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BULLETIN

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Letters to the Editor

May 1, 1984

Dear Editors,

Browsing through my copy of the most recent *TSF Bulletin* (7/5, May/June, 1984), I was startled to discover your editorial modification of my review of Alan Culpepper's *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*. Whereas I had written, "One might hope that Culpepper's future work would explore further the challenge that reading of John poses to historical-critical orthodoxy," the printed review reads as follows: "One might hope that Culpepper's future work would not explore further the challenge that his reading of John poses to historical-critical orthodoxy." Indeed, I suppose that someone might well cherish the latter hope, but I certainly would not. Nor would I have thought that the editors of *TSF Bulletin* would harbor closet concern for the defense of "historical-critical orthodoxy"; consequently, I assume that some unclean spirit of criticism has tampered with your word processor. I hope that you will apprise your readers of this mischance.

Note also that the quotation from Culpepper in the final paragraph of the review should read, "the gospels, in which Jesus is a literary character . . ."

Grace and peace,
Richard B. Hays

March, 1984

Dear Editor,

The report in the March-April *TSF Bulletin* on the "Evangelical Study Group" at the AAR offered an interpretation of that meeting that surprised and disappointed me. I want to offer a differing assessment in two areas. First, the one line about a "hearty exchange among the panelists and a few from the 70 or so in attendance" failed to suggest why it was so "hearty." A major debate ensued over the recent forced resignation of New Testament scholar, Ramsey Michaels, at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and similar actions against Robert Gundry by the Evangelical Theological Society. Panelist Royce Gruenler, a professor at Gordon-Conwell, justified the dismissal on grounds that Michaels had failed to circulate his ideas adequately before publishing them. Within the "evangelical" seminary family, Gruenler explained, they could not tolerate "surprises." David Scholer, the academic dean at Northern Baptist

Theological Seminary and a former colleague of Michaels, countered that Michaels' position maintained an orthodox christology and that his views had been, in fact, widely known throughout the twenty-five years Michaels taught at Gordon. Though the board of Trustees and the Faculty Senate recognized publicly that Michaels had affirmed biblical "inerrancy" in good faith, their failure to spell out beforehand precisely what hermeneutical approaches and historical results are precluded by it was and continues to be a serious ethical flaw to many AAR participants. I reasserted (cf. *USQR* 3/23 (1977) 81-94) my charge which I deny. At least Michaels had a trial!

Moreover, the reporter portrays my "homelessness" as the product of unresolved, perhaps directionless, tension in my being "in some ways Pentecostal, in some Evangelical, in some liberal." However, Dayton and I both claimed that precisely such a ghettoizing use of "labels" is completely misleading from a historical and theological perspective. In my view, I could be neither a "fundamentalist" nor a "liberal" because I am not a "modernist." I also tried to describe myself in more positive terms as one seeking to be "ecumenical" in a divided church. At the same time, I must admit that "this world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through." Being "homeless" means that I am simply not comfortable living in a ghetto, even a white, affluent evangelical one during the "Year of the (Christian?) Bible." Instead, I hope in God's grace to act in conformity with a liberating Gospel and seek to articulate a post-modern, non-racist Christian confession that can never claim to do more in words alone than erect "a fence around a mystery" (Augustine's description of church creeds). In sum, I am "homeless" not in my Christian faith, only in my affiliation with diverse institutions, which at its best, and to the degree God has given me wisdom, testifies to my vision of God's working at the same time in groups that have often sought through prejudice to ignore, condemn, and belittle each other. I do not want to support this prejudice, for I believe the mystery of the Kingdom is that it sprouts in places where we refused to sow and where through a poverty of imagination we either least expected it or hoped that it could not grow.

Gerald T. Sheppard
Assoc. Professor of Old Testament
Union Seminary, NY

May 4, 1984

Dear Editor,

In the May-June 1984 issue of the *TSF Bulletin*, in a sympathetic treatment of my book *The Ecumenical Moment*, your reviewer, no doubt under pressure of space, makes a statement which in its brevity could be misleading. He writes: "[Wainwright], with Wesley, openly welcomes non-Christians to share in eucharistic fellowship."

Wesley's remarks, in the sermon on *The Meaning of Grace*, about the Lord's Supper as a "converting ordinance" occur as part of his opposition to the quietistic teaching of the Moravians that those seeking full assurance of faith should abstain from prayer, Bible reading, and the Lord's Supper. In 18th-century England, Wesley could count on such persons as already having been baptized, and, unlike the Moravians, he allowed for "degrees of faith." It was, therefore, far from a case of admitting unbaptized unbelievers to the holy communion. Early Methodism was in fact quite strict in its discipline of admission to the Lord's table.

In my own case, the implicitly offending sentence seems to have been: "No one should be refused communion who has been moved by the celebration [of the Lord's Supper] then in progress to seek saving fellowship with the Lord through eating the sacramental bread and drinking the sacramental wine. Then such a person should be brought to the sealing commitment of baptism as expeditiously as possible" (9p.141). A footnote refers to the place in my *Eucharist and Eschatology*, pp.128-135, where I gave the grounds for this view and expressed it in a more nuanced way. In conversation, this view has been shared by several individual Eastern Orthodox theologians, who appreciate that it may call for a charismatic act of discernment on the part of the pastor. This support is the more interesting when one considers that the Orthodox Churches practice a very strict discipline of communion.

Yours,
Geoffrey Wainwright

Ed. Note: The specific mention of Wesley in the review in question is the responsibility of the editors.

MISSION

Linking The Gospel and the Human Predicament: An Interview with Emilio Castro

Emilio Castro, an Uruguayan Methodist pastor, recently completed eleven years with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. As Director of CWME he organized the Melbourne meeting (1980) which produced the much acclaimed statement, "Mission and Evangelism—An Ecumenical Affirmation," (see "An Evangelical Observes a WCC Assembly" by Clark Pinnock, *TSF Bulletin*, October, 1980; and an edited text of the Melbourne statement in the Sept./Oct., 1983 issue). Since leaving his position with CWME, Castro has been completing graduate studies in Europe, and working on plans to return to South America. In January, 1984, he was among the lecturers at the seminars sponsored by the Overseas Ministries Study Center (co-sponsored by *TSF*). Mark Lau Branson interviewed him at that time. In July, the WCC announced that Castro had been elected General Secretary, succeeding Phillip Potter. Castro will begin his new

position in the summer of 1985.

Castro's old friend and mentor José Miguez-Bonino, a former World Council president, remembers greeting a queue of worshipers after the Easter service at Central Methodist Church in Montevideo, Castro's former parish. "An old woman approached me somewhat mysteriously: 'You meet Emilio Castro sometimes?' 'Yes, of course,' I replied, 'I'll be seeing him in a few weeks.' 'Please greet him for me. You know, he was my pastor. He introduced me to Jesus.'" (Reprinted from *The Christian Century*, Aug. 29-Sept. 5, 1984.)

TSF: Prior to working for the CWME, you were an active churchman in South America. Could you describe some of your activities?

Castro: I was General Secretary of UNELAM, Commission for Evangelical Unity in Latin America. This was an attempt to bring

churches together through a process of reflection and communication. This movement later on emerged as CLADE, the Conference of the Latin American Evangelical Churches. During this time I spent every moment on Uruguayan soil and was involved with my church. I was president of the church and very much engaged in evangelistic proclamation, especially through the mass media. Those were years of tension and passion in Uruguay; political life was in great in turmoil. Yet it was possible to preach on television. That gave me a chance to put fundamental questions before the country.

A military coup took place in 1973, six months after I left the country. Since then, Uruguay has known almost no freedom. More recently, however, signs indicate that people are striving to get a democratic opening, and I hope the churches will play a role in that process.

TSF: During your years with CWME, what encouraged you the most about the Church?

Castro: I have been encouraged by the willingness of most of the churches to face their respective situations with an evangelistic question in mind. Churches in the Soviet Union and in Western Europe are in entirely different situations. But both are facing the same question—how to convey the gospel in a society submitting to secularizing influences. Such pressure may come through a political party or, in the West, through the whole ideology of the consumer society.

For example, the Russian churches cannot see themselves simply as guardians of the past. They must face the question of how that past can be turned into an instrument for inviting the young people to share the future in terms of Christian beliefs, values and activities. Their recent talks about the evangelistic dimension of the liturgy were very hopeful.

In the Western world the situation is very different. The church has been reduced, radically speaking, to core groups, a remnant. This remnant is confronted with the tremendous masses of people who consider themselves Christians but in their lifestyles do not pay attention to gospel values or practice. Now, some churches have the mistaken idea they are the church of the majority. However, others have discovered their actual minority status and once again are facing the evangelistic question.

For example, there is the Kirchentag in Germany. Once every two years, more than 100,000 young people gather to deal with the gospel and society. They develop all kinds of associations. They have what they called a "market of opportunity." Every group will offer their gift, through theater, music, dancing—all kinds of evangelistic manifestations. Then they have a Bible study in groups of 7000 or 8000. They conclude with the Holy Communion Service. The service last year drew 150,000 people. The impact is not just for those who participate; it affects the whole community. In the last two locations, the question of peace was faced in a way that obliged all political parties to pay attention. It's another way of responding to the anonymity of modern society.

Another response is that of the community of Taizé in France. It is the center of Protestant monastic life. Thousands and thousands of young people go there every weekend for meditation and Bible reading. It is a style of pilgrimage based on the traditions of the middle age, though the message being communicated is much more up-to-date. Taizé provide a way to respond to spiritual needs while the local churches are often not able to offer that outlet.

What we have learned from the churches in China is unbelievable! They have gone through this tremendous and terrible Cultural

Revolution and have survived and thrived with an evangelistic spirit. We published a small book called *The Household of God in China*, a beautiful story about the church—no success story, no romantic story, but down-to-earth. There is the fear and trembling of their coming together in the morning to celebrate in worship and Bible study. One is suddenly awakened to the reality: here is the Church, it is alive!

People in the middle of a struggle for life discover that in the Gospel are the sources of endurance and resistance. They cannot do that through their own secular ideologies; they need each other and need to find their roots in the Gospel. In that sense, evangelism is essential for churches everywhere.

TSF: What is the definition of evangelism you're working with?

Castro: I consider evangelism to be the linkage, the bringing together of the story of Jesus Christ with the story of a particular person or a particular people. There is no evangelism without recognition of the facts of the Gospel. We talk about the Good News, something that happened in Jesus Christ, we do not talk about a package deal that is declared loudly, but remains irrelevant for today. We talk about Jesus Christ alive today, the Risen Lord. We are retelling the story with the hope and the prayer, that the Gospel story will become alive in the encounter with the story of the peoples who are hearing. Only Christians who are immersed in an incarnational model of community life and are living side by side with the people are able to attempt this linkage.

But the linkage can also come from another direction. Perhaps there are some people immersed in deep human problems who are searching for some sense of direction. Christians could then say, "Listen, this unknown god you are looking for, we know—This is the One who has made himself known in Jesus Christ."

There must always be two dimensions to evangelism—a clear reference to the Gospel story and a clear recognition of the seriousness and reality of the human predicament. The encounter of those two realities should be the moment when the Holy Spirit has a chance to make evangelism work.

TSF: What were the biggest discouragements for you during your time with CWME?

Castro: I would not say that I had any discouragements. I will say that the amount of time we Christians lose in fighting each other is distressing. We provide a good excuse to the nonbelieving world for their nonbelief, because they see us excommunicating each other. I think that once we recognize the joys of life in Christ and see the reality of a world in such desperate need, we can use the nuances and different manifestations of our Christian belief, to help people see their reality in light of the story of Jesus Christ.

Of course the theological task is necessary, of course the ecumenical work has something to do with reciprocal corrections. But, if I must choose between the task of proclamation to the world outside the Church and the task of correcting my Christian brothers and sisters, I know very clearly where my priorities are.

How do we challenge each other to say a clear word to the outer world, to the masses of secularized Christians, or false Christians or to people with other religious persuasions? If our focus is on the missionary task, the correctives that we need will come in the dynamic of ministry.

TSF: What have been some things you've learned that have changed your thinking during the last few years?

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Castro: The basic change concerns the discovery of the Orthodox Church. That is very thrilling. I come from a Methodist evangelical tradition, so I have learned about the depth of evangelical faith and the depth of Christian obedience in the context of difficult struggles. However, now I am faced with this encounter with Orthodox believers. Prior to now, I had only had an intellectual description of them, or caricatures of old people who were very static and very quiet; we all remember the story of what took place during the Russian Revolution. The Orthodox bishops were meeting in Leningrad discussing the color of their hats as the revolt began; now, for me, all those caricatures are being shed.

First, I was taken by the honesty, the candor and the faith of the Orthodox believers. Second, I became aware of the beauty of the liturgy. If I am supposed to love God with all my being, can that also include the beauty in the harmony of colors, or appropriation of the other senses, that draw me to the mystery of God? My Latin American Protestant tradition will reject the Catholic Church and with that will reject what we call "externals of religion." But the externals can become very, very internal when they are made into fine symbols, almost becoming a sacramental anticipation of God's presence. They have been able to dramatize the mysteries of the Gospel and, through these means, to pack all Gospel message into a form that can exist in this situation where the availability of Bibles is not as we would like it to be.

Third, I am impressed by the way in which Orthodox believers have been able to commit generation after generation to the faith of the Church. They have been working for twelve or thirteen centuries in Muslim countries with the prohibition against doing any evangelistic work. An attempt to convince somebody could mean death. What a sense of mission! A sense of presence, evidence, endurance, patience—a waiting for the chance to come. You begin to realize that in such a dramatic situation just the preserving of the faith is a tremendous missionary act. Of course, the Orthodox believers have something to learn from the Western World, from the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. But, they know that the Church has a priestly responsibility, a responsibility to be representative of the whole. Biblically speaking, the Church is more than the adding of individuals. It's the reality of the Body of Christ that takes presence around the Eucharist. And, as we have learned from the Orthodox believers, the Eucharist is a missionary event.

TSF: Since Melbourne and the publication of "Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation," it appears that bridges have developed between Western-based evangelicals and the ecumenical movement. There seems to be more opportunity for dialogue. How do you evaluate that bridge-building at this point?

Castro: I do not want to use the word "bridge." Rather, I think a document tries to be sensitive to what Christians are saying about the evangelistic missionary responsibility. It seeks to be sensitive to people and aware of the viewpoints that entered into the shaping of the document—Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical, and Liberal. The document doesn't pretend to be a potpourri; it is an affirmation of all those groups.

If the member churches of the World Council say, "Well, now we are at peace with evangelicals," and then go about business as usual because they believe, somewhat accurately, that we are not so far one from the other, that would be total failure. The important thing is what we are able to provide an instrument to challenge, to inspire, to give guidance to our evangelistic practice. The task of the document is not the facilitation of conversation, it is the call to

obedience of every group that reads this document, independent of their presuppositions. If this document gives happiness to evangelicals, but does not challenge, then the document is not good. If this document says, "Okay, we have provided our shibboleth to the evangelicals, now we can go on with business as usual according to the ecumenically-minded churches and people," then it is a total failure. This document should be an opportunity for us to take stock of our main convictions. However, concerning the bridging function, it is incidental, a by-product for which I am very thankful. It should not be considered equal with that fundamental role, with that central role of promoting evangelism.

TSF: What can seminaries do to help promote mission and evangelism?

Castro: Two things: First, we must challenge the traditional theological disciplines to see themselves in the light of the mission of the Church. The progress of history should be analyzed: When did churches grow? When did they fail to grow? How did they relate to their countries and cultures? What was the Holy Spirit saying? These questions will spur the imagination of students and provide a sense of expectancy. Also, students will discover the freedom of the Kingdom in history. So, the professor of dogmatics could not simply teach about the Creation and the Fall, etc., etc.—just so the student will pass an examination—but the professor will help the students understand how dogma relates to the people with whom they will be working.

Second, I think seminaries should give more importance to linking of the theological discussion to the actual world of the parish. Students will often begin their pastoral careers in a small churches, perhaps in rural settings. The congregations will consist of perhaps thirty or forty older people. We have given them, in the three or four years of training, all kind of rhetoric, "World-wide evangelization!" or "Liberation!" or "Revolution!" Then, in their new churches they have the shock of their lives. They can't touch their new reality. Normally, the new pastor tries to survive one or two years in anticipation of moving to something better. A Baptist lady in Montevideo said to me, "I do not know what is wrong with the Holy Spirit! Whenever we have a promising young pastor in our small parish, the Holy Spirit calls him to a better and higher-paid parish. But the Holy Spirit never does it the other way around!" This young pastor has the hope that one day he/she will have a platform for big ideas, but all the time this pastor is losing his or her soul. How do we relate the big dream, the big love, and the big international discussion to the reality of the thirty older people? I am convinced that the local congregation that is able to see themselves in terms of the kingdom dynamic will be transformed! Let's be realistic—older people have much more freedom to commit themselves than do young people or middle-aged people. Young pastors should be helped to discover those potentialities and to create the models for commitment and transformation. We must bring the global affirmations into close relationship with a local context. The young pastor cannot simply imitate the old pastor. It would be very creative and exciting if there were an attempt to bring the dynamics of the kingdom down-to-earth in the local situation.

Evangelism in the seminaries has become a second-class discipline. Perhaps if it were to be more forceful, more provocative, more specific in terms of meeting the needs in the world, it could become recognized on its own terms, be valued as it should and have an impact on the church and the world.

"SPIRITUALITY—FOUNDATION OF FAITH AND MINISTRY"

This 1984 Oak Brook Conference on Ministry will focus on spiritual disciplines and is designed for church professionals and committed laypeople. It will be held October 16 and 17 at Christ Church of Oak Brook, Illinois. Speakers include Donald Bloesch, Fr. Mark Gibbard, Robert Meyer and Arthur DeKruyter of Christ Church. For more information, contact Donna Fleck, Christ Church of Oak Brook, Thirty-first and York Rd., Oak Brook, IL 60521.

CONFERENCE ON JONATHAN EDWARDS

"Jonathan Edwards and The American Experience," a conference sponsored by the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, will occur October 24-26, at the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois. Topics include "The Spirit and the Word: Edwards and Scriptural Exegesis," "History, Redemption and the Millennium," and "Rationalist Foundations of Jonathan Edwards's Metaphysics." Speakers include Nathan Hatch, George Marsden and Mark Noll. For further information contact Joel Carpenter, ISAE, Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187.

Biblical Authority and Interpretation

by Randy Maddox

The affirmation of biblical authority has been a central theme of the evangelical tradition.¹ At the same time, the precise understanding of the nature of biblical authority has been one of the major sources of conflict within evangelicalism. It has been my experience, as one who was nurtured by and has come to identify with this tradition, that the question of the nature of biblical authority can most helpfully be answered only after one has gained an understanding of the necessity of biblical interpretation.

I. The Necessity of Biblical Interpretation

The necessity of interpreting Scripture was far from obvious to me as a beginning religious studies major. I assumed if a person wanted to determine what the Bible taught about a particular matter, all that was necessary was to read it. Behind this assumption were the implicit assumptions that the Bible always says what it means in obvious and literal ways, that biblical teachings are homogeneous, and that everyone who reads the Bible with a sincere heart will find the same message in it.²

A. Shattering Assumptions: The "Literalness" of Scripture?

The first of these implicit assumptions was shattered by the experience of trying to read and understand the whole of Scripture. For example, how "literal" was I to take Jesus' command that every man who casts a lustful glance on a woman should pluck out his eye (Matt. 5:29)? I noticed that the majority of commentators understood Jesus to be using this saying as a graphic illustration of the seriousness of lusting and not as a literal command. While this seemed reasonable, it meant that my former assumption about the "literalness" of biblical material had to be nuanced.

Even deeper questions were raised by material like the Book of Revelation, the ponderings of Ecclesiastes, and those Psalms that rejoice over the battering of Babylonian babies' heads against the ground (e.g., Ps. 137:9). As an evangelical I was committed to the belief that even these passages had some authoritative meaning for Christians today.

And yet, my alarm over arriving at this meaning illustrated that the meaning was not immediately obvious. It was becoming clear that some type of interpretation was necessary to determine the authoritative meaning of any scripture.

Disagreements in Interpretation. This was driven home further when a second of my implicit assumptions—that everyone who reads the Bible with a sincere heart will find the same message in it—was unmasked as false.

I can still recall my alarm when I discovered that during the Civil War there were committed conservative clergy and laypersons in both the North and the South who argued fervently that their position was the biblical position.³ How was this possible? As I studied defenses of their positions, it became obvious that each side focused attention on the verses that reinforced their positions and avoided or "explained away" the verses that called their position into question. It was not a case of one side using the Bible as an authority and the other drawing on another authority. Rather, both groups were populated by conservative Christians who believed they were using Scripture as their authority and reading it correctly.

Homogeneity of Scripture? The encounter with the different positions on slavery supported by appeals to Scripture also served to call into question the assumption that homogeneity or total agreement through the breadth of biblical teachings.⁴ This question was deepened as I continued to deal with Scripture. On one level, there were significant differences between Old and New Testament perspectives and teachings on issues such as war. At an even deeper level, I noticed different perspectives on the significance of Jesus and the nature of the Christian life in the New Testament itself. This posed the question of whether there was any unity among

these various perspectives.⁵

B. The Dilemma

Many who have gone through similar experiences conclude that the interpretation of Scripture is arbitrary and, therefore, that Scripture cannot be the final authority in Christian thought. At the opposite extreme there are those who dogmatically declare that *their* interpretation is the authoritative one and that all others are false. The problem, of course, is showing how either of these claims this absolute can be objectively defended. On the one hand, to surrender Scripture as the authoritative norm for Christian faith meant that "Christian faith" then became whatever a particular group of people who called themselves Christians happened to believe at a particular time.⁶ On the other hand, the retreat to dogmatic claims about a particular interpretation seemed to ignore or belittle the fact of rival interpretations by equally committed Christians and failed to do justice to the biblical command to be ready to give a defense of one's faith. However, if neither of these alternatives are acceptable, where do we turn?

C. A Clue: The "Hermeneutic Circle"

The most important help I received in answering this question came from the philosophical and psychological study of human understanding and interpretation, that is—hermeneutics.⁷ Hermeneutical investigation, at its basic level, deals with the question of how people understand any phenomena such as written text and traditions. An important focus of this investigation has been the analysis of the "hermeneutic circle" or "circle of understanding."⁸ This "circle" refers to how we tend to interpret new data by what we already understand and believe. This helps explain some of the problems previously mentioned. The reason, for example, that Southern Christians tend to focus on passages in the Bible that confirmed or condoned their practice of slavery was the conscious and unconscious influence of their prior commitments to slavery. Moreover, the analogous situation was true of the antislavery proponents in the North! That is why each side was blind to the biblical bases (such as they were) of the opposing side.

The natural response at this point is to declare that the problem is the interference of preunderstandings and that the solution is to remove preunderstandings altogether in interpretations. However, this is where one of the crucial characteristics of the hermeneutic circle comes into play. We have come to realize that such a removal is impossible. The essence of understanding is relating some new data to already existing ideas and notions and seeing what changes this new data necessitates or how it fits. This would be impossible if the first step in understanding was to do away with all previous ideas and notions.

Moreover, the ideal of presuppositionless understanding is also problematic from a theological standpoint. As Paul reminds us, the wisdom of God appears as foolishness to non-Christian human understanding. Why? Because they do not understand the word of the cross (I Cor. 1:18–20). That is, prior understanding is necessary to understand the range of Christian truth. In understanding theology, the idea of presuppositionless interpretation must be rejected.

What then? Have we left each interpreter stuck in their own preunderstandings? Have we become mired in total relativism, in which everyone's opinion is equal? Not necessarily! Another important contribution of the analysis of the hermeneutic circle is the methodology it brings to deal with preunderstandings. While we cannot escape the influence of our preunderstandings in the process of interpretation, we can bring these preunderstandings to a level of self-consciousness and evaluate their appropriateness to the subject-matter being interpreted. To accomplish this, we need to cultivate an understanding of the socio-historical context and its influences. The means to developing this understanding is dialogue: dialogue with the text and dialogue with other interpreters and interpretations of the text. Often in such dialogue it becomes clear that some aspect of our preunderstanding is inappropriate to or

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judged by the matter being investigated and can be reformulated.⁹ The Copernican Revolution would be a classic example of such a reformulation, showing its possibility and its likely attendant difficulties and repercussions.

D. The Clue Applied

All of this has extreme importance when we return to the issue of biblical interpretation. Our goal should not be to deny or get rid of our preunderstandings and presuppositions and just see "what the Bible says."¹⁰ This is an impossible ideal and soon becomes a cover from which we confuse "what we understand the Bible to say" with "what the Bible says;" we become the final authority rather than the Bible. On the other hand, we need not surrender to a relativism that sees everything as merely someone's opinion. In dialogue with Scripture and each other, those sensitive to biblical authority will seek awareness of their preunderstandings and how they affect their interpretation of Scripture and will test these preunderstandings for their adequacy and legitimacy.

The Role of Biblical Exegesis. It is here that the methods of modern biblical exegesis come into play.¹¹ The essential goal of these methods is to provide clarity about the original setting (historical and linguistic) and meaning of Scripture. To the degree they are successful, they provide a stimulus to counteract the interpreter's preunderstandings and let Scripture speak in its own voice. As Donald Hagner has recently argued, the distinctive element of evangelical biblical scholarship should not be that we avoid the modern methods of exegesis, but rather that we use them in a positive manner aimed at locating the authoritative teaching of Scripture and obeying it.¹²

The Role of Dialogue. Another important way in which we can test our interpretation of Scripture is through dialogue with other interpreters. If we find significant disagreements between various interpretations, we are obliged to find where either we or the other interpreter, or both, have been misled. To be sure, we will not always achieve a final agreement on an interpretation. Some passages seem to defy clearcut meaning and there is the problem of some diversity in Scripture. However, the dialogue can help eliminate false alternatives.

Particularly for Protestants, it is important to emphasize that this dialogue is not just among contemporary interpreters. Tradition is equally important. The Protestant principle that "Scripture Alone" is our authority does not reject interaction with tradition. It merely rejects an improper elevation of tradition over Scripture. With tradition, as with individual preunderstandings, Scripture must be the ultimate norm, not vice versa. When evangelical Christians turn to tradition, it is not to use tradition to correct Scripture. Rather it is to dialogue with tradition to test our interpretation of Scripture.¹³ If we find our interpretation is at odds with the majority of interpreters past and present, then we are obliged to provide significant warrant for our interpretation.

E. Summary

We have seen that the "meaning of Scripture" is not a self-evident commodity that can be appropriated effortlessly by anyone who desires. Rather, adequate understandings of the authoritative teachings of Scripture can be obtained only by a careful process of exegesis and comparative dialogue.

II. The Nature and Scope of Biblical Authority

As suggested earlier, it was only after I gained some understanding of the necessity and role of interpretation in dealing with Scripture that I was able to work through the issues about the biblical authority.¹⁴ For me, these issues did not deal so much with whether Scripture was an authority, but rather with redefining the nature and scope of biblical authority.¹⁵

A. The Right Approach to the Question

One thing that became increasingly obvious to me as I read the various materials on the authority of Scripture was the way the problem of preunderstanding, discussed above, once again manifested itself. In case after case, it was clear that the authors had first developed a model of authority and then conceived the Bible as that kind of authority. One of the major clues this was happening was that the most crucial arguments in their discussions of biblical authority were drawn from philosophy or tradition—not Scripture.

This was particularly true at both extremes of the theological spectrum.

On one hand, there were those who believed modern people could no longer accept some extraneous authority as an ultimate norm for life and thought. For them the Bible became just a collection of exemplary religious literature that was to be accepted or rejected based on its reasonableness.¹⁶ On the opposite extreme, there were the strict inerrantists who were convinced that any document claiming divine authority had to be accurate down to the very dots on the "i's" and in relation to every topic treated. For them, any view that did not see the Bible as this type of authority did not see it as an authority at all.¹⁷

What was most problematic about these extremes was not their philosophical bases—though these are not above question. Neither was it the extreme differences between the two positions. Rather, it was the unexpected point of agreement between the two—in practice if not in concept. Both positions argued deductively, developing an argument for a type of authority and then imposing this understanding of authority upon Scripture. In light of the potential distorting effect of preunderstandings, this procedure is highly suspect. Ultimately, both these positions made their understanding the ultimate authority over Scripture! It seemed clear to me that *if Scripture is the ultimate authority, then it is an authority on the issue of the scope and nature of its authority.* Therefore, it became crucial for me to proceed inductively, turning to Scripture and seeing what claims about its own authority it warranted.¹⁸ As I did so, three major points became clear.

B. Scripture—A Guide to Living

The first deals with the purpose of Scripture. The clearest teaching on this issue is the familiar passage in II Timothy 3:15–17. There we are told that Scripture is able to make us "wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ," that it is "useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness," and that the study of Scripture will equip us thoroughly for every good work. The important point here is that the purpose of Scripture is focused in its instruction in salvation and its training in righteousness. What is not claimed is that Scripture should be treated as a textbook for the sciences, etc.¹⁹

This is not to say that Scripture is full of false scientific statements, but rather that many of the statements treated as scientific claims by defenders and critics alike were really not intended that way in Scripture itself. A good example is the Genesis prologue. In its Hebrew form this chapter is an artfully crafted and highly stylistic literary piece. This fact, in conjunction with an analysis of its sevenfold structure and symbolic use of names (Adam=humanity, Eve=giver of life, etc.), makes it clear that the prologue is much more a theological account of the source and purpose of creation than a narrowly scientific or historical account of the details of creation.²⁰ When this realization is related to the growing sensitivity to the differences between such theological reflection and modern scientific explanation, the basis is provided for a constructive integration of the authoritative teachings of the Genesis prologue and the findings of modern science.²¹

C. Divine Word and Human Setting

A second aspect of biblical authority that becomes evident as one deals with the whole of Scripture is the tension between the Divine Word and its human setting. Because the Bible is God's Word,²² it has eternal relevance and speaks to all cultures. Yet because this Word has been spoken through human words (Cf. Jer. 1:9, Acts 4:25) and in human settings, it is conditioned by a historical particularity. As a result, it is sometimes crucial, in deciding the authoritative teaching of Scripture, to distinguish between the essential Divine Word and its particular historical expression.²³

Jesus himself provides a model for the necessity of making this distinction in the way he dealt with Old Testament scriptures (Cf. Matt. 5:38–9, Mark 7, and Mark 10:2–12). As James Dunn suggests, when one studies Jesus's use of the Old Testament, it becomes obvious he understood these texts in relation to the historical situation in which they were originally given. Jesus did not deny these scriptures were the Word of God to their original situation. He did say or imply that many of them were no longer God's word to the situation he had brought.²⁴ A similar analysis could be made of the

way the New Testament authors used the Old Testament.²⁴ Moreover, the realization that the authors of the New Testament were attempting to apply the same Word of God to different situations helps explain many phenomena such as the presence of four accounts of the Gospel story.

Occasionally, it is said that such an understanding of Scripture lessens its authority and value for Christian life. I have found the opposite to be true. Let me cite one example. In I Corinthians 8, Paul offers guidance to the first century Christians at Corinth on the problem of eating food offered to idols. Since most twentieth century Christians never confront this problem, this passage is often judged to have no contemporary relevance or authority. This verdict can be overturned, however, if we are sensitive to the distinction between the human setting of the particular problem and the authoritative principle that guided Paul's response. In brief, this principle is that those who are stronger in the faith and can see through false moralism must be willing at times to submit to the weaker members of the community in order to protect the latter's faith. This principle can be applied as an authoritative guide to numerous situations in our contemporary setting. Thus, far from being a fatal error, an awareness of the divine/human nature of Scripture can serve to broaden our commitment to and understanding of the authority of the Bible.

D. Christ—The Center of Scripture

The final point that should be noted about biblical authority is the recognition of a certain gradation in this authority. There are clear claims that the authority of Scripture lies in the Bible as a whole, nor just in certain parts of it. We are not free to treat as authoritative only those verses with which we agree (Cf. Pro. 30:5-6). However, this should not be constructed as meaning every part of Scripture possesses equal authority in and of itself. On the contrary, the Christian canon teaches that there is a central focal point for biblical authority—the revelation of Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-3). Indeed, the very authority of Scripture itself is derivative of the authority of this revelation. More importantly, the authoritative meaning of any particular verse is a function of the way in which it prepares for, testifies to, or clarifies and applies this revelation.

The recognition that the revelation of Jesus Christ is the focal point of biblical authority provides a helpful perspective on the diversity present in Scripture. As expressions of the gospel in different settings with different agendas, the diversity in Scripture should be seen as a help rather than a hindrance. It presents us with several models of how we can apply the Gospel to our situation. At the same time, the demonstration of an essential unity between these various expressions provides a set of criteria for judging the appropriateness of our application.²⁶

Another implication of recognizing that the authority of Scripture is focused in the revelation of Jesus Christ is that it allows us to handle the development or progression of revelation apparent in Scripture, particularly between the Old and New Testament. A good illustration would be the biblical teachings on life after death, which are very unclear in the Old Testament, was still debated among the Jews in Jesus' day (Acts 23:6), and only settled for Christians by the experience of the resurrected Lord (I Cor. 15:20). In light of Christ, there is no more room for debate.

E. Summary

To summarize this section, we have seen that: (1) The authority of Scripture is centered on matters of instruction in salvation and training in righteousness; (2) In interpreting Scripture it is often necessary to distinguish between the Divine Word and the human situation; and (3) We must be sensitive to the very important role of the focus of biblical authority in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

III. An Evangelical Agenda

The necessity of interpretation and the nature of biblical authority provide a helpful perspective to the on-going evangelical debates on inerrancy and biblical authority.²⁷ Simply to defend the authority of Scripture is not enough. Indeed, it is at most the presupposition for the crucial task, which is to develop a responsible contemporary interpretation of authoritative biblical teachings. It is

precisely in matters of interpretation that the most significant differences in theological systems can be found.

The elaboration of such an interpretation of Scripture is a major on-going project for evangelical theologians. However, based on the foregoing discussion there are some guidelines for this project I would suggest.

1. We should focus our attention on the issues Scripture claims as authoritative rather than waste time dealing with false confrontations.

2. We must develop an appreciation of the appropriate diversity in Scripture and in contemporary Christian understanding. At the same time, we must develop a more precise understanding of the criteria or boundaries that determine legitimate diversity. In light of the biblical teachings about the Holy Spirit guiding the Church into truth, we should be willing to use the central teachings of the historic Christian Church as a guide in this process.

3. We must continue to develop criteria for distinguishing between the Divine Word and the human situation in biblical teachings.²⁸

4. Above all, we must always remember the limitations of our human understanding of these issues when either recommending our own conclusions or judging others'. Scripture is the final authority, not any one person's understanding of Scripture.

¹ For a perceptive analysis of the various meanings of "evangelical," and an argument for a definition which I find amenable, see two articles by Donald Dayton: "The Social and Political Conservatism of Modern American Evangelicalism: A Preliminary Search for Reasons," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 32 (1977): 71-80; and "Whither Evangelicalism?" in *Sanctification and Liberation*, ed. Theodore Runyon (Abingdon, 1981), pp. 142-63.

² These assumptions were actually explicit teachings of the Princeton School that contributed to the development of fundamentalism. See George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 110-14.

³ Examples of arguments from both sides can be found in Edwin Gaustad, ed., *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, Vol. 1 (Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 477-90. For a helpful analysis of the hermeneutical perspectives of each group, see Willard Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women* (Herald, 1983).

⁴ For a brief survey of the various positions on the homogeneity of Scripture, see W. Hulitt Gloer, "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: Anatomy of an Issue," *Biblical Theological Bulletin* 13 (1983): 53-8.

⁵ One of the most thorough expositions of the different perspectives in the New Testament and arguments for an underlying unity is James D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Westminster, 1977). The serious student should also consult some critical reviews of this book such as *Themelios* 5 (1979-80): 30-1; *Theology* 81 (1978): 452-5; *Theology Today* 36 (1979): 116-21; and *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 (1979): 135-7.

⁶ This is the position of classical liberalism as illustrated by Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology* (John Knox, 1966), pp. 71ff.

⁷ The best general introductions to this subject are: Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980); and Ricard Palmer, *Hermeneutics* (Northwestern University Press, 1969). For an application to biblical studies, see Anthony Thiselton, *The Two Horizons* (Eerdmans, 1980).

⁸ For a detailed discussion of this concept, see my "Hermeneutic Circle: Vicious or Victorious?" *Philosophy Today* 27 (1983): 66-76.

⁹ This methodological prescription is the essential import of Hans-Georg Gadamer's "fusion of horizons." Cf. Graham Stanton, "Presuppositions in the New Testament Criticism" in *New Testament Interpretation*, ed. I. Howard Marshall, (Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 60-71.

¹¹ Cf. Perry Yoder, *From Word to Life* (Herald, 1982); John Jayes and Carl Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook* (John Knox, 1982); and Walter Kaiser, *Towards an Exegetical Theology* (Baker, 1981).

¹² Donald A. Hagner, "What is Distinctive about 'Evangelical' Scholarship?" *TSF Bulletin* 7.3 (January, 1984): 5-7.

¹³ Cf. Bernard Ramm, "Is 'Sola Scripture' the Essence of Christianity?" in *Biblical Authority*, ed. Jack Rogers (word, 1977), pp.107-23. An example of a commentary using such a dialogue with tradition in interpreting Scripture is Brevard Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Westminster, 1974).

¹⁴ The most helpful treatments of the authority of Scripture that I have found are: Donald Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* Vol I. (Harper, 1978), pp. 51-87; James D.G. Dunn, "Authority of Scripture According to Scripture," *Churchman* 96 (1982): 201-22, 201-25; and Robert Johnstone, *Evangelicals at an Impasse* (John Knox, 1979), pp. 15-47.

¹⁵ Some evangelical scholars seem to be trying to provide a foundation for the claim of biblical authority by a rational "demonstration" of the inerrancy of Scripture. I find such an approach both impossible and wrong-headed. As Kierkegaard has shown, the idea of basing Divine authority on human arguments is ludicrous. Moreover, as Dunn has argued, it is theologically and pastorally dangerous (Dunn, "Authority of Scripture," pp. 116-8). We would be wiser to remain with Calvin who ultimately based knowledge of the authority of Scripture on the witness of the Spirit (*Institutes* 1, 3, 9).

¹⁶ Cf. L. Harold DeWolf, *A Theology of the Living Church* (Harper, 1953), who precedes his discussion of biblical authority with a long section on rational criteria of faith and then argues for a very selective ascription of authority to biblical materials on the basis that "A reasonable man concedes authority to the best books he can find on a given subject." (p.83).

¹⁷ The argument of James Boice is typical: "God's character demands inerrancy . . . If every utterance in the Bible is from God and if God is a God of truth . . . then the Bible must be wholly truthful and inerrant." Boice, ed., *Does Inerrancy Matter?* (ICBI Foundation series I, 1979), p. 20. Note the narrow definition of truth that is assumed as obvious.

¹⁸ See Hagner "Evangelical" Scholarship," pp.6-7, for a similar rejection of the deductive approach to the issue of biblical authority in favor of an inductive investigation of scripture. As Bernard Ramm has argued, it is not enough in such an investigation simply to pick out some individual texts that deal with inspiration. Rather, we must grasp the phenomenon of Scripture in its totality. Ramm, "Scripture as a Theological Concept," *Review and Expositor* 71 (1974): 149-61.

¹⁹ See Stephen Davis, *Debate About the Bible* (Westminster, 1977), p. 78; Dunn, "Authority of Scripture," p.108; and Marshall, *Biblical Inspiration*, p.53.

²⁰ A sensitive evangelical analysis of the literary character of the Genesis prologue can be found in William LaSor, et. al., *Old Testament Survey* (Eerdmans, 1982), pp.70-75.

Women's Realities: A Theological View

by Linda Mercadante

(Keynote address: "Women—Psychology and Theology" Conference, Mennonite Mental Health Services Annual Symposium, April 5-6, 1984, Fresno, CA)

Ever since I heard the theme of this conference and was asked to participate, I've been excited by the concept of bringing together Psychology and Theology in a supportive, interactive setting. I've been excited because these two fields—which often operate at such a distance from each other, and whose practitioners often view each other with such suspicion—really belong together. For psychology's main concern is to facilitate the wholeness of the person. Theology affirms that goal, and does so by redirecting our sights back to the One who has made us personal and who intends for us to be whole.

If there's one thing I've learned in my whole Ph.D. pilgrimage, it's that theology is too important to be left to the experts. I want to stress this, because for too long women especially, but also many men, have felt there was a radical separation between their own experience in knowing God and the seemingly more abstract work known as theology.

But in fact, anyone who wants to know God, anyone who tries to understand their own religious experience, and anyone who embarks on a spiritual pilgrimage, struggling to discern the meaning of life, is already in some fashion doing theology. For all good theology grows out of the experience that people of faith had in receiving and interpreting God's self-revelation.

I will not pretend that theology in the past has generally served women well—for we all know it has not.

But I will affirm that whatever good theology there has been—there certainly has been some—has always grown out of the experience of faith, the personal and communal reception of God's self-disclosure.

The problem is, however, that for far too long the woman's experience has not been considered "serious" or important enough to warrant careful theological consideration. For example: it's almost as though a map had been drawn listing just those places that men would likely frequent. Did you ever see one of those tourist maps that list all the places of interest in a certain city? Well, the state of theology now is like a map that lists just those sights that men would likely visit.

Of course some of these places would be very interesting to women, too, but they're not on this map, they have been left off. The map-makers considered them of minor importance, or perhaps didn't even take note of them. So, if you are a woman, this map, like much theology today, is only partially useful to you.

When male ministers, for example, talk about pride being the most deadly sin, they are talking about their own experience. Pride, in their experience, is the most serious problem, it is a matter of wanting to be in control, to be like God.

Valerie Saiving Goldstein has pointed out that pride is not women's chief problem—far from it. Instead, if we had to point to the chief failing of women, it would more likely be over-dependence upon things or persons never meant to carry that burden.

So if we want to change theology, if we want to change the map, we must begin to speak out about, write about, teach about and counsel out of our own experience, our own attempts to hear the gospel message, our own experience in knowing God.

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²⁴ Dunn, "Authority of Scripture" p.207.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.207-14.

²⁶ The precise understanding of this unity is a matter of much present discussion. See notes 4 and 5 above. For a particular application, see my "The New Quest and Christology," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* forthcoming.

²⁷ An excellent survey of these debates is Robert Price, "Inerrant the Wind: The Troubled House of North American Evangelicals," *Evangelical Quarterly* 55 (1983): 129-44.

²⁸ The most helpful evangelical treatment of this issue to date is Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth* (Zondervan, 1982), pp. 60-70.

There is one very fundamental change that must be made in order to make this all possible. This change is foundational for all other changes. And that is a change in language, particularly our language and imagery for God.

Our culture is in the habit of using exclusively male language and imagery for God. I'd like to explain how we can introduce a theologically sound way to use feminine language and imagery for God. But before I do that, I want to stress that the way we use language is just as important as the language we use.

Several years ago the Presbyterian Church published a very interesting study on the power of language in liturgy and worship.¹ This study said that language functions like a window through which we see our life and surroundings.

Normally, this window is clear and we don't focus on it, but instead look through it. But when the glass gets dirty or cracked, we do start noticing it because it begins to distort our view of life and reality. And this is now the case with our language about God.

Because of the way we use language and imagery, we get into the bad habit of imagining God to be somehow masculine. The results of this, as we know, are often disastrous—not only in the way women have been made subordinate, but also in the way we have actually limited God.

Almost anyone with a little religious training or Sunday school can tell you God is not really a male, but a spirit. Many people now know that in the Bible there are striking examples of feminine imagery for God. Some people are also aware that in the history of the church, feminine imagery for God has been accepted and taught from time to time. But somehow, the message was distorted and there prevails in the culture and in the church the popular belief that God is somehow masculine.

The problem has come about for two reasons. First, we are stuck on a male image of God because the metaphors for God in the Bible and in the religious experience of Christians over the ages have been used and understood incompletely. There is clear warrant in Scripture for feminine imagery for God, and through the ages Christians have again and again envisioned God in feminine ways.² But because the culture was not receptive to these images, they were never used to their full extent.

Second, the problem is another huge example of the everlasting sin of idolatry. Feuerbach was partly right when he said that projection is a function of religion. Rather than letting God's reality correct the dominant culture, all too often the dominant culture has projected what it imagines or wants God to be. Mary Daly put it succinctly when she said, "If God is male, then the male is god."

At this point you might be thinking, "Even if there is some feminine imagery for God in the Bible and Christian tradition, hasn't it been—just in sheer volume—predominantly masculine?" I'd like to turn that question around. First, we all know the Scriptures were written and received into a very male-oriented set of cultures. Therefore, as Virginia Mollenkott says, the marvel is that so many feminine images for God actually got through that patriarchal mindset. It testifies loudly to the amazing power of God to self-communicate the divine image, no matter what the culture's particular blindness or sin is.

I don't find it so much a problem that Jesus was male, as much as I find it a challenge to our whole notion of gender stereotypes. For Jesus didn't come to image a supposed maleness in God. Instead, Jesus came to overturn, among other things, the terribly ingrained

sin of male superiority. By his radical behavior, which was quite unsterotypical, he judged that lie and other lies along with it.

You've noticed that I've been using the phrase "feminine imagery for God" quite a lot, but I haven't defined it. What does "feminine imagery for God" really mean? We have to think about this very carefully, for here is where the heart of the problem lies for those of us who want to make some decisive changes in theology, in the church and in the culture.

To put the matter simply, depending upon how we use feminine imagery, we will either help dispel the oppressive character of the gender stereotypes we have inherited, or we will reinforce these stereotypes and encourage their continuation.

So what does feminine imagery for God look like? Is it restricted to nurturing, giving birth, comforting, feeling? Is feminine imagery to be used only when talking about these qualities of God, but not when describing God's righteousness, perfect knowledge, power, judgement of evil and the other characteristics traditionally thought of as masculine? Doesn't this start sounding familiar, even though we are talking about imagery for God? Doesn't this sound like an old tune we thought we wouldn't have to sing anymore?

Depending on how we interpret and use feminine imagery for God, we may end up in a worse box than the one we're trying to break out of now. Even if we manage to get feminine imagery for God into our language, our worship, and our theology, we stand in danger of reifying, hardening the stereotypes. Because if a man is only seen as in God's image when he's being strong, and a woman is only seen as in God's image when she's being comforting, have we really changed anything? No, in fact we have made our straitjackets even tighter.

The additional danger is that we'll still rank these attributes, even though they are all in God, thus making the "masculine" ones primary, and the "feminine" ones secondary. This is already being done. One scholar, Donald Bloesch, in his book *Is the Bible Sexist?*, admits freely that there is feminine imagery of God in the Bible, but he wants it known that "the biblical God is primarily Father and . . . and other designations, especially those of a feminine character, are to be seen as secondary . . ." (p.121, n.38).

What does the Bible and Christian tradition actually say? It is true that many of the feminine images for God in Scripture and tradition are maternal, having to do with giving birth, with breast-feeding, with comforting. This was a major role of women when the Bible was written. Now these attributes of God are never ranked second. But there is more. For the characteristics are often used in revolutionary ways that actually challenge the stereotypes.

Virginia Mollenkott shows an interesting use of feminine imagery for God when God is likened to mother eagle. As you may know, the female eagle is stronger than the male. And so it is she who teaches the little eaglets to fly, doing this by balancing them on her wings, swooping down so they have to go it alone for a few seconds, and then catching them when they get tired. When God is likened to a mother eagle, then, we are presented with a God who personifies strength and the ability to teach her children the skills they need to survive in the world. Thus a feminine stereotype is broken.

In another place, God is likened to a determined woman who has lost a valuable coin and searches everywhere until she finds it. When she does, she throws a party for her friends. In this metaphor for God, we learn that women image God just as much, or more, when they are responsible for their own affairs, when they do not give up until they have reached their goal and when they share their resources with others, as when they conform to the gender stereotype of maternal behavior. We find, then, that when Scripture uses feminine imagery for God, it often does so in ways that contradict or revolutionize our own inherited stereotypes. Let's continue to search for the surprises behind feminine imagery for God.

It's very important to realize that in addition to dispelling stereotypes on the human side, what we are also trying to do by using feminine imagery for God is to dispel the distorted images we have of God. For even God has become stereotyped! To help people turn back to God, we must work to dispel these false views.

By using exclusively male language and imagery for God, we have in this age played into the Victorian father picture—the remote man whom everyone feared and called "sir," even his wife. By

imposing this stereotype on God, we get the one-sided image of God the distant, immovable, stern judge, more transcendent than immanent, a God who lets you suffer to build character, and only promises to feed the hungry, free the oppressed and comfort the afflicted in the *next* life, where he awaits them after they've passed all their tests down here.

This is a distorted view. For while God *is* powerful, greater than this world of time and space, a righteous judge, and a builder of character, God is also closer to us than a sister, one who hears and responds, a comforter, a liberator, a mother, a friend and a lover.

The crucial factor is that in our enthusiasm to portray the latter set of God's attributes—the ones we feel have been neglected—we must be careful not to throw out the former. Of course, some of the former characteristics—the ones associated somehow with stereotypical maleness, such as transcendence and power, may have to be rethought and re-evaluated.

We can't say, on one hand, that God is static, immovable, and yet that God hears and responds to our prayers. But Scripture never said God was static. It said God is changeless in the sense of being always trustworthy, always loving, always righteous, always opposed to injustice—someone you can count on at all times.

I've been talking about expanding our vision of God by using gender-inclusive imagery. Maybe you're wondering why we don't just avoid the whole problem of stereotyping by using impersonal language for God. In fact, there is theological precedent for using at least some impersonal terms for God. For instance, we can draw on such biblical metaphors as God the rock of salvation, or God the consuming fire, or expand on descriptions of God as Love, Peace, and Justice.

We should continue and perhaps even increase our use of such language in order to break the hold of exclusively male language for God. But this is not a total solution. For the most important disadvantage in using only impersonal language is that all through the Bible, as well as through the history of Christian experience, God has been encountered in a profoundly *personal* way.

Maybe another solution has come to your mind. If impersonal language has only limited usefulness, how about using personal but non-gender specific language—that is, words for God that carry no gender—like Sustainer, Redeemer, and Creator.

This is another possible option, but it's also seriously limited. Because all persons as we know them are either "she" or "he." Of course God is a spirit, and therefore out of the realm of our experience with human beings. But even so, in a relationship as intimate as the one God desires to have with us, eventually personal pronouns become necessary—not just so that our language isn't awkward—but, more importantly, to insure that we do not think our relationship with God is any less personal and intimate than our human relationships.

There have been times when I've tried to use exclusively feminine imagery for God. I knew that theologically there was no more warrant to refer to God only as "she" than there was to use only masculine language. But I was excited about the feminine imagery I was seeing in Scripture and tradition and wanted to proclaim it.

I tried it once at an all-women's camp one summer up in Massachusetts and the results were exciting.

Most of the women were either from non-religious backgrounds or so alienated from their former traditions that even the word "church" made them angry. Yet when they were introduced to the biblical feminine images for God, many of them were surprised and delighted. There had been a real longing to renew the spiritual dimension of their lives, but they had been blocked by the exclusively masculine imagery.

I have also tried using just feminine imagery for God in more traditional settings. One time I was invited to give a lecture at a theological college in Berkeley. My topic was imagery for God, and I closed the lecture with a prayer I had written based solely on the feminine images for God in Scripture. After the lecture, people commented on how moving and freeing the experience had been for them. But one professor hung back, looking troubled. Finally he came up to me and said "Oh, I get your point now. I see what you mean. I got your message completely. I've never felt so oppressed and excluded in my life!"

While I had not intended to exclude anyone—that was the op-

posite of my message—we both learned something that day. He learned something of what women have felt all along. I learned that we must mix our metaphors carefully in order not to repeat the exclusivity we've been subjected to.

I want to share some of the specific ways we can introduce gender-inclusive language and imagery for God. First, search for the hidden examples of feminine imagery for God in the Bible and in Christian tradition. Don't be put off by the fact that past interpretations may not have brought all of this to light. Biblical scholars can be blinded by cultural prejudices just like anyone else—some people would say more so! But my book *From Hierarchy to Equality* makes it clear that we must always be wary of the cultural presuppositions of biblical interpreters. And that includes our own blindnesses. We are all bound up in our culture. The paradox is that unless we realize this, we actually limit God from speaking a fresh word to us.

Another suggestion: build on the cues the Bible and the history of our tradition have given us. You might have to look in unexpected places sometimes. The Shakers, for example, developed the concept of the Father-Mother God. I think the concept has potential as long as we make it clear we are not talking about two gods, but about one fully inclusive God. The parental image of God is still a good one, even though we need to augment it, because it not only points to the power of God, but it helps us trust a God who takes a loving parental interest in us.

But God is also a friend. Here is a place feminine imagery could be used effectively. The image of God as friend was developed especially well during the middle ages. One Cistercian, Aelred of Rievaulx, noted that the inner dynamic of friendship is one of equalizing. Real friends try to be on a par with one another. Jesus said he called us slaves no longer but friends. So we are actually being fashioned into God's friends—quite a mind-boggling idea.

Another place I see a strong theological avenue for feminine

imagery is in our speaking and thinking of the Holy Spirit. Now I am most definitely *not* advocating that we should have "two 'he's'" and one "she'." But there is some real theological room here, because the Holy Spirit has been the least stereotyped of all three divine persons or "modes-of-being." The true identity of the Holy Spirit has eluded Christian thinkers, and they have tended to fuse the Spirit with the other two, sometimes calling the Spirit an energy or a bond of love. Yet because of the Spirit's anonymity and hiddenness, she is especially close to the role of hiddenness women in our culture have had to assume. And so here is a place we can seize the stereotype and revolutionize it.

But we must not focus solely on the Spirit as we introduce feminine imagery for God, or else we will end up with, as I put it rather crudely before, "two 'he's'" and a "she'," which is an equally distorted view of God, since it destroys the unity of the Godhead, the foundation of our faith.

The key issue as we open ourselves to feminine language and imagery for God is to reclaim our birthright—the depth and fullness of knowing God. For we have lost this treasure along with the loss of our own wholeness. By searching for the hidden aspects of God and bringing them to light, we will also bring the fullness of our own selves into the light.

So I urge to expand your knowledge of God. Begin to incorporate the feminine imagery for God into your worship, into your thinking and into your speaking. Recognize that since you are *already* doing theology—let it be *good* theology.

But be careful not to submit again to the yoke of bondage. Because it is for freedom that Christ has set us free.

¹ *The Power of Language Among the People of God and the Language about God "Opening the Door"* UPC (U.S.A.) 1979.

² Lady Julian of Norwich, 13th C.; Clement of Alex. (2nd C); John Chrysostom (4th C); (Mother hen imagery).

From Knowledge to Wisdom: The Seminary as Dining Hall

by Hal Miller

Theological education ought to be nourishing to the spirit. At least there are texts of Scripture which might give you that impression. Psalm 19 insists that the Law of the Lord makes the simple wise, gives joy to the heart, and tastes sweeter than honey (vv. 7, 8, and 10). A proverb says the one who finds wisdom and understanding is blessed, for these things are worth more than any material treasure (Prov. 3:13–15). And 2 Timothy sees Scripture as a resource for wisdom and righteousness (3:15–16).

So, it's no surprise that many people enter seminaries with the expectation of gaining not merely knowledge, but wisdom as well. To be able to spend two (or three, or more) years studying the things of God—ah, truly blessed task, one which will surely nourish the spirit. This is not mere "secular learning"; this is pursuit of the very treasures of the kingdom.

Sometimes reality strikes in the middle of memorizing a Hebrew conjugation. Sometimes it invades when one is trying to see the difference between *posse non pecare* and *non posse pecare*. And sometimes it comes during an attempt to figure out a use of the genitive in some Pauline epistle. But whenever it comes, it comes as a shock. This is sweeter than honey? If this is the treasure of the kingdom, why don't I hear the jingle of coins in my pockets? With a jolt, you come to the realization that you might be gaining knowledge, but wisdom is nowhere involved.

That shock is a common part of seminary experience. No matter what goals and desires you entered seminary with, somehow the process of theological learning has turned dusty and dry. It has become so much rote, no different than learning social statistics or

western civ. The days when you read the Bible with child's eyes have gone; now it is merely one more document to be mastered. When before you spent every spare hour immersed in theologies or commentaries, now you find yourself watching the clock anxiously, waiting until you can leave off studying with a minimum of guilt.

A good deal of any sensitive seminarian's time is spent trying to overcome this problem and integrate theological studies with spiritual life. I remember poring over lexical studies, spending hours amidst reference books, and wrestling with the likes of Moltmann, Bultmann, or Cullman, wondering what all this had to do with knowing God. The years I had pictured as glorious and sweet turned out to be just another parenthesis in life—something I had to get through so I could go on to what was really important.

Naturally, such a situation is as troubling to those watching the process as to those who experience it. Spouses, parents, pastors, and professors each in their own ways are disturbed by the lack of connection between theological education in America and the spiritual nurture which one can indicate by the word "wisdom." Among the learned, this distress spawns ever renewed cries to integrate the spiritual with the intellectual in seminaries and theological schools. We all agree: wisdom needs to be added to our knowledge.

But what are the recommendations? Compulsory chapel attendance? Prayer before lectures? Stricter rules concerning lifestyle and deportment? Fine. But all these assume that the problem is merely an organizational one which can be solved by adding (or subtracting) one element or another from theological education. Unfortunately, such a strategy simply places two things—the intellectual and the spiritual—beside each other in the life of a seminarian. And that's not the same as integrating them.

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Furthermore, the very way we ask the question, "how can we integrate the spiritual with the intellectual?" is itself a symptom of the problem rather than a step towards its solution. We implicitly assume that the intellectual dimension is the substance of theological education and the spiritual is simply a kind of lubricant to make it go down smoothly. We seem to think the "spiritual" is something akin to the religious doggerel one can find on greeting cards: edifying, uplifting, but intellectually vacuous. And the intellectual is—sad to say—dry and difficult, but nonetheless the central goal of theological education.

But what if this analysis itself is already a blunder? What if the intellectual and the spiritual are not like two substances which need to be mixed together to make a happy seminarian? What if, rather, they are two different aspects of the same reality? If so, it would mean that the problem does not require us to bring together two disparate, alien things but to find out how *we* have become so fragmented that we can perceive these only as two separate realities. We need to ask why we find ourselves choosing between knowledge and wisdom rather than seeing knowledge become wisdom. Putting it another way, the problem is not to bring together the intellectual and the spiritual (as if they were somehow far apart). The problem is to see the intellectual in the spiritual and the spiritual in the intellectual.

To try to visualize this different kind of solution, maybe we would be better off returning to that initial confrontation with frustration in seminary, the "This is sweeter than honey?" experience. The problem is common indeed, but more important than this it is similar to other problems we experience. And a comparison to one of these can give us a helpful doorway into this problem. I know that it may seem perverse to talk about "theological junk food" or bolting your spiritual meals (both of which I am presently going to do), but I have found some aspects of eating to be not unlike the frustrations I experienced in seminary. For in some ways, the "This is sweeter than honey?" experience amounts to feeling very full of knowledge and hopelessly hungry for wisdom.

Consider this: I have found myself, more often than I would like to admit publicly, rushing around without time for a proper meal. Rather than take steps to make my schedule more humane, I resort to that all-American solution to the problem: fast food. A Big Mac, fries, and a shake later, I'm off and continuing to run.

Yet a couple hours later, although I'm not exactly hungry, I have a vague feeling that something is wrong. I'm unsatisfied. I have a taste for . . . no, that's not it. I need to . . . uh uh, I just ate. The problem is that I didn't just eat. I *thought* I ate; I certainly went through the motions of placing food in my mouth, chewing it briefly and then swallowing. And yet it's some how not satisfying. Even though I did every thing we naively would call "eating", my vague dissatisfaction is the first sign that something is wrong. Maybe the simple act of eating bears closer examination.

Food, after all, has at least two different functions for human beings: it tastes good and it nourishes us. Both of these functions were apparently intended by the Creator. It seems to me that God could easily have made us so we gained nourishment the same way we get oxygen—by a continual, mostly unnoticed process of breathing. Instead, we get our nourishment from food, which exists in a mind-boggling variety of forms. We might easily have been formed to gain our nutrition from some kind of Soylent Green in our environment. But instead, God laid out every different tree of the garden (save one) from which we might eat. This pleasure which God intentionally included in eating involves more than mere variety of taste. Food also gives us sights, smells, and social meanings which are not simply matters of the tongue. Though many of God's creatures feed, we have meals. And our meals are times for fellowship as well as an intricate web of beauty, smells, and tastes. This variety and aesthetic pleasure of food was our Maker's intention, just as much as was the nourishment it gives us.

But nourishment was also part of God's intention for food. The human body needs a wide variety of trace elements and other nutrients. And by eating a reasonable balance of various food, we can get these with little difficulty. But under normal circumstances, we cannot consume unlimited quantities of food. Rather, when our nutritional needs are more or less fulfilled, we become full and desire no more food. If the only function of food were the aesthetic

pleasure of taste, we might expect eating to be something more like seeing. We can look at things (and gain pleasure from seeing) almost indefinitely. But because food is for both nourishment and taste, we do not eat indefinitely.

So, it appears that in the bounty and variety of God's good creation we have been given food for two different but intimately related reasons: taste and nutrition. Food nourishes and delights, and doesn't do one without the other. All this, however, is under normal conditions, a phrase which doesn't describe our era very well at all. When we bolt meals to keep up with our own personal rat race, we separate those two aspects of eating. For one "good" reason or another, our fast food mentality drives apart that which belongs together.

We have even managed to separate that which belongs together by creating a whole new kind of food—junk food. Junk food just tastes, that's all; it is taste robbed of nourishment. You don't have to be a natural foods fanatic to see that there is something seriously wrong with that kind of thing. When you eat junk food, you feel like you're eating, and it might even taste quite interesting. The only problem is that your body is fooled into thinking it is being nourished (since no one told it that taste and nutrition could be separated). In reality, however, all you are getting is "empty calories." What is it that is so wrong with this situation? The key thing (and the one which will help us understand the problem of knowledge and wisdom) is that in order to prefer fast food or create junk food, we have to take two things which belong together—the aesthetic and nutritional aspects of eating—and drive them apart by "processing." This processing isn't just done by the nasty old multi-nationals who conspire against us by marketing food without nutrition and then selling vitamin pills to make up for the deficit. We are just as guilty, for we "process" our food to tear apart these meanings as well. The "processing" I chose to do when I rushed for the fast-food solution to my schedule destroyed its significance as a meal. I was merely "feeding," and processed by food so that it gave me nutrition without satisfaction.

It is certainly amazing that our culture has been able to develop a kind of food devoid of nourishment, and a way of eating evacuated of pleasure. But in order to appreciate fully the perversity of this situation, you need to consider the long term effects of this kind of diet. After a while, you actually end up preferring junk food to the real thing. Given a choice between a candy bar and a carrot, what red-blooded American kid would fail to choose the candy bar? After awhile, you become habituated into thinking that food is *supposed* to be like this—merely taste and empty calories. Isn't that why God saw fit to give us multivitamins?

Or think of the other side. If I take the hours necessary to prepare and eat a meal with others, those are hours I will not devote to "important" things. But if I grab a bite here and there, I have more time for studying or appointments or evangelism or . . . If we had been meant to eat slowly, God wouldn't have given us microwaves and Big Macs.

Now you can imagine the effects of this over a prolonged period. An occasional candy bar is a pretty innocuous (even if nutritionally useless) pleasure. And a Whopper now and again may be a necessary concession to the modern age. But if you make such things a steady diet, you should expect your body and spirit to rebel. And in many cases of the seminarian's "This is sweeter than honey?" experience, something analogous to this has happened. All the theological junk food we eat makes the spirit go bonkers; it rebels because all it is getting are empty calories. Add to this the speed at which we are forced to consume what nourishment there is in the curriculum, and is it any wonder many people leave seminary with a severe case of theological heartburn?

Now, use the analogy to try to rethink your theological eating habits. How is it that we have made it possible to consume theological food all day and yet not be nourished by it? How do we end up gaining knowledge without wisdom? Here too, the key lies in the way we "process" things. Sometimes, someone else has done the faulty processing, delivering to our eyes a piece of theological junk food—pure intellectual savor without nourishment. Still, it would be unfair to put the blame onto others. Even theological marshmallow fluff can be interesting on occasion; spiritual malnutrition only happens when you try to live on it.

Overall, I think there are three ways in which we fail to gain wisdom with our knowledge, which you can think of as three bad ways of processing. The first concerns the way we select our theological food: we tend to go for taste rather than nutrition. There are all kinds of exegetical studies, or theological ramblings, or ethical questionings to delight the intellect. And intellectual delight is not to be despised. Yet if intellectual delight is the only criterion you use for choosing a diet of reading, you run the risk of trying to live on theological twinkies. Other, more substantial foods might not give you the instant gratification of a sweet nothing, but they will at least nourish you.

Don't misunderstand me. I certainly don't shy away from the desserts of the intellectual world. The latest controversy out of Germany (or California) attracts my attention as much as anyone else's. But I have learned that I can't make a steady diet of these things

wisdom? Anselm of Canterbury—whose work falls among the vegetables of the theological world—described such a process as “faith seeking understanding,” a phrase which might be worth chewing on.

If theology is “faith seeking understanding,” the beginning of the process is in faith, in an orientation of dependence upon and trust in God. But this faith is not static; it is seeking. And if it is seeking, it must be lacking something. Yes—it lacks understanding. To translate this into other terms, one begins the theological process with faith, but not with a smug, satisfied faith. This is a faith which is seeking. How does it seek what it lacks? by asking questions; by looking for answers. What Anselm means by “faith seeking understanding” can be translated just so. He means that the process of theology is a process of “faith asking questions.” Most people who go to seminary go because they are asking questions, and want

Is it any wonder many people leave seminary with a severe case of theological heartburn?

and stay healthy. I also need the more earthy nourishment of Augustine, Luther, Anselm, and Edwards, even though I know I have to chew them more thoroughly. I have learned to eat cabbage and squash as well as candy and cakes. And in the process, I have learned that the vegetables taste good too (though liking theological spinach seems to be an acquired taste rather than a natural one).

Second, if you want to gain nourishment from theology, you can't wolf it down and rush off to something else. There is no such thing as spiritual fast food. If you try to eat things quickly, without adequate chewing and savoring, all you'll get is indigestion. Unfortunately, those of us who grew up with TV have a very difficult time understanding this. We are used to the most earth-shaking problems being resolved within 30 minutes, before it's time for station identification. Yet that is a fantasy world. In truth, no theological problem worth thinking about can be solved quickly, and few works worth reading can be read quickly. Anything of consequence takes time; theological nourishment is no exception. It requires long hours of mulling and questioning, and needs to be thought of as more like a leisurely meal than a hamburger on the run.

Third, you cannot get proper theological nutrition by tasting from every one else's plate and never sitting down to your own. Even with physical food, such behavior would be very bad manners; with theological food, it is also injurious. Theological dishes which meet someone else's may or may not meet yours; or, to put it another way, spending all your time nibbling on theological questions in which you have no personal interest is a certain way to remain hungry.

Think of some examples. Does it seem important to you to master the history of Luther's reformation? Or to understand the significance of *hupotassomai* in Romans 13? Or to grasp what Karl Barth was up to? Those are certainly questions which others have thought worth the time spent chewing, but for you to be nourished by those questions, they must become yours. If you try to hover over other people's plates, one after another, without ever sitting down and beginning to chew on the questions which you yourself have, you will certainly remain hungry. But if you eat your own meal, you can also get great delight from sampling from others' plates.

Now, we are in a position to come full circle and see the relation of the intellectual and the spiritual—knowledge and wisdom—in the theological enterprise. Far from being two different things which must be brought together, they are normally two aspects of the same reality, much as taste and nutrition are normally two aspects of eating. To ask how the two can be brought together only show that we have eaten theological junk food for so long that we think we can only get wisdom by adding on a spiritual vitamin pill to our normal diet of Cheetos.

On the contrary, knowledge and wisdom are inherently unified. The reason they are separate in our experience has to do with the way we process them. If this is so, what might be a better process, one which maximizes both taste and nutrition, both knowledge and

help finding answers. Once they arrive, though, a subtle transformation takes place. Confronted with four or five courses to study—languages, exegesis, systematic theology, pastoral skills, ethics, or whatever—they tend to quit asking questions and start trying merely to absorb answers. Unfortunately, most of these are pre-packaged answers to questions they never asked. They are mere information, filed carefully away to be brought out (maybe) someday. The result is that they spend their time nibbling on others' plates and pay no attention to their own.

What happened to their own questions? Most likely they too got filed away, somewhere between ecclesiology and eschatology. And the result is that rather than sitting down to a full meal, based on the questions they were really asking, seminary turns into picking from the plates of others, quickly gulping down the morsels one finds there, and (more than likely) choosing far too many of the cute desserts and too few of the coarser but more nourishing dishes.

How can you avoid falling into these three bad ways of processing theological food? One way to go about it is twofold, and is rooted in Anselm's idea of the theological process, which I translated as “faith asking questions.” On one hand, you need to give attention to questions that you genuinely have. Most seminary courses are flexible enough that you can mold them toward your own particular issues. Don't be taken away by every theological question which happens to be in vogue—those vary from seminary to seminary and from year to year. If you seriously ask your own questions, you will be better off in the long run than if you superficially ask some one else's. In short, you need to spend some time finding out just what questions you really have, and then pursuing them.

But won't that lead you into a one-sided, idiosyncratic education? Yes; so on the other hand you need to pursue the second side of the theological process—making another's question your own. Let me illustrate. When you find someone (a friend, a professor, or an author) absorbed in an issue which appears silly to you, don't assume that it is inconsequential just because it is not your own question. Rather, try to find out why they see it as important and grasp it for yourself. Notice that this is a very different process than nibbling off someone else's plate. Nibbling implies being a detached dilettante in someone else's theological world. The attempt to grasp another person's question means entering that world yourself and being a co-questioner there. In this case, you are seeing the value in a question which some one else has raised, and beginning to ask it yourself.

This double process of faith asking questions—asking your own questions and grasping someone else's questions—can give a way of processing theological food so that knowledge and wisdom are not torn apart, but are left in their naturally integrated state. Being trained in theology, after all, need not be mere intellectual titillation supplemented with spirituality. It can be a feast “sweeter than honey” which leaves you both satisfied and nourished.

How Ellul Transcends Liberation Theologies

by Thomas Hanks

2.1 Christ Alone—Not Marx

As far as I know, just about all the liberation theologians would agree, in theory, that Christ, not Marx, is the supreme authority. But, in practice, this principle does not turn out to be either simple or easy. Many see Marx as a scientific genius; others as a "prophet." But given that so many modern theologians possess a dichotomized worldview, with the authority of Christ and the Scriptures relegated to a nebulous "religious/theological" sphere, in practice the authority of the great "scientist" and "prophet"—like the proverbial camel—very soon to become the master of our everyday situation.

On the other hand, the great majority of evangelical Christians find it much too easy "to choose Christ" instead of Marx. Without having suffered poverty or oppression, and having no knowledge of the socio-economic analysis provided by Marx, our "choosing Christ" may easily be an unconvincing "cheap virtue." Ellul would be the last one to pretend to offer the "definitive synthesis" that would resolve the conflict between Marxist teachings and Christian revelation, but he can illumine us with his well-informed writings, which reflect nearly fifty years of living this tension. He attempts to show us how to value the scientific and ethical perceptions of Marx in order to make us more authentically Christian—avoiding the trap of "anticommunism" (the unfortunate error of Solzhenitzyn, according to Ellul).

Reading Ellul disturbs many Christians with right-wing or centrist ideologies because he accepts many Marxist notions. But Christian Marxists are startled by the Ellul's forceful criticism of many of the "sacred cows" in the temples of the left.

Hugo Zorilla, in a book of essays, has objected that another contributor to the same work, Miguez Bonino, falls into the trap of judging "the capitalism of 'already' while proposing a socialism of 'not yet' without judging the existing socialisms."⁴⁹

No one could lodge the same complaint against Ellul, who seems to maintain an interminable "lovers' quarrel" with the left. He says little about rightist reactionaries (he doesn't waste energy flogging the horse that Marx had quite effectively slain). Clearly, many Latin American readers, who live under a "reign of death," would prefer that Ellul at least help us a little in our effort to "remove the cadaver" of the horse, since most of us live struggling to breathe under it. But the help Ellul offers us comes much more in the unexpected form of a challenge, purification, and upsetting of the alternatives that confront us. Especially in his most recent book, *Changer de revolution*, it is clear that Ellul's concern is not to resurrect the dead horse of the right, but to free revolutionary forces of their inauthentic elements. This freedom under the lordship of Christ to demystify the sacred cows of Marxism is a characteristic of Ellul's praxis often lacking among theologians of liberation.⁵⁰

2.2 *Sola Scriptura*—Not the Social Sciences

After his conversion to Marx (1930), Ellul was converted to Christ, during a "somewhat brutal" crisis, through reading the Bible (1932). He completed an entire program of theological study, including Hebrew and Koine Greek (he had been tutoring Classical Greek since the age of 16), but was never ordained. In addition to his theological books, he has published several expository commentaries: on Joshua (1952), II Kings (1966), and Revelation (1975). He has also produced unpublished manuscripts on Micah and Job. After finishing the remaining two volumes of his ethics, Ellul hopes to write a detailed commentary on Ecclesiastes.⁵¹

We must not think that Ellul is a "conservative Evangelical" with a doctrine of biblical inerrancy *a la* Harold Lindsell (is it possible to imagine Moses, the prophets, John the Baptist, or Jesus and the Apostles considering themselves—or being considered—"conservatives" in their own time?). But, if Ellul does not ally himself

with those who incessantly tout a formal definition of biblical authority (verbal inspiration, inerrancy, etc.), the marked prophetic and biblical tone of his writings testifies to his profound search for the sense and message of Scripture. (It is also worthwhile to remember that the principal enemies of Jesus—the Pharisees and scribes—also touted a definition of the authority of Scripture, but without grasping the Scripture's most fundamental sense and message.)

Ellul does not waver in his affirmation of the importance of biblical authority for his work. For example, in the Introduction to *To Will and To Do*, the prolegomena to his ethics, he affirms:

Lay the cards on the table . . . It would be useless to claim to pursue a moral quest without presuppositions. Such a thing does not exist . . . It is better to have presuppositions which are clear, and which one owns up to candidly, than to pretend not to have any, when such a pretense would reflect only ignorance or a lie . . . I therefore confess that in this study and this research the criterion of my thought is the Biblical revelation, the content of my thought is the Biblical revelation, the point of departure is provided by the Biblical revelation, the method is the dialectic in accordance with which the Biblical revelation is given to us, and the purpose is a search for the significance of the Biblical revelation concerning ethics.⁵²

Although Ellul criticized Barth's ethics for failing to take seriously the situation of modern persons as illumined by the social sciences, this doesn't mean that for Ellul the social sciences could usurp the authority of Scriptures. In fact, one can see in Ellul's writings a growing preoccupation with the Word of God, and a zeal to understand and communicate the Bible to modern persons, including non-Christians. For example, in 1982 he led monthly Bible studies on the book of Job for a very heterogeneous group (he explains that his ideal for such groups is to have 25% Protestants, 25% Catholics, 25% Jews, and 25% unbelievers).⁵³ When explaining the changes in his thought over the last fifty years, Ellul insists that the principal factor has been an increasingly profound understanding of the Bible, an understanding progressively more liberated from philosophical and theological presuppositions.⁵⁴

As in the case of the lordship of Christ, we must not suppose that the practical application of *Sola Scriptura* in relation to the social sciences is simple. Many Christians of the right, just as liberation theologians, want to affirm *in theory* that the Word of God must take priority over scientific hypotheses. But in practice, the whole gamut of human "interpretations" of Scriptures presents us with the difficulty of distinguishing between scientific "hypotheses" and facts.

For example, when ideologically conservative Christians proclaim the Good News to the poor (if it occurs to them to do so), it does not strike them as strange to "complement" (not to say "substitute") the anointing with oil of James 5 with, say, doses of penicillin and much instruction in family planning. However, basic Christian communities, cooperatives, union organizing, strikes, and protest marches—all this strikes them as a "communist" betrayal of the gospel! The nonviolence of the Sermon on the Mount quickly disappears beneath a cloud of "rational-scientific" arguments, "cultural" factors, and twisted exegesis—so that suddenly the Christians of the right are free to support wars in Vietnam and El Salvador, while Christians of the left call for guerrilla warfare (cf Ellul's book, *Violence*).

None of Ellul's readers is completely in agreement with all the biblical interpretations, theological arguments, and scientific affirmations contained in his writings. But the experience of getting to the bottom of the thought of such a respected Christian (one thinks of the atheist Aldous Huxley's reaction to reading *The Technological Society*)⁵⁵, a prophetic lay theologian highly skilled in exegesis, can

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provide us with a decisive orientation in our desire to be honest and open before the social sciences and at the same time faithful to the supreme authority of the Word of God. Without denying the value of sound doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture, I believe Ellul shows us how *Sola Scriptura* must be expressed in praxis and understanding, and in the communication of the biblical message to a world in which the social sciences play an increasingly important role.

2.3 The Option for the Poor—Not Exclusively for the Proletariat

Ellul recognized the decisive influence of Marx in "my decision to side with the poor."⁵⁶ Nevertheless, in both his praxis and his writings concerning this theme, he makes a continual effort to recognize as "poor" all those so designated by biblical and sociological criteria—thereby avoiding becoming trapped in the typical ideologies and propaganda of the left:

For Marx there is a complete analysis of the psychological, sociological, and economic situation of human beings, and the poor person is the person deprived in all these areas. Hence, when I say that Marx oriented me toward always siding with the poor, I am not necessarily siding with those who have no money. I am siding with people who are alienated on all levels, including culturally and sociologically—and this is variable. I will not claim that qualified French workers in the highest category are poor, even though they are subject to the capitalist system. They have considerable advantage, and not just material ones. On the other hand, I would say that very often old people, even those with sufficient resources, are poor, because in a society like ours they are utterly excluded. That is why I keep discovering those who are the new poor in a society like ours.⁵⁷

Ellul insists that "the Christian must be the spokesman for those who are *really* poor and forgotten. . . . Christians specialize in joining struggles that are virtually over and championing those of the poor who already have millions of champions. Which is to say that Christians are very susceptible to propaganda."⁵⁸

Further, Ellul makes us rethink and continually revise our understanding of "poor" and our comfortable and static notion of "opting":

. . . (T)he Christian *must* change camps once his friends have won; that is, when in the aftermath of its victory revolutionary party assumes power; for the party will immediately begin to oppress the former oppressors. This is the way things regularly go. I saw it in the case of the French resistance to the Nazis.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, Ellul recognized that a situation like that of contemporary Nicaragua is even more complex.⁶⁰ The defeated Nazis and French collaborators in the postwar period could not threaten a counter-revolution supported by a great empire. In contrast, the *somocistas* within and without Nicaragua are not in the same situation as the France of 1945 that Ellul describes. Despite the needed clarifications, the option and praxis that Ellul suggests have a great deal of relevance when the Lord of history overturns the powerful. For Christians, love of enemies and the question "Who is my neighbor?" demands that we continually rethink our praxis.

2.4 The Witness to the Truth—Against Propaganda

You are at liberty to seek your salvation as you understand it, provided you do nothing to change the social order.⁶¹

Many Christians regard their principal role in the world as the "conserving" of traditional values—as much in society as in Theology—so that they are very comfortable when they receive instructions like the above from their political leaders. Perhaps they would be less comfortable with this reference if they realized that it comes from Dr. Goebbels, Hitler's minister of propaganda! The good German—"conservative"!—Christians did nothing to "disrupt the social order" and thus supported their government in the "just and defensive" war (as all wars are!) that left some fifty million dead, including six million Jews.

When reading the propaganda produced by both governments and almost all the press of England and Argentina during the Mal-

vinas/Falklands war, one realizes that the fundamental problem of propaganda did not disappear with Hitler. It continues to live and flourish under fascist dictators (Argentina) as well as the oldest and most "advanced" democracies (England). And how do Christians respond?

The most common response—as much among Christians as among others—is, in effect, to answer bad propaganda with good (that is, "ours" as opposed to that of "the other side"). Instead of conquering "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" (Rev. 12:11), we think to conquer black lies by opposing them with "good propaganda" (public relations, etc.)—or even with "white" lies (1 Jn2:21!)—just so long as they are ours.

I have the profound impression that in circles where liberation theologies are dominant there has not yet been serious reflection—let alone the attempt to liberate themselves—concerning the tyranny of propaganda as an instrument of the state. They have changed sides without manifesting authentic freedom. In some cases they have carefully swept the house clean of capitalist propaganda and permitted the entry of seven even worse demons.

Ellul points out that the dominion of propaganda is one of the fundamental characteristics of technological society, while conformism under this dominion is common to communist, socialist, and capitalist countries. The theologies of liberation currently attract more attention in communist and socialist countries, such as those of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, China, Cuba—and, above all, Nicaragua. In order to develop a prophetic testimony in such new and distinct contexts, the theologies of liberation will have to confront seriously the phenomenon of propaganda—an area in which Ellul has made a unique contribution as a sociologist and as a Christian.⁶²

As Ellul notes, to be molded by propaganda is not so much a problem for humble people, peasants, and the uneducated, but for the "educated" class, with its zeal to have an "opinion" concerning every issue in the world (who almost never deal with issues concerning our experience, but rather depend on the media). Further, even Goebbels recognized that effective propaganda does not so much lie as skillfully select from the many truths the public will be permitted to know.

2.5 The Fight of Faith—Against Violence

We reject the caricature of a certain North American theologian who described Theology of Liberation as "throwing a grenade for Jesus." Nor does it seem to us fair to treat Latin American theologies under the heading "War," as does a prestigious dictionary of New Testament theology.⁶³ Wars—always just—(Vietnam, Falklands, El Salvador, etc.) play too great a role in the historical praxis and imported theologies of every type that we have swallowed from the North, along with all the Coca Cola. Without doubt, nonviolent and pacifist praxis (of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Helder Camera, Archbishop Romero, etc.) has had a much better liberation than in traditional theologies.⁶⁴

Many evangelicals, however, have been perturbed to find that some want to interpret the plagues of Exodus not as divine miracles, but as disguised guerrilla activities.⁶⁵ Similarly disturbing has been the failure of some to distinguish between the militarism of the sandinistas (the height of "conformism" rather than truly revolutionary!) and the way of the cross—or even the claim that the Kingdom of God has definitively come to earth in Cuba, with Fidel Castro as the "prophet who is to come," the successor to Moses.⁶⁶

Faced with such extremes (which do indeed exist, but are neither as typical nor as dominant as the Coca Cola addicts believe), Ellul's classic little book, *Violence*, which has only recently appeared in Spanish, is of great importance.⁶⁷ We have elsewhere indicated that this book, like almost all the writings on this subject, suffers from not having started with a biblical definition of violence.⁶⁸ Ellul now recognizes that his argument would be more powerful and convincing had he questioned the definitions that currently dominate—and confuse—the issue.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, it is Ellul (with his years of fighting fascism in Spain and France) who has given us a truly devastating and prophetic analysis of this phenomenon, which is so dominant in our context.

Of particular importance for us is Ellul's refutation of the ar-

gument (so common in theologies of "just war" as well) that seeks to permit violence as a "last resort"—as if Yahweh, the Liberator of the Exodus, who raised Jesus from the dead, had not demonstrated that as long as He lives, there is always another "last resort."⁷⁰

2.6 The Priorities of the Kingdom—Not the Growth of the State with the "Political Illusion"

Who should we credit—or blame!—for having shot the "sweet bird of pietism"? In the U.S. it appears to be the "Moral Majority" of Jerry Falwell and company (with their politicized crusades against abortion and in favor of prayer and Bible reading in public schools, etc.) that has killed the pietistic tradition of "leaving politics at the door" upon entering the sanctuary (usually a naive way of decisively supporting the conservative politics of the status quo).⁷¹

For Christians, love of enemies and the question, "Who Is My Neighbor?" demands that we continually rethink our praxis.

In Latin America it is common to credit the theologies of liberation with the political dimension of the Bible, the gospel, and every ecclesiastical and personal praxis. If the pietism imported by the missionaries is not yet an extinct species, it is becoming as difficult to find as a Quetzal bird in Costa Rica.

With his years in the anti-fascist resistance in Spain and France, followed by two years as the vice mayor of Bordeaux, Ellul came to see that to live out the political implications of Christian faith is not "optional" but "necessary" (whether we do so consciously or not). However, his sociological analysis also enabled him to see the "political illusion" that fails to take into account the realities of totalitarian states in technological societies—and, above all, ignores the preponderant role of bureaucrats and technocrats (who usually determine what the politicians, who claim to be "the decision-makers," must actually say and do).⁷² Further, in his expository work on II Kings, *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man*, a part of the canon little known in pietistic circles, Ellul unfolds in a rich and original manner certain transcendent paradigms from the Word of God for the political dimension of our time.

Latin American students observe a common difficulty: they get a "taste" for the political dimension through theologies of liberation, and wind up so "inebriated" by conscientization, campaigns, and political dabbling, that other essential elements of discipleship (personal devotional life, prayer, Bible study, evangelism—which pietism is right to emphasize) become, if not totally eliminated, greatly neglected. They arise from their baptism in the river of liberation looking as skinny as the cows in Pharaoh's dream that had gone hungry for seven years. The sudden extermination in so many countries of "pietist sparrows" has left us with a great ecological imbalance!

Ellul's profound analysis of the political dimension of modern life, with its opportunities and its perils and deceptions, and the role of the church (clergy and laity) therein, was written for a different situation. Nevertheless, it contains a great deal of light that can be essential in guiding us through the long dark tunnel of our current situation. The situation of middle class Christians in the older democracies (such as England and the U.S.) is so different that their evangelical theologians cannot even imagine what our questions are, let alone provide us with answers or orientations. Ellul's writings are of particular relevance because they emerge from a similar struggle (in Spain and France) against fascism. In this anti-fascist struggle Christians and Marxists of very different "ecclesiastical" affiliations find themselves dumped together—often surprised and somewhat ashamed—in the same trenches. In this uncomfortable context, both pietists and liberationists may find an unexpected challenge in what Ellul has written from a similar trench.

2.7 Time would fail us . . . (Hebrews 11:32)

Due to the limits shared by writer, readers, and the budget of this journal, we can do no more than suggest some of the other, not yet explored, areas of Ellul's work that would also be useful for developing a more prophetic Latin American theology:

1. His analysis of authentic liberation (his article on Paul is only a small part of the attention this theme receives in his ethics and other writings);
2. His "rereading" of Marx, springing from his analysis of technique and technology as the dominant factors of the twentieth century (taking the place held by capital in the nineteenth century);
3. His understanding of biblical hope (see *Hope in Time of Abandonment*), which differs radically from the humanistic optimism of Marx, other communisms, and even many Christian theologies;
4. His treatment of authentic individuality and community, almost completely lost in modern society (wherein Ellul accuses both the churches and Marxist groups of conforming

rather than offering a prophetic challenge);

5. His discussions of evangelism, conversion, prayer, and biblical exposition;
6. His analyses of diverse political philosophies: capitalism, socialism, communism, democracy, anarchy, etc.;
7. His grasp of the ecological crisis and nuclear issues (energy and arms).

Conclusion

Undoubtedly there are many who would have liked to see this article end—if not begin!—with another section, entitled, "How do the Theologies of Liberation Transcend Jacques Ellul." That would be fair. We don't want to insist stubbornly that the proverbial "old wine"—a Bordeaux, no less!—is undeniably superior to the new liberationist varieties being imbibed so enthusiastically in Latin America. We in no sense desire to deny the transcendent importance of the theological explosion in our context, which we have elsewhere compared to the Reformation itself.⁷³ But, if Ellul's sociological and theological writings do not constitute all the "fullness" of a liberation theology (which is, in any case, still very much in process of formation), it seems clear to us that the "bordelaise" prophet, like a John the Baptist, has prepared a highway in the desert of our modern technological world.⁷⁴

When we in Latin America read Ellul's writings today, it is vital that we remember they proceeded neither from the Third World nor from the "liberationist" era (1968–83) of our history. We must circumnavigate a certain "hermeneutic circle" to be able to draw lessons and paradigms from them our own context. Nevertheless, it is astonishing that a "little professor" in the Faculty of Law in Bordeaux, on the southwest coast of France, has written with such prophetic discernment about the problems that confront us in current Latin American praxis and theological tasks. Much more than C. S. Lewis, Francis Schaeffer, or other prophetic voices of the Anglo-Saxon world, Ellul has addressed himself fervently to the most important elements of our theological agenda. As Martin Marty has remarked of him:

... (I) If I were asked to introduce one man from the Protestant orbit to let the church know what I think its agenda should be, it would be Ellul.⁷⁵

The importance of Ellul for the communication of the gospel to modern persons is underlined by Robert Nisbet, the Albert Schweitzer Professor Emeritus of Columbia University (N.Y.):

If, as some have prophesied, a new rebirth and reformation of Christianity awaits us, one which will eradicate the demons of the twentieth century, in which the necessary equilibrium between freedom and moral authority will return, and in which, above all, once again the sense of the sacred, the truly Judeo-Christian-Christian sacred, will become dominant, the writings of Jacques Ellul will be held in the highest

esteem as the fundamental elements that have brought us to this rebirth.⁷⁶

Postscript

Too late for incorporation into this article, I received the excellent doctoral dissertation of Darrell J. Fasching, *The thought of Jacques Ellul: A Systematic Exposition*, Edwin Mellen Press, New York and Toronto, 1981. Together with the article by John Boli-Bennett (note 29 above), it offers the best available introduction. Fasching does not agree with Ellul's rejection of "utopias" (pp.xxi-xxviii, 170-176). Otherwise, he faithfully expounds many of the areas touched upon in this article.

⁴⁹ Hugo Zorilla, "observaciones y preguntas" (reaction to the paper of Jose Miguez Bonino), in Padilla, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁵⁰ For more details on the centrality of Christ in Ellul's ethics, see Gill's dissertation (note 26), pp. 240-243.

⁵¹ Personal interview, Bordeaux, 1982.

⁵² Ellul, *TWTD*, p. 1. For details on the *sola scriptura* principle in Ellul, see Temple's dissertation (note 48 above), pp. 197-461.

⁵³ Personal interview, Bordeaux, 1982.

⁵⁴ Ellul, *ISOS*, p. 75.

⁵⁵ Huxley said that Ellul's work, *The Technological Society*, was comparable in importance to Spengler's *Decline of the West*, and that Ellul established the argument he had tried to offer in *Brave New World*; Gill, Introduction to Ellul, *ISOS*, p. v.

⁵⁶ Ellul, *POA*, p. 11.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12; cp. *BW*, pp. 85-125; *Violence*, pp. 30-35; see the article below.

⁵⁸ Ellul, *Violence*, SCM, London, 1970, p. 153.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁶⁰ Personal interview, Bordeaux, 1982.

⁶¹ Ellul, *TS*, p. 420.

⁶² Ellul, *PK*, pp. 96-136; *Propaganda, passim*; Christians and Van Hook, *Essays*, pp. 128-146.

⁶³ Colin Brown, ed., *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1978, III: 972-976.

⁶⁴ Pacifist theology and praxis are especially dominant in Chile and Brazil. Interview with William Cook, San Jose, 1983.

⁶⁵ Pablo Richard and Esteban Torres, *Cristianismo, lucha ideologica y racionalidad socialista*, Sig-ueeme, Salamanca, 1975, pp. 74-76.

⁶⁶ Ernesto Cardenal, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 31, 57, 85.

⁶⁷ Ellul, *Contra los violentos*, Ediciones SM, Madrid, 1980.

⁶⁸ Thomas Hanks, *God So Loved the Third World*, Orbis, Maryknoll, 1983, pp. 105-08; Jacques Pons, *L'oppression dans L'ancien Testament*, Letouzey et Ane, Paris, 1981, pp. 27-52.

⁶⁹ Personal interview, Bordeaux, 1982.

⁷⁰ Ellul, *Violence*, pp. 169-70; cp. Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp. 106-31.

⁷¹ Emilio Nunez, "The Challenge of Liberation Theology," in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, July 1981, pp. 41-42.

⁷² Ellul, *The Political Illusion*, Knopf, New York, 1967, *passim*; cp. the critical essays in Christians and Van Hook, *Essays*, pp. 69-90, 128-46; also the dissertation of Fasching, Postscript, note 76, pp. 161-76.

⁷³ Hanks, *God So Loved the Third World*, ch. 4, "The Bible, The Reformation, and Liberation Theologies."

⁷⁴ Gill, "Jacques Ellul: The Prophet as Theologian," p. 9.

⁷⁵ Martin Marty, "The Protestant for this Summer," *National Catholic Reporter*, July 3, 1970.

⁷⁶ Robert A. Nisbet, "Foreward," in Christians and Van Hook, *Essays*, p. 5. Ellul's last evaluation Ellul has made of Latin American theologies can be seen in the journal he edits, *Foi et vie*, 81:5-6 (December, 1982). In particular, see Ellul's reviews, "Quelques livres de la Theologie de la Revolution," pp. 75-89. The books treated are: Ernesto Cardenal, *Chretiens au Nicaragua, L'Evangile en Revolution*, Caribe-CELEP, 1982, pp. 81-85; Vincent Cosmao, *Changer le Monde*, 1981, pp. 85-89. Ellul has evaluated Cosmao's book as "the first theology of liberation that convinces me" (personal interview, Bordeaux, 1982).

The Politics of Biblical Eschatology: Ronald Reagan and the Impending Nuclear Armageddon

by Larry Jones and Gerald T. Sheppard

"Pie-in-the-sky" religion is condemned by progressive evangelicals for its lack of political concern, a willingness to postpone issues of social justice in order to meditate on events during the period of the Great Tribulation. So-called "apocalyptic" eschatology appears to be pre-occupied with "things to come," and pays little attention to the way things actually are. Such a neat distinction between piety and politics often proves to be an illusion. Even apocalyptic ideas have direct political consequences for those who hold to them and to the *politeia* who are under their authority or influence. So, too, American politicians have often recognized a connection between public policy and their religious views. More than any other American president in recent history, Ronald Reagan has displayed a keen interest in biblical prophecy. His interest is evidently more than academic, for he has linked a number of political decisions to biblical prophetic scenario familiar to fundamentalist dispensationalism.

Charismatic Christians close to Reagan, Christian journalists, long-time friends and Reagan himself have made reference to the president's interest in prophecy. Reagan met with friends for an afternoon of fellowship on September 20, 1970 to talk about the Holy Spirit and the signs of the unfolding apocalyptic drama. The meeting is described in George Otis's 1971 book *High Adventure* and in Bob Slosser's 1984 *Reagan Inside/Out*.

After his appearance at a charismatic clinic in Sacramento, Pat Boone, his wife Shirley and two friends, George Otis and Harold Bredesen, drove to the Reagan home. Pat Boone told the Reagans of his recent experiences with the Holy Spirit, including the new song he had sung "in tongues." Recent headlines told of civil war in Jordan and Nixon threatened intervention. Reagan listened intently to his old friend.

At some point, Reagan turned the conversation to the subject of Bible prophecy. He told his guests of a story he had heard from Billy Graham. The famous evangelist, a long time friend of Reagan, told him of a talk he had had with Conrad Adenauer. The then West

German chancellor had asked Graham what the next great news event would be. Graham shrewdly answered, "The return of Jesus Christ."

Reagan, then, listed what he saw as the signs of the times: The scattering of the Jews, the re-gathering of Israel in 1948, and, most especially, the Israeli capture of Jerusalem in 1967. Reagan saw the stage being set for the last act in world history. George Otis described Reagan's using the Bible as a signpost or chronometer of history. For Reagan, the Old Testament prophecies marked the rise and the fall of empires in the timeline of world history. The Bible seemed to him to have authenticated itself by virtue of the complex and intricate "fulfillment of many prophecies." Otis reported that Reagan delighted in the wonderful cadence of history marching with such beauty and precision. Bredesen told the governor that he had failed to mention the most important sign of all, namely, the two great Pentecosts, one of Satan and one of God, which mark the present time as the "last days."

The trial of the cultic Manson murders had only recently filled the television screens and newspaper headlines. For their last fifteen minutes together the little group spoke fervently of their experiences with the Holy Spirit. Pat Boone gave his old Hollywood friend an enscribed copy of his recent book *A New Song*. Boone, Otis, and Bredesen presented Reagan with a copy of an apocalyptic pamphlet they had written, *A Solution to Crisis America*. Before they left the Reagan home, someone suggested they pray together. They joined hands in a circle. In the course of his prayer, George Otis was "possessed by the Holy Spirit." Otis or the Spirit possessing Otis addressed Reagan as "my son" and prophesied that Reagan would one day be "resident of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue." Otis' left hand, the one holding Reagan's right, began to shake and pulsate. Everyone opened their eyes and let go of one another's hands. Ellingwood drove away in the waiting limousine with the visitors. He told them on the ride back to Sacramento that while he held Reagan's left hand, it, also, shook and pulsated when Otis prayed. Later he reported having felt a "bolt of electricity" from Reagan's hand.¹

Possibly the first published evidence of Reagan's interest in biblical prophecy appeared in the May, 1968 *Christian Life*. In the lead article Reagan's pastor, Donn Moomaw, told of a visit he and Billy Graham had had with Ronald Reagan while he was in the hospital.

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They became "engrossed in a discussion of "Bible prophecy in relation to the signs of the times." The writer, William Rose, confirmed that meeting with Governor Reagan. Reagan said,

We got into a conversation about how many of the prophecies concerning the Second Coming seemed to be having their fulfillment at this time. Graham told me how world leaders who are students of the Bible and others who have studied it have come to this same conclusion—that apparently never in history have so many of the prophecies come true in such a relatively short time.

Reagan added that he had asked Moomaw for more material on prophecy in order to check it out in the Bible for himself. Reagan's keen interest in biblical prophecy seems to have been especially incited by the 1967 re-unification of Jerusalem.

In October, 1983, President Reagan made an apocalyptic telephone remark to Tom Dine, executive director of the American-Israeli public affairs committee. The remark was published, first, by the Jerusalem Post and then picked up by the Associated Press. Reagan told the pro-Israel lobbyist,

You know, I turn back to your ancient prophets in the Old Testament and the signs for telling Armageddon, and I find myself wondering if—if we're the generation that is going to see that come about. I don't know if you've noted any of those prophecies lately, but believe me they certainly describe the times we're going through.

Reagan telephoned Dine to thank him for lobbying efforts of AIPAC to secure votes in favor of continued U.S. military presence in Lebanon. The U.S. embassy in Beirut had only recently been destroyed by a terrorist bomb. Only days after President Reagan's aside to Dine, a similar terrorist attack killed 279 U.S. marines near the Beirut airport.

Later, reporters from *People Magazine*, Dec. 6, 1983, asked Reagan about his remark. According to the transcript published in the weekly compilation of presidential documents, Reagan then asked them where it had been published:

The President: "Where was that?"

Question: In the Jerusalem Post. And I was going to say, "Is this really true? Do you believe that?"

The President: "I've never done that publicly. I have talked here, and then I wrote people because some theologians, quite some time ago were telling me, calling attention to the fact that theologians had been studying the ancient prophecies—What would portend the coming the Armageddon?—and have said that never, in the time between the prophecies up until now has there ever been a time in which so many of the prophecies are coming together. There have been times in the past when people thought the end of the world was coming, and so forth, but never anything like this. And one of them, the first one who ever broached this to me—and I won't use his name; I don't have permission to. He probably would give it, but I'm not going to ask—had held a meeting with the then head of the German government years ago when the war was over, and did not know that his hobby was theology. And he asked this theologian what did he think was the next great news event worldwide. And the theologian, very wisely, said, "Well, I think that you're asking that question in because you've had a thought along the line." And he did. It was about the prophecies and so forth. So, no. I've talked conversationally about that.

Question: You've mused on it. You've considered it.

President: (laughing) Not to the extent of throwing up my hands and saying, "Well, its all over." No. I think which ever generation and at whatever time, when the time comes, the generation that is there, I think will have to go on doing what they believe is right.

Question: Even if it comes?

President: Yes.

Two years earlier, while President Reagan was lobbying Congress for AWAC surveillance aircraft for Saudi Arabia, he talked with Senator Howell Hefflin of Alabama about biblical prophecy.

Senator Hefflin told reporters:

We got off into the Bible a little bit. We were talking about the fact that the Middle East, according to the Bible, would be the place where Armageddon would start. The President was talking to me about the Scriptures and I was talking a little to him about the Scriptures. He interprets the Bible and Armageddon to mean that Russia is going to get involved in it.²

On another occasion, according to the New York Times, President Reagan euphemistically named the MX missile, a first strike weapon, "the peacemaker." His aides objected that this biblically based euphemism was too easily confused with "pacemaker," a word with an unpleasant connotation. Reagan obliqued and changed the missile's name to "peacekeeper," a word which more properly invokes images of old west shoot-outs rather than the Sermon on the Mount.

Herbert Ellingwood, chairman of the Federal Merit System Protection, and longtime Reagan aide, recently told a reporter that Reagan has read and repeatedly discussed Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth*. Reagan apparently believes in the apocalyptic scenario popularized by Lindsey, Falwell, and a host of other fundamentalist dispensationalists. According to this scenario, the Gog-Magog war will be a Soviet invasion of Israel. The invading Soviets and their allies will be crushed either by God or the U.S. nuclear arsenal, used as a tool in the hand of God. That war sets the stage for an Anti-christ, totalitarian regime. At the end of seven years of Tribulation, Jesus will come again to defeat the Anti-christ and to establish his millennial kingdom.

George Otis, who prophesied Reagan's presidency in 1970, believes that an Arab-Israeli war will trigger the "Gog-Magog" conflagration in which God/America will destroy the Soviet military machine. Otis writes in his 1974 book, *The Ghost of Hagar*,

The Bible clearly says that this troop movement WILL still take place one day in the near future. When will this be? Could it be during 'War Number Five' coming up against Israel? The early percolating of War Number Five has already begun. (Otis emphasis)

Otis foresees America coming to the rescue of Israel. "America," he writes, "will be blessed for her sacrificial role during Israel's crisis hour."

Translated into real political terms, this scenario means, arguably, a preemptive American first strike against a perceived Soviet attack on Israel. In order to protect Israel, the U.S. must defeat Russia. In order to "win" the war, a nuclear first strike is necessary. America's "sacrifice" would be the destruction caused by the Soviet second strike retaliation. But Otis hopes to be raptured out before the bombs explode.

George Otis is a former electronics manufacturer who made nuclear weapon system components. He now devotes his time to his "High Adventure" ministry and operated four radio stations in southern Lebanon. The late Major Hadad, a Phalangist leader, was a close associate of Otis. Otis' "Voice of Hope" radio devotes part of its programming to the Phalangist line. He first met Reagan the day he uttered his presidential prophecy. He interviewed Reagan in the 1976 presidential campaign and again during the 1980 presidential campaign. Otis was honorary chairman of "Christians for Reagan," an offshoot of Christian Voice.

On a number of occasions during the 1980 campaign, candidate Reagan remarked that "this may be the last generation." Dispensationalists like Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye are board members of Christian Voice, which has rallied support for Reagan's moral agenda. For the 1984 presidential campaign, LaHaye's "American Coalition for Traditional Values" (ACTV) is organizing a highly selective, voter registration drive to bring out the "born again" vote. Otis said in a recent interview that Reagan's re-election, "could make a difference in the timing of Jesus' return."

In 1981 Reagan's appointee, James Watt, then Secretary of the Interior, told a House Committee, "I don't know how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns." Watt's remark raised a furor and resulted in perhaps some unfair parody. Watt made his statement so casually because fundamentalist dispensa-

tionalists view the coming Tribulation as a time of purifying violence will cleanse the earth for her millennial replenishment. George Otis, in his 1974 *Millennial Man*, writes, "Earth needs and will soon get her Millennium overhaul." For Otis, as apparently for Watt, the energy crisis was also a sign of divine providence:

Before all the earth's gears lock up for want of lubrication, this age will close. The oil supplies which God placed in the planet will prove adequate to squeak through this era.

The earth, Otis writes,

needs to be born again. But before it can, there must be a clearing away of everything decadent. Our all-wise Heavenly Father knows He must 'PLOW UP THE EARTH,' root out and eliminate everything that won't harmonize with His Millennial-life blueprint.

As Otis sees it, the earth must be destroyed first and then Jesus will return with his saints to "re-plant, re-build, and re-organize." This is the same Otis who, in his 1976 T.V. interview with candidate Reagan, asked

Governor Reagan, concerning another country that is extremely unique . . . Perhaps the most dramatic Bible prophecy which has been fulfilled right in our own day is the re-emergence of Israel as a nation. What do you feel America should do if ever in the future, Israel were about to be destroyed by attacking enemy nations?

Reagan answered,

Well, here again we have a relationship. We have a pledge to Israel to the preservation of that nation. They are an ally and have been a long time friend and ally and, again, I think we keep our commitments. I think there is a tendency today that goes along with the things you were mentioning earlier in our talk about the easy way and there are many people taking advantage of the war weariness that came from Vietnam, that long conflict. There are many people who would like to say that, that no agreement is worth keeping if it causes trouble to ourselves. We can't live this way; we have an obligation, a responsibility, and a destiny. We are the leader of the free world and I think, to a certain extent, in the last few years we have tended to abdicate that leadership. A very definite withdrawal from moral commitments.

President Reagan has frequently spoken of "God's plan" for America but has not publicly elaborated what he believes God's plan to be. Reagan delighted many evangelicals with his call for a national revival and his own public testimony to Jesus Christ. Privately, the president has talked repeatedly of his belief in an imminent "Gog-Magog war" involving the Soviet Union. Does the president believe that God has planned a national revival before the Tribulation and then an American sacrificial role in a nuclear Gog-Magog war? Just what the president's thinking is on the question of the secret Rapture is unknown. The president has, in a 1984 public speech to the National Religious Broadcasters, quoted from post-tribulationist Pat Robertson's *Secret Kingdom*. The apocalyptic coalition supporting Reagan includes the entire pre-, mid-, post-tribulationist spectrum. Reagan's longtime friends Pat Boone and Billy Graham are pre-tribulationists. But the difference between pre- and mid-tribulationist views is sometimes left up in the air. The people in Reagan's eschatological support group have learned to agree to disagree on certain nuances. Regardless, presidential beliefs in matters of biblical prophecy become a public issue if he sanctions, even by his public silence, this eschatological rationalization for the nuclear build-up for what seems to his supporters to be an inevitable nuclear conflict in the Near East.

Certainly Reagan's fundamentalist dispensational views, obtained through popular literature, like that of Hal Lindsey and George Otis, should not be equated with the essence of "apocalyptic" interpretation. While not rejecting the value of apocalyptic literature in the Bible, an evangelical New Testament scholar, George Ladd, wrote one of the more persuasive criticisms of these particular dispensational claims in his *The Blessed Hope*. Some Marxists associate themselves with apocalyptic expectation, and a major contemporary

theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, has persistently placed a positive stress on apocalyptic themes in his "theology of hope." Black theologian James Cone has similarly spelled out the importance of the "eschatological and future expectation" essential to the black church's understanding of the salvation story, often in terms of "the gospel train."³ Moreover, "dispensational" views can be found from the time of Augustine and in the work of John Calvin as a way to express views of God's progressive revelation in different periods of history. However, Reagan's statements reflect a particular type of dispensationalism which has only been an option in Christianity since a little more than a century ago.

For example, prior to the nineteenth-century, no figure in Church history advocated the belief in a "pre-tribulation rapture."⁴ This doctrine finds its origin in the prophetic studies of J. N. Darby in the 1830's. Yet, now in the twentieth-century, the publishing success of *The Late Great Planet Earth* has given the impression to the public that this position is one commonly accepted by biblical and theological scholars in seminaries across the country. The opposite is the case. In fact, most scholars have for so long ignored the whole position that many would not know the intricacy of its terms enough to refute it. They may be correctly challenged to take more seriously the popular views within the church and to address more adequately the eschatological questions too often casually side-stepped in seminary lectures and sermons, but they know that these views have almost no standing among their seminary colleagues.

In Timothy Weber's recent study of dispensationalism, he observes that the popularity of prophecy conferences during the last half of the nineteenth-century had subsided by the beginning of the twentieth-century because premillennialist views lacked any consensus among evangelicals. Nevertheless, World War I attracted renewed attention to matters of biblical prophecy and the dispensational pre-millennialist claimed that the break-up of the Ottoman Empire confirmed exactly their predictions based on Scripture. By 1919 prophecy conferences gained renewed popularity and sprouted up across the country. Favorite teachers and their elaborate, colored charts sought to diagnose the future of world politics.⁵ Eschatological charts carried their own psychological apologetic, often more persuasive than the technical arguments, for instance, between C. I. Scofield and H. A. Ironside, over the exact nature of "literal interpretation" and how strictly one must distinguish between the church and Israel in Scripture for "the system" to be exegetically sound. Many pentecostal groups, for example, adopted dispensational outlooks corresponding to these charts but generally neither understood nor endorsed the underlying hermeneutic of Scripture which justified the charts.⁶

Because of the timing and success of these new prophecy conferences after the World War I, Weber notes,

By 1920 premillennialist revivalists could afford to repress their doctrine, while before then they had been careful to remember premillennialism's distinct minority status within the evangelical mainstream.⁷

If one can, as historian E. Sandeen has argued, think of "fundamentalism" as a movement in reaction to "higher criticism" from the 1860's, it was only in the 1920's that the term "fundamentalist" was invented to describe a wedding of conservative historical views of Scripture on one hand, with a pretribulation rapture, premillennialist estimate of biblical prophecy on the other.

Weber, and Lewis Wilson in his *Armageddon Now*, review the ensuing history of speculation by fundamentalist dispensationalists regarding current events through the outbreak of World War II, the founding of the state of Israel, the cold war with Russia, and the present period of increasing nuclear tensions.⁸ Of course, everyone has a right, perhaps an obligation, to try to estimate what will happen in the future. The very symbolism of the endtimes within biblical prophecy invites a yearning for more precise revelation about the future of this planet. At this point, in our judgment, fundamentalists exhibit their most serious misuse of Scripture. By insisting on a rigorous, historical type of literalistic exegesis of the Bible, they strive to secure additional information hidden from the ordinary reader in the ambiguity of apocalyptic texts. They think they can peep behind veils which were not drawn aside for the author of the book of Revelation. But this dispensationalist ap-

proach, again, in our judgment, misconstrues the nature of the "sensu literalis" of Scripture, for literal interpretation of a "symbol" must *sustain* the text as symbolic or it ceases from being, any longer, "literal." Unless a biblical text is really a secret code (perhaps of parables, cf. Lk. 8:10) which only the insiders rightly understand, then the very power of symbolic texts lies in their multi-valency, their endless ability to contribute to the imagery and imagination of faith without allowing a single translation to end their symbolic interpretation once and for all or in favor of *our own* views of the world.

Only the return of Jesus Christ could end the symbolic interpretation of these apocalyptic prophecies in the same way as did the person and work of Christ in the first-century regarding the Christian eschatological interpretations of the Hebrew Bible. A prime example of the danger in premature speculation, like that proffered by so many fundamentalist dispensationalists, can perhaps be found in the Gospel story of Peter's confession of Jesus in Matt. 16:13-23. Recall how Jesus posed the key question to his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" After other disciples volunteer various opinions, Peter responds with the confession, "You are the Christ (lit. "the Messiah"); the Son of the Living God: (v. 16). Jesus seems elated: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jona!" We next find the classic text in which Peter is given the so-called "power of the keys" and made the rock upon which a future Christian church will be built.

Then, in this new atmosphere of understanding, Jesus begins to tell his disciples for the first time that he will suffer, die and be resurrected. Immediately, the same Peter, in some sense relying upon his own orthodox eschatology chart regarding the future of the Messiah, rebuffs Jesus, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you" (v. 22b). This disciple whom Jesus had just blessed, then received the strongest rebuke ever given a disciple: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men." (v. 23) While Peter may have had the correct christology, he had a wrongly presumptuous eschatology which reduced the mystery of God's revelation to his own literalistic assessment of biblical prophecy. Modern views to the degree that they venture the same presumption, often at the price of marginalizing even the "plain" teaching of Jesus, invite the same rebuke from God who will surprise us and in whose hands the future must remain. The idea that America as a nation could tempt Jesus to return by offering him the burnt sacrifice of a world-in-nuclear-flames is a blasphemous parody of Christianity. Prophecy was never offered to sanction such an attack on creation.

The symbolism of prophecy checks those who cannot withstand surprises or mysteries deeper than any flicker of light within a crystal ball. If Augustine can describe even a creed as "a fence around a mystery," a symbolic fence around a mystery like that found in the apocalyptic writings of the Bible ought to make us more cautious than ever.

Our concern with Reagan's comments are, finally, twofold. First, the popular literature upon which he relies on is for us theologically dangerous and presumptuous, risking a rebuke from God like Christ gives to Peter. Of course, this theological critique does not depreciate either the value of apocalyptic literature in Scripture or the necessity of hope, with freedom to imagine what the future might portend. Second, an equally serious concern is that Reagan has been linking these speculative, fundamentalist views of Bible prophecy to his pragmatic vision of the world and to the role his presidential policies play in it. It is one thing to speculate about implications of Bible prophecy, it is another to take one's speculation as seriously as established facts which then can be cited in support of one's political decisions. Reagan has been cautious not to voice his position on biblical prophecy in major public speeches, but he has, at a minimum, confirmed a connection between prophecy and some of his policies to insiders in a casual but direct manner. Moreover, Reagan has openly supported the fundamentalist dispensationalist teachers, like George Otis and Jerry Falwell, who then publicize their special rapport with the President on these matters and leave no doubt that a ballot cast for Reagan is a vote for the right team in the final World Series of these last days.

In sum, not every fundamentalist dispensationalist crosses the line from speculation to confident prediction regarding contemporary political events. But the history of dispensationalists doing so is a long and disturbing one. At stake also is the most difficult issue of how religious belief ought to influence one's decisions in public political office. In 1980, a public confession of being "born again" was almost required of serious presidential contenders. We hope that the presidential election in 1984 does not become a mandate to experimentally test the dispensationalist hypothesis with a war of our own making.

¹ The description of Reagan's meeting with Boone, Otis, Bredesen, and Ellingwood is a composite drawn from published statements and especially through interviews by Joe Cuomo of WBAI, New York City. Cuomo and, at times, Larry Jones, have had extensive telephone conversations about these matters with Otis, Bredesen, and Ellingwood. References to "a reporter" primarily have Cuomo in mind. A documentary on the subject, with Larry Jones and Gerald T. Sheppard serving as consultants and commentators, has been aired several times in the New York City area and will, in a revised form, be aired internationally in the next few months. Among the many recently published journalistic investigations on Reagan and eschatology is "Does Reagan Expect a Nuclear Armageddon?" which was the lead editorial in the *Washington Post*, Sunday, April 18, 1984. It was written by Ronnie Dugger, publisher of the *Texas Observer*, with Larry Jones. Another article on the same subject by Dugger and Jones will appear in the next issue of *Mother Jones*.

² *The New York Times*, Oct. 29, 1981.

³ *God of the Oppressed*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p. 56-57.

⁴ Timothy Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism 1875-1925*, (New York: Oxford, 1979), p. 13-42.

⁵ Smith, p. 21-24

⁶ Gerald T. Sheppard, "Pentecostalism and the Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism: The Anatomy of an Uneasy Relationship," p. 1-26, in *Pastoral Problems in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement*, ed. by Harold D. Hunter (Cleveland: Church of God School of Theology, 1982). A paper delivered to the Society of Pentecostal Studies, held Nov. 3-5, 1983.

⁷ Weber, p. 52.

⁸ Cf., also, E. R. Chamberlin, *Antichrist and the Millennium*, (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1975).

Well's Introduction to Francis Schaeffer's Jeremiad

by Ronald A. Wells

When the editors of the *Bulletin* requested permission to reprint my article from the *Reformed Journal*, the late Francis A. Schaeffer had not yet commented on it. Since then his last book, *The Great Evangelical Disaster* (Crossway Books, 1983) has appeared, so the editors asked that I take that writing into account and append the following for clarification. Even though Mr. Schaeffer is no longer with us, there are many persons who have been influenced by him, and it is with them that I would engage in dialogue.

While Mr. Schaeffer and I may well have disagreed on certain matters, that disagreement always proceeded in an atmosphere

of mutual respect. I am very pleased by the high tone and personal grace of his final evaluation of my writing—a tone which is in marked contrast to the critique on the same subject offered by his son, Franky, in his book, *Bad News for Modern Man* (Crossway Books, 1984). The younger Schaeffer's book has rightly been called "an ugly book" by Gilbert Beers of *Christianity Today*. Its treatment of a host of Christian scholars and institutions is beneath criticism, if not contempt, and it will not be discussed here. Francis A. Schaeffer's *Evangelical Disaster*, while hard-hitting, is nevertheless scholarly in tone and intent, and it is at one with the character of the author whose life and was work typified by an unflinching grace.

The subject on which we disagreed was the Reformation, or, more accurately, the uses to which the Reformation may be put

for apologetic purposes. Throughout his many books, Mr. Schaeffer repeatedly used the term "the Reformation Base." To him the Reformation was the reference point from which modern society ought to be evaluated. In it he finds socio-religious propositions which are re said to be "true," and it is the abandonment of those "true" propositions which account for the malaise of our own time. In short, he asked, if we do not have an ahistorical and propositional basis to judge modern culture, the cause is lost. As he wrote in *Evangelical Disaster*, if one follows my views, "Everything the Reformation stood for is swallowed up in a morass of synthesis and relativity" (p. 118).

I need not remake the points in the above article, but would add a few points of clarification on the relationship of Renaissance humanism to the Reformation. Humanism in the Renaissance was not so much a philosophy as a methodology by which a number of philosophies—both sacred and profane—were possible. At its most basic, humanism was about the right of private conscience to govern action. Some humanists asserted this right individually and contemporaneously, others corporately and historically (what Crane Brinton called, respectively, "exuberant" and "spare" humanisms, in his classic book, *The Shaping of Modern Thought*). Exuberant humanists are clearly forerunners of the democratic individualists of modern times. Most humanists, however, and especially those religiously inclined in Northern Europe, should come under the rubric of "spare." From them, their rebellion was not against authority itself, but "wrong" authority, in their view. But, how was one to know "wrong" authority? Herein is the basis of the humanist methodology—i.e., in its insistence that a better prescription for "right" authority can be found in antique sources, hence the insistence that scholars learn Greek, Latin and Hebrew. The majority of intellectuals in the Renaissance employed the humanist methodology insofar as they judged then-contemporary culture by the standards of the past, to which they had access to the writings of past wisdom (the "classics").

In the Reformation the Protestants employed the "humanist methodology" insofar as they objected to then-current religious doctrine and practice. For most of them, their protest was not against religious authority itself, but against "wrong" authority, in their view. For them, the antique source to which they repaired, via the ancient languages, was the Christian scriptures. This led to the Protestant slogan "scripture alone," by which it was meant that the Bible was the source for Christian believing and behaving. So, most Protestants conformed, methodologically, to the spare tradition of humanism. Let it be restated that humanism was not so much a philosophy but a method by which

a number of philosophies were possible. Let it also be said that, while the methodology of referring to antique sources united the users, it is of fundamental difference that one referred to the "wisdom" of Greece and Rome and the other to the Christian scriptures as authoritative. But like any movement based on free choice and selective reading of texts, they could not agree on much more than the Bible was "authoritative" and they were no longer content to remain within the historical church. Moreover, even though Lutherans and Mennonites both were Protestants they shared very little; indeed, if Lutherans had to choose, they would find much more in common with the Roman pontiff than Menno Simons.

Much more could be said on the subject, but suffice limitations of space to say that this extremely complex and paradoxical movement known as Protestantism simply cannot be wrenched out of its time and made a repository of timeless truth. Indeed, which "truth" of the various Protestantisms (singular won't do here) can one cite if a "base" is looked for?

The pity of Schaeffer's work is that his notion of "the antithesis" blinded him to the possibilities of creative interpretations. If one cannot accept the Reformation as a propositional "base," then, in his view, one must be a relativist who accommodates to modernity. This is the unfortunate mind of fundamentalism; in its predisposition to regard things as all-or nothing—either one is "reformational" or one has accommodated to modernity. This is a false antithesis. The Christian message *does* provide an alternative hope for a fallen world, but that message is not the sole province of one expression of the Christian tradition. The Reformation *is* part of the Christian tradition and I am glad to count myself as standing in that expression. But the majority of Christians, after all, stand in other expressions of the faith, and our main evangelical writers must allow them to stand with us, as we accept them and respect their expressions of the faith. The key to understanding Christian history is its continuity, not its change. There has always been a paradoxical relationship between Christianity and culture, and—Calvinist triumphalism to the contrary notwithstanding—that was also true in the sixteenth century. To believe as I do that the Reformation was an important revitalization movement in the history of the church—but not a "base"—is to open possibilities for the gospel, not to close them. It is in that task of bringing the claims of a fully-orbed gospel to bear on modern culture that I would join with all Christians in the various expressions of the faith. The question remains, however, if Schaefferites and other sectarian neo-fundamentalists can leave aside their triumphalism and join the rest of us.

Francis Schaeffer's Jeremiad: A Review Article

by Ronald A. Wells

Social commentators from all ideological persuasions seem agreed on a central proposition: There is something very wrong indeed with modern society, especially American society. Whether it be Robert Heilbroner, speaking for the liberal humanist tradition in *The Inquiry in the Human Prospect*, or Christopher Lasch, speaking for the radical tradition in *The Culture of Narcissism*, intellectuals of note are agreed we are adrift in a sea of indecision in modern culture, that the malaise of the human spirit has nearly reached its nadir. It is no longer necessary for intellectuals to demonstrate that something is fundamentally wrong with Western culture; they assume a reader already knows that, so that the critic may merely illustrate the difficulty on the way to offering a way out.

In Francis A. Schaeffer's *A Christian Manifesto* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1981), we have a best-selling book which is another example of this, but in this instance speaking from an evangelical Christian perspective. Thoughtful Christians, such as readers of this journal, must be immediately interested in the contribution offered by Schaeffer in his latest essay.

Schaeffer's work over the past fifteen years has become a *cause celebre* in evangelical Christianity. He is hailed far and wide as the leading intellectual of the evangelical movement, and his various books, pamphlets, and films have been widely appreciated and commercially successful. Since his work arises out of the Reformed tradition of Protestantism, his latest book should be of considerable interest to people who found their religious lives in the Calvinist tradition.

Schaeffer is a Reformed Presbyterian clergyman who has lived in Switzerland for more than thirty years. With his wife Edith, he founded *L'Abri* (the shelter), a place in the Swiss Alps to which many of us have gone. During the first half of his ministry at *L'Abri*, Schaeffer was little known. His first essay, *Escape from Reason*, was not published until the late 1960s. *The God who Is There* quickly made Schaeffer a force to be reckoned with in the evangelical movement, an intellectual with an increasingly large popular following. *A Christian Manifesto* rounds out a score of Schaeffer publications over the past fifteen years on a variety of subjects, ranging from biblical criticism to art history to social comment.

I first heard Francis Schaeffer lecture while I was a graduate student in Boston in the mid-1960s. He had not yet published any-

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thing of note, and I saw him plot his now-famous "line of despair" on the chalkboard. Hearing *Escape from Reason* in lecture form was a marvelously stimulating experience for those of us (perhaps pretentiously) styling ourselves as "a new generation of evangelicals" (what Richard Quebedeaux would later call "young evangelicals").

Schaeffer had been brought to Harvard and Boston by Harold O. J. Brown, then minister to students at Park Street Church, now professor of theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Brown had persuaded some well-to-do New England evangelicals to fund a "Christian Contemporary Thought" lecture series, in which a leading Christian intellectual of evangelical commitment would be brought in for a week of lectures once a year. The first year was launched by the American university debut of Herman Dooyeweerd. Francis Schaeffer was the second year's lecturer. Now, nearly twenty years later, I see a significance in that juxtaposition: Dooyeweerd the leader and pathbreaker, Schaeffer the follower and popularizer.

What Schaeffer popularized and published abroad in his successful publication campaign (nearly a million copies of his various books have now been sold, one hears) is a notion that at first hearing would seem like an academic nuance: *the antithesis*. It, like beauty, has meaning in the eye of the beholder. A crude characterization of it would suggest an entire separation between Christian patterns of thinking and "modern" thinking. In the various versions of this, "the modern mind" can either be "secular scientific humanism" that is, the world-view emanating from the rationalism of the Enlightenment, or can even be "humanism," a world-view emanating from the Renaissance. But whether one finds the origins of modern thought in the seventeenth or fourteenth century, the main line is said to be man's displacement of God as central to the meaning of human existence. Christian thinking, it is said, proceeds from an entirely different basis from modern thinking.

The implications of this are manifold, and Christian intellectuals, especially in the Calvinist tradition, have spent a great deal of time and energy exploring the depth and breadth of this insight. Christians outside the Calvinist tradition will immediately recognize this by a less precise name, noting that since Augustine and Tertullian, Christians have been asking what the city of man has to do with the city of God, or what Athens has to do with Jerusalem.

A Christian Manifesto should be seen in this context. The book is of interest because in it the leading intellectual popularizer of evangelically motivated "antithesis" has laid down the gauntlet to modern American culture and states flatly that things have gone too far. He invites Christians into a headlong confrontation with the institutions of contemporary society. In the remainder of this essay I want to offer a description of Schaeffer's main argument and then a critical analysis of it.

Schaeffer's main point is to encourage Christians to see the relationship between ideas and behavior in modern culture. He suggests that for too long Christians have lost sight of the forest while dealing with the trees. In doing a form of intellectual history in this way, Schaeffer asks the Christian community to relate selected matters of particular concern to the "world-view" of our time, to what Carl Becker called "the climate of opinion."

Those readers familiar with Schaeffer's earlier works already know the outline: Humanism has become the dominant mode of thinking and acting in modern society; in founding institutions on an anthropocentric world-view, society has effectively abolished truth. On this view, Schaeffer says the theocentric world-view of Christianity has been totally obliterated in nations like the USSR, where "humanism" is said to reign supreme. The United States is almost a similarly totalitarian state because the basis for behavior and belief is similarly founded on a world-view that systematically excludes God-consciousness and upholds the "secular religion" that the world is "in reality" only material plus energy, shaped by impersonal chance. As Schaeffer said in one of his earlier books, "the gulf is fixed" between these two world-views, and therefore between the types of social and political institutions required by Christians and non-Christians. While Schaeffer realizes that most Christians already understand this in their purely "religious" lives, he encourages them to extend that understanding to all aspects of life.

Within this framework Schaeffer illustrates the depth to which modern society has fallen because of the "humanist religion." Given

his prior interest in abortion it is not surprising that many of the examples given have to do with the Supreme Court and "right to life" issues. But there are other areas of concern as well, most notably the place of Christian schools in secular society, and especially the teaching of evolution or creation in them, and in the public schools. Readers might wonder if, in Schaeffer's view, the cause is not already lost. The answer is that it is *almost* lost to the dominance of humanism, but that victory might be snatched from the jaws of defeat if Christians were to *act now*. It is in this context that he lays out the Calvinist-Reformational notions of God-given law, and the responsibility of Christians to resist the state, to reform it, even to overthrow it if society diverges too far from the requirements set down in God's law.

Shifting now from description to analysis, we must ask if Schaeffer's characterizations of modern society and his remedies are to be accepted and followed. My answer to both is a qualified no. While I laud Schaeffer's attempt to encourage Christians to realize that ideas have consequences, and that religion is related to life, he has offered his work with such sophomoric bombast and careless simplicity that it is very difficult to endorse his characterizations of modern society, much less the remedies he offers.

Readers must realize the difficulty from here on in this essay: I am an academic intellectual, Schaeffer is a popularizer who, by his own testimony, is not a philosopher but an "evangelist." While academic and evangelical work are both honorable callings, they are not the same thing, I take it that Schaeffer, in *A Christian Manifesto*, believes himself to be offering a serious critique of modern society, and I intend to take him seriously and critically. If a reader might wonder what "side" I am on ideologically, I affirm that I am on the Christian side, but a side which does its work with care and honesty, which values truth above ideological solidarity. What follows, therefore, is not mere academic condescension but an utterly serious look at some of the main points of Schaeffer's argument. My critique will question Schaeffer on the meaning of humanism and on the meaning of America.

If humanism be the enemy, it would be helpful to delineate just what humanism is. Yet here is exactly the point: no historian will accept an ahistorical, propositional definition. This has been Schaeffer's difficulty throughout his work, although most notable in *How Should We Then Live?* When "humanism" arose in the context of the Renaissance, it offered a methodology by which persons could challenge "authority" in any realm of life. First artists, then literary critics, then historians, then theologians, and finally political thinkers used a method whereby they could rebel against the authority of the "medieval synthesis." Whether in art, literature, history, theology, or statecraft, persons acted "humanistically" if they asserted the right of private conscience over an authority that prescribed a way of doing things. (Schaefferites would do well to read Crane Brinton's *The Shaping of Modern Thought* on this point.)

The religious authorities in the sacred medieval society of Christendom realized what a threat "humanism" was. The church saw the potential danger of the freedom of conscience, and wondered where it would all lead. I suppose it has led to the sorry state of things Schaeffer illustrates. So, what is my critique of Schaeffer? His confusion rests on his inability to see Protestantism as the religious form of Renaissance humanism. To be sure, Protestants *said* that their consciences were informed by the Bible, on which authority alone rested ("*sola scriptura*"). Yet we all know of Protestant inability to agree on what the Bible said, or even on what kind of book it is.

In his triumphalism, Schaeffer cannot see the ironic and tragic in the Protestant movement, because he refuses to see it as an aspect of the humanist movement itself. In his various works Schaeffer repeatedly invokes the Reformation as the answer to the problem of humanism, when in reality it is part of the problem. I do not say that these religious humanists were "wrong" in invoking the primacy of private conscience, but I accept that when they did so they, among others, loosed a methodology on the world that resulted in modernity.

Schaeffer is half-right, but half-truths are sometimes more dangerous than falsehoods. What Schaeffer must come to grips with some time is the tragic and ironic entrapment of Protestantism's development at a time when a new methodology was developing

for other reasons in other aspects of culture. He cannot have it both ways: He cannot lament the excesses of a methodology and at the same time offer critique on the basis of the religious formulation of that methodology.

Throughout *A Christian Manifesto* Schaeffer implicitly endorses what historiographers call "the Whig theory of history." This view of history has had several incarnations, and the details vary, but in general it means that right religion and liberty are on the same side against wrong religion and tyranny. The Anglo-Saxon peoples are especially blessed in this regard, and it is the Protestant nations of northwest Europe and their overseas extensions that are cited as the righteous nations. (At one point Schaeffer becomes explicit, and invokes Northern Europe in this context, and goes on to name the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.) But it is for

revolutionary party, advocating quite different visions of society. As John Adams said in writing the Massachusetts state constitution, the question was whether or not the government would be "a government of law or of men." While Adams clearly advocated "law," for Jefferson the meaning of America and of its revolution was that it would be "a government of men."

It will come as no surprise to readers that the one main sign of hope Schaeffer sees (an "open window," in his terms) is the present-day conservative successes in American politics. One of the founding principles of the neo-conservative faith is the doctrine of return to the principles of the Founding Fathers. What this simplistic view of past reality cannot accept is that the same divisions which bedevil our society were there then as well. Nostalgia will not help us out of our present malaise, nor will rewriting American history.

Schaeffer's confusion rests on his inability to see Protestantism as the religious form of Renaissance humanism.

the United States that the superlatives are reserved in this view of history, and Schaeffer seems to have swallowed the theory whole.

It has been said that the discovery of America was the cause of the greatest liberation of the European imagination. As the Renaissance-humanist world-view drove the voyagers west to go east (they defied the "biblical" authority of a flat earth), the discovery of the Western hemisphere was, as C. S. Lewis wrote, a great disappointment. But, soon that disappointment changed to anticipation, and Thomas More's *Utopia* was the first mature reflection in the Old World on the potential of the New. The general idealism in Europe that mankind could begin over again was widely shared, in both secular and religious circles.

Once again the Protestant movement was not immune from the impulses of its time, and, as is well known, Calvinists came to the New World early in the seventeenth century. Winthrop's sermon, "The Model of Christian Charity," offers the interpretative paradigm for American history: The meaning of America was to consist in "building the city on the hill," in which the light to the Gentiles would shine, and in respect of which, all would one day turn and be converted.

With this model of early American development clearly in mind, Schaeffer turns to the American Revolution. True to Whig theory, right religion and liberty were arrayed against wrong religion and tyranny. Schaeffer correctly notes the evangelical impetus behind the Revolution, and he endorses it. But should it be endorsed? As Nathan Hatch has written in *The Sacred Cause of Liberty*, many evangelicals did believe that there was a British conspiracy against liberty, especially after the passage of the Quebec Act in 1774. While we might have empathy for these evangelical revolutionaries in their context, surely they were deluded if they believed that an "absolute tyranny" was about to be imposed. (Here the Whig theory argues against itself. It was supposed to be the Anglo-Saxon peoples who were on the side of right religion and liberty. How do the British suddenly become "absolute-tyrants?") Surely they acted on a pretentious view of themselves and their cause if they believed they alone were protecting the right of society.

As to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, Schaeffer is similarly muddled. The Declaration of Independence is an Enlightenment document, whereas the constitution opposes the spirit of both the Enlightenment and the Declaration in requiring liberty to be ordered by law. Once again, Schaeffer is half-right. Jefferson was thoroughly baptized in the Enlightenment faith, but John Adams was not. Of the several books on this subject, Schaefferites would do well to consult Merrill Peterson, *Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue*. As Richard Hofstadter once said, "The Constitution of the United States was based on the philosophy of Hobbes and the religion of Calvin." Schaeffer is on to something fundamental in suggesting the unique character of the constitution. But his argument is substantially flawed by suggesting a moral-legal consensus among "the Founding Fathers." There were two sets of Founding Fathers, because there were two factions in the

In fact, Schaeffer's book stands in a long tradition of American history, and is a good example of a literary form which Sacvan Bercovitch calls "the jeremiad," in his brilliant book, *American Jeremiad*. There is a long history of Calvinists preaching the doctrine of return to the vision of Winthrop. In the seventeenth century this form was well developed. The theme is familiar: The people had betrayed the faith, had fallen from grace, but there was still time to return and re-capture the vision. This theme was reasserted in the Revolution, and at regular intervals throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Schaeffer conforms to one important aspect of the genre of the latter-day jeremiad: the enemy within. All the vision that Schaeffer sees as "the base" of American society was founded by immigrants from Protestant countries. The story begins to turn wrong when substantial Catholic immigration begins in the 1840s. While he does not name the Irish specifically, he suggests that 1848 is a turning year, a year in which (of course) migration from famine-ridden Ireland began. He returns to this theme in the conclusion.

Here we have a vestigial remain of that virulent Protestant disease: Anglo-Saxon anti-Catholicism. I am appalled to see Francis Schaeffer appearing to endorse this. Surely a person like Schaeffer, who knows that ideas have consequences, must know that in endorsing such views he is endorsing by extension some of the most undemocratic acts of intolerance in American history, acts of which Protestants must be ashamed. It is too late to be nostalgic about an Anglo-Saxon America.

In the 1950s, when political and religious conservatism had its last revival, several scholars took note of it; and some important books were written which give an analytical perspective on such conservatism in America. Richard Hofstadter wrote of "the paranoid style" in American history (neither Hofstadter, nor I mentioning it, mean to accuse anyone of the clinical phenomenon called paranoia). One nevertheless observes that there have been many movements—ideologically centered on evangelical Protestantism—which fit the typology of social paranoia. The argument proceeds as follows: The precious heritage is about to be lost, both because of the indifference of the brethren but also because of enemies within. While happily falling short of an accusation of "conspiracy" (which would have fit the paranoid style perfectly), Schaeffer nevertheless believes that institutions which specialize in the collection and dissemination of information (universities and the media) are an informal league with the courts to foist the secular-humanist mind onto the American people.

I do not endorse American social behavior and belief as it is. As a committed Christian, I believe my religious principles require me to assert that there is something quite wrong with American society. I share Francis Schaeffer's sense of urgency about matters as diverse as "right to life" and "the battle for the mind." Yet Schaeffer's outrage does not mention much at all about what I believe to be equally important questions—the arms race, institutional racism, the inequities of industrial capitalism. Schaeffer's outrage, and his will-

ingness to be civilly disobedient, seem to be rather shallow in not taking these important matters into account.

Rather than "A Christian Manifesto," Schaeffer's book should have been called "A Fundamentalist Manifesto," because it bears all the marks of that unfortunate movement. Writing in this journal on the "new fundamentalism" (*RJ*, February 1982), George Marsden suggested, in a memorable phrase, that "the Moral Majority turns out to be something of Dooyeweerdianism gone to seed." If that be true, a reading of evangelical fundamentalism's leading thinker will help us understand why. It is cruelly ironic that evangelicalism's philosopher, who spent so much time on "the antithesis," winds

up a synthesizer after all. In this book we have a vintage blend of evangelical orthodoxy and the lore of one version of American history. This is a bitter recognition for some of us who, fifteen years ago, thought Francis Schaeffer was a leading light of a new movement in evangelicalism. With his atrophied view of "the antithesis" and his chauvinistic Americanism, Francis Schaeffer becomes less appealing the more he writes.

EDITOR'S NOTE: In a subsequent article (*Reformed Journal* 5/83) Ronald A. Wells responded to some critiques and misunderstandings of this article. Interested readers may wish to consult this piece.

Early Christian Attitudes to War and Military Service: A Selective Bibliography

David M. Scholer

- Bainton, R. H. "The Early Church and War," *HThR* 39 (1946), 189–212; reprinted in *The Church, the Gospel and War* (ed. R. M. Jones; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), 75–92, and as "The Pacifism of the Early Church," Chapter 5 in *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation* (New York/Nashville: Abingdon, 1960), 66–84. One of the first of modern (Post World War 2) attempts to deal with the question. A basic article by a prominent church historian.
- Birley, E. "The Religion of the Roman Army: 1895–1977," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt—ANRW II*, 16.2 (1978), 1506–41. While Birley does not deal directly with the question of early Christian attitudes, he deals indirectly with the question since part of the debate is the level of religious obligations assumed by soldiers. Best recent treatment of subject; written at a very technical, advanced level.
- Cadbury, H. J. "The Basis of Early Christian Antimilitarism," *JBL* 37 (1918), 66–94. A Quaker, early 20th century work. The arguments from many older articles (such as this one) have been picked up and refined, so in that sense they are primarily of historical interest.
- Cadoux, C. J. *The Early Christian Attitude to War* (London: Headley, 1919; reprinted New York: Gordon, 1975; reprinted New York: Seabury, 1982). Classic, but still important as a particular expression. For the sake of appreciating the early form of the argument, Cadoux and Harnack are the major tomes on the question, both fairly technical. Cadoux presents a very scholarly approach, but is operating somewhat out of pacifist assumptions (he has a commitment to argue that the church not be involved in military service).
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- Case, S. J. "Religion and War in the Graeco-Roman World," *American Journal of Theology* 19 (1915), 179–99. By major scholar in early church history at Chicago. Of historical interest due to the date of publication and prominence of the author.
- Crossan, J. D. "Jesus and Pacifism," *No Famine in the Land: Studies in Honor of John L. McKenzie* (ed. J. W. Flanagan and A. W. Robinson; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 195–208. Important essay because written by a modern gospel scholar.
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- _____. "The Nature of Early Christian Pacifism" *Hibbert Journal* 55 (1956–57), 340–49.
- _____. "The Pacifism of the Early Church," Chapter 3 in *The Politics of Love: The New Testament and Non-Violent Revolution* (Cambridge: James Clarke/Greenwood, SC: Attic Press, n.d. [ca. 1974]), 53–67. Ferguson is clearly, polemically a pacifist. A scholar of the Greco-Roman empire, he writes in Greco-Roman religion and is trying to expose some of the data that the church was pacifistic. Of his articles listed here, this is the most important.
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- Gabris, K. "The Question of Militarism at the Time of the Apostolic Fathers," *Communio Viatorum* 20 (1977), 227–32. Gabris deals with very limited fund of passages.
- Gero, S. "Miles Gloriosus: The Christian and Military Service According to Tertullian," *Church History* 39 (1970), 285–98. Gero, an early church historian, attempts a rereading of Tertullian, whose evidence is essential in the discussion. Very technical article, which critiques both pacifist and non-pacifist sides.
- Grant, R. M. "War—Just, Holy, Unjust—in Hellenistic and Early Christian Thought," *Augustinianum* 20 (1980), 173–89. This article summarizes pagan and patristic literature on the theory and actual conduct of war. One implication of the article is that Christians often opposed the way in which war was conducted more than the concept of war itself. The article does not deal with the "pacifist" issue in the early Church.
- Harnack, A. *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries* (trans. and intro. D. M. Gracie; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981 [1905]). Harnack isn't afraid to acknowledge that the church got into the military, even though he thinks it wasn't a good thing. First major collection of the evidence in modern times. Harnack leans in a non-pacifist direction. Pacifists think Harnack has overstated his case.
- _____. "The Spread of Christianity in the Army," Book IV, Chapter 3, sec. 3 in *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the first Three Centuries, Vol. II* (2nd ed.; trans. and ed. J. Moffatt; London: Williams and Northgate/New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), 52–64. This entry covers only one particular point from the previous entry.
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A New Mission Agency in the United Methodist Church

By James Pyke

A significant and controversial event took place on November 2, 1983, in the life of the United Methodist Church. On that day in St. Louis, thirty-four ministers and lay persons unanimously voted to create an alternate mission sending agency. They represented some twenty conferences and all five jurisdictions of the Church.

The assembled ministers needed only a minimum amount of time to arrive at their decision. A paper by Dr. Gerald H. Anderson, a leading mission theologian of the Church, was ready; some vigorous opinions were voiced; but there was no doubt in anyone's mind that the need for the new agency was crucial. The discussion centered around the structure of the new organization, the possible reactions from the establishment of the Church and the immediate steps that had to be taken to bring the agency into being. As the news of the meeting spread across the Church, the foremost question in everyone's mind was: Why do we need a second mission agency?

The short answer to that question is that a growing number of persons, particularly the evangelically-minded, were becoming increasingly frustrated with the philosophy and the policies of the official mission agency of the denomination, the General Board of Global Ministries. A brief historical sketch will illustrate the problem.

New Direction

The stated purpose of Mission as set forth in the Discipline of the Church (which is normative for theology and polity) is: "The World Division exists to confess Jesus Christ as divine Lord and Savior to all people in every place, testifying to His redemptive and liberating power, and calling all people to Christian obedience and discipleship."¹ In contrast to this, there began to emerge in the late sixties and early seventies what came to be known as "Liberation Theology." Springing from Latin American roots, it emphasized the socio-political aspects of the Gospel. This perspective, reinforced by the strongly perceived nationalism of the Third World churches,

captured the attention of mission executives of most of the mainline churches. For example, in an article that appeared in the house organ of the GBGM² of the United Methodist Church, written by Dr. Tracey K. Jones, the General Secretary of the Board, made the following points: no longer should the Christian mission emphasize Jesus as Savior, or men and women as either "saved" or "lost," but rather Christ as Lord over all men and that all men are to become a "new humanity" in Jesus Christ. The arena of missionary activity should be the liberating of persons from degradation, war and hunger and empowerment of the weak and disinherited.

Those in the Church who adhered more closely to the classical Wesleyan tradition began to fear that a new concept of mission was taking shape, what they started to refer to as "Missions without Salvation." To them it appeared that this "new look" in missions was going to vitiate the very basis of the Gospel as they found it in the Scriptures. They discerned that under the new rubric, mission was to proceed from God's sovereign activity in the world rather than from Christ's Great Commission. The goal seemed to be a this-worldly one of perfect peace and prosperity for mankind. The "new look" meant participating with God in His intervention in world events to overcome evil institutions. To the evangelicals, this meant that the Church was no closer to God than the world, and that the frontier between the Church and the world, between the "saved" and the "lost" had been erased. In this view God no longer held out a universal call to mankind to cross the frontier between death and life. This, according to the opposition, was a "beautiful but unBiblical" idea, for it allowed no understanding of God's gracious provision of salvation and man's response to it. They say the new concept was making Christ Lord only without first being Savior. He was a "Man for Others," the Lord of history with His Incarnation nothing more than His presence within that history.

To Methodists of a more orthodox persuasion, this new trend seemed to be leading the mission of the Church to a place where

there would be no longer any relevance in proclaiming the Gospel to non-Christians. If mission is seen as participation in God's mission proclaimed as His active engagement in history, specifically in the revolutionary movements of our time, then the Church should be engaged in these movements. If God is operating in industrial relationships, economic development, the rejection of political domination and the promotion of human dignity, then mission is identified with social change. The world, not the Word of God, would be determining the agenda of mission. The axiom emerging seemed to be, "Revolution equals liberation equals salvation" (quite unacceptable to the evangelicals). From their reading of Scripture, they say the degradation of society exists not primarily in externals but in the will of man. The real problem of man's sin was in his ability to take any structure, however good and ideal, and twist it into an instrument of evil.

New Policy

In a policy statement put out by the Committee on Missionary Personnel of the Board in November of 1972 it was stated that in view of the global situation the church's mission could no longer be primarily concerned with individual salvation and the world beyond, but with participation in the liberation and development of peoples. The entire statement, having to do with the selection and training of missionary candidates and the implementation of personnel policy, was couched in terms of liberation as God's activity in history and mission as the redress of inequities in society and the amelioration of the existing conditions of poverty, cruelty and injustice.

The evangelical response to this statement was to explicitly disagree with the relegation of individual salvation to the dustbin of mission. To them it was precisely where all Christian mission should begin, though it should not end there. To start anywhere else was to misunderstand the Gospel as reconciliation of man to God. True liberation, in their view, was based squarely in the redemptive Gospel of Christ and a life-changing encounter with Him, which should then be followed by all possible efforts to uplift the conditions of human existence. In other words Christ is Savior first and only in that context can He become truly Lord. It is "witness" and then "service" that draws people to the Person of Christ and builds the lasting Kingdom. The two cannot be separated, nor should they be indefinitely reversed.

Evangelical Missions Council

Because the trend seemed to show no signs of slowing down or halting, a large group of United Methodist Evangelicals in February of 1974 met in Dallas, Texas, to found the "Evangelical Missions Council" with the purpose of giving voice to their concerns and thereby hoping to open a dialogue with the GBGM. They were alarmed not only by the change in philosophy of the Board, but by the fact that United Methodist world mission was going down by about one million dollars and one hundred missionaries annually. They believed that the Board had departed from the stated "Aims of Mission" set forth in the Discipline. They were distressed by the setting aside of the purpose to "evoke in all people the personal response of repentance and faith through which by God's grace, they may find newness of life."³

As evidence of their concern they noted a list of "Items of Major Import to the Board of Global Ministries." Under this title items such as the following were highlighted:

- The need for political campaign reform
- A call for withdrawal of Texaco and Standard Oil of California from Angola and Namibia
- Continued aid to Indochina and drought-stricken West Africa
- The necessity for tight federal regulation of strip-mining
- Support of the Equal Rights Amendment
- Aid to refugees from the Chilean government
- Watergate and a call for Nixon's impeachment
- American Indians and Wounded Knee.⁴

To the persons at the Dallas meeting, the fact that there were no items of evangelistic import in the list was explainable only by the judgment that the philosophy of the Board had radically altered. Indeed it was referred to as being indistinguishable from the "Board of Social Concerns." During the years following the creation of the

Evangelical Missions Council considerable correspondence, dialogue and face-to-face conversations were carried on between leaders of the opposing groups. In all the meetings and conversations, however, the Evangelicals did not feel any real concern on the part of the Board for their point-of-view and discerned no change at all in the direction that it was taking.

In a promotional booklet, "Why Global?" put out by the Board in early 1975 there appeared the following sentences: "The focus (of mission) is shifting away from confrontation between Christian and non-Christian, and toward cooperation between Christians and persons of other living faiths. In the new historical situation (mission) means putting our witness in the context of our work together in common human concerns."⁵

In responding to this position an editorial, in the Good News magazine commented that "conversion to Jesus Christ is noticeable by its absence. In its place missions becomes dialogue and human betterment. . . . Many Evangelicals believe that the philosophy of syncretism and universalism expressed so clearly in 'Why Global' spells the death of missions."⁶ It must be assumed that many traditionally-minded United Methodists reading that editorial would have nodded vigorous agreement.

Continuing Divergence

To see how little the philosophy of the GBGM was affected by the concerns of the Evangelicals ten years after the World Outlook article one needs only to turn to a statement of the World Division Criteria Committee. The normative declaration is: "All commitments, actions and decisions, of the World Division will be examined in the light of a fundamental commitment to advocacy and support of the empowerment of the poor and oppressed."⁷ In a seven-point outline of how this commitment was to be contextually worked out, from theological declaration to funding, from program to missionary personnel, the "poor and oppressed" are specifically referred to.

Evangelicals, believing that the main task of the Church should be cooperation with God in His purpose to reconcile the world to Himself, were convinced that the Methodist denomination as represented by its boards and agencies was not fulfilling that purpose. For some years voices had been raised in favor of an alternate mission sending agency. When the continuing dialogue with the GBGM was not producing any results, these views began to be more and more heeded. The aspects of the Board policies that concerned the Evangelicals seemed to be growing steadily worse rather than better.

As evidence of this, it was pointed out that the missionary force of the Methodist Church was continuing to decline with the likelihood of reaching 300 by 1985, which was the Board's own prediction. Increasingly, United Methodists of whatever age who felt the call of God on their lives for missionary service were having to find other avenues of service, primarily with non-denominational boards such as Wycliffe Bible Translators, OMS International, World Gospel Mission and many others. Millions of dollars once available for Methodist missions had been and were now being channeled beyond denominational boundaries. In effect the GBGM by their policies were forcing many local voices had been raised in favor of an alternate mission sending agency. When the continuing dialogue with the GBGM was not producing any results, these views began to be more and more heeded. In fact, the aspects of the Board policies that concerned the Evangelicals seemed to be growing steadily worse rather than better.

Awareness of Continuing Need

Furthermore, national leaders of the Church overseas had been and were making repeated requests for missionary helpers. In response, a number of churches and some Conferences were entering into agreements with overseas churches and sending their own missionaries. In the face of this situation Evangelicals felt that there should more properly be some legitimate organization withing their own denomination under which volunteers could go and requests from national churches met.

Evangelicals and others were also acutely aware that there are large segments of the world's population, an estimated three billion persons including almost 17,000 people-groups, where there is no Methodist presence, nor indeed any indigenous church whatever.

Even where there is a national church, in most instances it is neither strong nor mature enough to evangelize the vast numbers of their own peoples who have no knowledge of the Christian Gospel. They are concerned also that missionary outreach needs to employ the new technologies, such as radio and TV, available in our day for the spread of the Gospel.

Decision Point

Finally after almost fifteen years had passed since the first alarm signal had gone up and the gap between the two sides had increasingly widened, those in the classical Wesleyan tradition came to the point of decision. Both sides recognized that the problem was one of theology, and theologies do not change easily. The opposition claims that the Board staffers have redefined the central theological terms and given them new meaning. If salvation is deliverance from all forms of oppression instead of from sin, social betterment instead of reconciliation to God through the atonement of Christ, then dialogue becomes, like ships passing in the night. Hence, for the Evangelicals an alternate (or at least a supplemental mission agency) becomes a necessity. A contributing factor and perhaps the final catalyst was the election in September, 1983, of Peggy Billings to head the World Division of the Board; she was a person long associated with controversial social action. The opposition has pointed out that as one of several precedents this same situation arose in the Anglican Church almost two centuries ago; an alternate agency was formed⁸ and the two have co-existed throughout these many years.

Thus it was that on November 28, 1983, the St. Louis meeting created a "supplemental mission agency." Dr. Anderson, Director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, in an address to a group of Dallas-area pastors meeting the previous week, had indicated that he had decided to go public after eight years of painful but loyal silence. The reasons he gave for his decision were similar to those of many others in the Evangelical community: The Board's theological imprecision, the imbalance of its policies and the fact that it had been unresponsive to the pluralism of United Methodism. The convenor of the founding meeting was Dr. L. D. Thomas, pastor of the First United Methodist Church of Tulsa, Oklahoma, who was elected chairman of a steering committee, to work out the details of the new organization.

Establishment Reaction

Predictably the reaction from the establishment of the Church was adverse. The President of the Board of Global Ministries, Bishop Jesse R. DeWitt of Chicago labelled the new Society a violation of church rules and a discredit to the entire system. The fear was that the new agency would "further erode established patterns of giving . . . and was a threat to the administrative order of the whole church." Another bishop, Edsel A. Establishment of the Michigan area, stated that in his opinion, the action was "not only misleading and untimely but illegal, particularly because 'United Methodist' is in the name."⁹ Only the General Conference, it was pointed out, had the authority to establish a general program agency.

All the bishops of the five regional jurisdiction expressed concern about the founding of the Society, but some also voiced strong dissatisfaction with the policies and philosophy of the GBGM, citing the long-term "unresponsiveness" of that body to the concerns of the Church at large. A statement issued by the bishops of the South Central jurisdiction called attention to "prolonged efforts by various United Methodists to secure serious consideration of a more representative mission program." They urged the GBGM to take steps to re-evaluate its mission philosophy in light of what "honest critics" are saying. The new Society, they stated, "reflects the deep and longstanding concern of many United Methodist people about the philosophy, policy and program and some of the personnel of the GBFM, some of which concerns we ourselves share."¹⁰ They went on to say that they were of the opinion that the present crisis was very serious, that it represented a far wider base of concern than any one segment of the Church's membership, and that it should be addressed with integrity by the Board before critical deterioration of denominational support should occur. At a December

29th meeting of the Steering committee, the Rev. H. T. Maclin, who was a regional staff representative of the Board, was elected as Executive Director of the new Society. He had served as a missionary in Africa and Asia and had been with the Board since 1953. The name for the new agency adopted at the meeting is: "The Mission Society for United Methodists." Rev. Maclin indicated that he had left the Board for three primary reasons: Complaints from national leaders that the Board was not sending the number or kind of missionaries they wanted, the constant frustration of many United Methodists who feel that the Board was not sensitive to their views, and that in Anglicanism the two mission agencies had added vigor and zeal to their mission effort and had not in any way diminished the Christian witness.

The 1984 General Conference, marking the Bicentennial of American Methodism, was held in Baltimore, in May, and there had been considerable speculation about how it would deal with the new Mission Society. A week before the Conference began, the Council of Bishops adopted a long report on the relationship of the United Methodist Church with the World and National Councils of Churches. At one point in the report the bishops observed that the staff of the General Board of Global Ministries had a "reluctance to be genuinely open to the consideration of other or additional perspectives. As a result, something of a 'siege' mentality was evident, namely that the Board (believes it is) correct in its position and is prepared to utilize what resources may be necessary to defend the core and perimeters of that position."¹¹

In his Episcopal Address on the first day of General Conference, Bishop William Cannon of North Carolina, representing his fellow bishops, stated, "We support the Board of Global Ministries as the sole agency of missionaries and disapprove the organization of another sending agency in competition with it. However, in fairness to the concerns of those who feel the necessity for a second agency, we urge that measures be taken to assure our people that evangelization and evangelism are a vital part of the philosophy and practice of mission by the Board."¹²

In the Conference itself the legislative committee on Global Ministries dealt specifically with a petition from a local church in New York state requesting that the General Conference recognize the new mission society as an alternative mission-sending agency. There was an overflow crowd to hear the committee debate the matter. In his statement before the committee Rev. Maclin emphasized that his body did not ask for official recognition and might, in fact, prefer not to have it should it be extended.¹³ In the end the committee voted overwhelmingly to support the Board and disapprove of another sending-agency, which action was confirmed by the Conference in plenary session.

Notwithstanding, Rev. Maclin, in a private conversation, with this writer indicated that he was frequently stopped in the halls and corridors of the Conference by delegates and Bishops alike who affirmed the establishment of the new Society and encouraged him and the Society to "keep the pressure on" the Board! In fact, he said he was "overwhelmed" with the amount of verbal support he was given, to the point where he stated that he felt that the new Society had been given "defacto recognition." In any event, "The Mission Society for United Methodists" is fact of life and is likely to remain so.

¹ *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1980*, The United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1980, p. 496.

² "World Outlook," April, 1969.

³ Quoted in "Opening Statement," p. 6, Evangelical Missions Council founding meeting, February 6, 1974.

⁴ World Division Newsletter, Number 30.

⁵ "Why Global," p. 17.

⁶ "Good News" magazine, Spring, 1975, p. 48.

⁷ September 20-21, 1979.

⁸ "The Church Missionary Society," 1799.

⁹ "The United Methodist Reporter," Baltimore Conference edition, "The Circuit Rider," January 27, 1984.

¹⁰ "The Circuit Rider," January 27, 1984.

¹¹ "Good News," Forum for Scriptural Christianity, Inc., Wilmore, KY, May/June 1984, p. 39.

¹² "The Circuit Rider," Baltimore Conference edition of "The United Methodist Reporter," May, 1984, p. 3.

¹³ *Ibid.* May, 11, 1984, p. 2.

The Challenge of Missions History

by Richard V. Pierard

The Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals sponsored the colloquium "The Challenge of Missions History" at the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois on March 16, 1984 as part of its series on research topics in the history of evangelical Christianity. The featured speakers were Professors Charles Weber of Wheaton College and Robert E. Frykenberg of the University of Wisconsin. Weber, who recently completed a doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago on the Baptist mission in Cameroon and is now working on the Women's Missionary Union, discussed various materials to be found in mission archives in general and the rich collection of the collection of the Graham Center in particular and explained opportunities for using them in missions history research. Among these are photographs, denominational and agency magazines, correspondence, surveys done by missionaries, and oral history interviews. Scholars can view mission organizations in terms of the domestic scenes in which they were rooted, assess how the missions functioned within the indigenous societies where they worked, and carry out comparative historical studies of mission endeavors in different cultures, various societies active among a same people, and church-colonial regime national state relations.

Professor Frykenberg, a prolific writer and leading scholar of the history of South India, examined the problems and prospects in writing the history of world missions. He underscored the general lack of understanding which most people in the North Atlantic community have about evangelical Christianity outside of the West and the consequences of this for scholarship. This factor and the enormous complexities of today's world gravitate against the possibility that we will ever again see a generalist historian of evangelicalism like Kenneth Scott Latourette or Julius Richter. He stressed the need for more ready access to primary sources and put forth

the intriguing thesis that a direct correlation exists between the antiquity of a mission organization and the quality of its archival collection. He said the older groups tend to have better archival policies and their materials are more adequately preserved and accessible than is the case with those more recently formed. This is important because agencies which are less concerned about preserving the record of their origins and development probably do very little critical thinking about their own ministry. Their work tends to be more promotional in nature and accounts of their history propagandistic, and when scholarship is directed toward this, it is more airy or theoretical and less empirical. He urged that missionary endeavors be studied as part of an indigenous culture on its own terms, as well as part of the wider history of religions and general history of mankind, and that it be done in a wholistic, interdisciplinary manner. The legacies of poor historical understanding can be seen in the suffering of Christians in Uganda and elsewhere, the Christianization of alien, pagan concepts, and the factionalism that flows from the quarreling and competition among the different mission societies.

At a banquet which followed, the ISAE co-directors, Professors Mark A. Noll of Wheaton College and Nathan O. Hatch of the University of Notre Dame, spelled out the achievements and goals of the group (currently funded by the Lilly Endowment), and President Kenneth Kantzer of Trinity College, Deerfield delineated the benefits which evangelicals may derive from the study of history. Also, ISAE has inaugurated a news letter, *Evangelical Studies Bulletin*, and will bring together the leading scholars on the life and thought of Jonathan Edwards in a national conference on October 24-26, 1984. For further information write ISAE administrator Joel Carpenter, Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187.

Sixth Evangelical Women's Conference

by Linda Mercadante

The Evangelical Women's Caucus International is now ten years old. As the sixth plenary conference convened at Wellesley College, it was clear that this would be a time of stock-taking with an eye toward the future, as well as a time of celebration for the careful scholarship, personal support and international networking that has come out of this diverse group in the past decade.

Organized by the Greater Boston Chapter of EWCI, the five-day conference drew some 500 participants from across the United States and Canada, as well as Norway, the Philippines, Australia and Panama. The theme "Free Indeed—The Fulfillment of our Faith" was examined from a variety of angles, from the biblical and theological to the psychological and social action perspectives. But rather than begin with a didactic or exhortative message, the conference began far more effectively with a dramatic one-woman play based on the life and writings of the medieval anchoress Lady Julian of Norwich. Written by J. Janda and performed by Roberta Nobleman, the play made clear that Julian's struggle to live true to the voice of God was no easier, nor less rewarding, than our own.

Fortified by this message, the participants began the round of plenary sessions and workshops that would last for the remaining four days. But as the week progressed, it became clear that this would not be simply a repetition of the past conferences, where the necessary hard grappling with the liberating message of the Gospel was accomplished largely through educational means and personal interaction. This type of activity was of course, a significant part of the sixth plenary conference, but in addition the membership of EWCI began to ask through the week, "Where do we go from here?" The Evangelical Women's Caucus began in 1975 as an outgrowth of Evangelicals for Social Action. Since that time it has successfully grown to international proportions, has nurtured a fel-

lowship of women and men in local chapters across North America, and has been especially effective in encouraging scholarship on the issue of the biblical warrant for liberation from gender-role stereotypes, toward the goal of the free and full service of God. But this year people were asking whether it was indeed time to expand the horizons and the outreach of EWCI. The two directions proposed included, first, taking a stand on social issues grow out of or impinge upon biblical feminism, such as speaking against militarism and for peace, and second, expanding the mission to include service to disadvantaged women here or in other lands.

The themes chosen by the various plenary speakers seemed to converge on the necessity of reasserting the primary goals of EWCI, but also possibly redefining them to include a new element of "risk-taking." Ruth Schmidt, president of Agnes Scott College, urged members to expand their vision to include "macro charity." Attorney Betsy Cunningham explained that since "for many of us the choice was feminist ideology" or a repressive brand of theology until they discovered Christian feminism, we must now use this new-found freedom to serve as a global political force for peace, justice and liberty.

Charles Willie, professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, insisted that "persons who wish to be free must cease cooperating in their own oppression" and directed sights toward the suffering servant tradition, the path of courage and compassion. Kathleen Storrie, assistant professor of sociology, Saskatoon, warned of the organizational strength of the "new submission of women movement," led by such figures as Bill Gothard, while Anne Eggebroten exhorted participants to grow towards a new level of "risk-taking." These themes came to a climax at the business meeting where the group debated at length how to address the challenge.

Some members believed that the strength of the organization and the clarity of its basic intent would be lost if other goals were interposed. The social issues, they said, could be better tackled if members worked under the aegis of other groups whose primary focus was, for instance, peace or poverty. Others, however, said that it was time for EWCI to move beyond its initial methods of personal support and educational efforts, and move into making an active witness for social issues that relate to the biblical feminist mission.

The membership decided to do two things. First, to devise a new method of group decision-making, since the standard method had failed to promote sustained discussion, and second, to carefully study the issues, members' attitudes towards them, and possible actions, with a view toward some resolution at the next plenary conference.

In the meantime, participants were left with a rich assortment of biblical, theological, and practical helps, as well as the necessary encouragement and personal support, to sustain them on their journey toward the full freedom of the Gospel.

A Christian Critique of the New Consciousness

by Douglas Groothuis

The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture,

by Fritjof Capra (Simon and Schuster, 1982)

The Reenchantment of the World,

by Morris Berman (Cornell, 1981)

The Aquarian Conspiracy,

by Marilyn Ferguson (J. B. Tarcher, 1980)

A new social force is struggling to reveal itself and so transform all areas of life with its potency. Evidences of influence crop up in everyday discussion, the media, literature, and academia. Those disenchanted with a secularized modernity or traditional Christianity search for a new model of the universe, society, and persons adequate to address the challenges of the age. They may turn to yoga, read books on Eastern religions, search for a guru, integrate pantheistic themes into their theology, interpret modern science as substantiating Eastern mysticism, lobby for meditation in the public schools, write scholarly or popular books on social transformation, or engage in any number of activities associated with what is called the New Consciousness or New Age movement.

To try and get to the heart of this movement, we will concentrate on the specific agendas of a scientist, a cultural historian, and a journalist each aglow with messianic expectations of personal and global transformation. A world-view revolution encounters us, they tell us. These apologists and prophets announce its arrival by proclaiming "the God within," a new, spiritual physics, an updated animism, and the evolution of consciousness. Agendas are set to revive a deadened modern mind.

Science speaks, says Fritjof Capra in *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture* (Simon and Schuster, 1982), and we must listen. After three centuries of simplistic, atomistic, mechanistic models of the universe developed by people like Bacon, Descartes, and Newton, we face the embarrassment and challenge of modern physics which shows us that "reality can no longer be understood in terms of these concepts" (p. 16). Einstein, Bohr, Heisenberg, Planck, and other physicists have uncovered unnerving and entrancing enigmas at the heart of the matter. The "new paradigm" portrays a vibrant and pulsating organism instead of a dead mechanism. Capra says:

Subatomic particles . . . are not "things" but are interconnections between "things," and these "things," in turn, are interconnections between other "things," and so on. In quantum theory you never end with "things": you always deal with the interconnection. This is how modern physics reveals the basic oneness of the universe (p. 81, 82).

Our physics must be revamped, as must our whole world-view.

The old paradigm fragmented, objectified, and

reduced the natural world to a mere machine of separable, individual parts seen in isolation from the whole. God was viewed as a domineering male tyrant who exploited his creation. People viewed themselves as separate from the Lord over nature. Consequently, Western civilization exploited the environment, resulting in our present ecological, economic, and political crisis. After charting the harmful effects of this outdated model ("the Newtonian world-machine")¹ on ecology, medicine, economics, psychology, and politics, Capra—himself a physicist—reevaluates these fields from a "holistic paradigm" informed by the new physics, general systems theory, and Eastern mysticism (which he believes was centuries ahead of science in its unified view of the world).²

Capra sees this revolutionary world-view as transforming the world. When we view ourselves to be an interrelated part of the cosmic whole, our societal dilemmas will begin to dissolve. A New Age of incalculable human potential awaits us through the evolution of this New Consciousness.

Morris Berman offers a similar critique, but through the eyes of a cultural historian. His book, *The Reenchantment of the World* (Cornell, 1981), argues for just that—a world revived after the disenchantment (Max Weber's term) of the West since about 1600. Villainous also for Berman are thinkers like Bacon, Newton, and Descartes who reduced nature to a clockwork contraption comprehended and manipulated through discursive reason, which he calls "non participatory consciousness." This legacy of materialism and scientism must succumb to a "participatory consciousness" as experienced by alchemists, hermeticists, mystics, and certain illuminated moderns (such as Gregory Bateson). In this type of knowing, "everything in the universe is alive and interrelated, and we know the world through direct identification with it, or immersion in the phenomena (subject/object merger)" (p. 343).

Berman synthesizes ancient thought with modern thinkers such as Bateson, Reich, and Jung in order to open us to the non-discursive aspects of knowing and being. Like Capra, Berman sees our time as one of great crisis and great opportunity. "Some type of participating consciousness and a corresponding socio-political formation have to emerge if we are to survive as a species" (p. 22). If this happens we will experience "not merely a new society, but a new species, a new type of human being" (p. 298).

A new human being and a new social order are the passions of Marilyn Ferguson whose popular and influential book, *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (J. B. Tarcher, 1980) charts their potential. She explores the new found powers of consciousness as seen in physics, psychology, parapsychology, holistic health, the human potential movement, and so on. But she not only records discoveries and theories, she reports a movement, an "aquarian conspiracy" of like-minded people from every area of life:

Broader than reform, deeper than revolution, this benign conspiracy for a new human agenda has triggered the most rapid cultural realignment in history . . . It is a new mind—the ascendance of a startling worldview (p. 23).

Ferguson presents a dazzling range of information—avant garde theories at "the frontiers of science," mystical experience, philosophical speculation, and sociological premonitions—in a whirlwind tour through the New Consciousness. This "conspiracy" is everywhere and the potentialities are tantalizing for "we are in the early morning of understanding our place in the universe and our spectacular latent powers." (p. 279).

Taken together, these books seem to pack quite a persuasive punch. Ferguson excites, stimulates, and challenges—impressing the average reader with the lure of the new and amazing. She showcases a growing movement in search of vital transformations that will infuse us all with hope. And the ideas seem to be catching on—her book has been translated into seven foreign languages. Hers is the manifesto of an activist, not the treatise of a scholar (although it is not without some sophistication). Capra and Berman will interest the generally well educated and more scholarly reader. Capra, as a scientist, charts the history and speculates about the implications of modern science. His book is quite popular, with excerpts published in *The Futurist* and *Science Digest*. Berman, more a philosopher and cultural historian than a scientist, emphasizes philosophical and cultural trends in the Western world.

The apologetic and prophetic voices of the New Consciousness ring out in bold, clear tones. But who is listening and why? World-view revolutions don't come out of nowhere. Our authors have crystallized and systemitized a "paradigm shift" long in the making, which can be most recently and visibly traced to the 1960s.

For all its superficial flamboyance, the counter-culture embodied more than passing fashions, mass-marketed gurus, and political disruptions. It challenged the core creed of secular humanism—technocratic materialism. This passionate protest against the modern "wasteland" was cogently codified by Theodore Roszak in *The Making of the Counter Culture* and *Where the Wasteland Ends*, in which he condemns the "single vision" (Blake) of a society stripped of the mystical, or "old gnosis" as he put it. Secularized, post-Enlightenment industrial society suffocated the spirit and immobilized the imagination. But spiritual sustenance was to be found by turning to the Romantics, tribal religions, occultism, psychedelic drugs or the adepts of the East to recharge our dying society. The emptiness and anomie of a "world without windows" (Berger) was met with a "resacralizing" (Roszak) spirit of hope.

While many of the social trends and trivialities of the counterculture quickly dissipated, the basic challenge to the Western materialism remained, only to be refined and expanded by the New Consciousness. What began to surface in the 60s as an adventurous fling into the exotic is now developing into an attractive world-view, as these authors demonstrate. The counter-culture becomes, to use Capra's phrase, "the rising culture"; and "the Aquarian Conspiracy" grows daily.

Before beginning our critique of the New Consciousness movement and how it should challenge Christians, we must codify its basic philosophy. Three elements emerge: monism, panpsychism, and pantheism.

Basic to the New Consciousness is the notion that our Western mind-set—whether Christian or secular must be reset to see all things as one interrelated, dynamic unity. We must move from a "disenchanted," mechanistic atomism to a "re-enchanted" organic holism or monism. As all is one, so all is alive or conscious in some way (panpsychism). Better to have, according to Berman, a modernized animism than a barren world of randomly colliding particles of dead matter. Capra draws on the work of General Systems Theory (Lazlo, Bertalanffy, and Jantsch) which views the whole as greater than the parts (holism) and finds Mind or consciousness not limited to individual living beings, but dispersed throughout the universe. Given this cosmology and the influence of Eastern mysticism, all three writers conclude that all is God (pantheism). Ferguson positively speaks of "God within: the oldest heresy" (p. 382). For Capra, the deity is not "manifest in any personal form, but represents . . . the self organizing dynamics of the whole cosmos" (p. 292), ourselves included. Berman presupposes a kind of pantheism/animism, and speaks favorably of "the God within" (p. 295). This deity is a consciousness, force, power, or presence—not a person. The personal God vanquished, all three writers flirt with if not openly embrace solipsism: All is one, all is God, I am God; therefore, my consciousness determines reality. We do not observe what is "out there," we somehow create it.

These sentiments are hardly new. This New Consciousness is really a very old consciousness, and its pantheistic lineage impressively includes American movements such as New Thought and Transcendentalism; European philosophers such as Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Spinoza; Romanticism; philosophies like Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism; much of Eastern religion; liberal pantheistic theories influenced by Schliermacher. In fact, it goes as far back as the serpent himself saying, "You shall be as Gods . . ." Inasmuch as our culture is being entreated to stand on the shoulders of these giants, we need to evaluate the foundation.

First, is this "new paradigm" actually demanded by modern science? Capra and Ferguson labor to build much of their pantheistic world-view on the speculations of quantum physics and brain physiology. Berman also notes the science-mysticism connection in passing. The world of quantum is an indivisible whole (all is one). Various experiments on the brain and consciousness in general reveal our incredible potential. Other theories which Ferguson calls "the frontiers of science" catapult the writers into the monistic, pantheistic, and panpsychic realms quite easily.

It is vital for the New Consciousness to seek credibility from science, for many who would remain aloof from Eastern mysticism per se will move that direction if escorted by scientific respectability. Yet the journey from physics to metaphysics or from human consciousness to cosmology is not so easily travelled.

Scientific theories bend with the times and this elasticity makes for an insubstantial foundation for metaphysics. The subject matter of experimental science (the natural realm) is subject to diverse in-

terpretation and reinterpretation. Today's "frontiers of science" may be explored only to be deserted tomorrow. As many philosophers of science such as Kuhn and Popper have noted, scientific theories are far from "objective" in any final sense. Thus they are hardly metaphysically demonstrative. Even the established fact of heliocentrism, having displaced the earth from the center of the solar system, could say nothing about the inherent worth of our planet or its inhabitants. Astronomy could tell us our location (science) but not of our ultimate worth (metaphysics). Modern physics may tell us something of the physical world, but it alone cannot penetrate ultimate reality. Capra, Ferguson, and a host of others trying to make the science-metaphysics connection are really engaging in an updated natural theology which builds a metaphysics on the shifting sands of scientific speculation instead of on special revelation.³

Second, is this "new paradigm" sufficient for a new mind and a new society? Capra, Berman, and Ferguson agree that a totally revamped world-view is required. At this crucial point in history—"the turning point"—we must turn to "the God within." Here the New Consciousness shows its age; it repeats the ancient Socratic and Gnostic view of sin—wrong doing stems from ignorance, not from intentional moral rebellion. But a holistic world-view will not regenerate a hellish heart. Moreover, as one astute reviewer put it, when discussing Capra's book:

Human ingenuity in creating untold misery did not wait for the development of a mechanistic world-view . . . The holistic world-views that have for thousands of years dominated thought in the Far East have not avoided hunger, violence . . . nor the Cultural Revolution.⁴

As Romans 7 teaches, the good we know we don't do; salvation comes not through actualizing latent potential (looking within), but through faith in the saving work of Christ (looking without). Kierkegaard clearly juxtaposed these two views of sin and salvation in his *Philosophical Fragments*: "In the Socratic view each individual is his own center, and the entire world centers in him, because his self-knowledge is a knowledge of God."⁵ Contrarywise, Christ prompts us to see that we are in error and are guilty of sin. This terrible tyranny to sin cannot be broken through the gymnastics of the New Consciousness whether it be yoga, meditation, biofeedback, or "participatory consciousness." While the need for personal transformation is at the heart of biblical sanctification (Romans 12:1, 2), it comes through faith and obedience, not through a fruitless quest for autonomy (realizing the "God within")—which is the essence of sin. All solipsism is judged, such epistemological pride goes before a fall. The idea that "knowledge of self is knowledge of God" could justly be called the idolatry of consciousness.

Third, having abandoned the Creator/creation distinction, these authors see nature, humanity, and God as continuous and interchangeable and in flux (evolution). To be holistic is to include each in all. Such monistic metaphysics tend to confuse distinct ontological categories (jurisdictions of being, so to speak) and so engender epistemological difficulties.

While the atomistic, mechanistic paradigm they are attacking needs criticism, the monistic view is not without problems. If, as Ferguson, says, "relationship is everything," just *what* is related? If "everything is process" (p. 102), by what standard can we gauge process at all? Measurement is impossible without a fixed measuring rod. It seems that in Ferguson's antipathy to static ontologies she has become a partner with Heraclitus and has thus inherited his confusions (which were recognized and refuted ably by Plato long ago).⁶ Further, if Berman rejects the distinct ego and all dualisms of

"non-participatory consciousness," logic as we normally see it becomes impossible; for it requires the (dualistic) distinction of logic from illogic, truth from error, self from non-self.⁷ And if Capra sees the highest state of consciousness as one "in which all boundaries and dualisms have been transcended and all dissolves into universal, undifferentiated oneness" (p. 371), it is difficult to see what is left of consciousness at all. Atomism may lose sight of the connection between entities, but the monistic alternatively tends to lose sight of everything as the world collapses into the dance of Maya (illusion) and implicit irrationalism.⁸ This rejection of the subject/object distinction and the accompanying belief in traditional logic has led many in the New Age to embrace what Charles Fair called "the new nonsense," beliefs held by intuition, emotion, or imagination apart from rational appraisal and/or justification.⁹ The popularity of astrology, gullibility concerning the paranormal, off-beat holistic health treatments (cosmic quakery)¹⁰, etc. demonstrate this tendency. In some cases a mystical solipsism deems anything real that is believed (created by one's own omnipotent consciousness).

If the danger of a secular, mechanistic paradigm is reductionism and abstraction, the danger of the New Consciousness is total immersion into being and the destruction of transcendence entirely. The God within replaces the God above.

Fourth, a further moral difficulty is presented which is an internal problem for the New Consciousness. Just as monistic world-views tend to erase or downplay ontological distinctions between created entities, so they also relativize or even eradicate the absolute and distinct moral categories of good and evil. If all is one and in unceasing flux, how can we discriminate between disparate moral options? Ferguson's chapter "Spiritual Adventure" repeats the ancient Hindu affirmation, "Thou art That." You are the whole, the All, the Self. She says that "this wholeness unites opposites" in the *coincidentia oppositorum* (p. 381). And if, as Capra affirms, the highest state of consciousness dissolves all "into universal, undifferentiated oneness" (p. 371), we have little ontological/moral ground for valid ethical evaluation. An ontological identification with the Whole or the One does not insure any specific moral motivation. If we are already one, whole, and have transcended all dualities, what is left for us to do? We should heed the warning given several years ago by Professor R. C. Zaehner that monism easily leads to antinomianism. In using the graphic example of Charles Manson (who was a pantheist/monist) Zaehner notes that:

This is a great mystery—the eternal paradox with which Eastern religions perpetually wrestle. If the ultimate truth . . . is that 'All is One' and 'One is All,' and that in this One all the opposites, including good and evil, are eternally reconciled, then what right have we to blame Charles Manson? For seen from the point of the eternal Now, he *did* nothing at all.¹¹

Certainly such a paradigm may prove dangerous, although the three authors avoid the issue. Of course, for the Christian, moral imperatives are anchored in the unchanging and transcendent character of God, so moral distinctions are clarified in the light of God's ethical revelation. God's ways are not our ways, but he is not "beyond good and evil." The prophet Isaiah castigates those who "call evil good and good evil" (Isa. 5:22)

Fifth, besides these moral concerns, our writers open a Pandora's box of supernatural seduction once sealed off by Christian discernment. As Berman notes, the rationalistic "disenchantment of the world" may have left it a cold mechanism, but the previous "enchancements" of pre-Christian religion left much to be desired. Despite its abuses, the

Christianizing of the West did much to exorcise unsavory religious practices prohibited by Scripture. This notwithstanding, these writers encourage exploration of the paranormal and the openly occult. We should also remember that the sophisticated panpsychism of General Systems Theory discussed by Capra is a close cousin to animism. The shaman returns in scientific guise. We should not view this as a "New" Consciousness but as the struggle to introduce a vanquished pagan orthodoxy, this time with the fanfare of scientific credibility.

Sixth, the political ethics of the New Consciousness prove problematic. Although Capra and Ferguson ostensibly argue for political-economic decentralization ("small is beautiful"), their monistic metaphysics seems to oppose this. Again, if all is ultimately one, then unity engulfs diversity (the one over the many, in philosophical terms), both cosmically and politically. A unified one-world order would be a logical result where sovereign nation states dissolve into the political One. We find a more materialistic type of political monism in the Soviet Union where the state¹² (collectivized Whole—the One) dominates the individuals (the many). Political elitism and the centralized, unifying power-state are logical results of monism because the state can view itself as the all-encompassing reality and center of total power. It becomes the sole source and enforcer of Persia, and Mesopotamia. In speaking of these cultures, Rushdoony notes that:

If the transcendent and discontinuous nature of the being of God be denied, then god, gods, or powers of the cosmos are continuous with man and identifiable with him. To the extent that they are directly identified with men, to that extent the social order is absolute and a total power.¹⁴ What appears as a New Consciousness democracy where all are God becomes quite easily and naturally a mystic oligarchy where some are more God than others (because they have realized their divinity).¹⁵

As Rushdoony points out, without a transcendent source of law and authority above the human political realm (as provided in Christian Theism), power becomes immanent in "a state, group, or person, and it is beyond appeal."¹⁶ New Age politics really recognizes no law above human consciousness; instead it opts for mystical autonomy. To the contrary, biblical social ethics limit the perogatives of the state by divine, transcendent law—a "law above the (civil) law."¹⁷ No human institution or ruler may be absolutized or deified, for God alone is divine and sovereign. As Rushdoony notes in relation to the political influence of Christianity in the West: "Divinity was withdrawn from human society [as pantheistic monism claims, 's'] and returned to the heavens and to God. . . . By de-divinizing the world, Christianity placed all created orders, including church and state, alike under God.¹⁸ Christians may agree with some of the proposals on the New Age agenda (solar power, world peace, etc.), but must disagree on ethical/political presuppositions.¹⁹

Seventh, several other criticisms of the New Consciousness have been raised by non-Christian analysts. Michael Marien criticizes Marilyn Ferguson and much of the New Consciousness for over-estimating their influence and power by simplistically misreading the social situation. Mobilizing interest in the New Consciousness, he points out, is not the same as triggering a global transformation. Nevertheless, he claims the New Age often mistakes its grandiose intentions for actual results through presumptions.²⁰ An article in the *Wall Street Journal* accuses "exager-books" by Ferguson, Toffler, and Naisbett of "mega-hyping the

pseudo-facts" through exaggeration, biased selection of facts, emotional appeal, and other weak methods of proof.²¹ A euphoric optimism may smother insightful social analysis and constructive plans for change. Similarly, concern for personal potential and transformation may lead to a selfishness and egotism that ignores others' suffering.²²

Despite these criticisms, Christians need to face the challenges of the New Consciousness.

First, we are challenged to see the interrelationship between world-views and the shape of civilization. Christian theology must articulate a full-orbed Weltanschauung equal to the modern task. In so doing, we should develop a theology of creation that treats both the sanctity of creation and the transcendence of God with integrity, without lapsing into either pantheism or Deism. The immanence/transcendence of God seen in the Logos doctrine is quite fruitful here.²³ The Logos unifies and directs the created realm in all its multifaceted richness without merging with it. In light of God's sustaining immanent providence, we can forge a biblically holistic approach to creation (ecological theology) which neither ignores the scientific understanding of the natural world, nor instantly capitulates to it. Rather than a monistic cosmology, the Bible pictures a creation that demonstrates both the integrity of distinct entities (the many-diversity) and their interrelatedness (the one-unity), as Christ upholds all things by the word of his power (Heb. 1:3). here we might find General Systems Theory's emphasis on the interconnectedness of nature quite helpful—without endorsing its pantheism. If secular materialism is philosophically bankrupt, Christianity must not be theologically bashful in advancing Christian alternatives.

Second, the New Consciousness should call us to rethink how we conceptualize theology. Capra, Ferguson, and Berman all castigate scientific rationalism—the strictly linear, one dimensional, and atomistic cognition so congenial to the West. Without becoming illogical, we should recognize and explore the intuitive, imaginative, and emotional elements of knowing ourselves, the world, and God.²⁴ Systematic theology is indispensable, but stress on formal propositions at the expense of imagery, poetry, and historical drama may diminish a truly biblical richness. William Dyrness's recent book, *Let the Earth Rejoice: A Biblical Theology of Holistic Mission*²⁵, presents a theology of mission not by systemizing propositions about God and His plan but by retelling the drama of God's redemptive strategies from Genesis to Revelation. In doing biblical theology he wants to spotlight God in action and so demonstrate God's "project" in the world. We can learn much from this approach.

We must communicate with those enamored with the New Consciousness. Without capitulating to irrationalism, we should be sensitive to the cognitive styles of those so disenchanted with Western humanistic rationalism. Much of modern apologetics is directed against a secular rationalist mentality already abandoned by the New Consciousness. A different apologetic approach is in order, one that affirms the finality of Christ as a personal God over against pantheistic counterfeits, emphasizes the human dilemmas as sin rather than ignorance, and one that engages the intuitive, imaginative faculties so esteemed by the New Consciousness. For this purpose Christian fiction and poetry may be more effective than classical apologetics. We might also learn from Kierkegaard's method of "indirect communication" in which he challenges the structure of our subjectivity to prepare us for our need of redemption instead of focusing only on objective arguments.²⁶

The New Consciousness offers a New Age of hope, a rebirth of our lurking potentials smothered by Western materialism. Inasmuch as it successfully caters to this hunger it will have many beggars at its banquet, at both the scholarly and popular

tables. Beside the general popular interest in human potential concerns (meditation, various New Consciousness therapies, consciousness-raising seminars, etc.), a growing number of sophisticated New Consciousness writers—in addition to Capra and Berman—such as the cultural historian William Irwin Thompson and psychological theorist Ken Wilber are enticing the academic arena with their eloquence. Journals concerned with humanistic and transpersonal psychology are beginning to wedge into more scholarly circles, despite the present cultural tenacity of secular materialism. A few years ago, Bantam books launched a new series of "New Age Books" ranging from the popular to the scholarly. Universities are using books like *The Turning Point* for texts.²⁷ This expansion of the New Consciousness should not be surprising since, as C.S. Lewis noted, "pantheism is in fact the permanent natural bent of the human mind."²⁸ Yet a "natural bent" is not immune to supernatural grace. As ever, Christians are called to affirm Jesus Christ as the way, the truth, and the life, and to cultivate a full—morbid world— and life—view conversant with, but never compromised by the challenges of the age.

¹ Newton was actually not so much to blame for the mechanistic view as was Descartes. See Bryce Christensen, "The Apple in the Vortex: Newton, Blake, and Descartes," *Philosophy and Literature* 6 (1982): 147-161.

² A point made in many recent books. For a Christian critique see Mark Albrecht and Brooks Alexander, "The Sellout of Science," *Spiritual Counterfeits Journal* (August, 1978): 19-29.

³ For a critique of classical natural theology see Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6 vols. (Texas: Word, 1976) 2: 104-123.

⁴ Marie Jahoda, "Wholes and Parts, Meaning and Mechanism," *Nature* 296, (April 8, 1982): 498. On the cultural implications of non-Christian holism/monism see Gary North, *None Dare Call It Witchcraft* (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1976), pp. 171-181.

⁵ Soren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 14.

⁶ Gordon Clark, *Thales to Dewey*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), pp. 66-69.

⁷ Berman flip-flops between rejecting the individual ego entirely and transcending it. See pp. 158-165, 170, 179, 297-299 for inconsistencies.

⁸ See Berman, pp. 151, 152 where he seems to undercut objective truth entirely. For a treatment of specific epistemological problem inherent in monism see David Clark, *The Pantheism of Alan Watts* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1978).

⁹ Charles Fair, *The New Nonsense* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974).

¹⁰ See Paul C. Reisser, Teri K. Reisser, John Weldon, *The Holistic Healers* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1983).

¹¹ R.C. Zaehner, *Our Savage God: The Perverse Use of Eastern Thought* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1974), p. 72.

¹² The Soviet state follows the impetus of Hegel's philosophical and political monism embodied in his statement that the state is "the march of God through the world."

¹³ At several points Capra argues for Statist control and regulation of the economy and environment, pp. 333, 338.

¹⁴ Rousas Rushdoony, *The One and the Many* (Fairfax, Virginia: Thoburn Press, 1970), p. 58.

¹⁵ See David Spangler, *Explorations* (Scotland: Findhorn Publications, 1980), p. 106.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

¹⁷ See John Warwick Montgomery, *The Law Above the Law* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1975).

¹⁸ Rushdoony, p. 124.

¹⁹ For a Christian critique of the roots and results of modern statism see Herbert Scholssber, *Idols for Destruction* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1983), pp. 177-231.

²⁰ Michael Marien, "The Transformation as Sandbox Syndrome," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Vol. 23, no. 1, Winter 1983, pp. 7-15; Marien "Further Thoughts on the Two Paths to Transformation: A Reply to Ferguson," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Vol. 23, no. 4 Fall 1983 pp. 127-136.

²¹ Anthony Downs, "They Sizzle, but Their Predictions Fizzle," *The Wall Street Journal* April 6, 1983.

²² Marien, "The Transformation as Sandbox Syndrome," p. 10.

²³ See Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 3: 164-247.

²⁴ See Stephen G. Meyer, "Neuropsychology and Worship," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, Vol. 3, no. 4 (Fall, 1975), pp. 281-289.

²⁵ William Dyrness, *Let the Earth Rejoice: A Biblical Theology of Holistic Mission*, (Westchester, Ill: Crossway Books, 1983).

²⁶ See C. Stephen Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief*, (Grand Rapids, Mich: Christian University Press, 1978).

²⁷ A nutrition class at the University of Oregon at Eugene used Capra's book. Larry Dossey's, *Space, Time and Medicine*, (Boulder and London: Shambhala, 1982), is also used. This applies the New Consciousness to health concerns.

²⁸ C.S. Lewis, *Miracles*, (Macmillan, 1974), p.87.

The Search for Christian America by Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, and George M. Marsden (Crossway/Good News, 1983, 188 pp., \$6.95). Reviewed by John G. Stackhouse, Jr., Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

This book will not be read widely. And it deserves to be. It is a careful, temperate, critical examination of the popular idea that America once was much more "Christian"—indeed, that America once *was* "Christian." This idea, which has animated many conservative American Christians to pursue particular social and political programs, is seen as a myth by the authors.

The volume initially points out the ambiguities in the adjective "Christian" when it is applied to societies. First, "'Christian' . . . can have a weak generic meaning as simply describing some connection with the Judeo-Christian heritage." Second, "Christian" can refer "to the presence of many individuals in a culture who were apparently Christians." Third, "Christian" can indicate "cultural phenomena produced by apparently Christian persons who not only are attempting to follow God's will but who in fact succeed reasonably well in doing so."

Authors Noll, Hatch, and Marsden—reputable historians all—proceed to examine the formative events in the myth of "Christian America." Puritan New England, the Great Awakening, and the Revolutionary War. They find that in each case the verdict is ambiguous: these were "Christian" events in the first two senses, but not in the third. They conclude that "early America and the early American form of government, while relatively good and influenced by some Christian traditions, were products also of substantial non-Christian influences."

The authors go on to draw out the practical implications of their historical conclusion. First, if we *don't* qualify our endorsement of early America as "Christian," we actually, if unintentionally, attribute the authority of revealed truth to what were in fact compromises between Christian and non-Christian influences. Second, this kind of confusion keeps us from distinguishing between what is truly Christian in our heritage, and hence what is worth reconsidering and perhaps changing.

The book rests on literally hundreds and hundreds of pages of the authors' own published research, as well as that of others. It clearly and calmly makes its case, with evident concern to be charitable to all—especially Schaeffer *père et fils*—with whom it disagrees. It does not shout, it does not draw bold, black lines, it does not sweep over contradictory evidence.

And it is precisely these virtues of deliberation, nuance, and qualification which will keep this book from being read. Evangelicals generally don't like to read careful books which deal honestly with ambiguity: the sales records show how well other books sell which steamroller opposing ideas and press historical evidence willy-nilly into their service. Let's face it: these latter books are a lot *easier* to read.

Moreover, the idea of "Christian America" is making a dramatic comeback, and Robert Handy has had to write another chapter to his book of that title to take account of something he had thought was dead. Some evangelicals—especially those who applaud Mr. Reagan at N.A.E. meetings—see the myth of "Christian America" as a powerful ideological weapon as well as a motivating force in their social and political programs. They are not going to welcome this qualification of that myth because it is difficult and sometimes costly to make policies in America in the light of the Word of God and not of "the rockets' red glare." And such policies perhaps will not be so popular and powerful as

those which unqualifiedly enlist the support of patriotism.

Nevertheless, evangelicals need this book. It is the antidote to the baptized "America First" movement among evangelicals. As such, it deserves to be widely read. And, as such, it won't be.

What the Bible Says About God the Creator by Jack Cottrell (College Press, 1983, 518 pp., \$13.50). Reviewed by Clark H. Pinnock, Professor of Theology, McMaster Divinity College.

This is a solid book on the doctrine of God which I will be using as a text next session at McMaster. Do not be misled by the title, which sounds a bit simplistic. This is a knowledgeable, well researched, and well constructed book on Christian theism, better than any I can think of. It goes deeply into the doctrine of creation, and its implications. It takes up our knowledge of God and the transcendence of God. It discusses the infinity of God and the fear of God. The book is 500 pages long and comes with a generous bibliography and indices. It is the first of a three volume set on the doctrine of God. The second will treat divine providence, and the third will be entitled *God the Redeemer*. Cottrell himself has his doctorate from Princeton and his MDiv from Westminster, and is an Arminian theologian in the Christian churches (Campbellite). For those who might wish to know, the press is located in Joplin, Missouri.

One of the themes which the author himself is particularly concerned about is the "Christological fallacy." He deplores the way Barth and others confuse creation and redemption and deny the priority of creation over redemption. One should not reduce creation as the stage on which redemption is to be played out, he believes. It has importance in God's sight in itself.

I will take issue with Cottrell at two points. First, he takes a hard line approach to the salvation of the unevangelized. He denies that general revelation can be of any help to them in this regard. Responding favorably to that light will not take anyone to heaven. While I am used to hearing this from Calvinists, it sounds a little strange from an Arminian. If God desires to save everyone, and fairness suggests everyone should have a chance to accept the offer of grace, why eliminate a major way by which God's mercy could be effective for much of the world's population? After all, Scripture itself points to the salvation of people outside the "church" (Melchizedek, Naaman, Cornelius). Did Paul not say God is near all of us, and that we can find him if we feel after him? (Acts 17:27). I guess evangelicals have yet to find their Rahner.

Second, I find his Arminian stance unnecessarily weakened at another point. Cottrell insists on holding to God's timelessness and total omniscience. Apparently God from his timeless vantage point can see the whole reel of time all at once, including all the contingent acts yet to be done. To me this is not compatible with the Arminian belief in genuine human freedom. If God knows infallibly what I will do tomorrow, then I do not have the freedom to do otherwise. It will not do to say God did not determine it but only foresaw it. The action is as fixed and necessary as if God had decreed it. Cottrell has walked into the arms of the Augustinians who know that total omniscience and timelessness imply determinism. I see no way around "limiting" omniscience to what *can* be known (i.e., not future contingents).

Disagreements notwithstanding, I highly recommend this volume as the best doctrine of God we evangelicals presently have.

Joshua
Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 7, by Trent C.

Butler (Word, 1983, 304 pp.). Reviewed by Marten H. Woudstra, Professor of Old Testament, Calvin Theological Seminary.

This new Joshua commentary follows the format employed in the *Word Biblical Commentary* series currently in process. A brief Introduction is followed by a verse-by-verse commentary of a scholarly nature. Each pericope or chapter is treated as follows. An extensive bibliography precedes a fresh translation of the text which is followed by extensive textual notes. The commentary section itself is divided into three subsections: Form/Structure/Setting, Comment, and Explanation. From the Editorial Preface we gather that this format was chosen to reach different levels of readership, both academic and non-academic. Yet the general nature of the book is such that one cannot easily benefit from the more popular parts without having first read the scholarly analyses.

The work evidences great erudition and a thorough acquaintance with Joshua studies until the present time. Its approach is that of form criticism and tradition history with an allowance of God's supervising activity during a process that is thought to stretch all the way from the time of Joshua till the exilic period. The author assumes an oral stage of tradition, followed by a cultic celebration stage. Then comes the Compiler who is said to have produced the first literary work, bringing earlier traditions up to date by means of etiological notations. In this long-drawn-out and often complex process God is said to have "used anonymous men to teach his people the divine word" (p. xxiv). Although allowing for the possibility that "the old traditional understandings (of the process of inspiration and inscription) may eventually be vindicated" (p. xxx) it is evident that this book follows an approach that is anything but traditional. It needlessly complicates the question of the historical substructure on which the author believes the book of Joshua clearly rests.

Although inevitably influenced at every step by its basic starting point concerning authorship and date of final composition, the commentary contains useful exegetical insights which contribute to an understanding of the book's divinely inspired message. But much reorientation is needed if one wishes to fit these exegetical comments into a more traditional pattern. At many points this task may turn out to be impossible. To say that "the motif of Moses as the servant of Yahweh appears to have arisen in prophetic circles at least as early as Hezekiah" (p. 10) raises the question whether Yahweh at one time actually said to Joshua, as the Scriptural witness said He did, that "Moses my servant is dead" (Josh. 1:2). If the phrase "my servant" as applied to Moses did not arise until Hezekiah's day, Yahweh clearly did not say what Josh. 1:2 says He did. While not a belief in a "Red Letter Edition" of the Old Testament to mark the *ipsissima verba* of Yahweh, the reviewer nevertheless is not able to fit Butler's approach at such points into a biblically acceptable view of inspiration.

In his English translation of the Joshua text the author uses "southern" style English, employing the colloquial "you all" for the plural second person where standard English simply uses "you." Sample: "The you all may return to the land you all possess so that you all may possess that which Moses . . . has given you all beyond the Jordan . . ." (Josh. 1:15b). It remains to be seen whether such regionalism in an academic work will commend itself to the general readership.

Butler's work, published as it is under broadly evangelical auspices, offers a challenge to those who favor another brand of evangelical scholarship than his work presents. As such it may help toward the clarification of issues that are as yet unresolved.

The Shakers: Two Centuries of Spiritual Reflection.

Classics of Western Spirituality edited with introduction by Robley Edward Whitson (Paulist, 1983, 370 pp., \$7.95 pb.). Reviewed by Linda Mercadante, teaching fellow and doctoral student in Theology/History of Doctrine, Princeton Theological Seminary.

Although the Shakers are one of the key communication experiments in our American religious heritage, they are also among the most consistently misunderstood. Akin to the popular stereotype of the Puritans as grumpy, dour-faced kill-joys, is the widespread misconception of the Shakers as anti-sex, eccentric utopians with a female Christ. The unfortunate thing about both these stereotypes is that they either stifle interest in these groups altogether, or distort whatever explorations are accomplished, so that the available riches are never fully discovered.

Yet the riches of our Shaker heritage are abundant and contain both theological and practical help for such issues as gender equality, Christian communalism, the function and role of spiritual gifts, leadership forms, liturgical renewal and the simplifying of life-style. The first step in evaluating these contributions is to gain knowledge of Shaker primary sources, and it is here that *Two Centuries of Spiritual Reflection* provides a long-eded starting place.

Robley Whitson, a Catholic priest, scholar and theology professor, has had a life-long interest in the Shakers, stemming from childhood experience with a Shaker community, as well as a continuing friendship with many of the remaining members. He has spent many years unearthing, compiling and organizing the Shaker primary sources in the expectation that prevalent misconceptions can be corrected and that a time of serious research, appreciation and appropriation of the Shaker heritage can be inaugurated.

The Shakers is an edited collection of pertinent excerpts from Shaker theological works, journal articles, letters, personal testimonies and other relevant sources. The lengthy introduction stands on its own as a useful primer to Shaker life and thought, as well as an evaluation of current views about them. For instance, Whitson explains that founder Ann Lee, as well as the majority of the leadership have always been careful to curtail any exaggerated claims that Lee was the female counterpart of Christ, instead of presenting her as a specially gifted or anointed ("Christed") messenger.

In addition, Whitson shows how the well-know Shaker focus on celibacy progressed in their thought from a culturally-conditioned dualism to an acceptance of this state as one of the many special gifts of God. The Shaker realized-eschatology is also of interest because by focusing less on the pervasive inevitability of sin in fallen humanity and more on the victory of Christ, they had the confidence to experiment boldly and to change when necessary.

Throughout the readings, as well as in Whitson's introduction and section comments, it becomes clear that this is not a community that focuses on establishing a static orthodoxy or regulating an ideal orthopraxis, but instead one which stresses continual openness to the leading of God's Spirit. Therefore, no one spokesperson can ever fully represent the Shaker theological stance, since they believe that only in the aggregate and over a period of time do the true doctrines manifest themselves. This rather different understanding of theology and practice may make some readers uncomfortable, especially those used to evaluating a tradition by analyzing its chief proponent or creed. Therefore, Shaker thought should be studied with an eye to

its fruit, that is, their life of peacefulness, productivity, practical creativity, gender equality, and long-standing success in achieving harmonious communal living among large numbers of diverse people.

In fact, earlier works on the Shakers had more to do with these factors, i.e., their communal life-style, their celebrated furniture-making and innovative domestic goods, and with their equal opportunity for women and ethnic minorities, than with their thought which supported all this. Whitson's book, then, fills a needed gap by bringing the primary sources to the attention of a wide audience.

Formerly, even among historians, little in-depth reference has been made to the writings of the Shakers or to the evolutions in thought which they experience, and this has led to problematic views. The fact that this book has been included in the Classics of Western Spirituality series (subtitled "A Library of the Great Spiritual Masters"), and at a reasonable price, should ensure these Shaker sources a wider audience than they have had in the past.

Ancient Myths and Biblical Faith: Scriptural Transformations

by Foster R. McCurley (Fortress, 1983, xiii + 192 pp.). Reviewed by Tremper Longman, III, Associate Professor of Old Testament, Westminster Theological Seminary.

A modern reader of the Old Testament must recognize the temporal, geographical and cultural foreignness of the texts being read before s/he can begin to understand them. Further, it must be realized that Old Testament books are primarily addressed to the people of Israel. They are contextualized writings directed toward the faithful and those who have chosen to follow the gods of the surrounding nations. Therefore, the study of ancient Near Eastern literature is a significant road to understanding the form and message of the Old Testament and indeed the whole Bible.

Foster McCurley has produced a handy and readable volume that traces the use of three major biblical themes which are shared with and perhaps originate in the literature of the broader Near East (Mesopotamia, Canaan and Egypt). The three themes are not McCurley's own discovery, but he describes them in a manner that will be clear to the nonspecialist and which shows their relevance to the understanding and application of Scripture.

The first theme is the conflict between order and chaos. The Near East produced a number of major texts that describe the struggles between a warrior god (Enlil, Marduk, Baal) and a chaos monster (frequently a sea dragon like Marduk, Leviathan, or Yamn). McCurley carefully shows how the Old Testament describes many of the great acts of Yahweh in history through allusions to these myths of warfare between a god of order and chaos. He rightly categorizes this practice the "mythicalization of history" rather than the "historicization of myth." By this he means that biblical authors begin with the historical act and apply mythological allusions to it, thus giving the act more than simple historical significance. While I agree with McCurley up to this point, I believe he should have stressed the polemical nature of these mythical allusions to the Old Testament. By describing Yahweh and his acts in terms of ancient Near Eastern myth, the biblical writers stress that Yahweh, not Baal or Marduk, is the true provider of order in the midst of chaos.

McCurley also treats the themes of the relationship between divine and human sexuality and the concept of a sacred mountain. With respect to the former, I feel McCurley stretched things a little in relating Sumerian Dumuzi texts to the issue of

women's ordination, but his discussion makes the book more interesting and relevant. A highlight of the chapters on mountains is the insight that Golgotha is an anti- or unmountain compared to Sinai, Zion and so forth. While correctly pointing out that the Old and New Testaments associate certain mountains with theophany (like other Near Eastern texts), he provocatively argues that Golgotha, the place of Christ's death, may have been a depression in the ground and not a mountain as tradition remembers it.

McCurley's approach to these themes is indeed unique in that he intentionally brings the New Testament into the discussion. For example, he shows how Jesus is pictured in the Gospels as one who conquers chaos in his calming the sea, rebuking of Satan, and exorcising of demons. The picture of Jesus as Divine Warrior is suggestive and may be supplemented, for instance, by connecting the picture of Jesus ascending and descending on a white cloud with the Old Testament image of God as the cloud-chariot rider.

McCurley's book is an easy-to-read introduction to the benefits of the comparative method. He points out that the biblical authors are engaged in the adaptation or transformation of Near Eastern materials and not crass borrowing. He affirms the biblical text is unique in its original cultural context. I recommend this book for the use of students, pastors and scholars.

Mere Morality: What God Expects from Ordinary People

by Lewis B. Smedes (Eerdmans, 1983, 282 pp., \$14.95). Reviewed by Dennis Hollinger, Associate Professor of Church and Society, Alliance Theological Seminary.

Mere Morality is not merely an exercise in abstract moral reasoning. It is a fresh, provocative treatment of God's moral law as it informs and guides human behavior in the midst of life's many difficult choices.

Lewis Smedes, Professor of Theology and Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary, contends that the moral law of God set forth in the Ten Commandments is not an heroic ethic for a select few, but is a normative framework for all humanity. God's standards, he believes, are deeply interwoven into our humanness and thus are a reflection of what we are as human beings. The Decalogue then is seen to fit life's design and make explicit what all humans already know—at least in part.

In *Mere Morality* Smedes examines five of the Ten Commandments—all from the second table of law pertaining to human relations. (Covetousness, the tenth commandment is not dealt with except in relationship to the eighth, "Thou shalt not steal.") With each command the author discusses three questions: (1) What does the commandment require? Here he particularly enunciates how the Hebrews would have understood the law as well as how we must hear it today. (2) Why was the commandment given? In these sections Smedes probes to the underlying intent to show that God's law guides us to true humanness and community. As he puts it, "The moral commandments of the Decalogue are not barked at us by a capricious heavenly staff sergeant . . . They match the configurations of life as God created it" (p. 15). (3) How can the command be understood and obeyed within our real worlds of conflict and change? Here Smedes attempts to do moral casuistry as he applies each command to numerous contemporary issues such as: capital punishment, abortion, treatment termination, divorce, adultery, treatment of property, and truth telling.

Causistry in Christian ethics is the attempt to apply specific moral principles or laws to designated, concrete situations. Such an enterprise has fallen on hard times in recent years. On the one hand, some ethicists have so relativized Christian ethics that we are primarily left with meta-ethics—discourse about the meaning and significance of moral language. Thus, the refusal to even attempt applied ethics. On the other hand are the absolutists who contend that principles can be applied uniformly to diverse moral dilemmas, without any appreciation for the unique variable in each situation. Smedes has successfully steered a *via media* between these two extremes. He is committed to the universality of God's moral law as commands which can in all places and times direct as to what God expects us to do. But he is also acutely aware of the competing moral claims and ambiguities which often inhere in life's choices. To admit that the application of the Decalogue is not simplistic points "not to a weak spot in divine law, but to the ambiguity that our fallen urges bring to our lives" (p. 237).

There will be those who think that Smedes is equivocating on some issues or is unwilling to declare "Thus says the Lord" about a given issues. But such readers must heed his contention that "we have no ideal world in which to find out what God expects us to do; we have only this changing and broken one. Life changes, and obedience to unchanging commands must adjust to changing conditions" (p. 242).

Mere Morality is delightful reading and sheds fresh light on both the understanding of ethical principles as well as the application of them. The author's attempt to root the Decalogue in the broader universal principles of love and justice is highly suggestive. My major question for Smedes is whether the law of God is just "mere morality"—a morality woven into our humanness. Does such a construction do justice to our fallen nature and thus God's attempt to renew our moral thoughts and actions? Smedes' emphasis is, of course, quite consistent with his Calvinistic heritage which has always eulogized a creation ethic over a Christological one. But it seems to me that God's law is not only a reflection of the created order. It is a call and guide to radical renewal for creatures who since the fall break covenant, disrespect human life, and replace truthfulness with falsehood. Moreover, the creation ethic framework has historically tended in practice to engender a rather static approach to the moral life as opposed to a dynamic approach rooted in redemption.

Despite this minor complaint, *Mere Morality* is a splendid contribution to Evangelical ethics. The book will be extremely useful for pastors, for classes on the Ten Commandments, as well as courses in Christian ethics.

Logic and the Nature of God

by Stephen T. Davis (Eerdmans, 1983, 171 pp., \$9.95).

The Concept of God: An Exploration of Contemporary Difficulties with the Attributes of God by Ronald H. Nash (Zondervan, 1983, 127 pp., \$4.95). Reviewed by Keith Cooper, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington.

Many who are interested in theology have serious misgivings about contemporary philosophy of religion, either considering it irrelevant or else writing it off as inaccessible (due to its technical machinery). That they are mistaken is, I suspect, often not their fault but that of the philosopher. But not always: in recent years there have been a spate of monographs and journal articles that are philosophically competent, theologically informed,

and yes, eminently readable. There is much to be gained, not least by theologians, from an acquaintance with these writings. One may legitimately wonder, though, where one ought to start.

Recent books by Stephen Davis and Ronald Nash provide one answer to that question. Both concern themselves mainly with the *concept* of God. This is not just a holdover from the days of linguistic analysis but a recognition of the topic's importance; after all, if theism's understanding of what God is like is incoherent, if it is logically impossible that a being with *those* attributes exists, then (among other things) the Bible is false and apologetic concerns become moot. Nash, who teaches at Western Kentucky University, provides a well-written and carefully crafted introduction that reviews discussion about God's omnipotence, omniscience, eternity, simplicity, immutability, and necessity. He argues that Process thinkers have erred in limiting the choices to Thomistic theism and panentheism, suggesting rather that one can (if needed) modify the classical concept of God while maintaining orthodox Christian theism. Though proposing that pure actuality, impassibility, and simplicity can safely be given up, he sees no incoherence in retaining God's omnipotence, omniscience, and (properly qualified) immutability, and defends God's logical necessity.

Nash's treatment is helpful at many points: in summarizing Process theology and its weaknesses, in discussing the logical limits to omnipotence, and in explaining how the doctrine of God's simplicity arose in response to medieval debates over realism—providing protection from heterodoxy perhaps not needed today. At other places I think he is just too quick: in the way he reconciles omniscience and human freedom, in claiming that analogies can help us make sense of God's being timeless, and in dismissing the notion of a "factually necessary being" (i.e., and everlasting being on whom everything else depends for its existence) in favor of logical necessity. Also, the arguments he discusses in favor of God's simplicity and immutability would seem to leave us simple and immutable, too; surely better ones are available. More serious flaws center around his use of the distinction between "God" as name and as title, and that between essential and nonessential attributes. He wants to argue, for example, that the person who is in fact god (Yahweh) cannot sin, but so far as I can tell only shows that any being who did sin would forfeit claim to deity. But these do not detract from the book's usefulness, so long as one reads it—as one should any book in philosophy—knowing that there will be many points about which others disagree. It is meant only to be introductory, and it succeeds well at that difficult task.

Davis, who teaches at Claremont McKenna College, intends his book to be a contribution to the scholarly literature in its own right; but I think that it too can serve as a useful introduction. It is clearly and sensibly written, and carefully makes its way through many of the same issues that Nash discusses. One has to work hard, in places, to follow Davis' argument, but one finds that the effort is well rewarded—in philosophy, too, the maxim "no pain, no gain" holds true. In claiming that the Christian view of God is philosophically defensible and theologically satisfying, he is refreshingly open about what that view must include: he opts for an everlasting but not timelessly eternal being, who can sin but never *will*—and so is praiseworthy for his goodness, and who is immutable where it counts ("God's basic nature and faithfulness to his promises remain the same") while not being changeless. There are excellent discussions of foreknowledge and omnipotence, as well as chapters on the incarnation, the Trinity, and the problem of evil. The latter goes beyond a defense of the logical coherence of a world containing both God and evil, but in an odd way. Davis conflates the philosophical

question of whether evil provides *evidence* against the existence of God (he concludes that it does not) with that of how to overcome the "evangelistic difficulties" wrought by evil. Calling this mixture the "emotive problem of evil" does not help! There clearly are pastoral concerns with evil that go beyond what philosophy can provide; but I should think that it would be enormously helpful to be able to say with confidence that suffering provides little if any valid evidence against the goodness of God. Davis argues well for the latter claim, but in a way that is potentially misleading.

I am tempted to say that one should read Davis and recommend Nash, but such general advice is rarely useful. Both are worth considering, as accessible entries to some of the most invigorating thinking occurring in philosophy or in theology.

Models of Revelation

by Avery Dulles (Doubleday, 1983, 345 pp., \$16.95).

Reviewed by Clark H. Pinnock, Professor of Theology, McMaster Divinity College.

This is an important and valuable book on revelation, what it is, and how it has been communicated. It is beautifully created, clearly and thoughtfully written, and will serve its readers well. Like his earlier book on the church, Dulles makes use of five models or ideal types in order to get at the basic issues and to set forth the essential options before us today in contemporary theology. Part one describes these options, and takes stock of their strengths and weaknesses, while part two goes on to a proposal Dulles wishes to offer in which he describes revelation as "symbolic communication." For the reader's benefit let me summarize what the five models of revelation are. They are in order of exposition: revelation as authoritative doctrine, revelation through the mighty acts of God, revelation from the depths of human experience, revelation as encounter with the *kerigma*, and revelation as breakthrough to a new consciousness. Dulles is very helpful in sorting out a seemingly confused situation. For my part I would have wished to see a clearer line plainly drawn between the classical assumption about revelation that whatever else it delivers certainly gives us truth content of which we are stewards and which must not be denied, and the literal revision which sees revelation not delivering such fixed content. Giving us these five models is helpful, but it obscures what to me is the most important point of all. As it turns out Dulles himself does not wish this point to be too prominent because his own proposal is shaky in regard to content.

Having looked at the five options, Dulles believes that the way to move forward is to collect the strengths of each and avoid the pitfalls of them all, and to construct in effect a sixth model which would be better than any of the five. He feels that revelation is a richer category than any of the five types allows and that we need a model which could represent that richness better. The ninth chapter is the key one to examine because in it Dulles explains his model of revelation by symbolic mediation. Part two is given over to spelling it out and showing its superiority relative to the other models.

What does Dulles mean by revelation through symbols? It is his way of isolating what is truly crucial in the biblical and Christian message. Foundational are the symbols such as cross and resurrection. This is not identical with what the Bible teaches on those topics, since that teaching may be inadequate in places. Nor is it to be equated with historical events as such because they might be shaky when interpreted by modern canons of historiography. Revelation is located in the symbols

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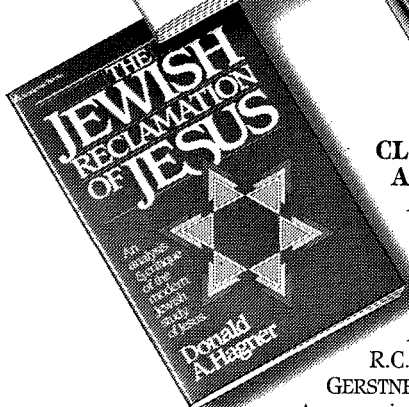
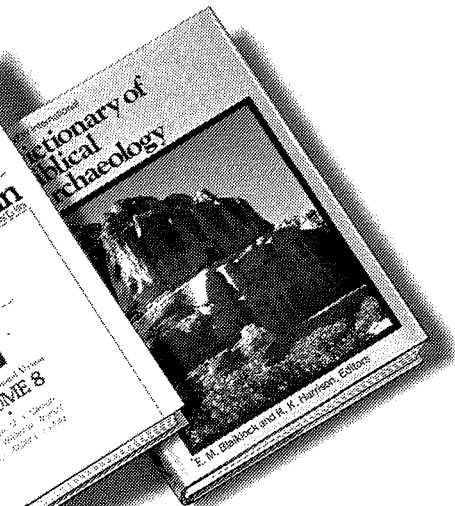
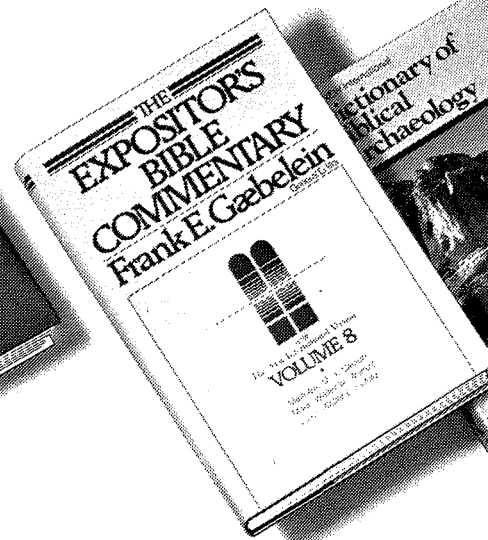
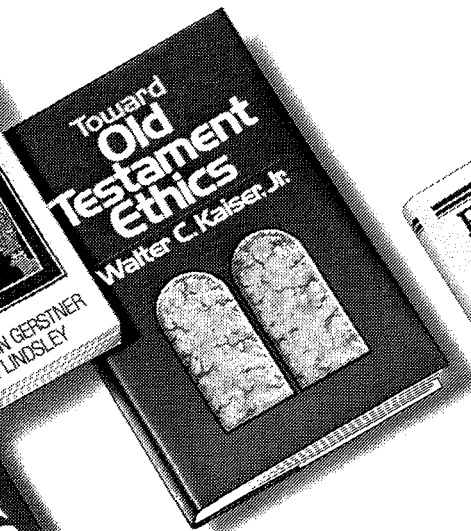
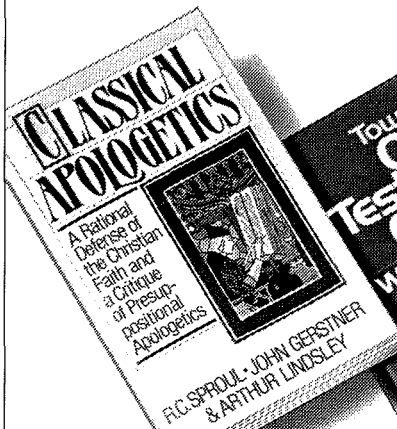


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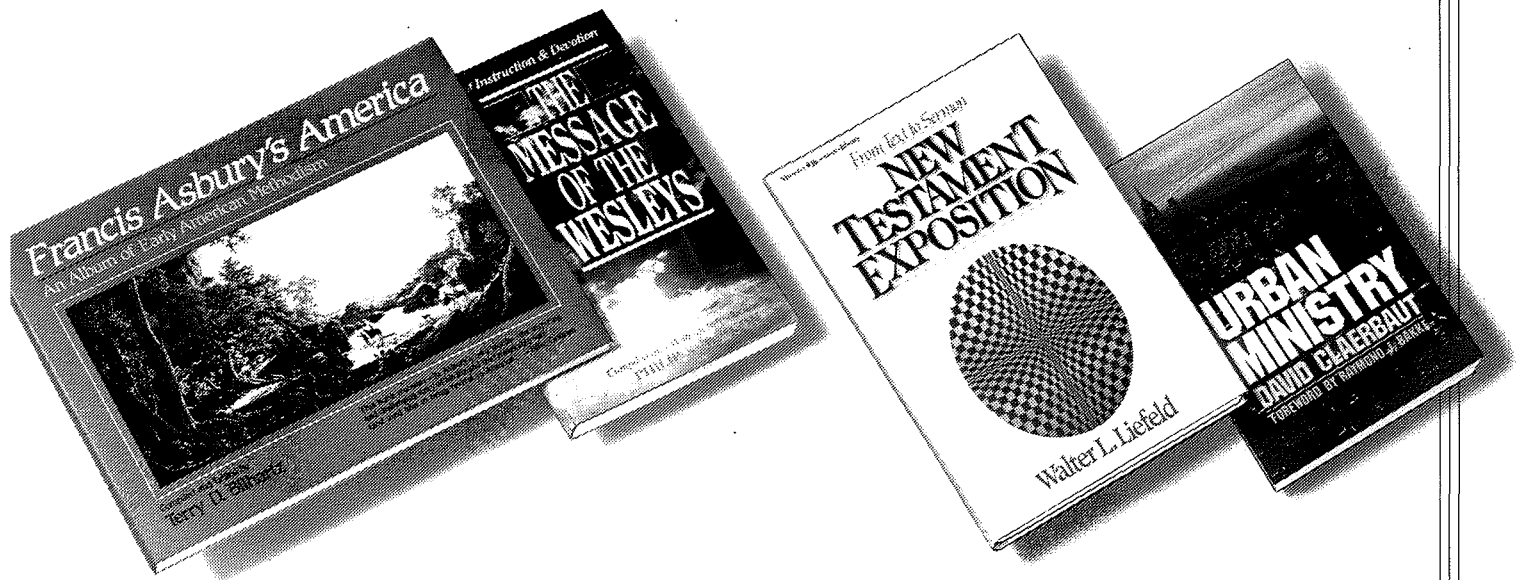


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borne by the biblical teaching and recital but which are deeper than just propositions or facts.

On one side of his proposal then, Dulles wants to distance himself from the kind of orthodoxy which would tie the message down to strict exegesis of biblical passages or have it stand or fall upon some question of historical verification. But on the other hand, Dulles does not want to see the gospel dissolve away into subjectivity. He wants to think of the great scriptural symbols as given by God and permanently binding on us. These are not, he insists, just human poetry, symbols of the human imagination which can transform our lives. He seems to think of them as given by God, divinely inspired even.

My view of Dulles' proposal of revelation by symbolic mediation is that it is rather vague. I am not sure where these symbols came from. Or what exactly they have to mean? Or whether God actually did these things to save us? Do we have to defend the ontological deity of Christ against the

functionalists? Do people have to be converted to Jesus Christ to be saved? Can we trust the Bible? It looks to me like Dulles had been too intimidated by certain sceptical objections to Christianity and feels he has to answer then in a very weak form.

What can we make of this proposal? It is a classical sounding proposal in that it stands firm for a solid symbolic structure which is not merely human in origin. But it wants to yield a good deal of ground to those who see it in those terms. It is close to what Tillich, Gilkey, and Baum are saying. He expresses great sympathy for positions which really do deny the teachings of the Bible and the creeds of the church. It leaves me a little confused. Just a few years ago Dulles wrote against a liberalism of accommodation which he found in such theologians as Gilkey, Tracy and Ogden, and he got blasted for doing so in the pages of the *Christian Century* (Nov 9, 1977). I perceived him to be a conservative voice speaking out courageously against heresy in the church. But now, perhaps in

painful recoil from that unpleasant confrontation, Dulles seems to be prepared to say this kind of liberal theology really has a lot going for it. I must confess that I prefer the Dulles of *The Resilient Church* to the present one. On the other hand I understand what may be going on in his life—out and out conflict over the faith once delivered can be a bloody and unpleasant business, and I do not blame him for drawing back just a little from it. But I do feel a little sorrow too because we need theologians of his acumen and faith to help us hold back the barbarians.

Theological Investigations, Volume 18: God and Revelation

by Karl Rahner, trans. by Edward Quinn (Crossroad, 1983, 304 pp., \$19.50).

Theological Investigations, Volume 19: Faith and Ministry

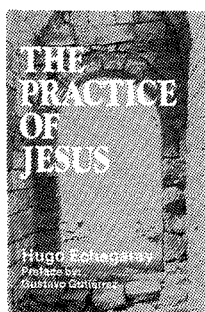
by Karl Rahner, trans. by Edward Quinn (Crossroad, 1983, 282 pp., \$19.50). Reviewed by Robert L. Hurd, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA.

Karl Rahner, the great German Jesuit theologian who died this past March, was once described as the quiet mover of the Catholic Church. These are not empty words. It is no little thing to move the Catholic Church even a little bit, but to transform its theological and self-understanding almost overnight—that is something of a miracle. It is not inappropriate, I think, to picture this process of transformation as a rebirth: the Catholic Church (including Catholic theology) was "born again" in the 20th century and Karl Rahner served as midwife. Under the stimulus of Rahner's tireless prompting, something really new came forth from the most traditional sources—from the Fathers, the mystics, Aquinas and the Scholastics, papal and magisterial teaching. The delivery—long overdue—was difficult, exciting, risky and painful and continues to be so. But the pains and risks are precisely those that accompany and signify healthy growth.

Although Rahner's midwifery took numerous forms, he has become most widely known for his theological essays, the new completed 20 volumes of *Theological Investigations*. Having laid the foundations for a real integration of fundamental (philosophical), dogmatic (systematic), and biblical theology in early works such as *Spirit in the World*, *Hearers of the Word*, and book-length lecture notes on grace, creation and the fall, Rahner had a basis for addressing specific topics as the need arose. In his hands the theological essay became a means of getting to the heart of an issue quickly and simply within the space of a few pages. Scholarly detail and citation were generally—not always—passed over in favor of a fresh and bold re-thinking of some theological theme or issue. What makes these essays so powerful and stimulating is the fruitful way in which Rahner's comprehensive theological vision is brought to bear upon specific issues, much as in the age of Aquinas' vision of the whole of reality was operative in each question and article of the *Summa Theologiae*. To one already familiar with the whole of Rahner's theology, it is fascinating to watch the particular application. To one not so acquainted, each topic and essay invites exploration of the whole of theology and its tasks. Indeed, one can gradually acquire a theological education just by tracking down those items in each essay that are unfamiliar.

Volumes 18 (*God and Revelation*) and 19 (*Faith and Ministry*) are the last in the series to appear in English. If the wide range of topics in each volume cannot really be adequately treated in the few paragraphs at our disposal, we can nevertheless indicate a few of the guiding threads which run through the writings of this period (1974-79). First,

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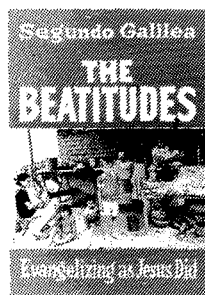


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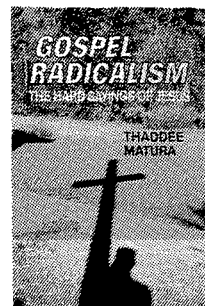


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one is reminded by these essays that to the end of his life Rahner fought hard to expand the intellectual vision and imagination of the Church of Rome. And he did so in the interest of overcoming apparently insurmountable oppositions between people (among Christian and between Christians and non-Christians). If theology's task is to facilitate understanding of the Faith, then it also has the task of removing misunderstandings. This includes the self-critical role of distinguishing between the substance of dogma and theological interpretations of this substance, the latter of which always involve conceptual models that remain historically conditioned, imperfect, and open to revision. It is one thing, for example, to affirm the notion of Original Sin, another to assume as intrinsic to this dogma itself the Augustinian theory of the Transmission of sinfulness by way of the libido involved in a directly paternal procreation. In the first instance we have, according to Rahner, the irrevisable substance of dogma—in the second case a quite revisable conceptual model for interpreting the dogma. Rahner does not simplistically imagine that one can have the dogma without some conceptual model, but only that one can learn through time to differentiate the two as successively better models or interpretive frameworks are found for the same dogma. With this awareness comes the realization of how dangerous and injurious to both theology and faith is the tendency to strictly equate a particular and perhaps only tacitly assumed interpretation of a dogma with what is essentially meant and binding in the dogma itself. This crucial distinction, which opens the way for a perfectly honest and forthright acknowledgement of the development of dogma, is at work in such essays as "Yesterday's History of Dogma and Theology for Tomorrow," "Magisterium and Theology," "On Bad Arguments in Moral Theology" (all in Volume 18, "The Church's Redemptive Historical Provenance from the Death and Resurrection of Jesus,") and "Mary's Virginity" (Volume 19).

In this connection "Pseudo-Problems in Ecumenical Discussion" (Volume 18) should be of special interest to protestant Christians. Touching upon such sensitive topics as the sacraments, Roman primacy, papal infallibility, Marian dogma, and the recognition of the sacramentality of Reform ministries (both in their transmission and exercise), Rahner argues cogently that Catholic dogmatic teaching is much more open on these issues than one is led to believe by either traditional neo-scholastic theology or even present-day Roman doctrinal statements.

A second and related theme operative in a number of these essays—not so much as an explicit topic itself but as a key to dealing with other matter—is the theology of grace. Briefly, as Rahner points out in "On the Theology of Worship" (Volume 19), an interventionist model of grace has been predominant in Christian Theology. The world (nature) is regarded as basically profane and the operation of divine grace in then seen exclusively in terms of a spatio-temporal intervention. Grace, it is assumed, has to be so conceived if one is to hold classically orthodox positions on the fall, the gratuity of grace, the distinction of nature and grace, and the salvific necessity and uniqueness of the Incarnation. Here again, however, a defective conceptual model for interpreting a dogma creates a host of problem not really entailed by the dogma itself. For example, one is pushed—as were Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin—into predestination schemes which seem to be required at one level but are nevertheless in radical contradiction to God's universal salvific will as revealed and accomplished in Jesus. Since for Rahner creation (nature) is encompassed from its inception by God's freely willed decision to grace it—the fall notwithstanding—God's gracious presence is a transcendental constant as well as an historical, spatio-temporal

event. The reader will find that this conception enables Rahner to avoid the pitfalls of an exclusively interventionist model, enhance classically orthodox positions, and at the same time shed new light on matters as diverse as non-Christian religions, sacramental consecration, and the meaning of the phrase "state of fallen nature." Mention must be made, finally of Rahner's fascinating essay "On Angels" (Volume 19). Aside from the provocative suggestions it offers for a theology of the cosmos and a more-biblical-less-Neoplatonic angelology, this previously unpublished study throws additional light on how Rahner understands the foundational metaphysical concepts of spirit, matter, and their interrelation. As Aquinas, Rahner's speculations on the ontology of angels are an extension and reflection of his understanding of human subjectivity.

Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism: Archibald Alexander and the Founding of Princeton Theological Seminary

by Lefferts A. Loetscher (Greenwood, 1983, 303 pp., \$35.00).

The Princeton Theology 1812-1921; Scripture, Science and Theological Method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield edited by Mark Noll (Baker, 1983, 344 pp., \$14.95 pb). Reviewed by Steven R. Pointer, Adjunct Professor of History, Wheaton College.

Mention of the "Old Princeton Theology" in contemporary American evangelical circles has tended to produce one of two opposite reactions: either one winces at the thought of the ghost of scholasticisms past, or one snaps to reverent attention for those surely enshrined in the hall of the departed heroes of the faith. If the latter sentiment has dominated, its accompanying corollary—the assumed continuing viability of the Princeton Theology—has added to the bewildered incredulity and prompt dismissal by non-evangelical theologians. In all cases, however, what has been sorely missing is a sober *historical* appraisal of the Princetonians' enterprise and contribution. That is, taking Alexander, Hodge, Warfield, et al seriously on their own terms and with due regard for the specific context which (for the most part) nineteenth century American culture afforded them has been the exception rather than the rule. Consequently, the two recent works by Lefferts Loetscher and Mark Noll represent an important redress of that situation precisely because, though different in scope and judgement, they are both successful historical studies.

Both works are accurately described by their subtitles. Loetscher's work is a substantial monograph which combines historical and intellectual biography with a perceptive history of Princeton's place in the American seminary movement of the early nineteenth century. Noll's book, on the other hand, is an anthology of the writings of Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield. Scripture, science, theological method and polemics are the representative issues addressed in an attempt "to present the Princeton theologians at their best and at their worst, but even more, at their most characteristic." Somewhat ironically, though, these two competent studies emerge from two very different frameworks of theological assessment. Lefferts Loetscher, late professor of American Church History at Princeton Seminary—in the words of Henry Bowden's foreword—"did not share the old assumptions that characterized" nineteenth century Princeton theology. That stance may provide "both detachment and a fondness bred from long historical acquaintance," as Bowden suggests, but it also injects a critical *apologia* which tacitly endorses the twentieth century transfor-

mation of Princeton Seminary and theology. Thus Loetscher's theological presuppositions definitely color, but do not necessarily negate, his often astute analysis. For example, Loetscher argues that the dual phenomena of the Enlightenment and Pietism set the formative stages for Archibald Alexander's labors and the birth of Princeton Seminary—yet rationalism and experiential religion were never adequately integrated with each other for the old Princeton tradition. Or again, preoccupation with deism, the mere tip of the Enlightenment iceberg, led the Princetonians (and American churchmen generally) to miss the more substantive, though indirect, influence of the Enlightenment in forming American cultural and social institutions.

Mark Noll, professor of history and church history at Wheaton College and Graduate School, unlike Loetscher, professes a measured sympathy for his subjects. The argument of the anthology is stated tersely in Noll's conviction that "the men of old Princeton can teach us much about nineteenth-century history and the doing of theology, but only if we resist the temptation to treat them as contemporaries." Specifically, Noll calls present evangelicals to consider again "the Princetonians' substantive theology and their general confidence in Scriptural authority" while we minimize areas where they were "most time-bound." Highlighting the major themes of the Princeton Theology—their use of the Bible combined with Reformed confessionalism, Scottish Common Sense Philosophy, religious experience, and nineteenth century American culture—Noll provides the best concise introduction and overview of the Princetonians tradition while still retaining "a remarkable consistency" over its history; this anthology more than fulfills its intention to provide "both an appetizer and an argument." Thus, seemingly independently, evangelical historiography has matured to the point of being self-critical while mainstream Protestant scholarship has deigned to take a second look at American evangelical history as well. Perhaps such a confluence bodes well not only for the doing of history but for theological dialogue as well.

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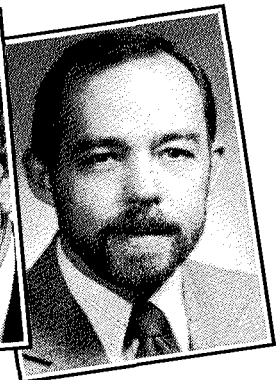
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The Sorcerer's Apprentice: A Christian Looks at the Changing Face of Psychology
by M. S. Van Leeuwen (InterVarsity Press, 1982, 151 pp. \$5.95 pb.). Reviewed by H. Newton Maloney, Professor of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary.

These were the 1982 lectures delivered at the John G. Finch Symposium on Psychology and Religion at the Graduate School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary. Van Leeuwen was associate professor of psychology at York University on leave at The Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship when she presented these lectures. The title for the book comes from Goethe's Ballad: "The Apprentice Sorcerer" which tells about a young sorcerer who attempts to use his master's magic to do the household chores. He turns the broom into a robot water carrier, but is unable to stop the broom from relentlessly going and coming to the well. Van Leeuwen compares psychology's continued adherence to the dictums of natural science as similar to the Sorcerer's dilemma. Although contemporary psychology would seem to know better, it continues to take its cues from natural science empiricism.

Van Leeuwen questions her discipline on this matter. She is well versed in the experimental methodology of social psychology, having taught and practiced its approaches for a significant part of her professional life. Yet she wonders whether continued persistence in following these methodologies does not violate humans as the object of psychological study and the Christian faith's profound understanding of persons from another perspective. She suggests that human reflexivity, human desire for wholeness and the desire for meaning are left untouched by traditional methodology. She proposes a psychology reformed according to a biblical perspective.

Van Leeuwen, in this volume, offers one of the more profound and lucid critiques of modern social and behavioral science. If given a serious reading by even the most erudite practitioners of contemporary scientific psychology, it will provoke introspection and questioning. Van Leeuwen takes no back seat in terms of her credentials and her background. She speaks of her own conversion experience and of the impact of a broader understanding of psychology brought on by her newfound theology and philosophy. This volume could well provide the bridge to integration that has long been sought by contemporary students of the Christian faith and psychology. It is probably one of the few statements by a Christian that can be counted on to have and impact in the non-Christian world.

Van Leeuwen is to be commended for the thoroughness with which she addressed the topic and her broad background in both scientific endeavors and philosophical approaches. Although the volume is not easy reading and will probably not be read widely by lay Christians, nevertheless, will be used for some time to come in both graduate and undergraduate courses where the philosophic foundations of psychology are being probed. I would recommend its use in general philosophy of science courses, as well as in integration courses where a Christian critique is being offered.

I would offer only one temporizing observation. While Van Leeuwen is absolutely correct in objection to the anti-metaphysical, mechanistic bias of much of psychology, there is a sense in which she misses the point and in which she knows better than she does. While she may be correct in her observation that many in modern psychology do not affirm a transcendent dimension to the human being, there are many others who are using empirical methodologies to study segments of human behavior who are as human and human as any

Christian scholars I have yet to meet. To discount their motivations and/or their conclusions is a bit naive at best and caricatures at worst. If I may be so bold as to suggest a rationale for this somewhat extreme analysis on Van Leeuwen's part, it could be due to a bifurcation of her own scholarly life into a pre and post Christian period. I know many other scholars who have been Christian all along and who do not see the issues in quite the same fashion. They rely on empirical data for reaching certain types of conclusions and know how to theorize on the basis of inductive reasoning in a manner that does not violate the nature of the human being. The alternative to Van Leeuwen's suggestion that psychology must begin again on a new basis devoid of its natural science base is to suggest that

the humanistic and natural science point of view are complimentary rather than contradictory. It would be of interest to see this possibility explored in the literature.

Worship and Politics

by Rafael Avila (Orbis Books, 1981, 144 pp., \$6.95).

A book on worship by a Marxist-influenced Roman Catholic with an introduction by a professor at a Southern Baptist seminary? This rather surprising combination speaks of the theological fer-

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ment now going on in Latin America. This book attempts to speak to that ferment from the perspective of worship, investigating how the worship of the church has participated in the structures of oppression and how it can liberate people from those structures.

Some of us might quibble with a few of the (to my mind, at least) historically questionable assumptions about the liturgy of the early church and worship directions today. But we are indebted to the author for a rather penetrating study, drawn against the backdrop of political oppression and struggle, of how, liturgy influences Christian life. Thought I might not share the political assumptions of the writer, I did find his analysis of the political dimensions of worship to be most illuminating.

William H. Willimon

A Reasonable Faith

by Anthony Campolo (Word, 1983, 200 pp., \$6.95).

"Theology, like good fiction, is always biographical," says Anthony Campolo in his book *A Reasonable Faith*. In this book he attempts to state his personal Christian faith in a way that might prove meaningful to his secularist friends and "... to illustrate that the secular world-view has religious implications in spite of itself." But what is secularism? Campolo borrows Langdon Gilkey's four traits of secularism, which are contingency, autonomy, relativity, and temporality, to answer this question. *Contingency* is the belief that absurdity rules therefore God becomes irrelevant; *autonomy* is the belief that if there is no God then humans are totally free; *relativity* is the belief that

all things are relative to culture; and *temporality* is the belief that humans limit reality to time and space.

In responding to the secularist traits, Campolo dialogues with such writers as Freud, Sartre, Kierkegaard, Kant, Nietzsche and Durkheim. His desire is to defend his Christian belief in transcendence, human dignity, freedom and order, while defending his secularist friends against Christians. While *A Reasonable Faith* promises much, it sadly disappoints. Campolo takes on more than he can deliver, leaving the reader confused with only scattered insights of theology's encounter with secularism.

—Steve Locke

Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View

by Marjorie Warkentin (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982, 202 pp., \$7.95).

After carefully reviewing the data concerning ordination in the Old Testament, in the Rabbinic tradition, in the early church and in the Catholic/Protestant debate at the time of the Reformation, the author concludes that, on balance, the evidence does not warrant the all but uniform practice of ordination in various branches of the Christian church. Not only is there a lack of consensus on many details—the significance of the "laying on of hands" is particularly illustrative of this point in the author's judgment—but even where there is a measure of consensus, the practice is of doubtful authenticity. For Protestants, as for Catholics, the bottom line is a hierarchical view of authority in the church that is inimical of the mutual service to which all believers are called for the edification of the body of Christ. In its struggle for organizational stability, the church has failed to realize that the Old Testament patterns of leadership are obsolete. As a result, the leaven of sacerdotalism—inchoate or explicit—has persisted in the church. The author calls upon her readers to recognize that "ministry" is the privilege and duty of all believers, not that of a few who stand between God and his people. Not a great deal is said about how this view of ministry is to be implemented, but the careful reader will learn much from the historical overview and careful exegesis of certain texts the book contains.

Paul K. Jewett

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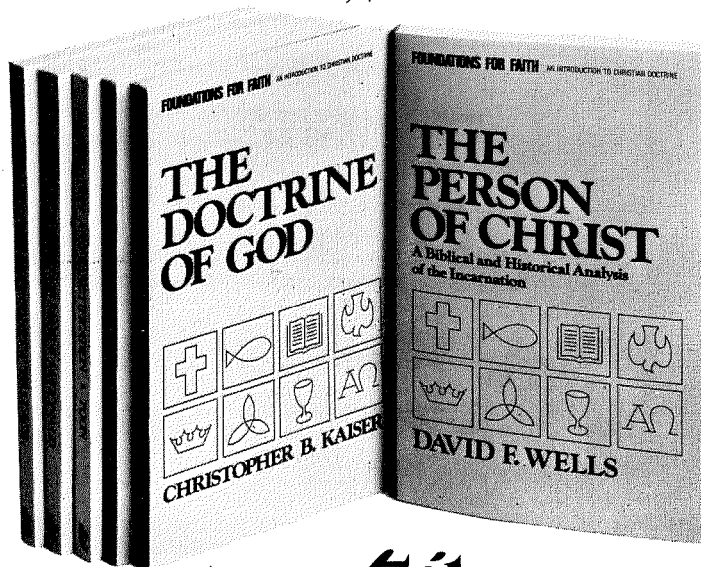
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The Pastor's Guidebook

by Marjorie D. Aldridge (Broadman, 1984, 159 pp., \$9.95).

This little book will prove helpful in many ways, especially to young pastors. There are eight services treated and discussed: (1) The Lord's Day Worship Service; (2) The Baptismal Service; (3) The Lord's Supper Service; (4) The Christian Marriage Service; (5) The Funeral Service; (6) The Parent-Child Dedication Service; (7) Other Dedication or Installation Services; (8) The Ordination Service.

While the general theological approach is that of the Baptist tradition, much appropriate material, especially prayers, are drawn from other sources—Presbyterian, Lutheran and Episcopalian—thus giving the book an ecumenical flavor. This ecumenical breadth is combined with specific instructions on planning each service along with practical, down-to-earth advice concerning the process. Each section, for example, contains a suggested order of worship. In brief, this is a book for those who, though they may be long on theory are short on practice. We commend it for what it claims to be, *The Pastor's Guidebook*, in the confidence that it will serve well the many pastors who wish to lead their congregations in an edifying manner.

—Paul K. Jewett

Christian Apologetics in a World Community
by William Dyrness (Inter-Varsity Press, 1983,
197 pp., \$5.95).

Bill Dyrness, now president of New College, Berkeley, wrote this informative book when he was a teacher in the Philippines, a fact which gives it an international flavour. Because he was up against challenges to Christianity which were more than parochially North American, an extra degree of wisdom came to characterize his thought. This is a learned and yet clearly written book designed to help the Christian develop an apologetic framework to use in the work of evangelism.

The volume is divided into two main parts: the first part fills us in on the basic issues in apologetics, while the second part takes on half a dozen specific challenges to faith. Dyrness' approach, like my own in *Reason Enough*, makes use of a variety of evidences which can be employed to create the impression of credibility on behalf of our Christian position. A unique proposal which he makes is that we should see the gospel as a power-encounter which promises to change people and their world. This allows him to conceive of apologetics as much more than a rational argument because salvation is much more than an intellectual belief.

Part two takes on naturalism, idealism, Marxism, and the problem of evil. Dyrness provides an abundance of information on arguments and objections, and adds discussion questions at the end of each chapter and a generous bibliography at the close of the book.

I strongly recommend this book as a handbook in Christian apologetics which can prove useful both for evangelism and for Christian reflection.

—Clark H. Pinnock

To Empower as Jesus Did: Acquiring Spiritual Power Through Apprenticeship
by Aaron Milavec (Edwin Mellen, 1982, 345 pp., \$49.95).

Milavec begins with a critical blast at Christianity in America, particularly the "major denominations," none of which he names, and all of which are apparently similar enough that little attention need be given doctrinal, liturgical or educational differences. The problem seems to be a loss of steam, as it were. The solution is the use of apprenticeship in churches, and the author wastes no time in pointing out that "even God depends on human apprenticeships." He quite aptly points out the significant role which parents play in passing along, wittingly or unwittingly, religious perceptions, inclinations and attitudes to their children.

While his intent is clear, and the point is well-made that the home shapes one's sensitivities greatly, Milavec has apparently demythologized the Spirit of God to the extent that inspiration and revelation can come to or be received by only those who have been "apprenticed" in just the right ways. The sweeping generalizations of the book are a source of discomfort and, to some degree, disqualify Milavec's arguments.

In an attack upon the atonement theory it becomes clear that Milavec's apprenticeship theory is the standard against which all theology must be measured. So in the end, Milavec reduces Jesus to the role of great teacher. Here is the tired liberalism of the 19th century Protestantism appearing from the pen of a 20th century Roman Catholic. The few good things which Milavec has to say are rendered a bit suspect by his heavy-handed, rather ideological approach.

—Gary R. Sattler

Sociology and the Human Image
by David Lyon (InterVarsity Press, 1983, 224 pp., \$6.95 pb.).

This book is a great improvement over a previous rather defensive attempt (*Christians and Sociology*, IVP, 1975) to consider the interface between Christianity and sociology. *Sociology and the Human Image* positively asserts that sociology needs the critical truths and insights Christian commitment can bring to it, and Christianity needs itself to be sociologically self-critical. Lyon calls for a "critical integration" in which social analysis and theory are informed by biblical revelation and where the "product of integration is both self- and socially-critical, in an ongoing and open-ended manner." Following a critical examination of major sociological theories, Lyon demonstrates his critical integration approach by analyzing both Marxism and feminism.

The author concludes, quite rightly I think, that the term "Christian sociology" is more confusing than helpful, and that we might better speak of a Christian perspective in sociology or of Christian ways of doing sociology. I consider Lyon's book the best written treatment available to date on the integration of Christianity and sociology. There is a need for other social scientists to continue the critical integration process that has begun.

—Jack Balswick

Who are the Peace-Makers? The Christian Case for Nuclear Deterrence.
by Jerram Barrs (Crossway, 1983, 64 pp., \$2.95)
introduction by Francis A. Schaeffer.

Jerram Barrs breaks no new ground in the debate over national security justice and war in the nuclear age. Rather, this booklet further polarizes a complex debate by offering a simplistic choice between unilateral disarmament and nuclear resistance to global tyranny. The book assumes that biblical argument for the use of lethal force in the protection of justice implies a support for current U.S. nuclear policy.

Barrs begins with a critique of pacifism, and then devotes most of his space to a biblical argument for the use of violence in the protection of justice. Finally, in the last ten pages the author addresses nuclear deterrence and concludes that we need a strong defense against Soviet aggression.

For a published work this book shows an astonishing lack of familiarity with the best recent writings on war, whether pacifist, just war theory or Christian realist. Barrs argues that war is a legitimate vehicle of God's vengeance. He denies any distinction between law-governed police force and all-out nuclear war against tyranny. While he appeals to just war theory over against pacifism as "important to God today," God did not honor them at Sodom and Gomorrah. In Barrs' view, the evil of communism and the solidarity of a nation in its guilt, justify total warfare. In the name of God's justice and the protection of the innocent Barrs defends the potential righteousness of genocide.

—Bernard T. Adeney

The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Volume I: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments
edited by James H. Charlesworth (Doubleday, 1983, 995 pp., \$35.00).

The publication of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* places an important, updated tool in the

hands of the student of the background of biblical literature and early Judaism and Christianity. The previous edition by R. H. Charles was a pioneering classic but was published in 1913. The last twenty-five years have seen a burgeoning of studies on the background documents of the Bible, not to mention the publication of new texts at Qumran. Many of the ancient documents, available in English for the first time, were recovered in the last hundred years.

The term Old Testament "pseudepigrapha" (works authored under a pseudonym) covers those writings attributed to ideal figures of Israel's past, usually claiming some sort of divine inspiration. The collection in volume 1 (volume 2 is due out shortly) covers two major genres of "pseudepigrapha"—apocalypses and testaments. The apocalypse in general is a vision of the heavenly world and the end-time (cf. Daniel 7), while the testament is classically portrayed as the deathbed blessing and prophecy of a biblical hero (cf. Genesis 49).

The collection may include too great a variety of texts from disparate ages, but it thereby avoids the eclecticism and paraphrase of *The Other Bible*, another collection of para-canonical texts that just appeared. For these new annotated translations we owe a debt of thanks to Professor James Charlesworth and his team.

—Stephen F. Noll

Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature
By Richard Rorty (Princeton University Press, 1979, 394 pp., \$7.95).

Evangelical Christianity has a vested interest in Truth. It does not, by most accounts, set well as one among many ways of being religious. Relativism, a prime target for evangelical apologists, and the contemporary concern for epistemological warrant, suggest that something is afoot in modern thought which threatens the way evangelicals think of themselves—namely, as possessors of truth about reality. Rorty's important book articulates that something, and has brought upon itself a good bit of philosophical attention in the process. Despite some sweeping generalizations of four centuries of thought, it is an excellent overview by which to attain familiarity with the contemporary discussion of epistemology.

Depending on Quine, Heidegger, Dewey, Sellars, and Wittgenstein, Rorty argues that contemporary analytical philosophy (upon which much current evangelical apologetics depends) has to its detriment adopted a foundationalist epistemology in which reality is "given" to the "knowing subject" without mediation of historical conditioning. Thus, by this account, there would be available to us a permanent, ahistorical, conceptually neutral, commensurating vocabulary which can serve to sift among theories and beliefs for those timeless true.

If Rorty is right that our desire for such a commensurating vocabulary by which to discuss and weigh depictions of reality may be a historical phenomenon in itself, are we left wallowing in relativism? Rorty rejects the notion that to doubt foundationalist epistemology is to question that at most one of competing theories can be true. He likens the pluralism issue to "choosing the one right thing to do" in a complex social setting. The relativist would claim that no action is inherently more correct than another. Rorty takes the subtly different stance that the list of candidates can be considerably shortened by "plausible conditions" that arise from our human and social setting. (The evangelical prophetic, traditional, and revealed factors would inform this setting.)

Rorty could be considered a critic of the way apologetics has been done since the Church Fathers read the Greeks. Constructing an airtight foundation is one way to do apologetics, but it shares the

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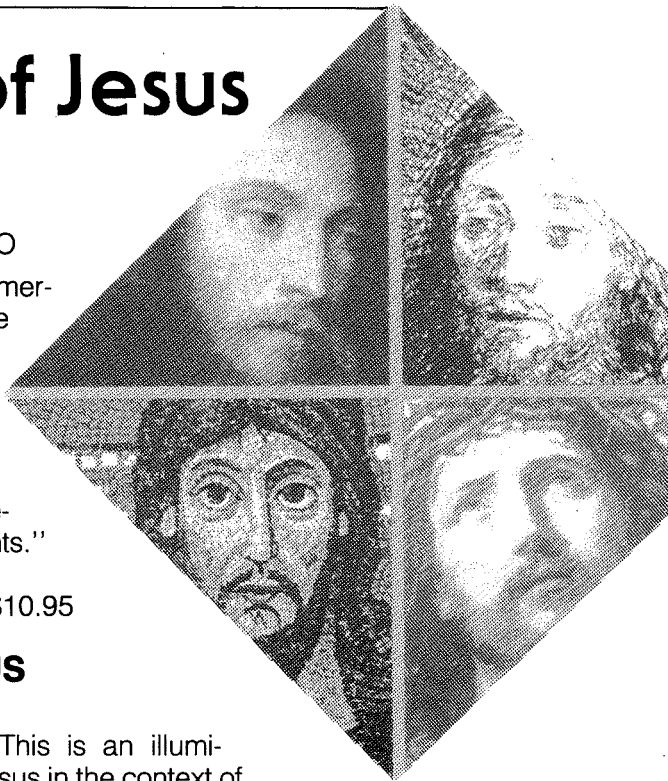
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same epistemological problems as pre-Kuhnian science (for one, being subject to a philosophical stamp of approval). Another way to do apologetics is to see not how we *ought* to warrant our beliefs, but how do we *do* warrant them, in the faith that our instinct for what makes sense is not all wet, and may even appeal to others.

—Steven S. Sittig

Book Comment Contributors

In addition to regular *TSF Bulletin* editors and contributors (listed on the front and back covers), the following reviewers have contributed book comments in this issue: **Bernard Adeney** (Assistant Professor of Social Ethics, Graduate Theological Union), **Jack Balswick** (Professor of Sociology and Family Development, Fuller Theological Seminary), **Paul K. Jewett** (Professor of Systematic Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary), **Steve Locke**, (M.A. Fuller Theological Seminary), **Stephen F. Noll**, (Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry), **Clark H. Pinnock** (Professor of Theology, McMaster Divinity College), **Gary R. Sattler** (Director of the Office of Christian Community and Instructor of Christian Formation and Discipleship, Fuller Theological Seminary), **Steven S. Sittig** (Ph.D. candidate, Claremont Graduate School), **William H. Willimon**.

BREAD FOR THE WORLD PROMOTES ELECTION WORK

Bread for the World, a Christian citizen's movement against hunger, is offering an "Election Kit." The kit contains suggestions on how to plan and carry out election projects that will make hunger an election issue. The kit is available for \$4 from Bread for the World, 802 Rhode Island Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20018.

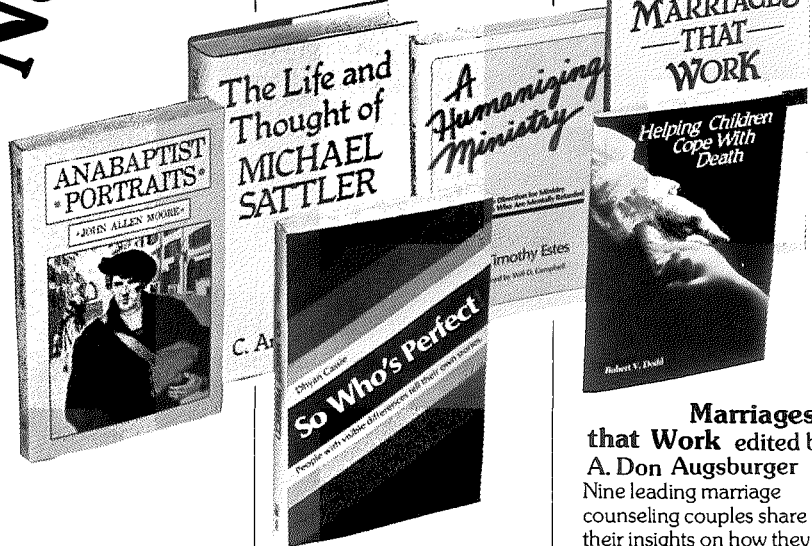
"GOOD NEWS FOR EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE" OMSC January Mission Seminars for Theological Students

Theological Students Fellowship again joins thirty seminaries in co-sponsoring the January term for seminarians at the Overseas Ministries Study Center. Although organized primarily for seminary students, these seminars are also for other interested participants. Each week is set up as a complete unit, but together they give a comprehensive survey of the World Christian Mission. Students may receive academic credit at one's own school if prior arrangement is made with the seminary administration. The topics for the three weeks are "Continuity and Change in Mission," with Charles Forman, James Cogswell, Alan Neely, Waldron Scott, and Tite Tienou (Jan. 7-11); "New Frontiers in Christian Witness," with Samuel Moffett, Franklin Woo, and James Phillips; "Mission in the Americas," with Jorge Lara-Braud. For further information and registration forms, write to James Phillips, Associate Director, Overseas Ministries Study Center, P.O. Box 2057, Ventnor, NJ 08406. Identify yourself as a *TSF Bulletin* reader or a member of a TSF chapter.

Publishing Schedule

Due to several personnel changes in the TSF office, we are behind schedule with this issue of the *Bulletin*. Please be patient as we attempt to catch up on future issues. Thank you.

New! From Herald Press



Anabaptist Portraits

by John Allen Moore

The author gives an honest and balanced account of the life and work of six leading Anabaptists: Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, George Blaurock, Michael Sattler, Hans Denck, and Balthasar Hubmaier. The stories of these key Reformers come alive in an interesting, readable style as you meet some of the first persons who dared to think "free church" thoughts. Paper, \$9.95

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by C. Arnold Snyder

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Nine leading marriage counseling couples share their insights on how they have made their marriages grow. Paul Tournier, Charlie and Martha Shedd, Evelyn and Sylvanus Duvall, Richard C. and Doris Halverson, David and Vera Mace, William E. and Lucy Hulme, Cecil H. Osborne, and John M. and Betty Drescher reflect and give encouragement to couples. Paper, \$6.95

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by D. Timothy Estes

The author analyzes the present state of ministry with persons labeled mentally retarded, and compares it to the "secular" human service system. It issues a call to the church to become an open, integrated community which includes persons with retardation as vital, worthwhile members of the body of Christ. Written from a solid background of experience. Introduction by Will Campbell, author of *Brother to a Dragonfly*. Paper, \$7.95

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