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# TSF BULLETIN

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# FOUNDATIONS

(Doing theology on the basics of classical faith)

## WHICH ESCHATOLOGY FOR WHICH CHRIST?

By Vernard Eller, University of LaVerne (CA).

Dr. Eller, who is a member of the Church of the Brethren, originally delivered this paper at a conference on the Believers Church, held at Bluffton College (OH) in October, 1980. Although in its broadest sense "the Believers Church" includes all bodies that practice baptism at the age of accountability rather than infant baptism, this series of conferences is supported predominantly by a much smaller group of churches representing the radical discipleship of the Anabaptist-Mennonite-Brethren line. In this paper, then, references to the Believers Church tradition would apply more directly to the smaller grouping than to the larger.

We have received Dr. Eller's permission to edit his manuscript to conform to our editorial policy concerning inclusive language. Eller provides a critique of the contemporary stress on inclusive language in his new book, forthcoming from Eerdmans, Language of Canaan.

This paper will appear in two installments, concluding in our November-December issue. Eller's ideas are not only relevant to contemporary theological discussions, but also have profound implications for evangelism, personal commitment, and church life.

It may be accurate enough, but it is not sufficient to say that any true understanding of Christ must understand him within an eschatological context. We must proceed to specify which eschatology for which Christ. Either "which" presents us with a number of options. Let us first consider "eschatology." In the next installment, we will explore "Christ."

### I. Sorting Out the Types

#### Biblical/Philosophical

We must be ready to treat eschatology on four levels. On the first, we have a *biblically* derived eschatology over against any that is *philosophically*, or rationally, derived. Our Believers Church tradition obviously opts strongly for the former. Because the Bible is our rule of faith and practice, the eschatological side of our faith will want to come from that same fountainhead.

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#### Demythologized/Realistic/Literalistic

On the second level, having determined that we now are to be *biblical*, it would seem to follow that our eschatology be *realistic* — this rather than either the *demythologized* version on the left or the *literalistic* on the right. As "demythologized," I have in mind the view which holds that the familiar eschatological teaching of the Bible is actually a mythic expression of the secular dreams and aspirations of oppressed people which, in turn, proves useful in inspiring them to work at radical social change. Thus the common eschatological hope, "God will come and save us," is understood as a mythic way of saying, "We can save ourselves" ("God" now denoting "the as yet unrealized human potential which our mythic dreams can move toward accomplishment.") Demythologized eschatology functions as nothing more than a psychological device for mustering human effort toward social change and is manifestly a travesty of what the biblical writers wanted to affirm. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of this so-called "eschatology" current among us; and we must be constantly alert to spot it and identify it for what it is.

Over against that, the *realistic* eschatology for which I am arguing is one that places its hope in the real promises of a real, wholly-other God whose real past, present, and promised actions in no way *depend upon* human effort, response, or even perception (although, of course, they do call for and *desire* appropriate human response). Demythologized eschatology assumes and appeals directly to "human heroism"; realistic eschatology gives God the glory in a way that expressly leaves no room for *human* heroism.

At the same time, this realistic eschatology must also be just as carefully distinguished from its *literalistic* neighbor on the right. Realism does peg its stance upon the actuality of a super-historical God who has, who can, and who will actively intervene both within the historical process and in bringing it to consummation. However, it does not follow that all of the Bible's eschatological pictures must be taken as photographic representations of those interventions. In this regard, the Bible's own divergency and even discrepancy of imagery constitute evidence enough that futuristic calendarizing and tour-guiding are not the order of the day — that these pictures are meant as *theological symbol*, even though symbolizing that which can be expected as very real event. That God will act as promised we can be certain; yet the timing and logistics of that action we can safely leave to him.

Surely, on the right, literalistic eschatology is currently just as popular as the demythologized variety is on the left. And if the one is "unbiblical," the other misses the mark just as far in its "biblical overkill." The realistic middle regularly tends to get squeezed out (or perhaps seduced away); but I would contend that it is the only truly biblical position. We will need to keep alert both ways.

#### Futurist/Realized/In-Process-of-Realizing-Itself

On the third level, we must choose among the three alternatives that have developed within the course of New Testament scholarship. The *futurist* position holds that eschatology itself (and thus, particularly, the biblical teachings) consists in talk about and prediction of essentially *future* events, things that haven't happened yet but will someday (whether that future be near or far away). That is to say, we presently are still somewhere this side of the eschatological starting point. Although literalistic eschatologists do discover "signs" in the present, their thought almost inevitably falls into this futurist category.

*Realized* eschatology, on the contrary, holds that God already has performed all the intervention he needs to do or will do. The customary form of realized eschatology proposes that the gospel actually amounts to a proclamation that the eschatological promises of God *have been* accomplished; that, ever now, we hold as much of kingdom possibility as we ever shall;

that, in effect, Jesus' "resurrection" was his second coming. Yet this term "realized" needs to be read a bit more inclusively; it should be understood to cover not only "that which *has been realized*" but also "that which *directly can be realized*." In either case, no new intervention of God is anticipated or wanted. And rather plainly, the demythologized eschatology discussed above inevitably shows up as a form of realized eschatology; the human potential for creating the end-state of perfected society is already in our possession.

Now, through a careful process of pick-and-choose, New Testament texts can be found to support either a futurist, or a realized view. However, our third option, the in-process-of-realizing-itself view (which phrase is a German invention, as you might guess) holds that such use of the texts is bad business and that forcing the issue between "futurist" and "realized" is to pose a false choice. This third view, then, *combines* texts and truths from each of the others. Thus, Christian eschatology *does* focus upon particular future, interventionist events — such as the return of Christ, the final judgment, the creation of the new Jerusalem. However, these very events represent a reality of such imminent power that they cannot be confined solely to the future. They are "coming" events in the sense that they already are "in process" as well as that they will someday "arrive." Thus, as just one instance, the coming of the Holy Spirit (and our present life in the Spirit) is understood as an eschatological event happening "in the last days" — an "already" that itself moves toward and participates in the "not yet" of seeing him face-to-face.

In its earlier development, New Testament scholarship was spread over all three of our alternatives. My impression now is that reputable scholars have come to a rather strong consensus that the textual evidence itself will support nothing but the third, "in process" view. If the Believers Church tradition is committed to being *biblical*, we have no choice but to resist both the futurist and the realized options and come down here (which, I am prepared to argue, is where our progenitors generally were by instinct even before the options ever got defined).

### Speculated/Lived

Our fourth and final level is as crucial as any. *Speculative* eschatology — predominantly futurist — is that in which the eschatologist has no interest and feels no obligation to do anything except "figure out" the chronology, timing, and detail of the eschatological calendar. Doing eschatology is now primarily an intellectual, exegetical activity. It is customarily treated either as the whole of theology or as the last session of a course, or the last chapter of a book, on systematic theology. Eschatology is compartmentalized — seen as having little to do with the remainder of theology and as good as nothing to do with practical matters of ethics and discipleship.

Conversely, *lived* eschatology — which as much as

demands the "already" aspects of the "in process" view — is anything but compartmentalized. Quite the contrary, it is precisely the wholistic, totalist perspective from which every aspect of the Christian faith and life is to be understood. Indeed, looking back over my own writing career, I one day realized that all in the world I have ever done is to eschatologize whatever I touched. Name the book, and I could tell you what it was I was eschatologizing and prove to you that such was indeed the case. And there is no question at all but that it has been my grounding in the Believers Church tradition that has led me in this direction. So, to follow up the implications of this "lived eschatology" becomes the purpose of the section of this study to which we now proceed.

## II. Seeing Beyond The Horizon

The material here to be presented can be found in more detail — though also directed to a more specific concern — as part of the final chapter of my book, *War and Peace From Genesis to Revelation* (Herald Press, 1981).

I must begin by picking something of a lover's quarrel with the structure of our conference program. Its tri-partite division clearly implies that eschatology represents one authentic but partial dimension of Christology (*future oriented*), which then needs to be complemented by present and past oriented dimensions. Yet that, I think, is wrong. "Eschatology" identifies the Bible's one, totalist perspective (*future oriented* but by no means *future confined*) — or at least it will be *my* definition. Our other two divisions, then, should be seen as treating specialized aspects of eschatology. Yet they will need to keep cognizant of the gospel's fundamentally eschatological setting, for it is in that setting they must be judged.

I propose that all various worldviews can be divided into just two categories: the "Secular" and the "Eschatological" — but please do not draw any conclusions from the words themselves until we have had opportunity to define them. It is most important that we protect the terminology from misunderstanding. In particular, ours is not a distinction simply between church-related faith and activity and those not so related; much, even, of what goes on inside churches will finally have to be qualified as "secular." Neither is ours a distinction between Christians and non-Christians; people who call themselves "Christians" are to be found in both groups, and the name of Jesus very well may be invoked in both. Likewise, there are concepts of God that will accord very nicely with what we are calling "the secular," so the distinction cannot be simply that between believers and atheists. Our categories are more subtle and less obvious than any of these; so we will need to take care in understanding them.

The English word "secular" is derived from the Latin term for "century" or "age," thus denoting "that which is of this age." In particular, we shall use "secular" as referring to "what can be accomplished *through human resources* within the limits of history as we know it." The root assumption is that historical possibility includes nothing more than what human wisdom and technique can make of it.

The word "eschatological," on the other hand, comes from the Greek for "end" or "goal" and denotes "thought and activity that is *end-state oriented*, directed toward an ultimate goal that lies *beyond* the potential simply of this age." The secularist, of course, *believes* he is operating out of a total view of reality. Yet, in the eyes of an eschatologist, the secular perspective inevitably is seen as terribly partial and constricted.

This observation enables us to present a diagram — one that you can draw in your mind's eye better than I can on paper. Begin by making an X to mark the spot on which stands "the secularist." Around him draw a circle (as large or small as seems right) circumscribing "the present age," "this world," "history as we know it." And recall that, within this circle, along with the secularist, are to be found the institutional church, an understanding of Jesus, that which can be called "God," and

### EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Evangelical Theological Society will hold its annual meeting at Ontario Theological Seminary (Toronto) December 28-30, 1981. The general theme, "Relationships Between the Testaments" will receive attention from many scholars, including Daniel P. Fuller and Paul Feinberg (Old Testament law and the New Testament); Ronald Sider and Frank Gaebelin (various issues in social ethics); Richard Longenecker, Ian Rennie, and Carl Armerding (distinctives in Canadian academics); and Clark Pinnock and Paul Holmer (Scripture). Paralleling the ETS sessions, the Evangelical Philosophical Society and the Near Eastern Archaeological Society will also be meeting. For further information, write to Simon Kistemaker, Reformed Theological Seminary, 5422 Clinton Blvd., Jackson, MS 39209.

particular versions of Christianity — all of which a true eschatologist would deem “partial” yet have to recognize as “actual” for all that.

The trick of this diagram, then, lies in *not* making a new X upon which to place “the eschatologist.” Most of all, that eschatologist is *not* to be put outside the secular circle. All tendencies to make the diagram represent two distinct and separate spheres are to be firmly resisted. It is not to be suggested, for instance, that the secularist is one who centers his existence upon *earth* while the eschatologist centers hers upon *heaven*, the secularist upon *the physical* and the eschatologist upon *the spiritual*, the secularist upon *the present* and the eschatologist upon *the future*, or anything of the sort. Our distinction does not lie in any kind of “dualism.”

No, the eschatologist is to be placed on the very same X with the secularist; there is no distinction as to *location* at all. The difference is that the secularist’s horizon simply does not exist for the eschatologist. She sees right over it, past it, through it — state it as you will; represent it graphically if you can. And it is not that the eschatologist pierces that horizon at just one point or only in one direction; no, the horizon simply disappears. Thus, the eschatologist can see *back* to what were *God’s purposes* in creating the world in the first place, while the secularist cannot even see that there was present a God who had purposes. The eschatologist can look *around* to see a non-horizoned God who has acted within history and who presently is acting so, while the secularist, at best, can call “God” only something from within the horizon, something much too small and weak for a real God. And the eschatologist can see *ahead* to God’s promises and commitments regarding where history is to *come out*, while the secularist cannot see that history even has “a coming out.” The eschatologist can see all the secularist sees *and more*; but because she does see *more*, she also will *understand* quite differently the secular reality that the two of them see together. A chapter read as part of a longer novel will render a much different sense than if it be read as though it were meant for a short story, complete in itself.

Deutero-Isaiah, indeed, pegs the truth of Yahweh’s being God precisely upon this understanding of eschatology:

Let them come forward, these idols,  
let them foretell the future.  
Let them declare the meaning of past events  
that we may give our minds to it;  
let them predict things that are to be  
that we may know their outcome.  
Declare what will happen hereafter:  
then we shall know you are gods.

See how the first prophecies have come to pass,  
and now I declare new things:  
before they break from the bud I announce them to  
you.

Here and now I will do a new thing:  
this moment it will break from the bud.  
Can you not perceive it?

— Isaiah 41:22-23a; 42:9; 43:19a (NEB)

Above, the use of the term “horizon” was intended to point to an analogy that will further our thought. The secularist, now, is to be identified as “a flatlander,” i.e., a person who believes that the earth is flat. The eschatologist, conversely, is a “round-earther” who knows that it is a sphere.

The secular assumption regarding the limits of life and history is in its own way as obvious and natural as was the original assumption that the earth is flat: within the everyday horizon of our human finitude, that is precisely how things “look.” Never-

## TSF IMPROVES SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

The current issue of *TSF Bulletin* is the first to be mailed from the computer’s new subscription system. After months and years of makeshift procedures, we now expect to process subscriptions much more accurately. Having made this new beginning, now is the time for us to make good our old debts. If you or someone you know have not received issues that were paid for, please let us know and we will try to send them to you. You can help us in the future by continuing to report any missed issues, and by keeping us well informed of any address changes. Please make sure that the name and address printed on this current issue is accurate, and feel free to offer any suggestions you may have at any time. Thank you for being such patient and supportive subscribers during our years of struggling in this area.

theless, the discovery that the world actually is round did not have to await the eschatologists’ being lifted up and off their X to where they could see the curvature of the earth beyond the horizon. No, the discovery was made from the very same spot, seeing the very same things that secular flatlanders could see and always had seen. What the eschatological round-earthers had learned was correctly to interpret the evidence of astronomical movements or of ships “sinking” out of sight below the horizon. All they had to do was “see” what everyone had been “looking at”: the whole time, the world itself had included signals trying to tell them that its “horizon” was an illusion.

Just so, becoming a Christian eschatologist does not involve being lifted out of this world into some transcendent realm or being given magic spectacles to see invisible reality. No, it is another case of catching the true significance of what has always been there to be seen. The difference is that round-earthers made their discovery out of their sharp wits and natural intelligence, whereas Christian eschatologists have learned to see by being taught of God. But the Apostle Paul stated our idea rather precisely: “When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world; the old order has gone, and a new order has already begun” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Obviously, Paul does not mean to say that, at the moment of accepting Christ, one is transported from this world to another one. Just as obviously, that moment does not mark the disappearance of this world and its replacement by the kingdom of God. No, what *does* happen is that one “sees” the entire world (and all its people) “newly.” The old, secular, flatlander interpretation is gone; and the new, true, eschatological signification has already begun.

Yet notice what follows. It is not so much that the secularist’s (or flatlander’s) is an utterly *false* reading of things as that his is a *partial*, or *limited*, viewpoint which, sooner or later, is bound to distort the truth. Goodness knows, there were a great many things people could and did do correctly and well, even when we were all flatlanders. Indeed, even now, when as good as all of us are enlightened round-earthers, we still perform most of our functions under the old premises of a flat earth.

However, I would suggest, even if a true-believing flatlander and a modern round-earther were working side by side — both making the same motions and together acting as though the earth were flat — there would still be a major difference between them. The round-earther would have a true understanding of what she was doing and why. She would not be vulnerable to having her entire worldview knocked into a cocked hat by chancing upon phenomena that flatlander premises cannot handle. The round-earther would be free to see whatever is to be seen rather than having to ignore or explain away the presence of that which would threaten her understanding of things. And of course, as soon as both came to matters of map-making, astronomy, long-range navigation, radio communica-

1, or space travel, the flatlander would be left helpless. All of which is to say that, even though secularist wisdom ought not be condemned as all wrong, it cannot be accepted as all right, either.

Given this understanding of "eschatology," I submit three quick observations:

(1) Everything we know about the New Testament church — faith, its worship, its Scriptures, its practice, its life — would indicate that its perspective was thoroughly and consistently end-earth *eschatological*.

(2) However, it does not follow that all (or even any) consequent versions of Christianity have retained the orientation. Indeed, regarding the Believers Church interpretation of "the fall of Christendom" under Constantine, I would suggest that the key to that entire catastrophe was the church's trading its eschatological birthright for a mess of secular pottage. And my apprehension of the church today is that it, too, is very strongly secularized, displaying very little of eschatological understanding or commitment. And what eschatology it does know tends to be either that of liberal, realized demythology or else of ultra-conservative speculation and literalism.

(3) Notwithstanding this sad state of affairs, it is my conviction that, within church history of the modern era, as something of a subconscious influence from our commitment to the New Testament, the Believers Church tradition marks the closest approach to a recovery of the original eschatological vision. In saying that, I am talking about our sainted progenitors and not venturing any opinion about the present state of our churches. At least we do still have our Bibles and perhaps some vestigial memory of how to go about reading them. Round-earth eschatology ought not be an entirely impossible option for us.

*An aside:* To the best of my knowledge, among moderns, it was the Blumhardts, father and son, who first did a deliberate eschatology based on biblical eschatology and thus fed the emphasis into contemporary thought. You can test that thesis with my *Why Kingdom Come: A Blumhardt Reader* (Eerdmans, 1980).

*The conclusion of this article will appear in the November-December issue.*

#### AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The 1981 Annual Meetings of the AAR/SBL will be held in San Francisco December 19-22, 1981. In addition to the usual array of papers, discussions, panels, and receptions, TSF members may be interested in the three sessions sponsored by the Group on Evangelical Theology. Chaired by Mark Lau Branson, topics of these sessions include Evangelicals and Karl Barth, Evangelicals and Politics, and Evangelicals and Process Theology. Participants include Donald Dayton, George Hunsinger, Ray Anderson, David Gill, Grant Osborne, Paul Feinberg, John Culp, and others.

The roundtable discussion on Process Theology will be limited to fifteen participants and requires that all attending read the four papers in advance. Reservations should be made through the AAR. All registration correspondence should be sent to Scholars Press, P.O. Box 2268, Chico, CA 95927.

The Institute of Biblical Research, a group of evangelical biblical scholars, will be having its annual meeting during the AAR/SBL events. Further information can be obtained from Carl Armerding, Regent College, 2330 Westbrook Mall, Vancouver, BC, V6T 1W6, Canada.

## INQUIRY

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

### THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE GOSPEL? An Analysis of Stephen B. Clark's book, *Man and Woman in Christ*.

By Hal Miller, Ph.D. candidate, Boston College.

When a certain bibliographer can select *Man and Woman in Christ* (Servant Books, 1980, 753 pp., \$15.95) as one of the "most significant" books of the year for evangelicals, it is difficult not to be interested, especially since the relationship of the sexes has been such a pesky issue among us. The same critic even praised it as "of all the multitude of books on this subject . . . easily the best." Having made a fairly serious effort to read some of that multitude, and having found some books I consider quite good, Stephen Clark's book was bound to demand careful scrutiny.

Even if it is not the best of these books on women and men, it is easily the biggest. With 668 pages of text and nearly a hundred more of footnotes, it dwarfs all other works on the subject. The breadth of its project is proportional to its size. It not only examines the biblical texts concerning men and women, but goes to great lengths to contextualize their application in the modern age through a system of men's and women's roles. It is such an ambitious attempt that Clark's characterization of his work as "a book on social roles for men and women" (p. x) has far too modest an appearance. What Clark intends by "social roles" is an all-inclusive set of structures within which to live. His goal is nothing less than a comprehensive sociology for Christian life.

Emil Brunner called the problem of the sexes "the crucial point and fateful question" of Christian anthropology, and Clark's approach shows implicitly that he agrees. Although the center of *Man and Woman in Christ* is the relationship of the sexes, its scope is far broader. Clark's view of women and men spreads rather quickly to touch virtually the whole of social reality. Church structure, the family, the nature of Christian community, and the failures of modern culture are all, he insists, directly related to sexually defined roles.

This vast undertaking is organized into four main sections. The first, which Clark names "The Scriptural Teaching," seeks to explicate the content of the Bible as it touches men and women. Its unified teaching, Clark says, demands that we make a deliberate role differentiation between men and women, and that in these roles, women be subordinate to men. The second section speaks more fully about the "authority" of this teaching, arguing from the unanimity of patristic traditions about the roles of the sexes and discussing the issue of cultural relativity. According to Clark, obedience to biblical authority and attention to the Christian tradition necessitate the subordinate role of women.

Thus far, however, Clark has only shown the authority of the scriptural teaching, not its applicability (p. 366). In the third section, entitled "The Scriptural Teaching in Contemporary Society," he turns to this question. His approach here touches empirical studies in psychology and sociology, as well as philosophical issues. He marshals information from various research to show that sexual differentiation runs deep into the human psyche and throughout human societies. Then he critiques "technological society" and the modern ideologies which hold sway within it. Having decided on the basis of this

analysis that the scriptural teaching is indeed applicable to our situation (though not in as naive a way as most partisans of sexual roles seem to believe), he proceeds in the fourth main section to spell out his application by constructing a "modern Christian social structure."

The root concern which motivates Clark's massive effort seems to be a perception that the social order in which we find ourselves in the modern era is in many ways sub-Christian. One central place where this shows up is in our incomprehension of the basic sociality of Christianity. In an age in which unthinking individualism is rampant, Clark's emphasis on the centrality of loving relationships among Christians is valuable, for our solipsistic brands of Christianity have little in common with the essentially interpersonal life of the New Testament. Clark's concern that this sociality of Christianity be taken seriously is one of the most worthwhile aspects of *Man and Woman in Christ*.

In all this mass of material, there is much that could be profitably considered. If someone like Clark spends the time and energy to write nearly 200,000 words of prose, he deserves the courtesy of a lengthy discussion. Any reviewer could find innumerable points of detail on which to comment, but in my view, there are five fundamental problems in Clark's book which make his project abortive. The five are interrelated, and center on the question of whether Clark has rightly understood what might be called the "sociology of the gospel." My approach in identifying these difficulties will be to begin with the more formal questions of method and gradually move into the material issues of Clark's system.

For convenience, let me list the five problems here: 1) his approach is methodologically suspect; 2) he uses prejudgments and categories inappropriately; 3) he transvalues theology and sociology; 4) his system results in an isolationist social ethic; and 5) he advocates a curious personal ethic.

### 1) Methodologically Suspect

The feeling of comprehensiveness which a book the size of this one necessarily tends to give is enhanced as one begins to read Clark's exposition of the Bible's "teaching" on men and women. All the apparatus of scholarship is there — even two different kinds of footnotes. Yet the more one reads, the more the impression begins to be overpowering that this is a highly selective kind of scholarship. It is difficult to justify this impression at first; for Clark cites literature galore, and deals with the central texts in the debate at length. Yet, on closer examination, it becomes clear that at point after point he has dealt with his material in a selective and tendentious fashion.

Let me give just one example of this. A remarkable insight which has emerged from the debate over the sexes concerns the use of *'ezer* ("help") to describe the woman in Genesis 2. The Old Testament nowhere uses this word to refer to an inferior (unless this be the sole case); rather, *'ezer* is used to describe God and military allies. The cognate verb is used of armies coming to the rescue. Special pleading apart, it would seem that to refer to the woman as "a help fitting" would at least imply her lack of inferiority. Yet Clark dismisses this linguistic data and insists that "there is clearly some sort of subordination indicated" by it (p. 24). How one could come to this conclusion without having decided on it in advance is a mystery.

Examples like this one can be found throughout Clark's chapters on Scripture, patristics, and the social sciences. Perhaps an analogy will make it clear why his method is so inadequate. If one thinks of all the available insights into a question as cards placed on a table before the investigator, the proper method would be to try to comprehend them, asking how all these parts can possibly be a whole. Clark, by contrast, lays out all the cards (witness his plethora of citations), but rather than trying to comprehend them, he looks over them only to pick out the ones which serve his purpose, discarding the rest. Although such a tendentious method is difficult to pin down at first, it ultimately undercuts the credibility of his entire work.

This basic methodological problem turns up in various forms. In the name of constructing a clear and consistent teaching on the relationship of men and women from the patristic writings, for instance, Clark draws a distinction between places where the fathers were reflecting the "received" Christian tradition, and places where they were acting as theologians in their own right (p. 317). Unfortunately, he uses this distinction in an entirely arbitrary way (e.g., p. 319). In the end, the distinction itself breaks down, for Clark admits that the two categories of teaching are "inextricably mingled" in the patristic writings (p. 322). If they are inextricable, they are inextricable, and Clark's ostensible extrication of the "received" tradition is little more than a foil to reflect his own judgments.

Many of his judgments are based on remarkable inflations of the evidence at hand. Clark will make a hypothesis about a text, insulating it with all the necessary "perhaps's" and "possibly's." But a few pages later, when he comes to his conclusions, the same hypothesis has virtually attained the status of fact. Confidence has emerged from nowhere, and the "possible" hypothesis has become an "obvious" conclusion. His dismissal of the relevance of Gal. 3:28 hangs by just such a thread (pp. 145-158). Where he cannot even form such threads, he appeals to a nebulous "overall sense" of the text which is unsupported by detailed examination (pp. 24, 30).

The overall impression left by Clark's exposition of his various sources is that he is arbitrary in both analysis and application. Although he is offended by "Feminist Social Science" because of its "casual dismissal of contrary evidence" (p. 459), this criticism applies quite generally to his own work as well. Of course, there are many points of value in his analysis. Yet because he has truncated and misrepresented his sources, his conclusions are untrustworthy. In case after case, the truth of the parts has been sacrificed for an appearance of unanimity in the whole. The result is that this whole — "the scriptural teaching" — turns out not to be the scriptural teaching at all, but a series of assertions by Clark (some true and some false) which are molded into a semblance of coherence.

### 2) Inappropriate Use of Prejudgments and Categories

Clark bases this coherence on a certain set of prejudgments as to what the "scriptural teaching" about men and women might possibly be. This set of prejudgments he calls "the pattern" of social roles which "must be grasped in order to understand the concrete meaning of the explicit teaching" of Scripture (p. 137). This pattern is more or less presuppositional (p. 48), and Clark uses it as the key for unlocking the "teaching" of seemingly disparate Old and New Testament texts.

His interest in approaching Scripture from this standpoint of "social roles" (p. 224) is indeed valid, but his use of a presupposed pattern of those roles to help the Bible speak its message is problematic. Agreed that one necessarily comes to Scripture with some kind of preunderstanding, this does not mean that such a necessity may be treated as a virtue. Clark has used this necessity to justify fitting the Scriptures on the procrustean bed of an already-known meaning, dictated by his patriarchal preunderstanding.

Our prejudgments on the meanings of biblical texts can indeed be helpful, but only if we allow a kind of feedback loop to form between our preunderstanding and the texts themselves. Scripture must also be allowed to speak an unexpected word, one which undermines the validity of our initial ideas. Because Clark does not allow such feedback from the text, he cuts himself off from the profound critique which the Bible can and does level against such patriarchal systems.

Further, the major categories of Clark's preunderstanding ("role" and "subordination") are themselves inadequate. When Clark speaks of "role," for instance, he seems to have in mind something which is already out there for people to plug into (e.g., p. 95), like the job description of a twentieth-century bureaucrat. Women's role, he says, has to do with the home,

while men's role is to face the world. But Clark interprets this role distinction in an amazingly casuistic way:

The man provides the food; the woman prepares and serves it. The man sees that the family members go to the doctor and he pays for the medicine; the woman nurses the sick. The man receives the guest and sees that he is cared for. The woman gets the guest something to eat, prepares his room, washes his clothing. (p. 97)

Such a reified and static concept of "role" is just too firmly cast to measure up to the complex realities of Christian community and human culture. Into such pre-hardened forms, the dynamics of Christian life can never adequately be forced.

The other central category of "subordination" is no better. Clark claims that the kind of subordination of which he is speaking is "unity-subordination" (p. 41), which does not imply any inferiority or oppression. Yet in spite of his insistence that "equality" is not compromised in such submission, he never shows how it is that equality and subordination are related. It is not enough merely to assert (as Clark does) that "unity-subordination" does not threaten equality in Christ. Nor is it enough to polemicize (as Clark does) against the modern predilection to consider "rights" and "freedom" as central to the gospel (p. 335). One must show the interrelations of freedom and submission (which Clark does not do), and distinguish between submission by choice and subordination by sex (which Clark does not do).

### 3) Theology and Sociology are Transvalued

Although he denies that H. R. Niebuhr's famous typology is relevant to his work (pp. 702-703), Clark's stance is clearly one of the "Christ *against* culture" variety. Yet his approach is an interesting example of the fact that this type of understanding is fundamentally the same as its polar opposite, the "Christ *of* culture" variety. In *Man and Woman in Christ*, the gospel is so identified with a particular culture that the possibilities of living as a Christian in any other cultural form virtually vanish.

For Clark, the central opposition between Christianity and the world is "between God's people living in God's social order according to God's way, and the non-Christian peoples living according to their own customs" (p. 276). The culture of Christ (understood to be patriarchal and subordinationist) stands apart from all other cultures. Yet Clark does not equate this culture with that of New Testament times and so falls into the trap which K. Stendahl so tellingly described as "a nostalgic attempt to play 'First Century.'" God's own culture is not that of the New Testament *per se*; rather, it is the culture which Clark himself is engineering.

Here his distinction between "teaching" and "exegesis" becomes formative. Exegesis of the important texts of Scripture merely tells what happened at various times in the past; the "teaching" of Scripture, though, is an exposition of God's own culture in a way mere exegesis could never be. This "teaching" refers fundamentally not to doctrine but to "a way of life" (p. 176). By decisively separating the doctrinal and the practical (e.g., pp. 138-139), Clark brings about a dramatic shift of values. Scriptural "teaching" concerns "a way of life" in such a pre-eminent sense that, for Clark, the resulting sociology is of far greater value than theology. The decisive thing is not to understand our Creator and Redeemer truly (though he would never deny that this has a certain validity); the decisive thing is to enter into the form of culture of the scriptural "teaching." What is essential is the sociology of the gospel, not its content.

He states the matter quite bluntly: "The crucial issue is not whether the restoration of a Christian social structure is feasible. The issue is whether any Christianity is feasible without a restoration of a genuine Christian social structure" (p. 618). Never in the Christian tradition, so far as I know, has the very existence of the faith been so closely linked with sociology. It

has, of course, been so linked with theology. (Luther, for example, saw justification by faith as the *doctrine* by which the church would stand or fall.) In *Man and Woman in Christ*, though, this place is usurped by "Christian social structure." The benevolent patriarchy which Clark is articulating has become a kind of sociology of the gospel. And the transvaluation of this sociology over theology is basic to his entire approach to Christianity.

Because sociology takes decisive precedence over theology, the culture which Clark formulates can be completely held apart from substantive theological concerns. It is not even possible, because of the secondary nature of the theology, that a text like Gal. 3:28 might carry with it in the development of doctrine an increasing critique of patriarchy. Even if it did carry such a critique, that would be mere theology which does not affect the more important categories of social structure. There is no possible argument from the life of Christ, or from the priesthood of believers, or from baptismal freedom, or from any other part of Christian theology which can possibly dislodge Clark's social structure, for this structure itself has the divine mandate behind it (pp. 595-596).

### 4) Isolationist Social Ethics

As they live in this culture of Christ, Christians have two alternatives concerning the "technological society" around them: they can either deal constructively with the problems it creates, or they can withdraw (p. 539). Given that a radically "Christ against culture" formulation of Christian existence like Clark's has obvious affinities with an isolationist approach to the "other," non-Christian culture, it is not surprising that his recommendation is for withdrawal. He feels that in order to apply the scriptural teaching (that is, to embrace the sociology of the gospel), we need to change our circumstances (pp. 560-561). The goal of this withdrawal is to "create a space" in which God's people can live in his culture, functioning in their sexually defined roles, and relating to each other in an appropriate way.

Clark claims that such a withdrawal still leaves Christians "in the world" though not of it (p. 666). Yet it is difficult to imagine how he can justify such an assertion, given the importance he attaches to withdrawing to more godly islands of social reality. In general, the broader culture should be left to stew in its own juices while Christians live a life apart as much as possible. If evangelicals in the past have far too easily adopted a "prophetic" attitude to society, standing smugly over against it, Clark seems to have done us one better. Clark's social ethics does not even touch society enough to be prophetic; it is merely apocalyptic.

### 5) Curious Personal Ethics

Because he emphasizes the sexual dimension of the husband and wife relationship (this, by the way, is the sphere in which woman is a "help fitting" for the man), and because he makes children a central aspect of marriage, Clark reacts against the notion that a personal intimacy between husband and wife is necessarily to be desired. Though technological society may make it important (p. 648), intimate companionship *per se* is not a value in the marriages of God's culture. Such companionship is in fact to be avoided as much as possible because it tends to "feminize" men (p. 622). Clark would rather see men spend their time with other men and women with other women, so that they can be better formed into their distinct kinds of manly and womanly character.

Manly character is apparently a major goal of God's culture. It has to do, according to Clark, with two things: "social responsibility" (that is, taking leadership within the home and Christian community), and "aggressiveness" (p. 639). "Men are, and should be, naturally aggressive," says Clark. Such aggression should be channeled, of course, but there is no sense in which it might fundamentally have to be repented of. The manly character which God wants is quite different than that of the femi-



nized men who people the technological society. "Compared to men who have not been feminized," he says, a feminized man will "place much higher emphasis and attention on how he feels and how other people feel. He will be much more gentle (*sic*) and handle situations in a 'soft' way" (p. 636). One wonders how gentleness can be a fruit of the Spirit and yet not be pre-eminent in manly (as well as womanly) character. If God wanted aggression, he should have asked for it rather than for love, joy, peace, and so on.

Clark is certainly to be praised for emphasizing that there is a basic sociality of the gospel. Interpersonal relationships are constitutive in the life of God's people. But Clark does not stop there; he insists that a highly developed and intricately nuanced sociology of the gospel is also fundamental. Because Clark has confused the importance of Christian sociality with his particular sociology, and because he has elevated this sociology over virtually every aspect of the Christian's existence, even his concern for loving relationships becomes somewhat disfigured.

In his brief "Afterword" (a little more than one page out of this massive tome), Clark admits that "perhaps the pastoral recommendations made in this book do not express the best way" of living out the relationship and distinction between the sexes (p. 668). After hundreds of pages, such a self-critical reflection of his own position is welcome. If only it had come sooner! On occasion, he does admit to problems with his own view (though the reader is left in the dark as to what they might be). He even grants on one occasion that a diversity of opinion might be possible (p. 338). Yet he is easily entrapped by polemics into making some very serious charges against any who might disagree concerning men's and women's roles (e.g., pp. 297, 365). Because Clark so closely identifies God's will with his own social construction, the possibility of obedience to Jesus by someone who takes exception to his program seems remote.

If only the body of *Man and Woman in Christ* had been marked by the intellectual humility and the spiritual solidarity with the rest of the church which becomes visible briefly in this "Afterword," the book might have been a helpful contribution to our attempts to understand the sexes before God. As it is, unfortunately, Clark's work must ultimately take its place among the polemic and divisive literature which has polarized and stymied the discussion up to now. In the end, it is one more book which will briefly cause a stir in the debate and then be forgotten because it confused its own particular way with the ways of God.

#### URBANA '81

Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship's biennial student missions convention will be held December 27-31 at the University of Illinois—Urbana/Champaign. The 17,000 delegates will hear plenary speakers, attend elective seminars, participate in small group Bible studies, and confer with representatives from hundreds of mission agencies. Plenary speakers this year include, among others, Samuel Escobar, Billy Graham, Isabelo Magalit, George D. McKinney, Rebecca Pippert and Helen Roseveare. To request more information or registration forms, write Urbana '81, 233 Langdon, Madison, WI 53703.

This year Theological Students Fellowship will be sponsoring elective workshops on Theology of Missions each afternoon during the convention at 4:00 PM. These workshops will not be included in the regular Urbana seminar listings. Write TSF for more information on these; or, if you register for Urbana, watch for a notice from us in the mail.

## EVANGELICALS AND THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

By Stephen T. Davis, Professor of Philosophy, Claremont Men's College.

Recently I heard an impromptu speech from a seminary president who had just returned from a trip to China. In his opinion, he announced, American seminary students ought to spend a year in the Orient. My initial reaction was: Why just the Orient? Why not a year in Rome or Sao Paulo or Nairobi? Immediately I saw the answer — what the man had in mind, apparently, was the religions of the world. In Rome and Sao Paulo and Nairobi, one encounters, in the main, Christianity; in the Orient one encounters, in the main, religions other than Christianity.

My purpose is not to criticize the man, nor will I argue against his suggestion. But I do suspect that the idea of Christian seminarians being asked to spend a year studying other religions is symbolic of a deeper issue. It points to what I regard as a pandemic and alarming loss of nerve among many Christian theologians and clergy. To put the matter bluntly, it is now widely felt that in the light of our new awareness of a religiously pluralistic world, it is no longer polite or appropriate or warranted for Christians to claim that they are right and followers of other religions wrong.

The study of the religions of the world is not one which evangelical scholars have emphasized or even much participated in. The field has been left largely to religious skeptics or Christians of a theologically liberal persuasion. Now I am an analytic philosopher, not a historian of religion. But living as I do in an academic community with several notable historians of religion and a community which occasionally sponsors academic conferences in the field, I have been forced to think seriously about how evangelicals ought to view the religions of the world.

### Exclusivism in Religion

Let us define an exclusivist religion as one whose adherents regard it as the one and only true way. They essentially say, "We believe that we are right and that people of other religions who disagree with us on crucial points are wrong." By this definition, some of the religions of the world are clearly exclusivist. In my opinion, Christianity is one such religion. I will return to that point later.

A rather obvious preliminary point ought to be made here. I mention it only because some scholars apparently believe that the very fact of religious diversity creates logical difficulties for exclusivist claims. The point is this: One cannot refute a person who holds a given view merely by pointing out that some people disagree. Specifically, one cannot refute an exclusivist religion merely by pointing out that other exclusivist religions make equally strong claims. Nor can one refute an exclusivist religion merely by pointing out that there are people — religious scholars, some of them — who in the interest of religious harmony in the world would much prefer that no exclusivist claims be made in religion.

There is a danger, I believe, for students of religion who are ideologically committed to the existence of a cooperative world religious community and who believe that such a community can exist only on the basis of agreement. The danger, naturally, is that such people will misconstrue the data of world religions — that is, distort the exclusivist religions. We see this danger illustrated in two of the seminal figures in the field today, Wilfred Cantwell Smith of Harvard University and John Hick of the University of Birmingham and Claremont Graduate School. These scholars, it seems to me, share the belief and the commitment mentioned above. Smith's strategy to solve the problem of religious diversity is to search for an essence or common factor in all religious experience, something crucial to all the religions of the world. In several of his books he has suggested that such

a factor is the concept of faith. Smith defines faith as "that quality of or available to humankind by which we are characterized as transcending, or are enabled to transcend, the natural order."<sup>1</sup> Faith for Smith is the exercise of our innate religious impulse or sense of the transcendent; it is our relation to the transcendent.

John Hick on the other hand suggests an overarching theory of religion that is meant to account for religious diversity and yet allow all religions to be partial approximations of the truth. Relying on Kant's distinction between *noumena* (things as they are in themselves) and *phenomena* (things as they are experienced by us), Hick suggests that the one divine transcendent reality is an unknown and unknowable *noumenon* and that the various religions of the world are all different ways that people apprehend the *noumenon*, given their historical and cultural settings. Allah, Shiva, Yahweh, etc. are all *phenomena*. All are true or at least approximations of the truth; none is true to the exclusion of the others. Says Hick:

I suggest that this pluralistic situation is rendered intelligible by the hypothesis of one infinite divine noumenon experienced in varying ways within different strands of human history, thereby giving rise to different divine personalities who are each formed in their interactions with a particular community or tradition.<sup>2</sup>

The first problem with the Smith and Hick approach is the one noted above — the danger of actually misconstruing the religions of the world. Smith, for example, has been criticized by other historians of religion for his claims about the centrality of faith in all the religious traditions. In a number of religious traditions, these critics argue, the concept of faith, defined even in the broad way Smith defines it, plays little or no crucial role.<sup>3</sup> As for Hick, we are entitled to wonder whether there is any good reason to believe his bold thesis apart from a strong desire (on his part at least) that it or some other unifying theory of religion be true. One suspects that the primary motivation for Hick's theory is the desire to avoid atheism or exclusivism — the conclusion that no religion is true or that only one is true and all the rest false. But of course the desire is not evidence. Is there any positive reason to believe that the religious traditions are all different apprehensions of the same divine reality? Furthermore, Hick's theory itself can be rejected by exclusivists as not at all capturing what they are trying to say. Evangelical Christians, for example, will want to insist that Hick misinterprets Christianity. They can perhaps accept the notion that the God they know is God as revealed rather than God as he is in himself. But they reject the notion that Christian claims about God exist in a vast ocean of other equally valid and valuable religious claims, all of which are different apprehensions of the one transcendent reality. Evangelicals want to say that Christianity is the only true way.

The second problem is simply this: All people, including evangelicals, wish for a harmonious world religious community; global cooperation, mutual understanding, and trust are indeed badly needed. But why say that such a community can be achieved only on the basis of agreement? One might have thought that something like the reverse is true. The only way in which people of various religions and cultures can come to understand and cooperate with one another is to honestly recognize their differences. Minimizing them or subsuming them under some unifying theory is not the way to proceed.

### Truth and Falsity in Religion

Admittedly there is something odd about speaking of religions as true or false. Surely it is *propositions* that are true and false, philosophers might want to say, not *religions*.

Still, all religions make certain claims. Some religious claims are historical, some moral, some metaphysical. When I call a religion true, I am simply saying that its crucial claims — or at

least a high percentage of them — are true. When I call a religion false, I am saying that a significant percentage of its crucial claims are false. I hold Christianity to be true precisely because I believe that its crucial claims — for example, that a personal, all-powerful God created the world, that Jesus rose from the dead after three days — are true claims. The fact that I believe them is much (but not all, of course) of what makes me a Christian. I further take it that the most significant question we can ask about any religion is whether its claims are true.

In several of his books Professor Smith says a great deal that is relevant to this issue of truth and falsity in religion, but some of it is confusing. One wonders, for example, how to construe his claim that religious truths can *become* true:

I have long thought that one should not speak of a religion's being true or false simply, but rather of its becoming true or false as each participant appropriates it to himself and lives it out. It is much too glib to say that Christianity, for instance, is true (or, indeed, is false) without recognizing that my Christianity may be more false than my neighbor's or that so-and-so's Christianity may be truer today than it was last year.<sup>4</sup>

I agree that we may somewhat loosely and without a great deal of confusion speak of a person's Christianity being *truer* than it was or than another's. But surely this means just that such a person is a better Christian than before or than the other. The fact that for some person Christianity has *become true* (in Smith's sense) is quite unrelated to what I am calling the *truth or falsity of Christianity*, that is, the truth or falsity of its crucial claims.<sup>5</sup>

Smith disagrees with the logic which says that if Christianity is true, the other religions are false.<sup>6</sup> The fallacy here, he says, is that of "confusing faith with theology." What Smith again appears to have in mind is some nonpropositional notion of truth, but it is not clear exactly what. Of course, theological propositions do not exhaustively explain a religion; we must look to what might be called practice as well as theory. Perhaps Smith means that a religion is "true" if, say, its adherents practice it sincerely, or if their lives are morally admirable, or if the religion pragmatically "works" for them. If he does mean something like this, he is right that the truth of Christianity does not entail the falsity of, say, Buddhism or Islam. But this is hardly to refute the notion that there is a broad propositional or theological element in religion.

### Christian Exclusivism

Christianity is one of the exclusivist religions of the world, but Christian exclusivism has been expressed in a variety of ways, some of them unacceptable. For example, evangelicals must reject an arrogant Christian triumphalism. This is the theory — still held among some fundamentalists — that Christianity has all the truth worth knowing; that other religions are not worth studying; that God does not work through other religions as well; and that people who die as nonbelievers in Christ have no hope of avoiding eternal damnation. People who hold such views do so, I believe, on the basis of bad theology and are not being genuinely Christian. Other religions must be understood and appreciated rather than rejected out of hand. It is quite clear that in many cases God does indeed encounter non-Christian people where they are, in and through their other religions.

Smith disapproves an interesting statement he says was discussed by the commission on faith of the United Church of Canada. It says: "Without the particular knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, men do not really know God at all."<sup>7</sup> But consider the familiar distinction between *knowing* and *knowing about*, as in the sentence "I know a great deal about Ronald Reagan but I don't know him." People can know truths *about* God apart from Jesus Christ, I believe, but knowledge *of* God comes only

through Jesus Christ. Smith calls such a position arrogant and notes that it antagonizes and alienates non-Christians. Well, I hope this is not true, but perhaps it is. But it is frankly hard for me to see how a person can be a Christian at all without affirming something like this statement. And non-Christians should not expect Christians in their desire to be tolerant and affable to give up beliefs that are essential to Christianity.

Christians do indeed affirm that God has worked and revealed himself in various ways among the peoples of the world. According to St. Paul (see Rom. 1:18-32, 2:12-16) some truths about God were "written in our hearts" by God. Thus it is not surprising to find impressive wisdom and deep piety in the various religious traditions. Nor is it surprising to find virtual unanimity at many points in ethics. But Christians insist that the supreme revelation of God to us, the fullest possible revelation of God we can comprehend, the one sure path to God, is the person of Jesus Christ.

Does such a position entail that non-Christians are totally wrong, that non-Christian religions are a waste of time, that Christians must hope Hindus and Buddhists and Moslems are eternally damned? Of course not. Non-Christians may know a great deal about God and the moral life. Again, God leaves no one totally ignorant of him. And the Bible makes it clear that it is God's will that all people be saved, not just Christians (1 Tim. 2:4). There is, I believe, a clear criterion evangelicals can use to distinguish between views that are acceptable and those (e.g. "All roads lead to the same mountain top") that are not. It is a practical, not theoretical, criterion — namely, the need for evangelism. Evangelical Christians find unacceptable those views that minimize or belittle or rule out the need for evangelism. They take seriously the command, "Go . . . and make disciples of all nations" (Mt. 28:19).

But how could any Christian know, Smith asks, that Christianity is true and other religions false?<sup>8</sup> Members of many other religions also claim to be the best, or only, way to God, and they seem just as happy and pious as Christians. The answer to this question must be *revelation*: God has revealed to us that people truly know him only through Jesus Christ. But Smith, anticipating this, denies that revelation is propositional. Christian exclusivists like me, he appears to be saying, misinterpret Christian revelation.

No one, of course, is immune to the danger of misinterpreting divine revelation. But it seems to me that the whole (by now venerable) concept of nonpropositional revelation is vastly oversimplified. Certainly God reveals himself in deeds and persons as well as words, but he does reveal himself in words. It is hard to read the Bible without seeing this. God reveals himself through the law Moses brought down from Sinai, through the oracles of the prophets, through the parables of Jesus, through the epistles of Paul — all of which consist of *words*. I should like to suggest that classic Neo-orthodox theologians who typically denied that revelation is propositional believed (in fact, if not officially) in propositional revelation. They simply didn't like the propositions literal interpreters of the Bible claimed to find there, and so (in effect, if not by admission) they looked for and found others.

The biblical *locus classicus* of the Christian exclusivism found in the United Church of Canada statement is undoubtedly John 14:6, where Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me." My own position on this issue is as follows: I believe it quite possible that in the mercy of God non-Christians can be saved. But if they are, it is only through Jesus Christ, whom they do not affirm and of whom they may never have heard. I do not know in what numbers they are saved; all I know is that God is merciful. I also believe, however, Christians can be saved far more easily. Christianity is true and the other religions false.

### Christian Imperialism

Unquestionably — and evangelicals are prepared to admit it

too — the Christian church has been guilty during much of its history of what we might call imperialism, attempting by coercion or other unethical means to convert people to its viewpoint and persecuting those who refuse to be converted. We need not look to the Orient or to Africa for the worst example. We need only look at the very ambiguous way, at best, in which Christians have treated Jews.

Why have Christians behaved imperialistically? This is a complex question. Doubtless there have been many factors. Two of the most important, it would seem, are a certain accident of history and bad theology. The accident of history is the fact that Christianity has been mainly a Western phenomenon throughout most of its history; and it has largely been the West that has behaved in politically, economically, and socially imperialistic ways toward the East and the South, rather than vice versa. Naturally, many of the Westerners who considered themselves politically, economically, and socially superior to non-Westerners also considered themselves religiously superior, and this influenced their behavior.

The bad theology is the mistaken connection some Christians have drawn between Christian exclusivism and Christian imperialism. My firm conviction is that there is no necessary connection between the two. There is no necessary connection whatsoever between (1) holding that Christianity is true and other religions false, and (2) failing to behave in loving, cooperative ways with non-Christians.

### The Impact of the World's Religions on Christian Theology

Here let me return to the seminary president who wants theological students to spend a year in the Orient. I said that this opinion is symbolic of something deeply disquieting to me, namely, the ease with which many of today's Christian theologians look to other religions for answers to theological and spiritual questions. Why are they so quick to do so? Occasionally, vague references are made to "problems" in the Christian view of this or that, the implication being that the problems might be solvable if we used the resources of other traditions. But what exactly are these problems? And why not try to solve them from within the Christian tradition?

Although I will not try to develop the notion here, I take the problem to be an aspect of what might be called the reduction of theology to philosophy. We all know that philosophers and theologians ponder many of the same problems. Classically, the main methodological difference was that theologians did and philosophers did not anchor their thinking in certain assumptions about revelation and authority. Thus the task of discovering the teachings of the Bible was infinitely more important to the theologian than to the philosopher. But now liberal Christian theology is often done quite apart from those assumptions; theologians must do the best they can to answer theological questions according to any light they can find; and the resources of other religious traditions are appealed to.

Both John Hick and Wilfred Cantwell Smith believe that the religious pluralism of our world requires serious changes in Christian theology. I have been arguing that this need not be true. The mere fact of diversity implies nothing by itself about the truth of Christian claims.

One of the things that bothers me about the current state of Christian theology is that it is so faddish. I was amazed when I was in seminary and have been constantly amazed ever since at the breathtaking speed with which theological movements capture the interest of theologians and seminarians, hold their interest for a while, and then fade from view. To the extent that seminary students are interested in theology at all these days (many are not), they are interested only in the latest ideas hot off the press. Aquinas and Calvin and Schleiermacher are not being read much any more. When theological movements fade, they look pretty ridiculous. Consider the Death of God or the Theology of Hope. "How on earth could people have been captivated by such notions?," we now find ourselves asking.

One of the current interests among theologians is global the-

ology. Smith has just completed a work to be entitled *Toward a World Theology*, and Hick is at work on a systematic theology from a global perspective. Now I am no prophet — perhaps a global theology is here to stay. Perhaps Christian theologians for the next hundred years will do their work as much influenced by the *Koran* and *Bhagavad-Gita* as by the Bible. I hope not. I do hope that Christians will read and appreciate these great and important books. But I hope they do their theology largely within the confines of Christian tradition. For one thing, the Christian faith is a theological and moral system, not a set of discrete religious truths from which we can pick and choose. More importantly, I believe the answers to our theological questions are to be found there.

Let me make a radical confession: *I am not existentially interested in the religions of the world.* True, I am academically interested in and intellectually curious about them. But I have no *existential* interest, no interest relative to my own spiritual enlightenment and well-being, because my commitment is to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I do defend the freedom of non-Christians to believe as they want to believe without any sort of coercive interference. And no intelligent person can become aware of the great religious traditions of the world without admiring the depth of wisdom and spiritual insight found there. But I admire and appreciate the religions of the world in much the same sense in which I admire and appreciate, say, the philosophy of Plato. I look neither to it nor to them for the answers to life's deepest questions. Such answers are to be found only in Jesus Christ.

#### REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>*Faith and Belief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 142. See also *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

<sup>2</sup>"Toward a Philosophy of Religious Pluralism," p. 12. This is a paper Hick read at a conference entitled "New Directions in the Philosophy of Religion" in Claremont, California, in January, 1980. See also John Hick, *Truth and Dialogue in World Religions*. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), pp. 151-55.

<sup>3</sup>For example, see several of the papers read at a conference entitled, "Toward a Philosophy of Religious Diversity" held in Claremont, California in January, 1981. These included "Faith and Belief — Some Critical Reflections on the Thought of W. C. Smith" by John A. Hutchinson; "Smith's World Theology: An Appreciative Critique" by John R. Cobb, Jr.; and "Faith and Self Awakening" by Masao Abe.

<sup>4</sup>*The Faith of Other Men* (New York: New American Library, 1963), pp. 46-47; see also p. 88.

<sup>5</sup>This is not to deny that *some* claims can become true, namely, those expressing propositions whose truth values change over time. For example, the claims, "Stephen Davis is fifty years old" and "The Middle East is at peace," will both, I hope, one day *become true*, though neither is true now. But this apparently is not what Smith has in mind when he speaks of religions becoming true.

<sup>6</sup>See *The Faith of Other Men*, pp. 92-131. Of course, this is possible even on my understanding of truth and falsity in religion: conceivably two religions could both be true if their crucial claims were similar enough. But again, this is apparently not what Smith means.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 134-138.

*This article first appeared in the June, 1981 issue of The Reformed Journal. Reprinted with permission.*

#### WHERE ARE THE TSF GROUPS?

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

## INTERSECTION

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

### A BREAK IN THE BATTLE

**By Mark Lau Branson, General Secretary, Theological Students Fellowship.**

A hopeful step toward reconciliation and respected diversity emerged at a June 1981 conference in Toronto. Billed as "Interpreting an Authoritative Scripture," and co-sponsored by the Institute for Christian Studies and Fuller Theological Seminary, it attracted about 100 professors, pastors, and students. This week-long series of papers, responses, working groups, extensive personal conversations and well-used social gatherings indicated new possibilities for a unified evangelicalism. A unique meeting-of-the-minds established a synergism for the common enterprise of hermeneutics.

Primary in the thinking of seminary students is the work of formulating a theological understanding of scriptural authority and pursuing faithful interpretation. While one receives volumes of information about Scripture and endless theories about how to understand and apply biblical teaching, the process of sorting these ideas is usually thwarted. The polemics of recent books, articles and conferences fail to offer any encouragement. However, this Toronto conference was markedly different. During lectures, participants were in attendance rather than in hallways and lounges. Several commented midway through the week that fatigue was setting in — probably because more effort was expended on listening than is common during such occasions.

Jack Rogers, professor of theology at Fuller, opened with a paper subtitled "A Contemporary Effort to Correct Some Current Misunderstandings Regarding the Authority and Interpretation of the Bible." For a classroom discussion at Fuller, Rogers had invited Professor John Frame of Westminster Seminary (San Diego) to discuss the inerrancy position. "Inerrancy simply means truth," said Frame. According to Rogers, the terminology was a symbol for authority.

It prescribed a reverent attitude toward the Bible which had no place for fault-finding, or picking and choosing, or dictating what God may and may not say. At the same time, inerrancy, for Frame, was compatible with imprecision of language, accommodation to ancient, cultural forms of expression and a variety of literary genre. He admitted that all of the problems hadn't been solved and that some attempts at harmonization were not very helpful. But the important thing which inerrancy symbolized for John Frame was an attitude toward Scripture of obedient listening to the voice of the Lord. By John Frame's definition I certainly want to be an inerrantist.

Rogers has experienced that some inerrantists carry the use of such symbols into destructive battles. The rallying of people to particular "language games" causes misunderstandings and forces battle lines that damage people and institutions. Now he admits, however, that all inerrantists are not so rigid.

On the second day of the Toronto conference, contributors discussed methods of biblical criticism which offer theories and tools for analyzing biblical texts. Many conservatives have avoided and even denounced such work. Few deny that some biblical criticism is employed for a kind of text deconstruction

# ACADEME

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

## THE ATHANASIAN THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY: TSF AT PERKINS

By Ted Campbell, Perkins School of Theology.

To keep readers of the *TSF Bulletin* informed, here is a report about the activities of the Athanasian Theological Society at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas.

Athesoc was organized in the Spring of 1980 for the purpose of bringing to the Perkins community a forum for discussions of issues relevant to New Evangelical thought. Athesoc has tried to hold three or four high-quality discussions per academic semester. In 1980-1981, Athesoc sponsored formal discussions of the meaning of "Evangelicalism" and "New Evangelicalism." Other programs in our first year included informal discussions of biblical authority and religious experience, and structured discussions of the ethics of evangelization and the possibility of miracles.

Athesoc will sponsor programs this fall concerning Biblical Hermeneutics, Old Testament Christology, and the Charismatic Renewal Movement in the Roman Catholic Church.

Our Society maintains informal liaisons with such national and international organizations as the Theological Students Fellowship, Evangelicals for Social Action, and the Evangelical Womens' Caucus.

Athesoc meetings have been generally well-attended by Perkins students and faculty, and we covet your prayers for a successful year in 1981-1982.

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

## EDITORIALS

(Opinions, options, and olive branches)

### PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

By Greg Ikehara Martin, M.Div. student at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Sometimes it seems to me that the favorite topic of thought among prominent evangelical spokespersons must be . . . evangelicalism. Tiresome as that can become, it's worth it for the sake of the occasionally fruitful observations made. A case in point came out of the 1980 AAR/SBL comments by Clark Pinnock, in which he identified two types of evangelicals, those with "running shoes" and those with "heavy boots."<sup>1</sup> Doctrinally, the former group's flirtations with quasi- or non-orthodox thinking raises for Clark the concern that they may become liberal. The "heavy boots" camp stays close to home, and while Clark is critical of both groups, if pressed he casts his lot with the tortoises rather than the hares.

As a student at Adidas-Nike Theological Training Camp,

Clark's comments set my defenses off like air-raid sirens. As I have struggled to understand my reaction to Clark, I have realized that it was not just (or even primarily) Clark with whom I was taking issue, but with student groups who may use what Clark and others write to create a Maginot line for protection during their trek through the academic wilderness. They believe that is the sure way to keep their faith intact. Still, as one currently making that pilgrimage, I have often felt that the guidance I have received from Clark and those who follow him has stressed only part of the "whole armor of God." In trying to answer the question, "How might evangelicals get mired in liberalism?" the guides repeatedly warn against uncritical reading of the likes of Bultmann or Tillich. This is a helpful suggestion as far as it goes, but if this guidance is given repeatedly or exclusively, it communicates that faith/doubt struggles are one-dimensional, "linear" movements along a cognitive continuum from evangelical to liberal doctrine.

My own experience, and those of some "liberal" friends, doesn't reduce so simply. In fact, I have as many special cases as I have acquaintances. Let me illustrate using the issue of authority. Imagine a theological student raised in an evangelical home and church which correctly emphasized the centrality of authority in Christianity, but unfortunately imposed an equally incorrect *authoritarianism*. This student leaves home and comes to seminary, where she rejects (healthily, I think) the authoritarianism, but with it (sadly) the moorings of the authority. As a friend or pastor to her, I need some way of affirming the positive step that she has taken vis-a-vis the authoritarian suppression of her own subjective affirmation of the truth. I need other categories, in addition to the cognitive, to allow me to recognize and give thanks for the grace of God in her life.

This is where Clark's image of evangelicals with two types of shoes (describing one's proximity to Christianity's authoritative Revealer) links up for me with Jesus' parable of the two prodigal sons. In light of my defensive starting point, I'll only deal with the prodigal evangelical with running shoes who winds up in a "far country, having squandered the riches of his or her theological heritage on riotous reading of European existentialists." In Jesus' parable there is a word of hope, a suggestion that there is a second dimension of proximity (in addition to geographic—doctrinal) for measuring the prodigal's progress: "He came to himself" (Luke 15:17). Or, as I read it isogetically, "He achieved the necessary psychological distance from the authority figure so as to be able to choose freely how to relate himself to the authority." A decisive turn has occurred, but if my only category for spiritual formation is linear, I may not have eyes to see the change. So I will be severely handicapped pastorally to help my friend (or myself) on the humble return trip to the Father's House.<sup>2</sup>

How is it that a Christian comes one day to find that, faith-wise, she or he is in an alien land longing for pig-feed? By being unattentive to the multi-dimensional nature of the life of faith — that is, by failing to put on the whole armor of God. People often become liberals for reasons other than intellectual. I mentioned fleeing authoritarianism as one example, but there are other paths to perdition as well. No doubt, as Clark's parable suggested to me at first reading, there are some of us (particularly if we are male) whose upbringing was so emotionally arid that faith never developed an affective dimension. For others, the almost exclusive diet of intellectual stimulation during seminary or university years may have shriveled faith into a mere "belief-system." To suggest that the gospel can be reduced, without essential loss, to only one dimension of life — be it intellectual, political, emotional, etc. — is to suggest something sub-human, and therefore sub-Christian.

To guard against truncating Christianity during the academic years I make the following three suggestions. First, don't sell the stork short. The point of Clark's joke about liberals not coming from storks was, I think, that we are responsible stewards of our intellectual well-being. But the joke will be on us if we do not

also apply this truth to other dimensions (psycho-social, political, etc.) of our humanity as well. The "stork" includes everything in our personality beyond our control: our sex, race, class, nationality, relationship to family members, and education, just for openers. If many of us have become most comfortable keeping faith questions on the cognitive level, is it because we fear the loss of control, for instance, with which the unconscious confronts us?<sup>3</sup> But if there are certain areas of our lives which are to a great degree beyond our control, is retreating into a "safe" harbor the response of faith? Should we not rather be all the more diligent in presenting these dimensions of our broken selves to the Lord by prayer and meditation?<sup>4</sup> Those elements in our personalities of which we are unaware will not go away by our ignoring them. Rather they will express themselves in our lives and theologies in unforeseen and potentially destructive ways.

Second, biographies (of Christian artists, politicians, theologians, etc.) can help bridge the gap between one's own inward journey and the world of academe. My isogesis of Luke 15:17 is informed by the struggle of Soren Kierkegaard to get out from under the dominant influence of his father. Kierkegaard is a clear case of the effect of the psychological dimension on theology, but the connection always exists. Indeed, any theology or system of theological education which boasts of being a pure intellectual product, uncontaminated by economics, emotions, etc., is at best irrelevant. At worst it is a diabolical denial of the image of God which calls every human being into wholeness.

Finally, while this wholeness ("the full measure of the stature of Christ") is the "upward call" of every person, it is a wholeness only partially glimpsed in this life. Thus, in the theological enterprise, we must expect to be eclectic, and (though that word implies it I feel compelled to add), appreciative. No one person has it all together. So much academic work is critical; we are driven more than most of us dare admit by our defensive need to control. Many a wise teacher is dismissed on a technicality; the priceless treasure lies undiscovered because the field has a few weeds (Matt. 13:44). I am weary of the reviews of Liberation Theology which complain of the problematic hermeneutics; this observation has its place, but in the final analysis, is that an important thing to say except in passing? We have so much to gain by coming to those who have been marginalized for most of Christianity's history — women, the poor, and those outside the North Atlantic cultures — in our quest to be made whole.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>See *TSF Bulletin*, Feb. 1981, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Some light is shed in Paul Hiebert's "Conversion, Culture, and Cognitive Categories" in *Gospel in Context*, Oct. 1978; or see the helpful review by Alfred Krass in *The Other Side* of May 1980.

<sup>3</sup>*The Other Side* of May 1981, p. 5, contains a letter (from a male with an Anglo surname, of course) who "find[s] it incredible that in his February column John Alexander could actually presume that the religious right's opposition to ERA and gay rights is due to 'sexual hang-ups.'" Why is this such a terrifying suggestion? See the excellent article by Carl Whitaker, "The Hindrance of Theory in Clinical Work," in Philip Guerin, Jr., ed., *Family Therapy* (NY: Gardner Press, 1976) p. 154 ff.

<sup>4</sup>Elizabeth O'Connor's trilogy of workbooks for the inward journey are a good starting point: *Search for Silence* (Word), *Our Many Selves* (Harper & Row), and *The Eighth Day of Creation* (Harper & Row).

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

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION

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

### HE AND HIS KIND OF KINGDOM

by Joseph G. Donders, University of Nairobi, Kenya

*Perhaps a comment is extraneous, but misconceptions persist. To place a lengthy quote from Joseph Donders's Jesus, the Stranger (see review, this issue) in the Spiritual Formation section does not imply it is less important than, say, theology proper. On the contrary, theology or biblical studies which cannot make an impact on one's Christlikeness or move one's society toward "Kingdomlikeness" is a sham and probably heretical. Donders lets us see Jesus. That's theology at its best. — MLB*

We are celebrating the solemnity,  
as it is very royally called,  
of the universal kingship of Jesus Christ.  
King, world, church, oikoumene,  
they all seem to hang together,  
and yet that whole kingship of Christ  
is a rather confusing issue;  
it is even, I think,  
a rather fishy issue.  
Did that man,  
Jesus,  
want to be a king?

When the devil wanted to make him a king,  
he refused;  
when the people wanted to make him a king,  
he ran away into the forest;  
when Pilate asked him:

Now tell me,  
Are you a king?

He answered:

That is what you say,  
but not from here,  
not from this world, not like you;  
my power is different;  
if it would not be different,  
then you would have been crushed by now  
by my father's angels  
and their missiles.

His power was not from here.

We all know where the power from here comes from:

It comes from what somebody HAS;  
at the roadblocks in the streets of Kenya,  
the matatu\*, the ex-hare-krishna car,  
is stopped time and time again,  
trunks are opened,  
briefcases are investigated,  
pockets are turned out,  
and the shiny Mercedes Benz 280 SE,  
according to the Automobile Association,  
the most expensive car for sale in the Republic,  
costing 249,918 Kenya shillings,  
is not even stopped.  
The man in the matatu

\*The cheapest possible "taxi," these cars are sometimes twenty or more years old.

is asked to justify  
the 60 shillings in his pocket,  
the guitar over his shoulders,  
the bag next to him,  
but nobody ever asks the owner of the Benz  
where he got his 249,918 shillings from.  
His power was not from here.  
We all know where the power from here comes from:  
It comes from your place on the social ladder,  
it comes from your place in society,  
it comes from your function and role.  
You are waiting in a long queue,  
a wananchi queue,†  
the waiting is long, boring, and painful,  
and there a man passes in front of you,  
a man who says:  
I am the permanent secretary,  
I am the dean,  
I am the director,  
I am a professor,  
I am a student leader.

And they,  
they are helped first,  
they are helped best,  
they get the single room.  
His power was not from here.  
We all know where the power from here comes from:  
It comes from what you can do;  
everybody is continually asking:  
Who can do something about this,  
who is the boss over here,  
whose signature do I need,  
and if you cannot do anything about it,  
if your signature does not mean a thing,  
and if you are powerless,  
you are null and void,  
your name means nothing,  
you are negligible.

Jesus' power was not from this world:  
this world is no good,  
this world is a shame,  
this world is corrupt,  
this world is split by people.  
In this world people are not respected  
because they are people:  
they are respected  
because they are rich,  
because they are white, or  
because they are black.  
In this world people are not respected  
because they are people:  
they are respected  
because of their function,  
because they wear a uniform,  
because they wear a badge or seven stripes,  
because they have a miter or a mortar board  
on top of their head.  
In this world people are not respected  
because they are people:  
they are respected  
because they are influential  
because they are important.  
The have-nots,  
who respects the have-nots?  
The people without function,  
who respects the unemployed?  
They are picked up as vagrants,  
and that is what they are according to the law.

†A queue of the common people.

## CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND HISTORY

During the annual meeting of the American Historical Association (Los Angeles, December 28-30, 1981), the Conference on Faith and History will hold a half-day seminar. "The Historic Roots of the New Right" will be the theme for this December 29 meeting at the Biltmore Hotel. For further information, contact Richard Pierard, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809.

The people who are not important,  
who respects the people who are not important?  
Who speaks to them  
Who cares for them?  
And that is why so many children  
run around half-dressed  
and half-fed.

All that is this world.  
This world lacks interest in people,  
in its people.  
And he said:  
Nobody among you  
should be called master,  
or teacher,  
or father.  
And when they asked him  
who is the most important,  
he took a small smelly unwashed streetboy  
and said: This one.

This Jesus,  
this universal king,  
showed us  
that our whole attitude should change,  
that our world should change  
in a revolutionary way,  
that we should respect all people  
for the simple and only fact  
that they happen to be God's people;  
that we should respect all people  
because they are his sheep,  
the lean ones and the fat ones;  
that we should respect all people,  
because he knows their names,  
he knows the name of that small girl,  
that virgin,  
that spring-chicken  
(what a lack of respect to call her that name)  
who is bribed to spread her legs  
because of the power of that rich man from town.  
He knows the name of that prostitute  
who was arrested in the street  
because an international church meeting  
was going on in town;  
and he respects her  
as much  
as he respects the archbishop of Canterbury,  
or Cardinal Otunga,  
or any of our guests;  
he knows the name of the beggar in the street;  
he knows the name of the man  
at the end of the queue;  
he knows the names of the destitute children  
all over the world;  
he knows all their names;  
after all he made them,  
and he made them all alike,  
and there he is standing as a shepherd,  
in the middle of his scattered sheep,

keeping them in view,  
rescuing them from mist and darkness,  
looking for the lost ones,  
trying to bring back the stray ones,  
bandaging the wounded ones,  
making the weak ones strong,  
looking after the tall and the small,  
the rich and the poor.

That is his power,  
that is his kingdom,  
knowing their names.

He is not interested  
in their cars,  
in the quality of their clothes,  
in their degrees,  
in their prizes and awards,  
in their grades and decorations,  
in their functions and ordinations,  
in their success and their training;  
he knows their names,  
he knows *them*,  
and he wishes them all well,  
and all they need.

And that is how we should behave,  
and that is why the world should change,  
in the east,  
in the west,  
in the north,  
and in the south.

That is how he frees us  
from deception and fake glory.

That is how he liberates us  
from shortsightedness  
and injustice.

That is how he enables us  
to see the world as it should be,  
an oikoumene,

a humanly inhabited world,  
where there is place and time  
for everybody.

A world in which people will not only be with each other,  
but a world in which people will be for each other.

It seems a dream.

It is a dream  
in *this* world.

But neither this world  
nor its leaders  
will have the last word.

If this world  
and its leaders  
would have the last word,  
then there is no hope.

HE will have the last word.

HE is the king,  
and that is why there is hope,  
for everybody,  
for you  
and for me,  
and that is final liberation.

*Reprinted from Jesus, the Stranger, by Joseph G. Donders (Orbis Books, 1978). Used by permission.*

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## REVIEWS

*(Notes and critiques on recent books and periodicals)*

### REVIEW ESSAY

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

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

Evangelism has long been regarded as a priority of the church in mission, but in recent years it has also emerged as a discipline of practical theology. The reason for this is deceptively simple. There is no more rigorous assignment for the Christian than to bring the gospel message into sharp focus for communication. Indeed, the more this is seriously undertaken by congregations of the church, the more clearly the members understand their faith and wish to share it. It is a searching experience to draw on one's knowledge of the gospel so that it can be presented, not only as the essential truth of God's saving-righteousness in Jesus Christ, but also as a challenge to which people can respond in repentance.

In this forging of gospel headlines, so to speak, there is little room for the niceties of ex-

egesis or the nuances of apologetics. This is nothing less than getting to the basics of the faith and defining them in ways which can be readily imparted to others. It is not surprising, therefore, that evangelism as a discipline tends to be polemical. The current disputes and conflicting strategies in the field are in some ways a source of encouragement: at least they are a sign of application to the task in hand. But the unprecedented technology of communication now available makes it imperative that the church does not opt for a pluralism which neglects to strive for unity in Christ. A divided gospel is a self-contradiction.

These issues were brought to the fore during the past year by two world conferences in the summer of 1980. The World Council of Churches held a World Conference on Mission and Evangelism at Melbourne, Australia; and the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization sponsored a Consultation on World Evangelization at Pattaya in Thailand. That these two world gatherings took place separately in fairly close geographical proximity, given their global scope, and that they were scheduled within a month of each other, does indicate some differences of approach to the proclamation of the *evangel*. The emphases of each were sufficiently distinctive to provide important corollaries one for the other, and students of the field need to be informed about both.

The American Society of Missiology devoted its eighth annual meeting to an evaluative survey of the two conferences, and the papers presented on that occasion can be found in *Missiology: An International Review* 9.1

(January, 1981). David M. Stowe, Waldron Scott and Thomas F. Stransky provide conciliar,\* evangelical and Roman Catholic reflections respectively, with lively responses by other delegates at Melbourne and Pattaya. *Missiology* can be ordered at the special student rate of \$7.50 for four quarterly issues from the Council on the Study of Religion, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ONT, Canada N2L 3C5. But the official reference volumes will of course be required reading for those who wish to make a definitive comparison of the two conferences. In addition to substantial reports in the *International Review of Mission* 69.275 (July 1980), 276-277 (October 1980-January 1981, a double issue), there are two volumes published by the World Council of Churches: *Your Kingdom Come*, The Official Report of the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, held at Melbourne, May 1980 (\$10.90); and *The Kingdom On Its Way*. Some of the Meditations, Prayers and Music shared at the Melbourne Conference (\$3.95). Both are available from the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, WCC, P.O. Box 66, 150 route de Ferney, CH-1211, Geneva 20, Switzerland. The Lausanne Committee for World Evangeli-

\*Conciliar Christians, broadly speaking, are those affiliated with the World Council of Churches. Evangelical Christians, again broadly speaking, are those who identify with the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. It is increasingly difficult, however, to make these designations — in itself an encouraging development.



zation is publishing the Pattaya Consultation in the continuing series, **Lausanne Occasional Papers**. The first four of these were in preparation for Pattaya, and thirteen have subsequently been published, each with a focus on a specific working group at the Consultation. Three more are to follow, at which point bound editions will be available. The papers can be obtained from the LCWE, P.O. Box 1100, Wheaton, IL 60187 (\$1.00 per paper).

For a study of the field of evangelism and missions in general, three further periodicals should be noted. Towards the end of 1980, the Lutheran-Northwestern Theological Seminars launched a new quarterly, **Word and World: Theology for Christian Ministry**, and devoted the first issue (Winter, 1981) to the theme of evangelism. In addition to a succinct and perceptive article on Melbourne and Pattaya by James Scherer, pp. 9-19, there is a thorough and reliable bibliographical overview by James A. Bergquist, pp. 59-70. To understand how evangelism is developing as a distinctive work of the church, one could do no better than begin here. Copies are obtainable from P.O. Box 1308-Z, Fort Lee, NJ 07024. Introductory subscriptions are \$6.00 for four issues.

The **Evangelical Missions Quarterly**, published by the Evangelical Missions Information Service, has for many years provided a fine digest of mission strategy, and a point of contact for those serving as missionaries with those in preparation. In addition to articles which range from the theological to the practical, there is a lively correspondence column, and helpful listings of current missional literature. A special student rate of \$7.50 obtains four issues, which can be ordered from P.O. Box 794, Wheaton, IL 60187.

For a complete coverage of the field, however, the leading publication is now the **International Bulletin of Missionary Research**, published by the Overseas Ministries Study Center. The range of its articles is wide and deep, and its book reviews and dissertation notices provide a regular update in all areas. A special student subscription is being offered until December 15, 1981. Those who send \$3.93 to P.O. Box 1308-E, Fort Lee, NJ 07024, will receive three quarterly issues at what amounts to a 50% discount.

Turning to books which have appeared in the past year, the most consistently dependable source for an introduction to world missions and evangelism remains the very fine series, **Mission Trends**, edited by **Gerald H. Anderson** and **Thomas F. Stransky**. The first volume appeared in 1974, dealing with some crucial issues in contemporary mission, and the fifth volume has just been published with the title, **Faith Meets Faith**. Volume 2: **Evangelization** appeared in 1975; volume 3: **Third World Theologies** in 1976; and volume 4: **Liberation Theologies** in 1979. Several features of these books make them basic to any theological student's library. First, they include some of the best scholarship in missions and evangelism. Many of the articles are reprinted from previously published volumes or journals; some have been specially prepared; but all have been carefully selected and given a clear and informative introduction by the editors. Second, the volumes are as circumspect in their theological perspectives as it is possible to be, with evangelical scholarship given prominent acknowledgement. Indeed, if there is a fault to be found, it is in the very scrupulousness of the editors in presenting all of their contributors with equal emphasis. One actually has

to read all of the articles with an open mind! Third, and by no means least, the books are very reasonably priced. As octavo paperbacks, each has some 250-300 pages of closely-packed text, yet they sell for \$3.95 (\$3.45 if you find earlier copies of volumes 1-4). They are jointly published by the Paulist Press and Eerdmans.

We can take two of the volumes as examples. Volume 2: **Evangelization** is widely used as a basic text in seminary courses. The appendices alone are worth the price. They contain: selections from the CWME Bangkok statements on "Salvation Today;" the entire text of the Lausanne Covenant of 1974; the *ad hoc* Response to Lausanne, "Theological Implications of Radical Discipleship" (which incidentally is very difficult to identify in the official handbook of the congress as the critical concern it voiced); excerpts from the Roman Synods of 1971 and 1974; and a report from the Consultation of the Eastern Orthodox Church held in Bucharest in 1974. Evangelical scholarship is well represented in the main text by John Stott, Rene Padilla, Ralph Winter and others. Some of the fundamental issues confronting evangelism are carefully examined — the question of "mutuality" for example. How does a Christian share her or his faith with another person in whose life Christ may have already been at work, though in ways which are unfamiliar and uncharted? Likewise the challenge of cross-cultural evangelism, with the now widely-accepted categories of E-1, E-2 and E-3, denoting the need for distinctive methodologies to bridge cultural differences. Ralph Winter introduces here the additional category of E-O, that form of evangelism which seeks to bring nominal Christians in a culture such as the United States into a firm commitment to Christ. The collection of essays never fails to stimulate discussion, and, given the direction the field has taken since 1975, their selection has in many ways proved to be far-sighted.

Volume 5: **Faith Meets Faith** deals with the issue which is most likely to impact the world church in the coming decade, namely interfaith dialogue and practice. The essential tension of the Christian faith has always been the uniqueness of Christ in a world of many religions, and the particularity of his saving-righteousness in a world with whose history God has always been involved. From our limited historical vantage point, we tend to ask why it is that the plan of God's salvation in Jesus Christ is taking so long to come to fulfillment. Yet the more basic question of Christian particularity must be to ask, from the vantage point of human history as a whole, why God took so long to send Jesus in the first place. In this more general context it is of vital importance that Christians do not surrender the historicity of Jesus or the fullness of his atoning work; which means that the tension of the faith becomes acute for the evangelist. How far can the gospel be proclaimed to the exclusion of the other manifestations of God's saving-righteousness? And how far can the evangelist in all good conscience ignore the riches of religious pluralism?

It is not perhaps too much to suggest that the church today faces a situation similar to that of the Apostolic Conference recorded in Acts 15 and in Galatians 2. The call of the Holy Spirit in our time seems to be increasingly persistent — to a new vision of God's salvation for the world. It is a call for Christians to risk all for Christ, in the sure knowledge that what Christ has done and is doing will ultimately prevail, regardless of the specific formulations of our

understanding. This renders our faith much less important than we sometimes care to contemplate, but it is an adjustment we must make in our global evangelism if we are not to fall into the same error for which Paul rightly censured Peter (Galatians 2:11). Our *evangel* will lack the authenticity of the Spirit if we insist on the legalism of a dogmatic faith as opposed to an open expectation of the living Christ.

There are of course no easy answers to these tensions, and the value of this Anderson and Stransky volume is that their selected authors recognize the problems as a necessary dimension of the Christian witness. John Stott and David Hesselgrave make important contributions from the evangelical perspective. Stott's position, taken from his 1975 post-Lausanne reflections, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (InterVarsity Press), is that dialogue is a desirable and necessary part of evangelistic proclamation, but must always be subordinate to the gospel. The technical word for this is *elenctics*, from the Greek meaning to convince, convict or rebuke — and so call to repentance (pp. 168ff.). The only purpose of such dialogue is to demonstrate the truth and finality of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hesselgrave, in a short but incisive analysis of the kinds of dialogue that "scriptural precedent clearly enjoins," suggests that evangelicals are being challenged to demonstrate a new kind of bravery today, which will break out of the "closet of monologue where we speak primarily to one another" (p. 124).

Contrasting perspectives are provided by selections from the work of Raimundo Pannikar, for example, and Yves Raguin. Each provides a succinct and pertinent statement about the search for the ultimate Christ. Even Christians do not yet know their Lord as one day he will be known, and other religious traditions can help us in this common quest and expectation. Such a dialogue is necessary if, in the words of George Khodr, a Greek Orthodox bishop, "we wish to avoid a *de facto* syncretism of resurgent religions all claiming universality" (p. 37).

The breadth of this agenda is perhaps best set out by Carl Braaten, who argues for the uniqueness and universality of Christ while rejecting the extremes of dogma and pluralism. "I am convinced and I intend to argue that my friends to the left who teach that there are many saviors to accommodate a pluralistic world and my friends to the right who teach that only those who share their faith will be saved in the end are both wrong. They do not have the truth of the gospel on their side" (p. 73). Braaten's thesis is that eschatology is the key to genuine interfaith dialogue. In Christ the salvation of this planet has been accomplished, but not yet fulfilled. How that fulfillment is to come about we do not yet know. "We have a universal hope in Christ, not a universal gnosis" (p. 87). On the premise that all is not yet fulfilled, Christians must therefore acknowledge a tentative dimension to their faith. We see as yet dimly, and know only in part (I Corinthians 13:12); and even though Christians are supremely privileged to taste the firstfruits of the *basileia*, the kingdom of God on earth as in heaven, we await that which will transcend all things.

This volume will not be comfortable reading. It may disconcert, disorient, and quite probably at times it will alienate. But it is a *trustworthy* volume. For there are times when our Lord, otherwise confronting and supportive to us in our journey, quite suddenly strides out ahead of us, apparently impatient with our reluctance

to trust him when the path becomes difficult. If a seminarian does not at some time experience this chilling sense of being left behind by Christ, the almost desperate feeling of lostness which comes when familiar and deeply-held beliefs seem to be shattered by the One who led us to accept them in the first place, then there is a level of trust still to be attained. If there is a book through which to discover such a trust, this is as good as any, especially since time and again its explorations lead us right back to the Scriptures.

Braaten's focus on eschatology in this volume is representative of a growing concern to bring an active expectancy back to the center of evangelism, most especially in the North American context. The seminal text for this movement, Alfred Krass's *Five Lanterns at Sundown*, was reviewed in these pages last year, and it is good to report that two further works have appeared on the same theme this year. Each gives a straightforward treatment of the subject, making them suitable for use with lay groups as well as introductory reading for theological students. The first is **Isaac C. Rottenberg's *The Promise and the Presence: Toward a Theology of the Kingdom of God*** (Eerdmans, 1980, 108 pp., \$4.95). The word "kingdom" is felt by some people today to lack the pointedness of its earlier connotations, and women in particular are sensitive to a masculine word which purports to describe a realm in which there will be "neither male nor female" (Galatians 3:28). Without wrestling directly with these semantics, Rottenberg nonetheless provides on page after page the alternative wording, "New Age," and thus offers an even more powerful advocacy for the eschatological dimension of evangelism.

His central thesis is taken from Oscar Cullman's widely-used analogy of D-Day and V-Day, in which he likens the present age of the church to the "in between times." "The great invasion of God's new world has taken place. A new day is dawning. While the final victory has yet to be won, those who have become part of God's great liberation movement in history have no doubt about the eventual outcome" (p. 43). The tension is that of the "already" and the "not yet," neither of which can be stressed to the exclusion of the other. If the "already" is over-emphasized, the church becomes indifferent or triumphalistic; if the "not yetness," then it becomes escapist. To maintain an appropriate eschatological expectancy, argues Rottenberg, it must always be remembered that the church and the kingdom are not the same (pp. 65 ff.). The church has a mission, which is to *announce* the New Age yet to come in its fullness; and Christians are also the *sign* of the New Age already with us. The agonizing of the church with this two-fold task is well documented, and there is no better introduction for the student who wishes to explore eschatology on the basis of sound scriptural authority, but without being tied to a narrow apocalypticism.

The second book is more practical: **Robert T. Henderson's *Joy to the World: An Introduction to Kingdom Evangelism*** (John Knox Press, 1980, 205 pp., \$6.95). His opening section, some 74 pages, is by and large a theological statement, arguing as does Rottenberg for the tension of the "kingdom between the ages." He then proceeds, however, to apply this theology to the nuts and bolts of congregational witness: what it means to experience the kingdom here and now as a community of faith; the implications of aspiring to a Christ-like sympathy for and identification with the world

in which we have been placed and called to serve; what this means for the communication of the gospel — being "on display" to the world; and finally, how to work with people in the evangelistic mystery of sowing, watering and reaping.

Taken together, these two volumes could do much to change the course of a congregation's outreach. Their scriptural documentation makes them ideal for study groups, and their agenda is more than timely for the eighties.

*This is the first of a three-part article which will continue in the November-December issue and conclude in the January-February issue. Some of this material will also appear in the Perkins Journal.*

### **Down to Earth: Studies in Christianity and Culture**

**Edited by John R. W. Stott and Robert Coote (Eerdmans, 1980, 342 pp., \$9.95).**

**Reviewed by Charles O. Ellenbaum, Professor of Anthropology/Religious Studies, College of DuPage.**

As Evangelicals, we confess that Scripture is normative for us. We must be wary of fallible human interpretations of Scripture and that includes our own personal interpretations and understandings. With this in mind, I must come to grips with Paul when he says, "So I become all things to all men, that I may save some of them by whatever means are possible" (I Cor. 9:19-22, TEV). How do I "live like a Jew" or "live like a Gentile" when I am with them in order to win them? How far is too far? When do contextualization and indigenization become betrayals of the Gospel? When does my ethnocentric Gospel become a betrayal of Christ's Gospel? We are on a tightrope between underconformity and overconformity to Scripture. Whenever we share the Gospel with someone else, we are on that tightrope. If we use jargon familiar to us, are we communicating the same meaning to that person? We all probably modify our approach to some extent depending upon the people to whom we are communicating. After all, do we not see Jesus doing this in the first four chapters of John? But how far is too far and how far is not far enough?

In the foreword to *Down to Earth*, John Stott says, "'Gospel and Culture' is not a topic of purely academic interest. On the contrary, it is the burning practical concern of every missionary, every preacher, every Christian witness. For it is literally impossible to evangelize in a cultural vacuum. Nobody can reduce the biblical Gospel to a few culture-free axioms which are universally intelligible. This is because the mind-set of all human beings has been formed by the culture in which they have been brought up. Their presuppositions, their value systems, the ways in which they think, and the degree of their receptivity or resistance to new ideas, are all largely determined by their cultural inheritance and are filters through which they listen and evaluate" (p. vii).

The seventeen working papers which make up this volume attempt to address that central issue of Gospel and Culture. The papers are divided into sections entitled "Culture and the Bible" (5 papers); "Culture, Evangelism, and Conversion" (6 papers); and "Culture, Churches, and Ethics" (5 papers). There is also an introduction consisting of a foreword by John Stott and one paper. This volume also includes *The Willowbank Report*.

This volume will begin to help you develop a set of conceptual and practical tools. However, keep in mind that you cannot read this book and one or two others and be really ready to deal with cross-cultural differences. You should ask around and find a good cultural anthropology course with some required field work. It is really field work experience that will get you ready.

In this volume, Jacob A. Loewen puts it this way:

I am firmly convinced that the science of anthropology can provide us with tools to understand culture and cultural problems. It can give us insights into our own behavior and the behavior of people in different cultures. But it can never write the foolproof formulae for communicating the Gospel. Just as our Lord refuses to be confined to temples built by the hands of men, so his ongoing work will not be confined by any human intellectual structures, be they theological or anthropological (p. 118).

Thus the conceptual framework provided by this volume is not an end in itself, but rather a means to the end of faithfully communicating the Gospel cross-culturally.

I am sorry to say that the book lacks an index or a bibliography. I think the lack of bibliography is a serious weakness for the person who wants to read further. The papers are short working papers and not full treatments of the subjects indicated by their titles. If your appetite is whetted, you are stuck since there are no guidelines on where to go next.

For those who might want further reading in this area, I would recommend three books by Edward T. Hall: *The Silent Language*; *The Hidden Dimension*; and *Beyond Culture*. They are not written from a Christian perspective but are quite valuable. A good reader in cultural anthropology which will hold your interest would be *Conformity and Conflict* by Spradley and McCurdy. There are many good introductory texts around which you could read. Don't allow yourself to be turned off by the hostility of many anthropologists to religion in general and Christianity in particular. Two possibilities within the framework of Christianity are *Message and Mission* by Eugene A. Nida and *Christianity in Culture* by Charles H. Kraft.

The best solution is to take a cultural anthropology course taught by a professional anthropologist. If the anthropologist is a Christian, so much the better. There are many Christian anthropologists, but you might have to dig around. If your seminary would like to look at a sample syllabus, tests, handouts, and source materials with a Christian perspective, let me know and I will be happy to furnish them with the material I have.

Read *Down To Earth* but don't stop there.

### **Earth Keeping: Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources**

**Edited by Loren Wilkinson (Eerdmans, 1980, vii + 317 pp., \$10.95). Reviewed by Merold Westphal, Hope College.**

It is hard to imagine a more valuable introduction to environmental ethics from a Christian perspective than this book, the product of a year-long co-operative effort at the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship. The insights

and expertise of seven contributors from the fields of philosophy, environmental studies, economics, physics, English, and history have been skillfully blended by Wilkinson into a single cohesive essay. A remarkable amount of high-powered knowledge has been rendered accessible to a wide reading audience, who need not be specialists to benefit from the authors' professional proficiency.

*Earth Keeping* consists of four major sections. The first is called "The State of the Planet" and is a report of the present circumstances which make the questions of responsible resource use so pressing. The deterioration and loss of mineral and energy resources, and the impact of inequitable patterns of resource use on the poor and powerless — all these combine to paint a bleak picture.

Section II is called "The Earthlings" and is not likely to be found in other books on this topic, even if written from a theological perspective. On the assumption that our treatment of nature is related to our view of nature, it surveys these views from Greek and medieval times through the scientific revolution to the specifically North American experience (with focus on the frontier mentality) and right on to our present-day economic and technological thinking. The most important feature of this section is its probing critique of the market system within which most of our economic activity takes place.

Against the background of the physical and spiritual crisis sketched in the first half of the book, the third section seeks to develop a biblical framework for thinking about the use of resources. Its title is its fundamental premise: "The Earth is the Lord's." The authors take seriously the charge made by Lynn White and Ian McHarg that irresponsible exploitation of the earth has its foundation in the biblical notion of human dominion over the earth. Their response is a series of careful biblical studies which show that while Christendom may be largely at fault for humanity's misuse of the environment, this happens only in violation of clear teachings of biblical Christianity. Beginning with the juxtaposition of the command to "subdue" and "rule" the earth (Gen. 1:28) to the command to "till" and "keep" it (Gen. 2:15), they develop a theology in which ruling is inseparable from serving nature (Christ himself being the model for such servant supremacy) and in which humanity's distinctness from nature is balanced by our immersion in it. Just as during the past decade Christians have found whole dimensions of biblical teaching (previously neglected or obscured) open up with living freshness when they have read with the world hunger crisis in mind, so here the biblical story takes on new vitality through confrontation with the environmental crisis. The central theme is stewardship as delegated dominion, accountable to God.

The concluding section is concerned with application of the biblical principles, but it is also concerned to avoid an environmental legalism. So instead of giving a series of do's and don't's it gives a set of thirty specifically environmental guidelines by which we can evaluate our personal, church, corporate, and national behavior.

*Earth Keeping* is published on recycled paper. Eerdmans is to be congratulated for making the volume as attractive as its message is urgent.

### **Christ and Violence**

**by Ronald J. Sider (Herald Press, 1979, 108 pp., \$4.95). Reviewed by Kenneth E. Morris, doctoral student in Sociology, University of Georgia.**

Falling somewhere between a short book and a long tract, *Christ and Violence* reiterates the thesis unveiled in Sider's tour de force, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (and other works of the same genre): namely, that the spiritual mandate must be realized in social practice. In particular, through this book Sider shares with the reader his attempts to think through the foundations of non-violence. Predictably (but not unimportantly), he asserts that certain American social structures are inherently "violent," and that the "old, old story of Jesus and His cross" impels the Christian to take action against such structures (e.g., economic oppression).

For the serious student of Christian pacifism and social responsibility, this book is a disappointment. The quest for brevity combined with a Luther-like fervor to speak creates not a few over-simplifications. Theologically, Sider's articulation of the pacifist stance pales in light of such really good works as John H. Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus* and, sociologically, Sider's analysis of contemporary modes of domination proves itself shallow when measured against a giant like Jacques Ellul or even current Marxian analyses (e.g., Jurgen Habermas). Most lamentable is that *Christ and Violence* fails to adequately define violence vis-a-vis notions of power, authority, domination, and the like. It is clear, for example, that Sider is addressing collective exploitation that has general legitimacy (i.e., perceived legitimacy a la Weber) — for which most persons working in this tradition reserve the terms domination or authority — rather than exploitation perceived as illegitimate, or violence. The distinction is not merely pedantic. Conceptual befuddlement obscures the analysis and critique and thereby the strategy for action. I, for one, cannot help but conclude that *Christ and Violence* explicates only symptoms, not causes, and therefore offers only stop-gap measures as "solutions."

On another level, however, *Christ and Violence* deserves praise. In combining the revelatory Word with the Incarnation and addressing prevailing injustice, Sider stands firmly in the historic and sorely needed position of prophet to a wayward and sadly not-too-peculiar people. Indeed, where Sider's analysis is lacking it can be supplemented by Christian and secular scholarship; but where his vision wanes, the loss is irreplaceable. In a spirit of sociological tenacity then, I salute Sider and heartily recommend *Christ and Violence* for usage in Christian study and action groups as well as for general readership.

### **Letters to Scattered Pilgrims**

**by Elizabeth O'Connor (Harper & Row, 1979, 147 pp., \$6.98). Reviewed by Linda Mercadante, Ph.D. candidate in theology, Princeton Theological Seminary.**

This is not a book to add to your long list of "books that must be read." Instead, Elizabeth O'Connor's *Letters to Scattered Pilgrims* should prove to be a book you will want to turn to in quiet times, times of reflection, times when refreshment is needed. It is not a "devo-

tional" book in the traditional sense, although perhaps the results are the same, but O'Connor has deftly managed to be contemporary, challenging and yet calming at the same time. She realizes we live in a chaotic, violent age, yet she summons us actually to believe God's promise to "do a new thing."

These letters were originally intended for the members of six new communities formed from and sent out by the Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C. But since they deal with matters common to us all, they do not have an exclusivist ring to them. One doesn't feel like a spectator or outsider to a "real" Christian community, with all the guilt-feelings that can sometimes bring. Instead, O'Connor has a talent for combining exhortation both to spiritual growth and also to social concern, yet avoiding the heavy, judgmental tone that is often the counter-productive by-product of books that deal with one or the other of these areas.

In addition to chapters on reflection, money and keeping a journal, O'Connor develops the concept of personal "centers." She defines and draws relationships between our "historical," our "intellectual" and our "emotional centers," and then introduces the dynamic concept of our "moving center." Although her two chapters on the role of money have been rightly praised, the theological student may find her discussion of vision in "On Our Moving Center" to be even more helpful. For which of us has not wondered whatever happened to the vision we carried with us — or which actually carried us — into theological studies in the first place? Amid the many books we "must" read, papers we have to write and other assignments, not to mention family responsibilities, we find ourselves hoping that our desire simply for intellectual honesty will be vision enough, at least for the time being. But O'Connor firmly encourages us to reexamine, revive and nurture our more fundamental vision, and then to encourage the same in others.

It is clear that O'Connor, for all her understanding and use of contemporary psychology here, is not instructing only an inward-turning, but also the concomitant outward-turning that she sees as crucial to living the gospel message. Although she realizes her own "white middle-classness," she does not consider vision, or reflection, or even hope, to be the luxury of a few. Instead she presents these as the heritage of all humankind, and also as a distinct possibility even in an increasingly disruptive age such as ours. Her tone of possibility, rather than apocalypticism, sets the book apart.

This is a book to take with you during a personal time-out, on vacation, or to be used for group study and interaction. The suggestions for further reflection, present at the end of several chapters, are helpful in any of these contexts. And the lectionary and practical advice about keeping a journal will prolong the usefulness of this book. Some readers may object to O'Connor's familiarity with and use of psychological concepts, particularly Jungian ones, but she does anticipate and try to deal with that objection. Whether or not she is successful, the doubting reader will have to decide. Others, however, will find her hope-inspiring yet very realistic messages refreshing, sometimes startlingly so, in a book so obviously church-directed. Finally, O'Connor's tone is intelligent, without being stultifying, and her footnotes are helpful for further research, thus making the book adaptable for different types of group use.

**Search: Journey on the Inner Path**  
Edited by Jean Sulzberger (Harper & Row,  
1979, 151 pp., \$10.00 cloth).

#### **Prayerways**

By Louis M. Savary and Patricia H. Berne  
(Harper & Row, 1980, 161 pp., \$8.95 cloth).  
Reviewed by Gregory A. Youngchild, Direc-  
tor, West Haven Emergency Assistance  
Task Force, New Haven, CT.

I wrote in the February 1980 *TSF News and Reviews* that "probably 50% of what is being published these days (new titles, that is) is relatively worthless, and another 40% is of very limited value. . . . That leaves 10% which deserves closer inspection for any of several reasons." Although this claim seems exaggerated, the books I have seen during the last twelve months bear witness to that opinion. Jean Sulzberger's *Search* and *Prayerways* by Louis Savary and Patricia Berne both fall in the 40% category of "limited value."

*Search*, subtitled *Journey on the Inner Path*, is not a book about answers and arrivals. Rather it focuses on the universal phenomenon of the ultimate question and the quest. The fourteen diverse chapters contain vignettes or segments of epic or ancient legend (almost exclusively from oriental traditions), and are accompanied by some lovely illustrations from the appropriate cultures. They reflect the themes of the awakening to the need for seeking, the arduousness of the journey, the dimensions of self and illusion through which one must pass en route, and images or non-images of the end desired.

A few of the stories are delightful in their richness: the Sufi tale, "Conference of the Birds"; the Chinese Buddhist manual for Zen training, "The Ten Oxherding Pictures"; the portion of the Gilgamesh epic, and Jacob Needleman's essay on "The Search for a Wise Man." The remaining pieces, while interesting, are not as engaging, and in some cases are too thin to be stimulating. It is a book whose idea is good, but whose realization falls frustratingly short of the idea's potential. Sulzberger, who has worked on the editorial staffs of *Time* and *Time-Life Books*, would seem capable of a more judicious selection of materials and a more thorough exploration of this universal experience. *Search* fails to reflect that depth of personal talent.

*Prayerways* by Louis Savary and Patricia Berne lies far to the other end of the spectrum with questions at one end and solutions at the other. To quote the book jacket, *Prayerways* was written "for those who feel discouraged or distraught, frightened or frustrated, angry or anxious, powerless or purposeless, overextended or underappreciated, burned out or just plain worn out." Whereas *Search* invites one to reflect broadly on the nature and direction of the journey, *Prayerways* is intended as a sort of first-aid manual to provide healing remedies for the scrapes and bruises suffered on the way. One could wish, however, it were not so close to *Search* on the quality spectrum.

*Prayerways*, I must admit, is the sort of book I instinctively dislike because of its tendency — like many other "how to" books these days — to make facile equations of psychological and spiritual realms, and to assume that what is good for the psyche is necessarily good for the soul. Indeed, the book directs one self-ward more than God-ward with a psycho-spiritual God-is-everything-ism view. The table of con-

tents reads like a brochure for the sort of personal development workshop that has earned California its stereotyped image.

The book makes no claim to reflect a peculiarly Christian perspective. Yet to Christian sensibilities, it still seems both vague and a little off-the-mark to speak of grace as "spiritual energy" and to lay continual stress on emotions and feelings as channels for and indicators of this grace. As important as feelings are, our love of God is not about feelings but about faith, and it is faith — not our feelings — that is the sure guide in the spiritual life. It would be dangerous to assume that we pray in order to feel better and that not feeling better reflects a poor quality of prayer.

Nevertheless, *Prayerways* can be a useful book to read as a reminder that self-knowledge and self-awareness of our inner and outer condition are critical for a healthy, balanced prayer life. The sections on "Owning Feelings" and "Dialoguing with Feelings" are valuable, and the suggestions made for healthy ways of countering burn-out are quite valid and constructive. The wholistic basis of its presentations is an important redress to the general tendency in some writers on spirituality to turn prayer life into an exclusively mental operation.

#### **Jesus, The Stranger** **Jesus, The Way** **Jesus, Heaven on Earth** **The Jesus Community**

by Joseph G. Donders (Orbis Books; 1978,  
1979, 1980, 1981; 290, 307, 307, 294 pp.,  
\$7.95, \$7.95, \$7.95, \$8.95). Reviewed by  
James Parker, III, Assistant Professor of  
Theology, Eastern Baptist Theological Sem-  
inary.

The author of these four books, Joseph G. Donders, was ordained to the priesthood in 1957. He was trained in philosophy at the Gregorian University in Rome. After having lived, ministered and taught philosophy in Holland, Rev. Donders began missionary work in Kenya. Presently he is the Chairman of Philosophy and Religious Studies Department at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, and Chaplain to Roman Catholic students. He has been involved in the charismatic movement in Kenya.

These books contain sermons delivered at Saint Paul's Catholic University Chapel in Nairobi, Kenya. Except for the volume, *Jesus, the Stranger*, the content of the books follows the liturgical year church cycles A, B, and C. The most recent volume, *The Jesus Community*, is available in time to coincide with year B, which begins this coming Advent. These volumes are not typical sermons; they are written more in poetic form than regular sermon prose form.

The reality of the person of Jesus comes alive in these intense reflections. As one is led through Luke in the second volume, the urgency and awe of the Gospel is pointedly driven home. The examples given are genuine African examples, and contextualization of the Gospel is demonstrated with integrity to the African context and faithfulness to the deposit of faith once delivered to the saints. Donders exalts Jesus as the center of personal life. Jesus is presented as the only positive side of reality. The picture drawn of Jesus is one that is real — neither romanticized nor tamed. These poetic meditations will be returned to again and again, not to be read quickly, but to be pondered, meditated upon and absorbed slowly. This review will conclude with one small exam-

ple from *Jesus, the Stranger*.

He is a Jew  
he is an Asian,  
from Asia Minor,  
but nevertheless from Asia.  
He lived two thousand years ago  
in a completely different situation,  
in a completely different environment.  
He really is a stranger.

But,  
if you believe in him  
then it must have been YOU  
who recognized something in HIM.  
And if this recognition comes from you,  
how could he  
at the same time  
be strange to you?

Note: A longer selection from the book can be found in this issue's *Spiritual Formation* section.

#### **The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Anti-slavery in Antebellum America** by Lawrence Thomas Lesick (Studies in Evangelicalism, No. 2, Scarecrow Press, 1980, ix + 278 pp., \$15.00). Reviewed by Douglas Firth Anderson, Ph.D. student in American religious history, Graduate Theological Union.

The "Lane Rebellion" was a central episode in the emergence of the controversial American antislavery movement. In 1834, seventy-five students under the leadership of Theodore D. Weld "rebelled" and left Lane Seminary (Presbyterian), Cincinnati, over restrictions imposed on student antislavery activity. Furthermore, the abolitionism of the "Lane Rebels" was inextricably permeated with the evangelicalism of Charles G. Finney. (In fact, twenty-eight of the "rebels" later moved to Oberlin Institute after it was clear that Finney would be the school's theology professor.)

Through a detailed exploration of the Lane Rebellion, Lawrence Thomas Lesick wants to examine "how a small number of evangelicals became abolitionists, the forms that their antislavery took over time, and the changes that occurred in both their evangelicalism and abolitionism because of the relationship" (ix). Why is such an examination important? To quote Lesick again, "a study of the theological bases of antislavery can give us some insight into the ways in which ideas can (or cannot) influence the actions of people in society" (viii).

Lesick's chosen focus is highly pertinent, particularly to those of us who are latter-day evangelicals. *The Lane Rebels* is Lesick's Vanderbilt University dissertation. While specialized in topic and treatment, it is nonetheless clearly written and well organized. But despite the promise of the topic and its concomitant issues, the book does not fully satisfy the aroused reader. The topic calls for a probing historical and theological methodology, but Lesick is more than once disappointing in this regard. For example, he wants to examine "how a small number of evangelicals become abolitionists." Certainly many of the future Lane Rebels were converted to abolitionism by the student debates on the subject in 1834. But the personal, regional, and theological background of the students — especially Theodore Weld — prior to the debates are alluded to but sparingly. Such background is crucial to buttress Lesick's argument that Finneyite theology was the moral and theological shaper of

the Lane Rebellion. Precisely how and when did students come into contact with Finney's evangelicalism? Without such information we cannot satisfactorily delineate "how a small number of evangelicals became abolitionists." Or again, if Lesick's guiding purpose is to explore in what ways ideas influence behavior, then his substantial focus on the details of the founding of Lane Seminary is inappropriate. Granting limitations of space and sources, he should have more extensively treated the studies and activities of the Lane Rebels. The student work among Cincinnati's blacks is a particularly tantalizing example of ideologically-motivated behavior which Lesick leaves relatively undeveloped.

These criticisms, however, should be taken as no more than expressions of disappointment. I had expected more from *The Lane Rebels*. Yet, the book is nonetheless significant. First, it is an example of and encouragement to the historical spadework necessary to fill in the picture of nineteenth-century American evangelical social Christianity outlined by Timothy L. Smith (*Revivalism and Social Reform*, 1957) and Donald W. Dayton (*Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, 1976). (Dayton, by the way, is a co-editor of the new monograph series of which *The Lane Rebels* is the second volume.) Second, while Lesick disappoints in fleshing out the Lane Rebels before and during their time at Lane, he does a commendable job of assessing their post-rebellion activities. In doing this, Lesick makes a contribution to our understanding of the interaction of evangelicalism and abolitionism. It was evangelicalism which led the Lane Rebels to argue that slavery was a sin against God and the slave. Furthermore, in the words of one of the rebels, "being a sin it [slavery] could be repented of, being a folly it could be cured" (89-90). Finney presented a rationally and emotionally powerful appeal for people to use their God-given volitional freedom to immediately repent and stop sinning; the Lane Rebels similarly appealed to the individual to immediately cease from the particular sin of slavery. Yet, as Lesick demonstrates, this same evangelicalism, articulated by this same Finney, also placed restraints on the abolitionism of the Lane Rebels. Some evangelicals sensed a danger of antislavery detracting from or even supplanting the "whole gospel." Should revivalism take precedence over antislavery activities, as Finney desired, or should evangelicals minister according to their respective "gifts" of revivalism or abolitionism, as Weld desired, or should evangelicals engage in both as equally as possible, as the Tappan brothers desired? A few of the Lane Rebels dropped antislavery, and a few dropped evangelicalism. Sadly, Weld was one who dropped both. However, the general trend which Lesick discerns was to subordinate antislavery as one important component of a larger, more balanced evangelicalism.

Finally, *The Lane Rebels* is significant for the way in which it indirectly clarifies some profound questions: In what sense is social concern a part of, or even near the center of, the gospel? What are the theological and historical limits of the interaction between Christianity and social concern? Where is the balance between the radical and conservative sociopolitical impulses inherent in the good news? What is the role of the individual Christian, of the Christian educational institution, of the Church, in participating in theologically-based social action? *The Lane Rebels* is a solid mono-

graph which, despite its shortcomings, affords fruitful historical perspectives with which to grapple with such questions for our own day. Hence, the book is worth the attention of all who are concerned with the unavoidable tension of relating the gospel to American society and its complex problems. As historical knowledge makes very plain, "Verily, there is nothing new under the sun."

***Costly Grace: An Illustrated Introduction to Dietrich Bonhoeffer***  
by Eberhard Bethge (Harper & Row, 1980, 169 pp., \$4.95). Reviewed by Patty Taylor, student in Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary.

*Costly Grace* is a Bonhoeffer book for all seasons. It serves its stated purpose as a clear, readable introduction to Bonhoeffer's life and thought, and at the same time it offers the seasoned student of Bonhoeffer fresh insights and new perspectives. It is short enough to be inviting to the casual reader and the reality of Bonhoeffer's world is brought home by the numerous photographs.

Particularly helpful is the chapter on Bonhoeffer's works in which Bethge outlines their consistent development in relation to his life. These are the insights of the man who knew Bonhoeffer best, refined and distilled over three decades, and they merit our attention.

Also valuable is the chronological table which correlates Bonhoeffer's life with the political and ecclesiastical events of his time. This appendix is the sort of help one longs for on the arduous journey through Bethge's lengthy earlier biography of his friend and colleague. (*Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Man of Vision, Man of Courage*). As an introduction to that definitive biography or as a summary of it, *Costly Grace* is a valuable work.

More than a chronology of his life or an analysis of his work, *Costly Grace* brings us into an encounter with the person of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the child, the student, the lecturer, the pastor, teacher, ecumenist, nationalist, ethicist, conspirator, friend, prisoner, theologian, Christian. Thus, the distances of time and culture are bridged and we can enter into his world and at the same time contemplate what it would have been like for him to exist in ours.

***A History of Christian Doctrine***  
Edited by H. Cunliffe-Jones (Fortress Press, 1980, 601 + xiv pp.). Reviewed by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Emeritus Professor of Historical Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary.

This book, first published by T. and T. Clark in 1978, was planned as a replacement for G. P. Fisher's famous *History* of 1896. The editor enlisted a team of scholars to take responsibility for the individual parts, including Dr. Lampe for the early period, the late Dr. Knowles for the Middle Ages, and Drs. Rupp, Hall, and Parker for the Reformation. Adoption of small type has made it possible to cover the whole course of Christian doctrine fairly comprehensively in just under 600 pages with two small indexes (names and subjects) but no bibliography (for reasons explained in an introductory note). The editor himself wrote a general introduction comparing and contrasting the work with Fisher's; and B. Drewery, who contributed the section on Luther, gave editorial assistance.

Assessing a work of this type, written by dif-

ferent authors with different approaches and along different lines, poses obvious difficulties. Some unquestionable merits may be mentioned first. As a good survey should, the work contains a vast amount of information in small compass. This is presented for the most part lucidly and authoritatively. The inclusion of sections on Eastern Orthodoxy is a valuable feature. In spite of the lack of a bibliography, documentation is generally good, especially in Lampe's contribution (though it is less thorough than one might desire in places — there are even a few annoying quotations without references, and others without primary references). Students in particular, for whom the work seems primarily designed, can gain a good working knowledge of the main developments in Christian doctrine from this account.

Yet some problems also call for notice. There are some odd gaps. The Anabaptists, for example, hardly receive any notice at all, and the treatment of American theology is decidedly skimpy. No doubt for lack of space, some areas (e.g., tridentine theology, the Anglican reformers, and Eastern Orthodoxy) hardly receive due justice. The different approaches also produce some disjointedness, as do the different styles of the various authors. Thus some periods are lumped together, but Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin are dealt with individually, and the chapter on Calvin adopts the singular method of simply giving an exposition of the *Institutes* (which does, of course, give an excellent grasp of the mature thinking of the theologian).

Perhaps the least satisfactory of the constituent parts is the last one on the modern period (1700-1970) by Dr. J. Kent. This is obviously the most difficult period, for we are still too close to see the wood for the trees. But instead of giving a factual account Kent compounds the problem by acting as though he were appointed to conduct the last judgment — except that far too many of his confident assessments are clearly inadequate, biased, and superficial. Students using this section would be well advised to bring an intellectual sieve so that they can sort out the genuine information from the interesting but unreliable and disruptive commentary. Incidentally they will find next to nothing on evangelical orthodoxy, which is hardly surprising when even Bultmann and John Robinson seem to be regarded as ultradogmatic.

***Perspectives on Evangelical Theology: Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society***  
edited by Kenneth S. Kantzer and Stanley N. Gundry (Baker, 1979, 289 pp., \$9.95). Reviewed by Robert K. Johnston, Associate Professor of Religion, Western Kentucky University.

This volume will prove an eye opener to those who think the E.T.S. is a hotbed of obscurantism. Some papers in this collection are poor, but more impressive to both evangelical and non-evangelical is the thoughtfulness and breadth of viewpoint which many of the papers exhibit. As might be expected, traditional evangelical concerns are covered (Christology, election, dispensationalism). But issues more typical of current theological discussion also are raised (the task of theology, process theology, liberation theology, "biblical theology,"

the concept of development in Pauline thought, Kant's influence, the ordination of women).

One of the book's stated objectives proves particularly useful: to "reflect at least some of the theological diversity present within the Evangelical Theological Society." Toward that end two contrasting approaches to the value of process thought are offered. Bruce Demarest provides five major criticisms of process theology's neo-classical theism. Clark Pinnock, also unaccepting of process theism, nevertheless attempts to take seriously the process critique of traditional theism, noting that the static ontology of classical Christian thought is incompatible with the dynamic ontology of the Bible.

Again, three radically different approaches to a theology of liberation are provided. Ronald Sider answers affirmatively and persuasively the question being posed by theologies of liberation, namely, "How biblical is the view that God is on the side of the poor and oppressed?" Harold O. J. Brown, on the other hand, argues that the language of liberation is more cultural than biblical, leading both to misunderstanding by its listeners and a blurring of biblical convictions by its advocates. It is interesting to notice that Sider's "cultural" conclusions are argued biblically, while Brown's supposed biblical warning is argued culturally. Thirdly, Morris Inch makes use of Bonhoeffer's *Christ The Center* to critique James Cone's black Christology.

Still another example of present evangelical diversity is the case for the ordination of women which is presented both pro and con. E. Margaret Howe offers a variety of helpful insights in arguing aspects of the affirmative case. Particularly useful is her observation that the relationship between office and function was not clearly defined in the NT. Robert Saucy takes the opposite position, arguing from God's created order that the function of elder or bishop is not to be practiced by women. Particularly challenging is his discussion of Galatians 3:28.

I found Pinnock, Sider, and Howe to be the most persuasive. Readers, however, will be impressed with the thoroughness with which both Saucy and Demarest present their cases.

Evangelical theology is anything but monolithic. One need only read the three articles on Calvinistic, Wesleyan, and Lutheran notions of election to have this fact illustrated forcefully. A perhaps unintended further example in this volume is the contrast between Earl Radmacher's discussion of dispensationalism's current status (its literal hermeneutic causes it to maintain a distinction between Israel and the church) and O. Palmer Robertson's discussion of Romans 11 (God intends to continue to deal with Jew and Gentile as he is presently doing so). But evangelical theology is not, for the most part, preoccupied with its internal differences (John Montgomery's article on the use of higher criticism is a sorry exception). What this volume suggests is that an interchange between evangelicals and non-evangelicals is presently being forged out, at least on the evangelical side. Not all attempts at dialogue seem adequate in the eyes of this reviewer. There is still, at times, a misreading of opponents' points of view. But there are also examples in this volume of the best of scholarly dialogue. The articles by Sider, Longenecker ("On the Concept of Development in Pauline Thought"), Hasel ("The Future of Biblical Theology"), and Pinnock are worthy models for seminarians and teachers alike.

### **The Word of Truth**

**by Dale Moody (Eerdmans, 1981, 628 pp., \$24.95). Reviewed by Mark Lau Branson, General Secretary, Theological Students Fellowship.**

Good theology almost sings; and Dale Moody, at times, accomplishes just that. Well known for earlier volumes and journal articles, Moody is the Senior Professor of Christian Theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville). As one who is conversant with (1) modern science (physical and social), (2) contemporary biblical criticism, and (3) the rich ecumenical landscape of theological studies, Moody provides us with a systematic study of doctrine that represents the best of classical orthodoxy.

The traditional headings (Revelation, God, Creation, Man, Sin, Salvation, Christ, Church, and Consummation) receive thorough attention. He interacts with biblical passages (often with careful historical critical and exegetical work), church creeds and historical theology, contemporary theologians (including Rowley, von Rad, Bultmann, Barth, Moltmann, Cullmann, Macquarrie), and up-to-date science. His own positions are then stated and lucidly defended. Useful indices (subject, author, Scripture) conclude this 628-page tome.

As a "post-liberal evangelical," I usually found myself agreeing with Moody's results. A personal God (who may be better understood here because of some cautious comments from a process theology perspective) created (though the Creation Research Society would not like this definition or dating). "Man" (sorry, Dale, but you forgot over half of God's people) chooses to depart from God (no inheritance of sin here — the Romans 5 translation receives a needed corrective). Salvation ties together confession, repentance, forgiveness, and liberation (regretfully unappreciative of theologies that lie beyond the European-North American scene), and the concept of apostasy ("falling away") is defended. The pre-existent Christ is incarnate in the human Jesus, who dies (emphasis on substitution and sacrifice, while propitiation is justly dismissed) and is resurrected (not just bodily, but transformed) and exalted. The Church is to witness, serve, and fellowship (traditional Baptist) and the consummation is a historic event with Jesus' return (dispensationalists and "pre-tribulation rapture" believers need Moody's critiques here).

A great benefit of *The Word of Truth* results from Moody's Southern Baptist setting. He takes fundamentalism and modernism seriously, as any theologian should. His explanations and criticisms should be heard. Also, he knows that theology must be done in the context and in service of the church.

I have a few crucial differences with Moody: (1) The section on the Ministry of Women and earlier comments on creation are hopelessly patriarchal. If he had applied the same careful exegetical talents displayed elsewhere he would be called toward a genuine redemption rather than to obey the curse and its hierarchy (Genesis 3). (2) I believe we basically have a Pauline theology (or at least a theology of the epistles) with the gospels being read through other NT documents. Recent scholarship indicates that the gospels represent a theology that is later (more mature) and re-focused (knowledge about Jesus is the core, rather than an assumed background for church teaching as is true in the epistles). (3) Ethics, especially of the social, economic, political, institutional

kind, receive far too little attention. Scripture teaches that such concerns are at the very heart of God, Jesus, and salvation. Moody's one-line dismissal of Liberation Theology attests to this weakness. (4) While Moody is commended for his alertness to biblical criticism, he too easily accepts the old JEDP divisions of OT passages and does not benefit from later scholarship.

As Moody believes, "historical revelation is subject to historical study" (p. 75). A rigorous approach to understanding biblical history as given and interpreted by the written word and by the incarnate Word can provide a theology that is fully conversant with our modern world. Dale Moody has excelled as a theologian and servant in providing us with such a rich textbook. With this addition to those works by Wainwright, Berkoff and Bloesch, and reportedly some plans by Erickson and Pinnock, there appears to be a shift in American theology. These scholars, all within classical Christianity, are on the initiative. They display a competence with the gospel and with the traditions of orthodoxy. The basic unity of the biblical message is expounded within the context of our modern era. They deserve serious consideration.

*Note: Portions of this review were previously published in The Christian Century.*

### **The Necessity of Systematic Theology**

**by John J. Davis, Editor (Baker, 1980, 190 pp., \$6.95). Reviewed by Clark H. Pinnock, McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario.**

This is an odd anthology of writings on the set theme which the editor tells us he likes to assign to seminary students. This book will assist them in locating particular items, he candidly tells us. The question is whether any other professor will assign the same readings, because it is a strange selection. One finds skimpy little pieces exhorting us to think more, on the grade ten level, and alongside them some more substantial essays by Brunner and Warfield. The only previously unpublished piece is by the editor (indicating perhaps a second reason for the book), which ends up where the book ought to have started. Davis observes how conservative systematic theology has been dominated by a kind of theological positivism which disregards the role of tradition, culture, and individual perspective. This being so, the editor might have considered dropping the pieces which show this naivete, and tried to find some that do not, as his own essay does not. As it is, there is no absolute necessity for the conservative theology the book largely promotes.

### **The Grammar of Faith**

**by Paul L. Holmer (Harper & Row, 1978, 212 pp., \$10.00). Reviewed by Alan Padgett, recent graduate of Drew Theological School, now pastoring near San Diego.**

Holmer, a Yale Divinity School professor and specialist in Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein, has offered us an important work in this book. His aim is not so much to do theology as to clear the air so that we can properly theologize and understand what it is we are about. He writes more as a philosopher than a theologian, and does not intend to expound any one theological

position (p. xi).

Holmer has several insights worth careful consideration, among which I have chosen four. First, he notes that theology has lost its roots in the life of faith. It has become non-religious, academic, faddish, unbiblical, and in the final analysis purely subjective.

Second, he emphasizes the importance of theology for every Christian. Theology describes our personal knowledge of God. It is not, however, subjectivism but rather "dependent upon a consensus of belief and practice, that of Jesus and the Apostles, of the Scripture's teachings" (p. 20). Theology gives us the structure of the Christian faith. It is not just for academia, but should lead us to greater knowledge of and love for God, and a happy, even blessed life. The task of theology is not to do something new, therefore, but to make something old alive for us today.

Third, Holmer tells us that the purpose of theology is not to get at the "meaning" or the "concepts" behind the naive words of the Bible and of faith, as if abstraction and philosophy were more fundamental than Christianity and the Bible. We are tempted to think that theology must discover the deeper, existential truths only partially and poorly found in Scripture. Rather,

Instead of assuming that there are thoughts, deep and rich, for which the Biblical text is but an approximate and local expression, and which the theologian is qualified to unearth, let us really give honor to the text once more! For it might well be that we have to learn how to make the text become our very life-enthusiasm (p. 47).

Holmer is not being anti-intellectual, but complaining that the life of the mind is being substituted for the life of faith. "Words" and "meanings" are not separate things, of which the latter must be uncovered by experts. Words carry their own meaning in their natural context, which a person recognizes or does not. Thus when one asks what the word "God" means, one does not point to some concept, some metaphysical construct "behind" the word. Rather, one points to how it is used in life and in literature. We can then discover the experience and the life-context that give rise to the word and its meaning. The purpose of theology, then, is to make clear the already operative concepts in the life of faith and in the Bible, not to erect a conceptual scheme which purports to give new "meaning" to now meaningless words.

Fourth, Holmer notes that the search for "facts" upon which to base theological language is wrong-headed. There is no single, master set of "facts" and a master state of affairs to which they refer. Rather, the word fact varies with the intellectual context, the scheme of learning. A fact is something which is not disputed, here, now, and in this context. We can have but one fact, and conceive of it many ways in different contexts. There is no "fact," no indubitable, indisputable starting point for all inquirers. Theology does have a foundation, of course, but not in scientific or historical facts:

sin and death are vanquished; God is in Christ, and Christ has been born, has lived, has died, and been raised from the dead. In a certain way of speaking, these together make the fact, the foundation, of at least Christian theology (p. 109).

This does not do away with apologetics, but realizes that faith and theology do not depend on apologetics.

These are ideas that deserve our careful consideration. Even though I agree wholeheartedly with what Holmer says, I have found a few minor problems, and at least one major question, with respect to this book.

Since this book is a compilation of previous articles and lectures, it is often repetitive. It could be made more concise. And for someone so concerned with the meaning of words, Holmer's use of "theology" is often ambiguous (again, it depends on the essay). He needs to differentiate between theology, the academic study of theology, and the personal knowledge of our Lord through faith. This distinction should be carried through in the work as a whole.

One of the questions that arise from the implications of this book has to do with section four, above. Granted the various intellectual contexts or language-games (*à la* Wittgenstein), how do we decide between the various conflicting schemes within the language-game? Thomas Kuhn (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*) would call these descriptive schemes "paradigms." How do we choose between the paradigms of, say, Christianity and Hinduism in the language-game of religion? To believe (as Kuhn does) that there is no reasonable way to make this decision leads to just as subjective and meaningless a position as the ones Holmer rejects. And yet Holmer seems to be saying this in his discussion of "facts," or at least could be interpreted this way. Surely such words as "true," "consistent," "complete," "logical," while they will not be used in exactly the same way, have a similar cross-game application. From Irenaeus to William of Ockham to F. C. Copleston, Christians have insisted that their religious paradigm can be shown superior to others because it is more consistent, more logical, explains more experiences, or is more satisfactory to the human heart than the others. If we cannot agree that there is some reasonable (if not wholly rational) means of deciding between conflicting paradigms, this will lead us to pure relativism. Perhaps there is a language-game that has application to paradigms within other games, and allows us to judge the suitability of conflicting schemes. If Holmer is not a relativist (and I do not think he is), he should be more clear here.

As one can see, this book should be required reading for every theological student. It deserves a careful hearing in all of religious academia.

***The Mysterious Matter of Mind***  
by Arthur C. Custance (Christian Free University Curriculum, Zondervan, 1980, 105 pp., \$2.95). Reviewed by H. Newton Malony, Professor of Psychology, Graduate School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary.

To say one is uninformed is no great admission in this day of such multiplication of knowledge. However, to have to admit one's ignorance in an area so central to one's discipline is a bit embarrassing. The issues with which Custance's book deals are the very foundation stones on which, as a Christian clinical psychologist, I plan my interventions and undertake my therapy. Yet, I was amazed as I read this volume how little I knew about the underlying issues and the dialogue which has

ensued about the nature of mind. The straightforward style and the helpful format of this, and all, CFUC volumes has left me much better informed and less naive about these matters — to say the least.

The book is about the mind/brain problem. Functional self-consciousness is taken as such a *prima facie* fact that few behavioral scientists spend much time belaboring the issue, although the questions underlying the mind/brain interaction are at the heart of every theory of personality and behind every therapeutic modality.

Custance explicates the ideas of Descartes, who set the stage of the mind/body dilemma for all of Western philosophy over the last several centuries. He then details clearly the several options which have been proposed as models for understanding the uniqueness of self-conscious mind in relation to the obvious presence of a physical brain. He suggests these options are four in number: Panpsychic Monism, Emergent Monism, De Nova Dualism and Ex Nihilo Dualism. He notes that the dominant theories of most scientists have been monistic, in the sense that they have tried to avoid postulating a substance other than matter or the appearance of an entity whose presence demanded other than mechanical explanation.

Four central figures in twentieth-century physiology are considered in detail: Sir Charles Sherrington, John C. Eccles, Wilder Penfield, and Karl R. Popper. Sherrington is cited for his incipient move toward a dualistic view at the end of his life. Penfield reported the seminal research on memory resulting from the stimulation of the temporal lobe, which clearly demonstrated the existence of mind apart from the brain. Eccles and Popper jointly authored *The Self and Its Brain*, which supported a dualistic view yet clearly demonstrated the difference between a *de novo*, emergent view (Popper) and an *ex nihilo*, out of nothing position (Eccles).

Eccles is presented as adopting the position nearest to that of Christian faith — namely that mind, while part of creation and while integrally related, is yet independent of and a qualitatively different substance from brain. Eccles postulated a continuing existence for mind in a semi-religious, quasi-Christian fashion.

Suffice it to say I finished the volume somewhat awestruck by the compact and understandable manner in which Custance presented such difficult yet critical ideas. Needless to say, my affirmation of this volume was enhanced by the firm endorsement given it by my mentor and colleague, Lee Edward Travis.

In conclusion I perceive that Custance has done all Christian scientists a valuable service and I commend the book without qualification.

***Paul the Apostle: Triumph of God in Life and Thought***  
By J. Christian Beker (Fortress Press, 1980, 452 pp., \$22.95). Reviewed by Kenneth D. Litwak, recent graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary.

Justification, reconciliation, and in-Christ mysticism all have one thing in common: scholars have proposed each one as Paul's leading or controlling theme. Beker argues that none is Paul's central theme. Indeed, Paul has no controlling theme in his letters around which he builds his theology. That is not the way Paul operated.

Beker proposes that all the themes in Paul's writings are symbols which express the core of Paul's theology, which is the Gospel of Christ crucified. These symbols are built on a structure which gives coherence to Paul's message: the triumph of God, "the hope in the dawning victory of God" and the redemption of creation which "he has inaugurated in Christ" (p. ix). The book has four parts. It begins by describing the debate over Paul's leading theme. Part two shows how Paul translates the coherent core into contingent situations, while part three speaks of the triumph of God and seeks to show that this is the coherent core of Paul's message. Part four ties the whole together.

Beker is concerned that the reader see the "whole Paul." He emphasizes both the coherence and contingency in Paul's thought as well as the relationship between these (p. 11). Because of these characteristics of his thought, Paul can make the Gospel relevant to the specific needs of his churches without compromising its content or "reducing it to a petrified conceptuality" (p. 12).

Paul's thought cannot be reduced to a "systematic doctrinal core." For Paul the symbolic structure of God's apocalyptic triumph is the essential means for his interpretation of the Christ-event. Paul translates this coherent core into particular situations, hence the contingent nature of the symbols he uses. The contingent interpretation almost always points implicitly or explicitly to the imminent cosmic triumph of God.

Beker next shows the contingent nature of Paul's message by using Romans and Galatians. He uses these two letters because they have similar content and because while Galatians is seen as addressed to a particular situation, most see Romans as a systematic statement of Paul's doctrine. If Romans can be seen to use contingent symbols suitable to the particular situation then all of Paul's letters can.

Beker compares how Paul interprets both the Abraham story and the Torah in these two letters. Since this investigation makes us recognize the contingent nature of both letters, we must not select either as the core of Paul's thought. All this shows that the Gospel allows a "wide diversity of interpretation without sacrificing its coherent core."

Beker then argues that the triumph of God is the coherent core of Paul's message, using 1 Corinthians 15 as a starting point. Beker rejects the scholarly bias against apocalyptic in Paul and asserts that the "apocalyptic texture" of Paul's letters must be accepted. The loss of apocalyptic leads to a perversion of the Gospel. Here Beker has a valuable discussion of Paul's view of the Law and of Israel.

Beker's book is definitely worth reading. He takes a fresh approach to some perennial questions. He offers a workable thesis and argues for it quite persuasively. I wholeheartedly agree with him that Paul's thought cannot be contained under one theme.

Unfortunately, for two reasons I have difficulty with the other part of his thesis, that the triumph of God is Paul's coherent core. First, the triumph of God may just be another symbol. Second, choosing this as the coherent core limits Paul's writings. Beker holds the common view, which I find quite unacceptable, that Paul did not write Ephesians or the Pastorals. For Ephesians does not have this apocalyptic outlook (p. 214). Since I believe Paul wrote all thirteen letters ascribed to him, I need a coherent core that is determined by the content of all

thirteen.

I recommend this book highly. However, since Beker is arguing more for his thesis than explaining Paul's theology, it is best read after reading a book more strictly on Paul's theology, such as one by Bruce or Ridderbos.

***God's People in Christ: New Testament Perspectives on the Church and Judaism***  
By Daniel J. Harrington, S.J. (Fortress Press, 1980, xiii + 126 pp., \$6.50). Reviewed by Robert H. Gundry, Professor of New Testament, Westmont College.

This book presents a rather popular biblical theological study of the relation of the Church to Judaism. The author surveys Israel's sense of being God's people, with emphasis on God's initiative and the historical and covenantal framework of Israel's faith. The Jewishness — particularly the apocalypticism — of Jesus and of the primitive church come in for special mention. Paul's enlargement of Abraham's offspring to include Gentiles who believe in Jesus is seen as a major breakthrough, but not without hope of all Israel's salvation in the future. Attention is paid to various New Testament developments of the unity of Jewish and Gentile believers and of their apartness from unbelieving Jews and Gentiles. Further attention is paid to the application of Old Testament imagery concerning Israel to the Church. The attacks on Late Judaism in the Gospels of Matthew and John are discussed as a theological problem. The historical setting of these attacks is said to provide a solution: because the controversies out of which they grew were theological rather than racist, anti-Semitism has no legitimate foothold.

The author's positions on disputed higher critical and exegetical questions need mentioning. He accepts the current critical orthodoxy of denying the apostolic authorship of Ephesians, the pastorals, and 1 Peter (to take the most obvious examples from his discussions). The kingdom of God in Jesus' preaching is both present and future and is not to be equated *tout simpliciter* with the Church. Though the Church is a natural sociological outgrowth of Jesus' charismatic ministry of the kingdom, he did not found it in an organizational sense. Here the author might have strengthened the relation between Jesus and the Church by noting the implication of Jesus' initiative in choosing the twelve. On the other hand, the author makes a nice point that since apocalyptic fervor and community organization go hand in hand at Qumran, we have no good reason to postpone the organization of the Church till after the dying down of apocalypticism.

The book closes with a translation of biblical theology concerning the Church and Judaism into contemporary theology. This translation includes exhortations to draw on the Jewish heritage of historical involvement (as opposed to withdrawal from the world), to avoid exclusionism (which would contradict Paul's enlargement of Abraham's seed, his stress on the cosmic significance of Jesus' saving action, and the deutero-Pauline tendency toward universal salvation), and to recognize present-day Judaism as legitimate in its own right (not merely as half-Christian or anonymously Christian). One wonders, then, whether Christians really need to evangelize Jews or, for that matter, anybody. But the author hangs on to Chris-

tians' "wanting to share their religious vision," for not to share it "is never very admirable." Here, the current desire for rapprochement with Judaism and other great religions of the world seems to have tempered the burning zeal in the New Testament to convert people into Christians.

For more challenging treatments of the topics discussed in this book, serious students might consider going to more scholarly literature. At its intended level, however, the present book is well written.

***Understanding the Old Testament***  
by A. H. J. Gunneweg (Westminster Press, 1978, 265 pp., \$12.00). Reviewed by William Sanford LaSor, Emeritus Professor of Old Testament, Fuller Theological Seminary.

The author clearly defines his purpose in the Introduction (Chapter I). Briefly stated, it is "to describe and give a critical evaluation of the different and often contradictory possibilities of understanding the Old Testament as part of the Christian canon — or even of rejecting it altogether" (p. 1). The concern, Gunneweg correctly states, is hermeneutical, involving "an overall understanding of the Old Testament and the presuppositions on which that is based" (pp. 1-2), but it is also theological and historical. The chapter headings give the author's method of developing this work: II. The OT as a Legacy; III. The OT in the Light of the Reformation and under Fire from Historical Criticism; IV. The OT as Law and as a Covenant Document; V. The OT as the Document of an Alien Religion; VI. The OT as a History Book; VII. The OT as Part of the Christian Canon.

When the Christian community first came into existence, it considered as its sacred Scriptures those writings which had been received by the Jews as such. To argue that the Hebrew Old Testament had not yet been finally completed (p. 8) is to blur the fact that there was already a concept of canonicity, even if the extent of the canon had not yet been officially or ecclesiastically defined. For all intents and purposes, it was the "Old Testament" — as it has come to be known. The author seems to put undue emphasis on the Old Testament as *law*, implying that it was a legalistic kind of document, and then points out that Jesus, and after him the writers of the New Testament, began a process of selecting those elements which were to be accepted as authoritative from those which were not binding on the Church. However, the concept of *torah* is certainly much broader than "law" — it includes faith and behavior (as Gunneweg correctly points out later, p. 97). The rabbinic method of abstracting principles and then applying them to situations not specifically covered in the Scriptures is only a somewhat different approach to the same basic problem. To suggest that in Hellenistic Christianity "it was no longer essential to recognize the law" (p. 17) appears to overlook the fact that the overall authority of the Old Testament was not challenged. When the time came to act on the question of canonicity, the Church (with minor exceptions) adopted the Old Testament as of equal authority with the New. The statement that the word *new* "already denotes something entirely different" (p. 35) may be challenged on the basis that the word *kaine*, as distinguished from *nea*, implies some connection with the former. From here on, we are attempting by one means or another to define this connection.



Exegesis attempts to bring to light the meaning which canonical Scripture has for any present time (p. 32). This may be attempted by typological (p. 24) or allegorical (p. 31) interpretation. The author identifies the latter as Hellenistic in origin (p. 32), and its extremes led to a dogmatic control of interpretation, which in turn resulted in a decline in the status of Scripture itself (p. 41) — a fact which many modern-day defenders of the Bible seem to overlook.

Chapter III is a very compact study, which could indeed be expanded into a book in its own right. The Reformation restored the centrality of Scripture (p. 45). Luther's treatment of the Old Testament serves to introduce the question of how the Old Testament relates to the New, and wherein its authority for the Church is to be found. The relationship of history to faith was sometimes solved by the elevation of dogmatic considerations (*sola scriptura*, verbal inspiration, etc. [pp. 60ff.]), and sometimes by emphasis on the historical. Ultimately, the Old Testament "became an alien book" (p. 92), and a difference was interjected between knowledge and faith, "between historical and dogmatic theology as a discipline on the one hand, and faith on the other" (p. 93).

It was when the Reformation returned to the literal sense of Scripture that it could be seen "how alien this collection of writings was" (p. 147). According to Gunneweg, orthodoxy and the dogma of verbal inspiration put back the veil (p. 148). Humanistic scholars, however, continued to press the idea that the Old Testament and the New were from different kinds of religion, and with the claim of Delitzsch that Jesus was a Galilean and not a Jew, "the idea of the Aryan Jesus was born" (p. 155). Anti-Semitism probably found some support in such concepts (p. 156). The author's suggestion that the application of Christian standards to interpretation of the Old Testament demonstrates its alien nature (cf. p. 171) is to be challenged as questionable methodology. "But when is Israel really Israel? When it leaves these limitations behind and continues to exist without land or state — a pure community of faith and a 'church'—, or when it affirms these limitations as the indispensable historical form of its own specific mode of existence?" (p. 172). Despite the author's argument that this is not shifting the argument into the uncontrollable realm of arbitrary evaluations, I think it is just that. The failure to distinguish between Israel and the Church usually ignores Romans 9-11.

Chapter VI is a careful study of various kinds of Old Testament theology, with a critique of "salvation history" (pp. 196-209), and a critique of the argument from prophecy and typology (pp. 209-212). The author seems to have difficulty with the basic concept that God was actively involved in his revelatory and redemptive process. "'By scripture alone' (*sola scriptura*) turns into 'by history alone' (*sola historia*)," and the observation that for the position outlined "scripture and exegesis retreat well into the background" (p. 192), serve to emphasize the fact that according to Scripture itself, the prophetic word was an explanation of what God was doing in history (cf. Amos 3:7).

The strengths and the weaknesses of the book become apparent in the final chapter, where Gunneweg attempts to provide a basis for including the Old Testament in the Christian canon. Older attempts have not been satisfactory — as a study of the continually changing scholarly approach to the subject reflects. But the author's solution, "to translate

once again, on a better historical and hermeneutical basis, the old language of the Old Testament into the proclamation of the one act of God in Jesus Christ" (p. 236), is also unsatisfactory. For one thing, to attempt to compress the entire redemptive activity of God into one act in Jesus Christ is to miss the length and breadth of that activity. Then again, to take the advent of Christ as the end of history or to say that "an eschaton which needed to be supplemented would be a contradiction in terms" (p. 229), is to fail to comprehend the total redemptive plan, which includes the Second Advent and the Age to Come.

This is indeed a mind-stretching book. Because of the author's method of presentation, it is not always easy to distinguish between his own position and that of the scholar under consideration at the moment. Therefore I must confess that I may at times have misconstrued the author's own position. To review the many and various ways that the Old Testament has been viewed across the millennia, to interact with the methods and criticize them, is indeed a formidable task, and we must indeed be indebted to Gunneweg for this book. The extensive bibliography and the indexes make it even more valuable.

### **Amos Among the Prophets: Composition and Theology**

**by Robert B. Coote (Fortress Press, 1981, 138 pp., \$5.50). Reviewed by David A. Hubbard, President and Professor of Old Testament, Fuller Theological Seminary.**

With a clear, vigorous style that students and lay persons will enjoy, Coote has set forth his theory that the book of Amos was composed in three phases: stage A comes from Amos the prophet, whose ministry is dated here between 745 B.C. and the fall of Samaria in 722 (a decade or two later than is usually the case), and consists exclusively of poetic oracles of judgment delivered to Samaria's ruling elite to denounce them for their oppression of the poor (e.g. 2:6-8, 13-16; 3:9-12; 4:1-3; 5:1-2, 11, 16-20; 6:1-7, 8, 11; 8:4-10; 9:1-4).

Stage B comprises the bulk of the book and is the work of a seventh century editor, perhaps contemporary with King Josiah, who interwove Amos' oracles with materials of various kinds — visions, autobiography, admonitions, judgment speeches, wisdom questions addressed both to the Israelite peasants that survived Assyria's invasion and to the ruling class of Judah. Stage B reflects a Deuteronomistic outlook, focusing on 1) the evil of Bethel as a rival shrine to Jerusalem, 2) the call to decide for or against God as was done at Succoth (Feast of Tabernacles), and 3) the role of the prophet as spokesman, commissioned by God yet rejected by the people.

Stage C dates from 520 B.C. or so (roughly contemporary with Haggai and Zechariah); it consists of two additions to the foreign oracles (1:9-12, 2:4-5) and the ending (9:7-15) with its promise of restoration; like Jonah, it wrestles with the question of divine mercy when judgment seems deserved.

One does not have to buy this basic scheme of composition to benefit lavishly from Coote's work. His summary of the relationships between Israel's peasantry and ruling class, his description of the *Marzech* (an organization that celebrated feasts for the dead) as part of the background for Amos' denunciation of the revelry of the rich, his discussion of the charac-

ter of justice, his penetrating analyses of literary forms, his suggestions for contemporary application—these and other features will pay high dividends to all who invest the time to read these chapters alongside the pages of Amos.

It was with the main thesis that I had my largest misgivings: 1) it is built on the assumption that Amos delivered only one kind of message to one audience; 2) it depends heavily on theories that a rival shrine like Bethel became a problem only after Josiah's discovery of the Book of the Law; 3) it reads far too much into the reason for the hopeful ending and makes a connection with the story of Jonah which is more ingenious than credible; 4) it leans too hard on the theory that the great prophets could not be both proclaimers of doom and heralds of hope; 5) it follows H. W. Wolff in trying to fix specific historical periods for the various parts of the message rather than taking a cue from B. Childs, who sees theological reflection on the part of Israel's faithful as the reason for the apparent diversity in the book; 6) it limits any discussion of the message to the intent and thrust of the book's alleged parts and gives us almost no help in grappling with the overall meaning.

Perhaps this needed synthesis will come later from Coote's ready pen. But meanwhile, his present work leaves one to ponder the ultimate value of a book that is so absorbed in analysis that it does not even contain a concluding chapter to help me know what I am reading and, more important, what God is saying, when I read Amos as a whole. I was much more successful, as a lad, in taking the family clock apart than in reassembling it. And that kind of success did not help me know what time it was.

### **The Prophets of Israel**

**by Leon J. Wood (Baker Book House, 1979, 405 pp., \$11.95). Reviewed by C. L. V. Hensley, Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, Rockmont College (CO).**

The emphasis of this book is stated on page 10: "... the discussion herein is concerned with the prophets themselves as people, rather than with the books they wrote." The book is divided into two parts: Part One introduces and surveys the prophetic movement in Israel and its Ancient Near Eastern background; Part Two covers the prophets themselves. In the light of the book's stated purpose Part One is unnecessarily long, taking up nearly one-third of the total volume. Furthermore, it is marred by an all-too-frequent defensive stand. It tends to read like a running battle between what Wood calls the "liberal" and "conservative" views of the aspects of prophetism discussed. A briefer, less polemic, introduction would have served his purpose better. Likewise, the historical survey of pages 119-31 should have been eliminated since it is repeated in connection with the individual prophets.

The format of Part Two, the focus on the prophets as persons, is disconcerting because of the division into various character traits — most commonly spiritual status, courage, command of respect and literary ability. Such a fragmented picture fails to capture the personalities of the prophets. By comparison, one gets a better appreciation of Ezekiel as a person from Taylor (*TOTC: Ezekiel*, "Ezekiel the Man," pp. 20-29) than from Wood (pp. 355-61). Wood also fails to portray the development of the character of Habakkuk, who appears initially as an impatient though zealous believer

who, shaken in faith, questions God's actions (ch. 1). Following God's answer to his complaint, Habakkuk responds with new (renewed?) confidence and trust in God's wisdom and can proclaim, "I will wait patiently . . . I will rejoice in the Lord . . . The Sovereign Lord is my strength . . ." (3:16-19). Part Two is also unnecessarily long, giving too much space to setting the stage from which to view the prophet and, for the writing prophets, the additional review of their books. Unfortunately, the book is also marred by historical inaccuracies concerning dates, places, and people. The reviewer's impression is that this book consists of Wood's lecture notes on the introduction to the prophets for an undergraduate-level course. It is adequate for that purpose but not for the stated purpose of the book, and hence is disappointing.

**Student Map Manual: Historical Geography of the Bible Lands**

(Zondervan, 1979, 142 pp., \$34.95). Reviewed by John Andrew Dearman, Department of Philosophy, Louisiana State University.

This volume places a premium on maps. It is designed to depict the lands of the Bible (i.e. Palestine) with very carefully drawn and researched maps. The needs of students are kept in mind and the volume is intended to serve them effectively.

There are several features to be noted. (1) The volume contains regional maps for details and sites of a particular area. (2) There are maps of Palestine for the various cultural periods (e.g. Chalcolithic, Iron Age) locating the important sites. (3) There are maps of the various historical periods (e.g. the Judges, Divided Kingdom) that locate the important sites and conveniently list the biblical and extra-biblical literature which mention these places. (4) There are maps of the archaeology of Jerusalem. (5) The volume includes several helpful indexes and aids. Especially useful are the references to secondary literature where the interested student can find additional information from excavation reports.

One difference between this manual and other atlases is its "east orientation," meaning that the maps face eastward at the top of the page rather than northward as is usually the case. This is a fine manual or atlas and a valuable resource for personal study of the Bible, but its price is rather high.

**Jewish Sects in the Time of Jesus**

by Marcel Simon, translated by J. H. Farley (Fortress, 1980, xii + 180 pp., \$5.95). Reviewed by E. Earle Ellis, New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

The religious context of the ministry of our Lord and of his apostles and prophets is important for a proper understanding of the New Testament. Until recently that context was known to us almost entirely from the New Testament itself and from two first-century Jewish writers, Josephus of Palestine and (later) Rome and Philo of Alexandria. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls there appeared an important new source of information about first-century Judaism, particularly about the Essenes who were probably the users and writers of the Scrolls. The chapter on this group is perhaps the most helpful one in Simon's book.

The author considers, besides the Essenes, the three other parties described in the writings of Josephus — the Pharisees, Sadducees and

Zealots. Under 'other Palestinian sects' he treats several lesser known groups whose nature and status during this period are not entirely clear. One of these groups, the Hellenists (Acts 6:1), which played an important role in early Christian history, was probably chiefly characterized by a rather loose attitude towards the ritual law. Whether, as Simon supposes, it originated in the Diaspora and represented a tendency to 'spiritualize' Jewish worship is more doubtful.

The title of the book is somewhat misleading. The Pharisees and Sadducees constituted more or less the religious "establishment," and the chapter on Philo fits awkwardly if at all in a book on "sects" or even on "religious parties." Some of the interpretations are also questionable. For example, the author seems too easily to identify the later Judaism of the rabbinic writings with the Pharisees of Jesus' day, and too easily to discount the New Testament picture of the Pharisees in favor of rabbinic perspectives.

If one wishes to have a brief overview of religious parties and tendencies in Judaism in the first and second centuries, this book can serve as a useful introduction. The present reprinting of the 1964 edition is, therefore, well justified. However, for a more satisfactory and extended treatment that relates the religious parties to their larger context, many students may wish to purchase for approximately the same price Bruce's *New Testament History* or (if it is reprinted) Reicke's *The New Testament Era*.

**Horizons in Biblical Theology: An International Dialogue**

Published by the Clifford E. Barbour Library, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 616 N. Highland Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15206. Student subscription: \$6.00 per volume. Reviewed by John F. Hobbins, graduate student, Pontificio Instituto Biblico, Rome, Italy.

Contents: Vol. 1 (1979): "Preface" by Ulrich Mauser; "St. Paul — A Good Jew" by Markus Barth; "The Crisis and Promise of Presence in Israel" by Walter Brueggemann; "Messianic Prophecy or History?" by Ronald E. Clements; "Some Archetypal Origins of Apocalyptic Predictions" by Paul S. Minear; "Resurrection — Fact or Illusion?" by Eduard Schweizer; "The Gospel of Reconciliation in Christ — Basic Features and Issues of a Biblical Theology of the New Testament" by Peter Stuhlmacher. Vol. 2 (1980): "Preface" by Ulrich Mauser; "The Problem of Variety and Unity in the New Testament" by Otto Betz; "Strife and Reconciliation: Themes of a Biblical Theology in the Book of Genesis" by George W. Coats; "Abraham and the Righteousness of God" by Lloyd Gaston; "The Confession of the One God in the New Testament" by Ferdinand Hahn; "Messianism in Chronicles? Some Remarks to the Old Testament Background of the New Testament Christology" by Magne Saeb; "Tradition, Canon and Biblical Theology" by Bruce C. Birch; "Canon and the History of Tradition: A Critique of Brevard S. Childs' *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*" by Douglas A. Knight; "What is Written. A Response to Brevard Childs' *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*" by James L. Mays; "Brevard Childs' *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*" by David P. Polk; "Canonical Context and Canonical Criticism" by James A. Sanders; "A Response" by Brevard Childs.

The two volumes of this new annual deserve a great deal of praise. In essence, each volume is a collection of essays by top-notch Old and New Testament scholars, primarily German- and English-speaking. Almost every essay contains very solid content, yet is written in a readable and relatively non-technical style. Recent biblical research is summarized in a way that will inform rather than perplex the average theological student. Moreover, the essays are generally creative, controversial, even brilliant. A concern which unites them all is their reading of both Old and New Testaments as Holy Scripture. Even if I disagree with this or that point, or even the thrust of a particular essay, I will always be impressed by the warmth and care these scholars evidently have for the biblical text. Bible-loving Christians will be thankful for these volumes, and teachers may find that the features noted above make the essays almost ideal from a pedagogical point of view.

It is impossible to comment on all the essays, so I will touch on those which I consider most important.

The Church still has much to learn from the Scriptures, much not found even in the creeds, much which has suffered great distortion in the course of her history. M. Barth's essay demonstrates that perhaps now — after pogroms and forced conversion, after many pages of history splattered with the blood of Jewish martyrs, after the Holocaust — the Church may finally learn to appreciate the Jewishness of her favorite apostle, Paul. Perhaps now, rather than justifying our ignorance, contempt, and misunderstanding of Jewish life and religion by appealing to Paul, we may finally learn to appreciate the passionate love which Paul had for his own people. Perhaps now we may be able to hear the message of Ephesians as the Church rarely if ever has. M. Barth's essay serves as a fine introduction to his Anchor Bible commentary on that epistle.

The Church has not always understood the apocalyptic passages of both Old and New Testaments. Apocalyptic is foreign to the Church whenever she does not wait expectantly for the return of her Lord. P. Minear's essay makes a good, if somewhat limited, start towards reacquainting us with this biblical idiom (although in my view, Minear is too simplistic with his equation of protology and eschatology).

Schweizer's essay is a beautiful reaffirmation of belief in the resurrection. Schweizer is not afraid to be controversial, and refuses to downplay the inconsistencies found in the Gospels. I am not completely satisfied with his necessarily brief treatment of the Old Testament on resurrection. One might compare the reflections of M. Buber in *Right and Wrong*.

Betz's essay is a good introduction to the problem of variety and unity in the New Testament. He does not go in for the sharp antitheses which are so fashionable in biblical scholarship. Instead, he is thankful for the pluralism and freedom of life and thought which the gospel allows.

There is no space to introduce the many other articles, such as Gaston's very provocative piece on Abraham, or Mays' fine statement of the challenge B. Childs has posed to the scholarly establishment. The overall impression which I gain from these volumes is that a part of the scholarly community is moving towards a new consensus which threatens to cut across the usual liberal and conservative stereotypes. Perhaps, too, we may discern the Spirit of God at work in this respect.

**Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine**

by Pinchas Lapide and Jurgen Moltmann, translated by Leonard Swidler (Fortress Press, 1981, 93 pp., \$4.40). Reviewed by James R. Edwards, Chairman, Dept. of Religion, Jamestown College (ND).

In the spring of 1978 Pinchas Lapide, an Orthodox Jew, and Jurgen Moltmann accepted the invitation of a West German pastor to discuss one of the oldest and most vexing problems dividing Jews and Christians, namely, the Trinity. The result of that discussion is this slender but provocative volume.

After two introductory essays, the discussion of God begins in earnest with the presentations of Lapide and Moltmann, and here the reader is privileged to a first-rate theological dialogue. Both Lapide and Moltmann avoid the pitfalls of caricaturing the other's position or compromising their own. Their concluding "Common Declaration" characterizes the tenor of the dialogue: the need for a "listening heart" as Solomon once requested (1 Kings 3:9), the humble insight of Paul that all of our thinking, doing, and speaking remain "imperfect" (1 Corinthians 13:9f), and the understanding of the universal message of the Bible that God "wants everyone to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4).

Lapide begins with a powerful exposition of the meaning of the oneness of God for the Jew. "One" is not so much a quantitative concept as a qualitative one; two or more cannot be absolute, eternal, or omnipotent. Against this background of the oneness of God, however, Lapide notes that Jewish tradition often speaks of God in statements of threes: the Old Testament calls God "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob"; the mystics of the Cabala speak of God's Self, God's Spirit, and God's Word; Exodus 3:12 speaks of the Spirit, the Glory, and the Lord's Self; the choir of angels in Isaiah 6:3 sings, "Holy, Holy, Holy"; a theophany of three men comes to Abraham at Mamre, etc. Lapide is able to accept such tridactic statements without reserve. It is the later

formulae of the Church Fathers, which in part were formulated *against* the Jews, that he rejects, and he wishes for a rethinking of the traditional dogma of the Trinity on a more biblical (and hence less Greek and speculative) basis.

Moltmann sets forth his understanding of the Trinity by arguing against conceiving of God in terms of *aseity*, i.e., that God exists from himself, in himself, and for himself. Relying at first primarily on the Old Testament and Abraham Heschel, Moltmann shows that the God of both Jews and Christians is a God who enters into life's journey of his people and suffers with them. The God who involves himself and communicates himself is, for Moltmann, a God of "self-distinction," and the basis for God's self-distinction is the passion of Christ on the cross. In Romans 8:32 and Galatians 2:20 the Greek verb *paradidonai*, meaning to deliver or hand over, epitomizes God's self-distinction. If God communicates himself in love then he cannot be indivisible, reasons Moltmann. "The Father gives the Son, the Son gives himself for us, and that happens through the Spirit. In this event of the giving up 'for us' lies the unity of the Trinitarian self-distinction of God" (p. 54).

In the ensuing dialogue it becomes apparent that both Lapide and Moltmann regard the other's faith as a God-willed way of salvation. Here Lapide expresses some surprising and welcome convictions for the Christian. He accepts, for instance, the resurrection of Jesus (and not, he notes, in a Bultmannian sense!), and by his count the resurrected Jesus appeared to 530 Jewish men and women. More than once he says that he never ceases to be amazed by the founding of the Christian Church, for which the resurrection provides the only stimulus. But this is not to say Jesus was God's Son in an ontological sense. Jesus was raised because he was, so to speak, a model Jew in the Old Testament sense. Lapide believes in "sons of God" as Jesus (Matthew 5:9, 45) and Paul (Romans 8:14) understood them, that is, in a functional rather than metaphysical sense.

On Jesus' relationship to Israel, Lapide asserts that when Jesus said he was "the way,

the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), he meant he was the way for all who were not already Jews. The Jews, like the elder brother in Jesus' parable, have known the way since Sinai. Why then did the Jews reject Jesus (Romans 9-11)? Had the Jews not said *no* to Jesus, argues Lapide, the Gospel of salvation would not have been extended to the Gentiles. Lapide climaxes by saying that Israel was God's firstborn son, Jesus his second. Jewish Messianism is functional rather than personal; Jews pray *for* Messiah, not *to* him. Judaism is a *what* religion, Christianity a *who* religion. Judaism emphasizes redemption, Christianity emphasizes the redeemer.

One sign of the success of Lapide's and Moltmann's dialogue is that it engages the reader to join in. Perhaps I may conclude with some comments of my own. First, encouraging as Lapide's view of Jesus' resurrection is, it seems to fall short of the New Testament understanding. For the early Church, the resurrection was not simply a reward for a pious Jew, as Lapide seems to imply; rather, it was so radically unique that it could signal nothing other than the inbreaking of God's way for all people. A second point concerns Jesus' relationship to Israel. True, the Jewish *no* to Jesus made possible the Gentile *yes*, but are we thereby to assume that the Jewish *no* is the correct, or necessarily final, response to Jesus? What are we to do with the wealth of material in the New Testament which states that Jesus was sent to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24), and that "Christ is the end of the law" (Romans 10:4)? Finally, the dialogue, for all its merit, may strike evangelical readers as a bit slippery and existential. Leonard Swidler's "deabsolutizing" of truth in the Foreword, and Lapide's statement that Judaism and Christianity are only two of several paths which lead to God (here Moltmann seems to concur) are cases to point. Are no truths eternal? If Christians believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ *is* eternal, what is its relationship to partial truths? Certainly Lapide and Moltmann have presented us with a positive start on the quest.

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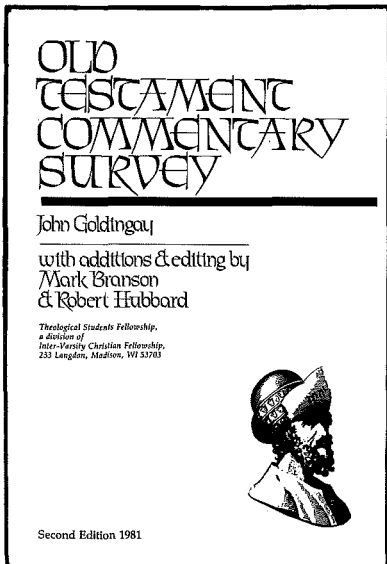
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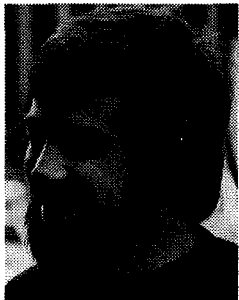
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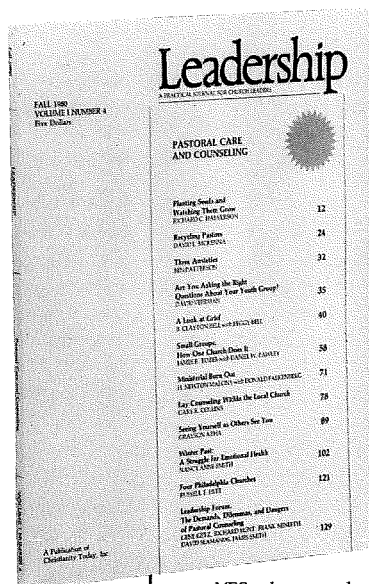
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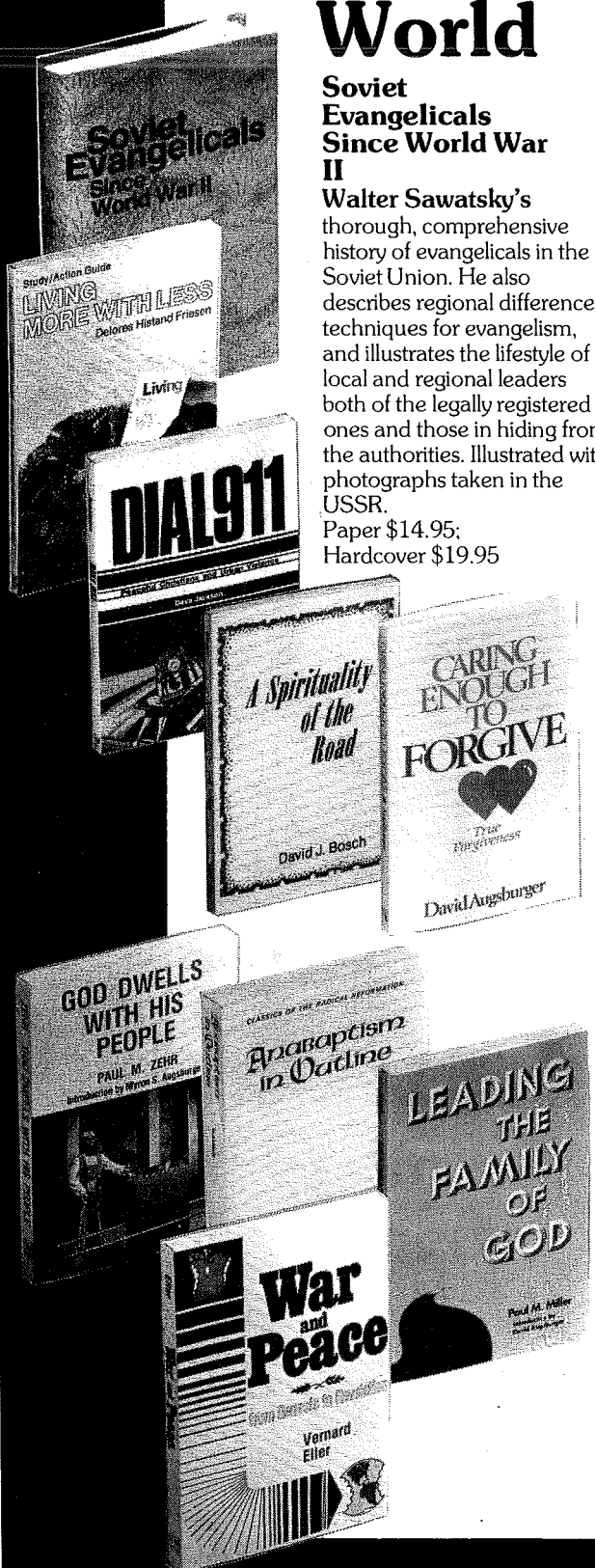
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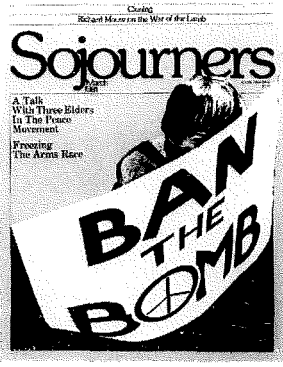
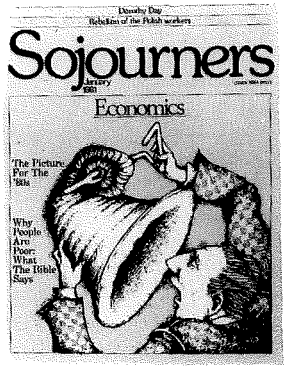
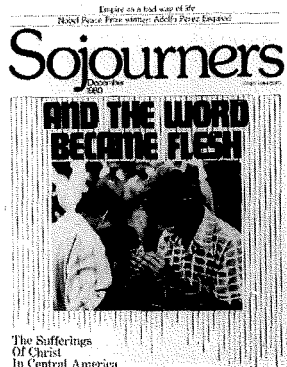
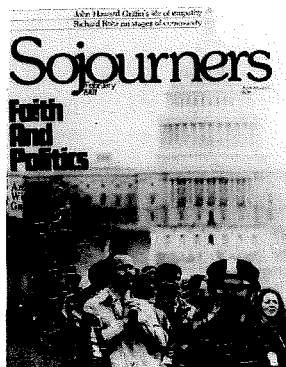
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