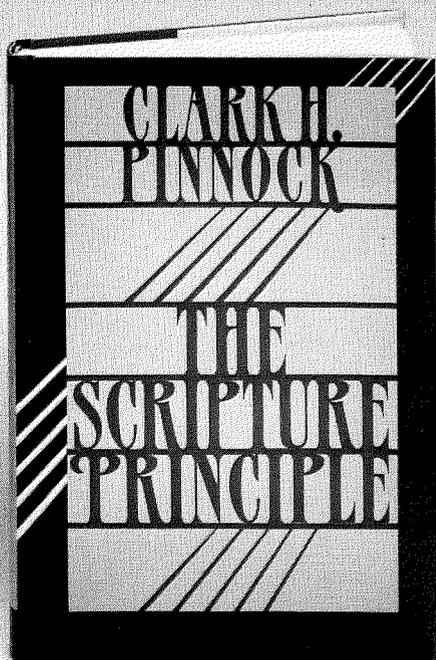
Half a generation has passed. Cross and Richardson are dead, and their respective dictionaries have been reissued under new editors. The second edition of *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* appeared in 1974 under the editorship of E. A. Livingstone. Its pages were increased from 1492 to 1518. The bibliographies were updated, but the new material had to do mainly with ecumenical and ecclesiastical affairs, especially Vatican II and its aftermath. Ninety percent of the original material survived.

No such fate has befallen Richardson's work. The book is no longer slim. The original 364 pages have been expanded to 614. The circle of contributors has also been enlarged. But a great deal has disappeared. The biographies have been axed. Those who want such information are referred to a forthcoming companion volume entitled *Who's Who in Theology*. In the meantime they have to make do with a four-page index of names which crop up in the various entries.

The new joint-editor has refocused the scope of the dictionary. He confesses that Richardson "would certainly have disapproved of a good deal of what has gone into this revised dictionary." He sees the earlier work as affected by concerns that were "retrospective and obsolescent": the aftermath of the biblical theology movement whose weaknesses had already become evident; the last stages of a German theology represented by Barth and Bultmann, "which has since proved to have



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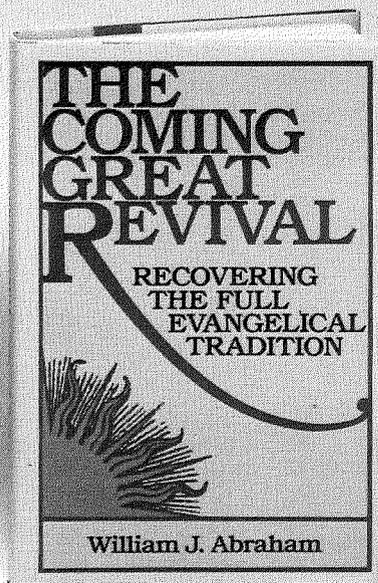


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less and less to offer," and a preoccupation with the "secular Christianity" of the sixties which was parasitic on the prosperity and irresponsibility of the Western world. Bowden sees a need to pay more attention to pluralism in multi-cultural societies, political theology, doctrinal criticism, psychology and sociology.

Some of the articles remain much as they were. Bowden's original contribution on "The Jesus of History" reappears as "Jesus" with only minor changes. But others have disappeared without trace. In the first edition those who wanted to learn about the "Imago Dei" were referred to "Man, Doctrine of." But "Man" together with the "Image of God" has dropped into oblivion. On the other hand, the brief paragraph on "Martyr: has been expanded to nearly two pages. "Mass" has been dropped, but room has been made for over four pages on "Marxism" and "Marxist Theology." There are new articles on "Hegelianism" and "Existentialism," but there is no entry on Kantianism.

In all this there is loss and gain. The value of the work lies in its ability to spell out issues and convey in "layman's language" the state of current discussion on a wide range of theological questions. As a bonus it throws in minimal but up-to-date bibliographies which represent the state of the art. It is a boon in helping students and non-specialists to find their way around the intricacies of subjects such as "Analytic Philosophy," "Arianism," "Gnosticism," "Hermeneutics," and "Process Theology." But it is not a dictionary of biblical theology. The articles on "New Testament Theology" and "Old Testament Theology" are not accounts of the content of the respective theologies but reviews of rival methodologies. It would have been more accurate if the article on "Jesus" had retained its former title, for it is not an article on Jesus but on the quest of the historical Jesus.

Although biblical exegesis plays a part in the articles on "Covenant," "Justification" and "Virginal Conception of Jesus" (to name three examples), biblical theology falls largely outside the scope of the dictionary. To a lesser extent this is also true of historical theology. There are entries on "Arminianism," "Calvinism, Calvin" and "Roman Catholic Theology," but the reader looks in vain for "Dort," "Westminster Catechisms and Confession" and "Rome, Roman Catholicism" (all of which appeared in the first edition). Presumably such items were deemed to belong to the province of church history rather than theology proper.

*The Westminster Dictionary for Christian Theology* is valuable for what it does. But, despite its size, it leaves many things undone. If I had had it in my student days, I would have found it very useful. As a teacher and researcher I have no doubt that I shall find it very useful in the days to come. But it is not an alternative to *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. The downplaying of biblical and historical information and the deliberate omission of entries dealing with individual thinkers and theologians mean that the student will have to buy at least one other reference work in order to fill these gaps. It poses the question of whether, for those on a limited budget, this is their best buy.

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*John Wesley's Message for Today* by Steve Harper (Zondervan, 1983, 140 pp.).  
*Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* by Thomas A. Langford (Abingdon, 1983, 272 pp., \$9.95). Reviewed by Rev. J. Mark Hendricks, graduate student, Christ Church, Oxford, England.

In recent years there has been a renewed interest in Wesley studies. Several volumes have appeared which discuss his life and thought, others are concerned with Wesleyan theology in general,

and of course there is the long awaited (and very slow in coming) 34 volume *Complete Works*. Steve Harper, assistant professor of "Trayer and Spiritual Life" at Asbury Theological Seminary, has now provided a small, useful, devotional-style exposition of basic Wesleyan theology.

Harper, a graduate of Duke University, writes from squarely within the Methodist tradition. He presents a clear summary of Wesley's life, then covers the cornerstones of Wesleyan theology: original sin, prevenient grace and sanctification. Each chapter concludes with questions for discussion and suggested readings from Wesley for those interested in delving further.

Because of its nature, this is the type of book which would be most useful in introducing new converts to the basic Wesleyan message, or helping younger students better understand their Methodist heritage. Those looking for a deeper exposition of Wesleyan theology will be disappointed, but that is not the purpose of this book.

Thomas Langford is a professor of systematic theology at Duke University Divinity School. Like Harper, he writes from within the Methodist tradition; he also gives his reader a basic exposition of the fundamental elements in Wesleyan thought. The similarities between the two, however, stop there. Whereas Harper makes the discussion of Wesleyan theology in its classical expression his primary task, Langford uses a similar discussion as the jumping off point for an excursion across two hundred years of Wesleyan theological developments. Langford gives us a broad picture of Wesley's successors and interpreters. Beginning with those who had immediate contact with Wesley, Langford proceeds (often at seemingly breakneck speed) to introduce and discuss the major Methodist figures from the 19th and 20th centuries, covering American and British figures, the Holiness movement, contemporary directions, and leaders within the traditions.

Given the scope of the undertaking, Langford is to be commended. He has done an able job of presenting the development and diversification of theology within Methodism since Wesley's day. For anyone interested in following the path Methodist theology has taken over the last two centuries, or for anyone interested in learning the basic thought of many little known or unjustly neglected Methodist thinkers, this volume is highly recommended.

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## BOOK COMMENTS

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*Luther and His Spiritual Legacy*  
by Jared Wicks, S.J. (Michael Glazier, 1983, 182 pp., \$7.95).

*The Luther Legacy: An Introduction to Luther's Life and Thought for Today* by George Wolfgang Forell (Augsburg, 1983, 79 pp., \$3.95).

*Luther the Preacher* by Fred W. Meuser (Augsburg, 1983, 94 pp., \$4.50).

These three volumes are among the wealth of publications which appeared in and around 1983 to mark the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth. All are useful. None say anything entirely new.

The most interesting is Wicks' study of Luther's spiritual legacy. Wicks, a Jesuit who teaches at the Gregorian University in Rome, means "spiritual" in the Catholic sense of specifically religious life. Although Wicks feels that Luther gave too little attention to the subordinate human element in conversion, the eucharist, and the interpretation of Scripture, he yet finds great value in Luther's spiritual journey and commends its continuing significance for all Christians. Especially good chapters on Luther's "theology of the cross" and on the

major insights of Luther's mature years highlight Wicks' interpretation. An added benefit is the book's basic bibliography which traces the shifting emphases in the Catholic interpretation of Luther. From the polemical denunciations which dominated Catholic historiography into the twentieth century, we have moved to a situation where appreciative books like this are now the norm from Roman Catholics.

Forell's brief study would be a good introduction for adult education classes, particular in Lutheran churches. Briefly, but clearly, Forell, who has long taught at the University of Iowa, tells the story of Luther's theological and religious development. The book is not deep, but it bears the marks of a sure authorial hand.

Meuser, president of Trinity Seminary in Ohio, constructed his book from lectures given in the American Lutheran Church. Like Forell's, the book is short, but clear. It describes Luther's very high evaluation of preaching ("when the preacher speaks, God speaks") and the steps, theological and practical, which he took to promote preaching.

—Mark A. Noll

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*What are They Saying About the End of the World?*

by Zachary Hayes, O.F.M. (Paulist Press, 1983, 73 pp., \$3.95).

This short book is well described by its title, which leaves unanswered only one question: Who are they? The answer is: Hans Urs Von Balthasar, Johannes Baptist Metz, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Karl Rahner, Joseph (Cardinal) Ratzinger, Michael Schmaus, and a dozen or so other theologians, some well known, some little known, of both Protestant and Catholic persuasions.

Since the book is mainly descriptive, it does not make an original contribution to the literature on eschatology. But Hayes has produced a timely survey of how several modern theologians have treated eschatological matters—one which is of added value because it considers the contributions made by several German and Roman Catholic scholars whose works are little known among Protestants in this country. Further, although Hayes readily concedes that unanimity on the various issues has hardly been reached, his survey is suggestive in so far as it records certain trends. Perhaps the most significant of these is the switch from "physics" to "anthropology." According to Hayes, theologians were once convinced that they could have clear and distinct knowledge about the end of all things, that they could draw from the Bible information as to when and how God would wind things up. But theology today, having learned the symbolic nature of biblical eschatology, is no longer inclined to think of eschatology as detailed data about future events, nor does it attempt to describe what the world to come will be like. Instead the focus is on the final relation between God and his creation and what that means for us today.

So in this sense the content of eschatology has been greatly reduced. And yet, and at the same time, the scope of eschatology has, somewhat paradoxically, been much expanded. Eschatology is no longer the final chapter of dogmatics; rather, eschatological truths cast their light upon the whole of Christian doctrine (witness, for example, Pannenberg's endeavor to define God as "the power of the future"). Among the reasons for the increased attention paid to eschatology and the expansion of its traditional boundaries are (a) the dialogue with Marxism; (b) renewed interest in the structure of human hope in general (E. Bloch); and (c) the demonstration that eschatological expectations permeate the New Testament.

Whether or not one agrees with the direction of Hayes' conclusions, *What are They Saying About the End of the World?* is a handy introduction to an ongoing discussion.

—Dale C. Allison, Jr.

***The Love of Jesus and the Love of Neighbor*** by Karl Rahner (Crossroad, 1983, 104 pp., \$5.95 pb.).

Until his recent death, Karl Rahner was widely recognized as perhaps the most penetrating and significant living theologian of the Roman Catholic Church. This little book, consisting of essays loosely connected to its title, is a nice introduction to Rahner. The book is divided into two parts: "What does it mean to love Jesus?" and "Who are your brother and sister?" Part One is generally an essay in Christology in which Rahner argues for the significance of holding a Chalcedonian view of the unity of God and humanity in Jesus and suggests the spiritual implications of this view that the natures of God and humanity are "unconfused" in Jesus. Part Two is far less intellectually demanding but offers valuable insights into the meaning of neighbor-love in the new world situation of global-interdependence and global intercommunication. Despite the rather difficult and often obscure Part One, this work is rewarding reading both in its concern for the spiritual life and as an example of the tone and direction of some contemporary Roman Catholic theology.

—Thomas D. Kennedy

***Christian Faith and Historical Understanding*** by Ronald H. Nash (Zondervan, 1984, 174 pp., \$5.95).

This book attempts the difficult double task of both introducing and critiquing important ideas. It succeeds remarkably well in a very brief space.

The important ideas it introduces are those surrounding the relationship of Christian faith and modern historical consciousness. The central question here in particular is, In what way should faith be related to historical knowledge of Christ? It discusses the major nineteenth- and twentieth-century views of this relationship, drawing on both historiographers (e.g., Ranke, Dilthey, Collingwood, and Dray) and theologians (e.g., Barth, Pannenberg, and especially Bultmann). Nash helpfully defines the major terms and issues at stake, and argues well for a solution to the problem which evangelicals can endorse.

As well as introducing these ideas, Nash critiques them from his evangelical perspective. Here he does good work, especially in exposing various problems in Bultmann's influential scheme. And he often takes time to point out the positive value of the ideas he critiques.

But the apologist in him does at times rush ahead of the expositor, leaving the reader at a loss as to just how one of his subjects could possibly have thought that. This marks a failure of historical sympathy, and reduces both the book's appeal to those who are not immediately in agreement with Nash and its usefulness for those who are in agreement and could stand exposure to a fuller appreciation of these other points of view.

For the most part, however, the book is careful, fair, and incisive. Read with Van Harvey's *The Historian and the Believer* (Westminster, 1966), it will quickly immerse the student into one of the most crucial debates in modern theology. And it will provide well-informed, soundly-reasoned evangelical answers to several of the central questions in this discussion.

—John G. Stackhouse, Jr.

***Religious Belief and Religious Skepticism*** by Gary Gutting (University of Notre Dame Press, 1982, 180 pp., \$15.95, \$9.95 pb.).

This work walks a line between those who find a particular religion rationally compelling on logical or experiential grounds, and those for whom rational justification of belief is either impossible or irrelevant. Religious belief for Gutting is rationally justified, cognitive, and compelling, but the content of such belief is limited to the understanding that there is a good and powerful being concerned about us and encountered through religious experience (in many traditions). A particular tradition's beliefs which exceed that understanding

are worth only tentative assent, and should be open to philosophical criticism. Thus Gutting claims to have established a new relationship between faith and skepticism—since religion is a significant human endeavor (like science or art), the philosophical question is not whether religion is true, but whether the practitioners "overbelieve" with respect to the essential truth of religion.

The book is well organized and argued, includes an interesting summary of post-Wittgensteinian thought, and a critique of a contemporary restatement of Aquinas on language. But a philosopher and an evangelical must pose the following questions to it: Is it fair to abstract a core of belief from a reported "of God" experience (and call that core rationally justifiable), but discount a core based on historical revelation or tradition? And do all re-

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ligions give "of God" experiences the significant weight Gutting finds, especially vis-a-vis scriptures and dogmas?

—Steven Sittig

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**Reason Within the Bounds of Religion**  
2nd ed., by Nicholas Wolterstorff (Eerdmans, 1984, 161 pp., \$4.95).

In 22 brief chapters, Wolterstorff sets for himself two tasks. In part one he considers the proper way to decide between theories, i.e., a "theory of theorizing." In part two he considers the goal and purpose of theorizing (scholarship), in the light of social needs such as liberation, justice, and shalom.

Part one is a good job of criticizing the "foundationalist" approach to the search for truth. Wolterstorff is correct in arguing that a set of indubitable, noninferential truths is humanly impossible. What is more, there is no indubitable process of using such a set of propositions in deciding between various theories. Wolterstorff rightly argues that even the Bible does not give us a set of propositions or a "foundation" for constructing or criticizing theories about the world. The argument against foundationalism is worth the price of the book. Wolterstorff does not opt for relativism, however. He argues that the search for truth involves focusing on one particular theory or model of the "facts." This means that other beliefs, facts, etc. (which later could be doubted) are accepted as "given" in order to weigh or test the theory under consideration. Christian faith does not operate as data or a foundation, but rather as a "control belief" which helps us, in some cases, to decide between alternative theories.

Part two argues that while scholarship, in part, is justified in and for itself, we Christians ought to pursue research and reflection in the light of the needs of our neighbors. We cannot do scholarship in an ivory tower, isolated from the need for social justice.

This is a good book that raises important issues. But it is too short. The arguments are sound, but need to be expanded and detailed. Also, the book is disjointed. I never got the idea of how it all fits together for the author. But as a "programmatically" essay by an evangelical, this book is exceptional. I recommend it.

—Alan Padgett

---

**Renewal and the Powers of Darkness**  
by Cardinal Leon-Joseph Suenens (Servant Books, 1983, 117 pp., \$6.00).

This timely, even providential, book on the church and the mystery of evil comes from the pen and pastoral heart of Cardinal Suenens, a father of the Second Vatican Council and of the charismatic renewal within the Roman Catholic Church. In a very personal tone he writes almost an encyclical to all those in the renewal movement, Catholic and non-Catholic, critically evaluating deliverance prayer and the practice of exorcism from a biblical, theological and psychological perspective. He steers a prudent course between what he calls the extremes of "an immoderate demonology" (admonishing Francis MacNutt at one point) and a reductionistic rationalism. Since his book is designed for stimulating reflection and discussion, he concludes each of his thirteen short chapters with a prayer and questions. Everywhere he emphasizes the victory of Christ over the devil (yes, like C. S. Lewis,

Suenens does believe in a "Power of Evil, endowed with intelligence and will, at work in the world"), the freedom and responsibility of each person for his/her sin (no, the Devil does not make us do it, contra Flip Wilson), and the personal and structural nature of sin. Suenens models the discretion and the deep faith and love to which he calls the whole Church in this excellent book, itself a model of layout and translation (however, note 2 on page 37 should read, "Cf. B. Longergan, *Insight* [London-New York, 1957], p. 666"). And though not his main aim, his book serves as a short course in past-Vatican II theology. Every pastor and theologian has something to learn from *Renewal and the Powers of Darkness*.

—Paul F. Ford

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**The Word of God in the Ethics of Jacques Ellul**  
by David W. Gill (The American Theological Library Association and The Scarecrow Press, 1984, 213 pp., \$17.50).

In spite of his formidable literary output, the ideas of Jacques Ellul remain relatively obscure to most English speaking Christians. In recent years David Gill has emerged as a zealous voice proclaiming Ellul's significance for Western Christendom. His "point of entry" into the Ellul corpus in this book is the "Word of God" in its threefold form with a particular focus on the Word-in-Scripture. Chapter one is a discussion of this focus in contemporary theological ethics. Chapters two and three consider Ellul's theology as a whole with an emphasis on his formal ethics. In chapters four and five, Gill shows how Ellul combines faithfulness to the Bible with a "hard-nosed" approach to social problems such as technology, violence and politics. The final chapter is a perceptive analysis of weaknesses and possibilities in Ellul's thought. Additional discussion of these issues and less summary and quotation would make this a better book. In any case, Gill's passion for Ellul shines through the book's plodding and repetitive dissertation style. It is useful as it leads the reader to and through Ellul's writings, but is no substitute for them.

—Stephen Crocco

---

**Trinity and Temporality**  
by John J. O'Donnell (Oxford University Press, 1983, 215 pp., \$32.50).

This book is exceedingly well done both in terms of the printer's craft and the author's task. After surveying the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, O'Donnell turns to the question of the radical place that time and history have in modern thought and the way in which this "process" perspective has influenced the understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. He uses the work of two present-day theologians, Schubert Ogden and Jürgen Moltmann—with a generous sprinkling of Karl Rahner—as furnishing paradigms for creative rethinking of the doctrine. His critical comments are insightful and sometimes incisive. When all is said and done, he is much closer, in his own thinking, to Moltmann than to Ogden. In fact, he sees Ogden's thought, and that of other consistent process theologians, as leading to an entirely different understanding of the Christological question (the question which the early church sought to answer at Nicea and Chalcedon) than is found in Scripture and tradition. As a result, there remains no adequate doctrine of the Trinity. What strictures there are on Moltmann's thought are much milder though not inconsequential. The most serious are his tendency to panentheism, his social understanding of the Trinity

that verges on tritheism, and the possibility that when one follows the implications of his thought the Father becomes (as Solle has noted) the "executioner" of the Son at Calvary.

All in all, this book is very informative concerning theological methodology, especially as it impinges on such issues as ontology and history.

—Paul K. Jewett

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**Just As I Am**  
by Harvey Cox (Abingdon, 1983, 159 pp., \$10.95).

This journey of faith is appearing in a series of such testimonies being edited by Robert A. Raines. Other titles have been provided by Wallis, Ruether, and Mollenkott. The title points back to Harvey Cox' roots in a conservative Baptist church, a tradition which he says he has never abandoned (*Religion in the Secular City*, p. 267). Although I find it hard to swallow that piece of self-analysis, I like the story he tells, and the creative way he tells it. The book goes into his roots in Pennsylvania, his experiences in Eastern Europe, his residency in Roxbury, and his present enthusiasm for liberation theology. The writer makes use of a variety of literary modes (a letter, an interview, some fictional documentation) and draws the reader into his faith journey effectively.

In response to the book, I find myself wondering how Cox could think his journey of faith was in continuity with his evangelical beginnings. From reading all his work I can only think it is a journey away from faith. Does he forget that we are accepted because the blood of Christ was shed for us (as the hymn of this title has it) and that this is far from what Tillich and apparently Cox have in mind? And what about his view that the metaphysical God is dead, and only the God of historical transcendence lives? (*On Not Leaving it to the Snake*, pp. 5–11). That sounds a lot like atheism to my ears. And according to his latest book (*Religion in the Secular City*), what matters is that Christians should support revolutionary politics and the nuclear freeze (read disarm the West), and if popular superstition like belief in the Virgin of Guadalupe helps us do it, so much the better.

My hope would be that Cox should return to the religion of his youth and of his favorite hymn before he signs off.

—Clark H. Pinnock

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**God, Action, and Embodiment**  
by Thomas F. Tracy (Eerdmans, 1984, 184 pp., \$11.95).

This book continues the discussion of how one might understand God as the possessor of attributes of perfection and, at the same time, as personally active in the world. In order to break this dilemma, the author takes a course that borrows elements from classical Thomist theology and process thought. In reference to the former, Tracy believes that a concept of the perfections of God as the perfection of being renders God inaccessible to us because we are able to comprehend only particular instances of being, not Being-itself. On the other hand, he finds the process idea of God's dependence on the world unacceptable. The alternative offered by the author is an understanding of God as the perfection of agency. This allows for such critical doctrines as God's creative ability, omnipotence, unity, and independence while also leaving room for His involvement in the world.

Tracy recognizes that neither the classical theologian nor the process theologian is likely to be satisfied with this proposal. Indeed, many evangelicals will feel that his modifications compromise

such doctrines as the immutability and eternity of God. However, in offering God's agency as a point of departure, this book presents an alternative to the concept of being, which has been the dominant center of discussion between classical and process theologians. In addition, the author's discussion of human agency, of which the major portion of the book is comprised, offers a helpful examination of the unity and action of the person.

—Steve Wilkens

**Jewish and Pauline Studies**

by W. D. Davies (Fortress, 1984, 432 pp., \$29.95).

*Jesus and the World of Judaism*, by Geza Vermes (Fortress, 1984, 224 pp., \$10.95).

*Meanings: The Bible as Document and as Guide* by Krister Stendahl (Fortress, 1984, 240 pp., \$14.95).

Reviewed by Scot McKnight, Adjunct Professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Fortress has provided students of the New Testament with a collection of essays by three influential scholars. W. D. Davies presents his essays in Judaica, Pauline studies, and New Testament miscellanea. Known for his exceptional volume, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, Davies offers some of his technical studies which clarify especially Paul's knotty relationship to the Torah, both Old Testament and Rabbinic. This volume, though pre-E.P. Sanders at places, will provide a useful vantage point for surveying the canvas of Paul and the Law as well as a convenient sample of a dominant New Testament scholar.

Geza Vermes' Riddell Memorial Lectures, published in booklet form in Great Britain, are now available in the U.S. in chapters two through four of *Jesus and the World of Judaism*. Most of the remaining essays were originally published in the *Journal of Jewish Studies* and were therefore unavailable to many. Vermes is known for his Jewish understanding of Jesus as a charismatic master. By progressing beyond the actions of Jesus to his teachings (chapters 2-4), Vermes is completing his proposed trilogy on Jesus; the final volume will cover what he calls the transformation of Jesus into Christianity. Of especial interest for students is Vermes' nuanced presentation of the relationships of Jewish sources and the New Testament and how one studies the New Testament in light of these documents (chapters 5-6). These chapters (and the book!) deserve reading by all who desire to interpret the Gospels with historical responsibility.

Finally, it is valuable for students to have before them a collection of articles by Krister Stendahl, former Dean at Harvard Divinity School. An extremely influential essay by Stendahl on Biblical theology has here been reprinted (originally in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*) and still warrants careful examination. As is known, the author urged that scholars doing New Testament theology stick to the descriptive (what did it mean?) rather than the prescriptive (what does it mean?) task. This volume is unabashedly pluralistic; it nevertheless provides the student with some significant interpretations of several passages.

**Pacific People Sing Out Strong**

by William L. Coop (Friendship Press, 1982, 92 pp., \$4.95).

Most of us "mainlanders" know little about the people of the Pacific Islands, eighty-five percent of whom are Christian. In Coop's collection of essays, Christian leaders of the islands speak for themselves about the beauty, the variety, and the severe problems of their beloved part of the world. This book makes interesting, informative reading for those who are concerned about ministry in this

area, as well as for those American Christians who want to understand better the needs and the gifts of our brothers and sisters in these Islands.

—William H. Willimon

**BOOK COMMENT CONTRIBUTORS**

The following reviewers have contributed book comments in this issue: Dale C. Allison Jr. (Research Associate, Texas Christian University), Stephen Crocco (Dept. of Theology & Religion, Elmhurst College, Illinois), Paul F. Ford (graduate student in systematic theology, Fuller Seminary), Paul Jewett (professor of systematic theology, Fuller Seminary), Thomas D. Kennedy (Dept. of Religion, Hope College, Michigan), Scot McKnight (Adjunct Professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois), Mark Noll (Professor of History, Wheaton College), Alan Padgett (pastor, United Methodist Church, San Ja-

cinto, CA), Clark Pinnock (professor of theology, McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario), Steven Sittig (Ph.D. candidate, Claremont Graduate School), John G. Stackhouse, Jr. (Ph.D. student in church history, University of Chicago Divinity School), Steven Wilkins (graduate student, Fuller Seminary), William H. Willimon (minister to Duke University, Durham, NC).

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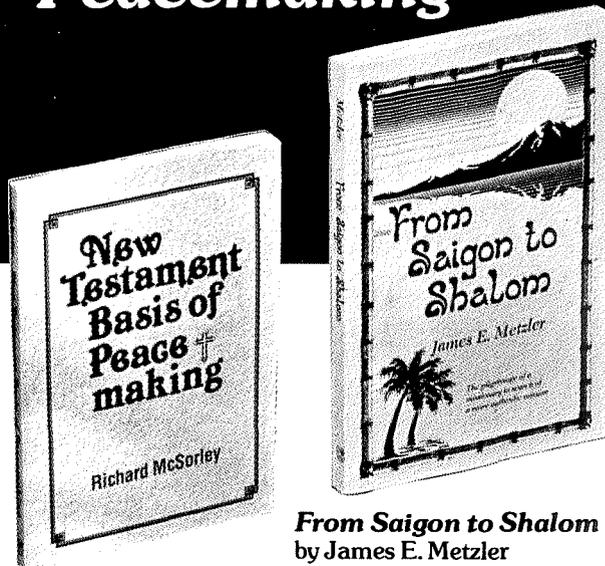
The International Fellowship of Evangelical Students is sponsoring a European Theological Students' Conference titled, "Relating the Bible To Today," to be held August 17-24, 1985, at Schloss Mittersill, Austria. Speakers include Andrew Kirk, author of *Theology Encounters Revolution*, and Sven Findeisen, Head of the Spiritual Training Center, Krelingen, Germany.

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