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Introducing This Issue

It is none other than Jesus Christ who has commanded his followers to love God with all their minds as well as their hearts. Indeed, he says God is to be loved with *all* the mind.

But what if the mind is radically estranged from God? What if, in the depths of the human psyche, there is a profound, even antagonistic alienation from God? What if every human being enters life in a stage of cognitive disharmony with God? What if the apostle Paul is right when he asserts in his Roman Letter that "the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit itself to God's law, nor can it do so"? Then there is need for a redemption which will overcome the mind's radical alienation, making it God-centered.

This, T.F. Torrance argues in his essay on "The Reconciliation of Mind" (page 4), is precisely what takes place when, in a life-changing act of faith, Jesus Christ is acknowledged as Savior and Lord. And since a cognitive transformation occurs, we may properly speak of an acknowledgement. Once by God's redemptive grace and power that reorientation has been effected in the depths of the psyche, the believer can testify with Paul, "we have the mind of Christ." Far from being a preposterous claim to omniscience, however, that affirmation really points to a process, "the renewing of the mind" which Paul urges his fellow disciples to pursue as they, in their own thinking, "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

The implications of this New Testament psychology are obviously so far-reaching that, as Torrance indicates, they ought to have a revolutionary impact not only on theology but society and culture as well. So to call his reflections challenging is to indulge in imperceptive understatement.

My friend Vernard Eller is a contemporary example of a Christian scholar whose renewed mind probes Scripture to discover what it really means (that, of course, is the hermeneutical task which Harvie Conn discusses in his article on "Normativity, Relevance and Relativism"). Invariably, I find anything Eller writes provocative and interesting. The interest is aroused and sustained by a refreshingly idiosyncratic style, as direct and often as humorous as his personal conversation. The insights he provides are usually provocative—and usually eye-opening. In the light of Romans 13, which he exegetes for us (page 7), can we properly call ourselves Christian anarchists? The idea seems absurd, but see how Eller develops his argument before insisting that the adjective *Christian* can never qualify the noun *anarchy*.

Augustine is perhaps the supreme example of a genius with a reconciled mind, certainly one of the greatest theologians in church history. Bernard T. Adeney shows (page 10) how the bishop of Hippo wrestled with the apparently contradictory Christian teachings on love and war to bring them into a liveable congruence. That problems persist down to 1987, agonizingly exacerbated by our nuclear weaponry. Can Christians, as witnesses to God's sacrificial love, and as embodiments (hopefully) of neighbor love, kill other persons who, like themselves, are God's image-bearers? And can they sanction killing on a scale that makes the bloodbaths of a Genghis Khan seems less of an immoral enormity? Augustine, as Adeney explains, has some answers, but they are by no means easy or uncontestable.

What, then, should we with reconciled minds, endeavoring to find and follow a distinctively Christian ethic, conclude about war in the atomic age? A vast literature on that whole subject has been proliferating. Who is able to know what is of value and what isn't? Mark Nation's bibliography (page 15) on nuclear weapons will prove a discriminating guide.

In our two concluding articles we observe reconciling minds using the resources of scholarship to help God's people better understand God's Church and God's Word. Dennis Hollinger (page 18) employs sociology to enlighten us regarding the nature of the Church which, while a supernatural reality, exists institutionally as one more organization in a world of interacting human structures. As such, he reminds us, it is susceptible of objective analysis and subject to the foibles and frailties which mark everything human. Its divine reality may be more clearly seen if, learning from Hollinger, we have a safeguarding awareness of its human nature.

Harvie Conn's analysis of hermeneutics (page 24) impresses me as the kind of updating article every seminarian, pastor, and for that matter, every serious student of the Bible ought to carefully read. Yes, we believe that Holy Scripture is God's totally trustworthy Word. Yes, as the Reformers contended, it is characterized by perspicuity: under the Spirit's guidance, a relatively unsophisticated believer can grasp its doctrinal and ethical meaning. But Biblical interpretation is at the same time a far more complex matter than some of us, schooled in historic-grammatical exegesis, may have imagined. Conn assists us in sorting out this complexity with a strengthened confidence that through this Book, God addresses us understandably.

Our book reviews are, typically, a feature of the **Bulletin** which many readers turn to first—with good reason. I hope this issue proves as stimulating to you as it has been to me.

The Reconciliation of Mind

by T.F. Torrance

"It pleased the father that in him should all fullness dwell. And having made peace through the blood of his Cross by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him I say whether they be things on earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death to present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable in his sight." (Colossians 1:21-22)

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

Paul states that we are alienated or estranged in our minds, and in fact are hostile in mind to God. This is a basic New Testament conception which was deeply resented by the rational culture of the ancient classical world of Greece and Rome, and which the rational culture of the Medieval world and rational, philosophical and scientific, culture of our modern world have found very difficult to accept. This applies not least to "evangelical Christianity" today which, on the whole, still seems to work with what I call an "unbaptized reason," for it has not thought through sufficiently the transformation of human reason in the light of the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ. Hence the *mind* of the Church and the *mind* of society are not inwardly formed by the Gospel—they remain basically unevangelized. This is because we have not taken seriously this New Testament emphasis that the mind of man is alienated at its very root. It is in the human mind that sin is entrenched, and so it is there, the Gospel tells us, that we are required to be cleansed by the blood of Christ and to be healed and reconciled to God.

According to the teaching of the Bible, man has been created in mind as well as body out of nothing. We must not forget that a creaturely human mind has "being." This is a fact which, interestingly, our neurologists, brain scientists and psychiatrists have come to recognize. Some of them speak of the mind as constituting a "fifth dimension," and others refer to the "ontology of mind." The mind is ontologically real—it has being. What they do not often recognize, however, is that it is deep in this mental being that our humanity is twisted and distorted, and indeed, to use Old Testament language echoed here by St. Paul, is "desperately wicked." We do not find in St. Paul, any more than in the Old Testament, any body/soul or body/mind dualism, for, as James Denney used to express it, man is the body of his soul and the soul of his body, or the body of his mind and the mind of his body, a unitary whole. It is as such that man has fallen and become alienated from God, and as such that he needs to be redeemed.

The mind of a human being constitutes what the Greeks called *to hegemonikon* or the governing principle, for it is the mind that governs or directs our behavior as human beings. Thus where modern people tend to refer to the will as the determining factor in human behavior, the Greek Fathers traced everything back to the mind. It is a mistake to think that they were not interested in the will and did not therefore stress the freedom of the will as modern people do, because they laid this emphasis upon the mind as the governing element in human nature. The Greek Fathers realized, however, as perhaps few people do today, that although we may have free-will we are not at all free to escape from our self-will. That is why they put their finger upon the twisted state of affairs in the depths of the human mind. It is in the heart of our mental reality which governs and controls all our thinking and culture that we have become estranged from the truth and hostile to God. And it is right there, in the ontological depths of the human mind, that we desparately need to be saved and redeemed.

The rational culture of the ancient classical world found this very difficult to accept, so that inevitably difficult problems arose whenever the Gospel began to take root and find expression in Greek life and thought. Thus we find cropping up fairly early within the Church an insidious heresy that came to be known as "Apollinarianism." It took its name from Apollinaris, a very clever theologian, who refused to believe that in his Incarnation the Son of God took upon himself our alienated, twisted mind, because it was in that mind that sin had become rooted and entrenched. If Jesus had taken our alienated mind upon himself, so argued Apollinaris, he must have been a sinner, in fact an original sinner. And so he held that the Son of God became incarnate in our human existence in such a way that in Jesus the human mind was displaced by the divine mind. It was therefore some sort of neutral humanity that the Son of God assumed, and not the actual humanity in which we sinners all share.

However, the Fathers of the Church found this idea of the Incarnation to be evangelically and soteriologically deficient. If at that point, in the heart of our mental being, we are not redeemed and cleansed by the blood of Christ, then we are not really saved at all. If in the fundamental controlling principle of our human mind we are untouched by the Incarnation and the Atonement, then we are no better off than the pagan Greeks. And so the Christian Church insisted that we must take dead seriously the fact that in the Incarnation, the holy Son of God assumed our fallen, enslaved human nature, our twisted, distorted, bent mind, but that in assuming it right from the very beginning our Lord converted it, healed it, and sanctified it in himself. In taking from us our fallen human nature upon himself, instead of sinning in it as we all do, Jesus condemned sin in our carnal mind, and was himself wholly without sin. And so by living out a life of perfect holiness and purity in his mind, he sanctified and healed our human mind in the whole course of his incarnate and redemptive life from his birth to his crucifixion. He carried our mind into the very depths of his agonizing and atoning struggle on the Cross—he descended into the hell of the utmost wickedness and dereliction of the human mind under the judgment of God, in order to lay hold upon the very root of our sin and to redeem us from its stranglehold upon us. Yes, it was not only our actual sins, but it was original sin and original guilt that the Son of God took upon himself in Incarnation and Atonement

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T.F. Torrance held for 29 years the Chair of Christian Dogmatics at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

in order to heal, convert, and sanctify the human mind in himself and reconcile it to God.

There is extant a fragment of a second century theologian, Irenaeus, which I like to think of in this connection. In it there seems to be a suggestion that the Incarnation may be understood in the light of the incident recorded in the Gospel when Jesus touched a leper, and when, instead of becoming leprous himself, he healed the leper. I don't know whether you have ever seen a leper. I used to pass a leper colony when I went to school every day as a boy in China. That was long ago, but I have never forgotten the horrible emaciation of face and hand and limb in leprous flesh. If I sense what Irenaeus had in mind in that tantalizing fragment, it was that Jesus had taken our leprous humanity upon himself, but that instead of becoming a leper himself he healed and transformed our leprous human nature and restored it to be like the flesh of a newborn child. But let us not forget that it was our diseased *mind* that our Lord assumed for our sakes. But in assuming it, far from sinning himself or being estranged and alienated from the Father, even when he penetrated into the fearful depths of our alienation—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—he turned it all back again, converted it from the very bottom of our disobedient human being, from the roots of our estranged mental existence, into perfect oneness with the mind of God—"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." In Colossians, as in Ephesians, St. Paul thought of the atoning reconciliation as embracing heaven as well as earth, for all things invisible as well as visible need to be cleansed by the blood of Christ and reconciled to God—how much more the invisible mental life of human being!

It was in order to conserve this biblical teaching that great Patristic theologians in the early Church enunciated as a fundamental principle, "The unassumed is the unhealed" (Gregory of Nazianzus), or "What Christ has not assumed has not been saved" (Cyril of Alexandria). They reckoned that the Church would be soteriologically and evangelically deficient if it refused to take seriously that Christ took our fallen mind upon himself in order to redeem and save it. That is a truth which I first learned from my beloved Edinburgh teacher, H.R. MacKintosh, who had himself been profoundly influenced by the Christology of these Greek Fathers. But it was only when I studied Karl Barth's account of this doctrine that its truth broke in upon my mind in a quite unforgettable way. I refer to that section in the *Church Dogmatics* I.2, where Barth expounded the mystery of the Virgin Birth. Overwhelmed by the immense significance of what our Lord had done all for our sakes and in our place, I fell to the ground in my knees trembling in awe and wonder at the sheer miracle of God's grace in the birth, life and passion of Jesus—the miracle that foul, wicked, depraved humanity, twisted in upon itself, had been appropriated from us by the Son of God, and had been cleansed, changed, redeemed and sanctified in him.

Here we are dealing with the inner heart of evangelical theology—the transforming of the human mind in such a way that it is no longer conformed to the patterns of this world but brought through renewal into conformity to Christ, through the communion of our mind with the mind of God in him, and its assimilation to the holiness and truth of God incarnate in Jesus. That is far from being easy, but it is something which fidelity to the Gospel will not allow us to avoid. It was because Karl Barth, for example, took this so seriously that he spent so much of his life thinking out what the renewal of the human mind means in the light of God's self-revelation in Christ, and what knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus implies for the transformation of reason, intelligibility and objectivity in Christian theology. Karl Barth was above all an evangelical theologian who spent his life in evangelizing the human reason, whereas the great majority of Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians still operate, I am afraid, with an unregenerated and unbaptized reason, and thus avoid the agonizing experience of working out conformity to Christ in the ontological depths of their minds.

Sometimes the inner conflict can be very sharp, as I learned as soon as I began to teach Christian theology, so I regularly made a point of alerting students about what was involved. I used to tell them about a friend of mine who went up to Basel to study music when I went there to study theology with Karl Barth. In those years before the war there were two of the world's greatest musicians in Basel, Adolf Busch and Rudolf Serkin—it was with the latter that my friend Edgar wanted to take piano lessons. Serkin looked at his hands and asked how old he was. When he said that he was twenty-seven, Serkin shook his head and told him that he was too old for him to take on, and declined to enroll him. But Edgar hung about and when Serkin found that he had an unusually keen "understanding for music," he sent him to a friend in Salzburg who gave him exercises for six months on end, until the very shape of his hands was transformed. I recall his talking to me afterwards about the drawn-out pain and agony of that experience. But it had been worth it, for when the muscles in his hands had been sufficiently restructured, Serkin at last took him on—and in due course Edgar became a distinguished musician, and indeed a composer, himself.

In recounting that story to my young students, I used to say to them, "Something similar may well happen to you in these classes, for as you let the truth of the Gospel have its way with you, you will find the very shape and structure of your mind beginning to change." That is indeed what the Gospel is about, a *metanoia*, a radical repentant rethinking of everything before the face of Jesus Christ. No better account of theological method has been given than that which Jesus gave to his disciples when he said: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." That is what repentant rethinking means: you cannot separate evangelical theology from that profound experience of the radical changing and transforming of your mind that comes through dying and rising with Christ.

There often came a point in my classes when I felt that the students wanted to throw their books at me, as the inner struggle between the Gospel and the frame of mind they brought to it became intense. Let us make no mistake about it: Divine Revelation conflicts sharply with the structure of our natural reason, with the secular patterns of thought that have already become established in our minds through the twist of our ingrained mental alienation from God. We cannot become true theologians without the agonizing experience of profound

As in the New Testament teaching and preaching were always interwoven with each other, so in the remarkable growth and expansion of the Church after New Testament times, theological and evangelizing activity always functioned inseparably together.

change in the mental structure of our innermost being.

"Let this mind be in you (*touto phroneite*)," as St. Paul wrote to the Philippians, "which was also in Christ Jesus." The early Greek Fathers gave a great deal of thought to that injunction. They cultivated what they called "the Apostolic mind" (*phronema apostolikon*), for it was only through the mind of the Apostles embodied in the Holy Scriptures that the Church could be imbued with the mind of Christ (*phronema Christou*) himself. That is precisely what a faithful theology was about.

Thus a regular question raised by Christian theologians, concealed behind all the great debates in the early centuries, was whether they were really thinking *worthily* of God in accordance with the mind of Christ Jesus, as it has been imprinted by the Holy Spirit in the Apostolic Scriptures. All through those early centuries as the Gospel was carried from end to end of the Mediterranean world, Christian theology played a major role in the evangelizing of nation after nation, for it was only as the mind and culture of people were brought into conformity to the mind of Christ that the Church could put down permanent roots in the soil of humanity. As in the New Testament teaching and preaching were always interwoven with each other, so in the remarkable growth and expansion of the Church after New Testament times, theological and evangelizing activity always functioned inseparably together. By its intrinsic nature, an evangelical theology is an evangelizing theology, for it is concerned with the winning and transforming of the human mind through conformity to the mind of Christ Jesus—not simply the minds of individual human beings but the mind of human society and culture in which individual human beings exist.

What does this have to say to us today about what we call "evangelical Christianity?" We have been concerned with evangelizing men, women and children as individual human beings, calling for repentance and personal decision for Christ as Lord and Savior, and rightly so. But have we been concerned with the evangelizing of the mind of the society in which these people live? If not, how can a Christian Church put down roots in an unevangelized society and remain genuinely Christian? I believe this is where evangelical Christianity today has failed terribly. By and large, as far as I can see, even the mind of the Church, let alone the mind of society, is still secular in that it shares the mind of the secular society within which it exists. We have Christian people, but do we really have a *Christian* Church? We have people who profess to believe in Christ as Lord and Savior, but do we have a Church that so imbued with the mind of Christ that its members individually and as a community think *instinctively* in a Christian way?

I have been wonderfully blessed with a mother and a wife who have a profoundly Christian, and indeed a remarkably theological, *instinct*. My mother never had any academic training in theology, but her life and her understanding were so tuned into the mind of Christ that she knew at once where the truth lay and was quick to discern any deviation from it. This is also very true of my dear wife who is imbued with an unerring *theological instinct*, evident again and again in her reaction to ideas put forward by preachers or teachers. At the end of the day that was the test I used to put to my students, as I read their essays and examinations or listened to them in the chapel. "Has this person a genuinely theological instinct or not? Is his or her thinking spontaneously and naturally governed by the mind of Christ?" That is much more important than being theologically learned, much more important than being able to offer a formal academic account of some doctrine or historic debate in the Church. What really counts in the end is whether a person's mind is radically transformed by Christ and so spiritually attuned to the mind of Christ, that he thinks instinctively from the depths of his mental being in a way worthy of God.

As Athanasius used to insist, we must learn to think strictly "in accordance with the nature" (*kata physin*) of God the Father as he is made known to us through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, that is, in an essentially godly way (*eusebos*). To think like that from a center in God himself, in accordance with his essential nature revealed in the Incarnate Son, is, he claimed, what *theologia* strictly is. If any one does not think in that way, but thinks from a center in himself, governed by the devisings of his own reason, then he is bound to think of him in an unworthy or irreligious way (*asebos*)—which Athanasius designated *mythologia*. Either you think from out of a mind centered in God through union with the mind of the Lord Jesus, or you think from out of a mind centered in yourself, alienated from God and inwardly hostile to the Truth incarnate in the Lord Jesus, that is, in a way finally governed by the unregenerate and unbaptized reason.

There often came a point in my classes when I felt that the students wanted to throw their books at me, as the inner struggle between the Gospel and the frame of mind they brought to it became intense.

The transformation of the human mind and its renewal through assimilation to the mind of Christ is something that has to go on throughout the whole of our life—it is a never-ending discipleship in repentant rethinking as we take up the cross and follow Christ. That is why we cannot be theologians without incessant prayer in offering ourselves daily to God through the reconciling and atoning mediation of Christ; and that is also why we cannot be evangelists without being theologians whose minds are constantly schooled in obedience to Christ. It is, after all, with our minds that we worship God and it is only with our minds that we can preach the Gospel and evangelize the world. Is that not, in part at least, what St. Paul was concerned with in the two verses from the twelfth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans which we read? "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (*logike latreia*—not just spiritual but *rational* worship). And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Notice the distinctive way in which St. Paul interrelates the renewing of the mind with the offering of the body as a living sacrifice and with rational worship. It is not with disembodied minds, but with the created unity of mind and body in which the human self is constituted. While stress may be laid upon the transformation of the mind and its assimilation to Christ, the whole human self is involved.

The transformation the Apostle calls for is so deep as to evoke out of the rational self an instinctive judgment about what is good, acceptable and perfect before God. That is to say, in the way I have been expressing it, we are called to be

transformed in such a profound way that there develops with in the depths of our rational being a *theological instinct* in virtue of which we are able to make true theological judgments. Without such a theological instinct we have little more than people with secular minds loosely clothed with a Christian profession. A genuine theological instinct of the kind St. Paul has in view cannot be gained apart from a constant self-offering in rational worship to God, for it is through that inner relation between prayer and the transforming renewal of our minds, that we may be so tuned into God that we fulfil our service in the rational way acceptable to him.

In his scientific autobiography, Werner Heisenberg tells us that again and again when the mathematics of quantum theory proved to be as difficult as they were intricate, he would go away for three or four weeks at a time to play the piano or the violin in order, as he put it, to tune in to the "Central Order"—the name he used in that context for God. When his whole being was tuned into that Central Order, he would come back to find his mathematical equations working out more easily. It is something similar that happens in theological activity. Through study of the Holy Scriptures, meditation and prayer we tune in to the mind of God incarnate in Jesus Christ, the Source of all rationality, until our minds, healed, renewed, and sanctified in him, are instinct with his Truth—then it is that we may preach and teach the Gospel, and find it transforming the lives and minds of people and the society to which they belong.

Romans 13 (Actually Romans 12:14-13:8) Reexamined

by Vernard Eller

We need to give more detailed attention to Romans 13—in that I have come to realize how firmly we are in the grip of the passage's traditional "legitimizing" interpretation. The support for this reading falls into a most interesting alignment. Of course, the Christian Right (along with conservative evangelicalism in general) welcomes this theological view of Romans 13 as confirmation of its own *politically* conservative predilection that is committed to political establishment of being God's chosen means for governing the world.

Yet curiously enough, the Christian Left also accepts, if not welcomes, the legitimizing interpretation—although under an entirely different rationale and for a totally different purpose. In some cases the argument runs: Mark 12 shows *Jesus* to be strongly *illegitimizing* of Caesar. Romans 13 has *Paul* coming out just the other way. In this showdown, then, Jesus obviously should take precedence over Paul. Therefore, we aren't obligated to give particular weight or attention to Paul's counsel about paying taxes and honoring the authorities. Alternatively, the argument runs: Yes, Paul does legitimize established government; yet certainly he must intend this regarding only "good" governments. Accordingly, his counsel about paying taxes must apply only to governments worthy of our tax dollars; when he says to pay taxes to those to whom they "are due," he must mean to those who, in our opinion, are morally deserving. Thus, it would follow that Paul had in mind paying them only to the "good" Roman Empire of his day and not the "Evil Empire" of ours (namely, the one Ronald Reagan was *representing*, not the one of which he spoke).

Now, however, as a way out of the political sophistries of both the Right and the Left, I propose an anarchical reading of Romans 13 that has Paul *illegitimizing* the political world as a whole—and thus entirely bypassing the dispute about his legitimizing *anything*, whether of the Left or of the Right, whether judged to be politically good, bad, or indifferent. If I may, I will call mine: "A Reading of Romans 13 Under the Premise that Its Author Was a Student of the Old Testament" (I disdain to argue this premise, because anyone undertaking to challenge it is manifestly belated, bewildered, and benighted).

(1) If we respect Paul's context by examining the total passage of Romans 12:14-13:8, it is plain that his purpose in introducing "the governing authorities" is in no sense to argue their "legitimacy." His main topic is the Christian obligation to love *any person whatsoever* and live peaceably *with all*. Check it out; he opens this inning by placing his hit: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them" (Romans 12:14). He extends that run to second base (13:1), at which point he introduces his "governing authorities" illustration. This he closes off neatly at third (13:7). He then proceeds to make his home-plate score by ending up where he started: "Owe no one anything except to love one another" (13:8). Pretty slick, I would say.

The "governing authorities," then, are brought in as Paul's example of those to whom it will be most difficult to make the obligation apply—but whom God nevertheless commands us to love, even when our natural propensity most strongly urges us to hate, resist, and fight them. As he elsewhere states the offense even more pointedly, "Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?"—which, of course, is not the easiest thing in the world for human beings to do.

Thus—just as with Jesus' praying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and his teaching about "turning the other cheek," "going the second mile," and the like—Paul is using the governing authorities as a test case of our loving the enemy—even when doing so is repugnant to our innate moral sensibilities (which sensibilities we ought never, never, never equate as being the very will of God—but which we regularly do go on to equate so anyhow). And if this "indiscriminating love" reading be correct, then verse 7 (the final word of the "governing authorities" section) ought to agree with Paul's overall love theme.

This it most beautifully does *if* "pay all of them their dues—taxes, revenue, respect, honor" advises against withholding *any* of these items from *whatever* governing authority claims them as due. If, however, the verse is taken to mean that we are to allow these things only to nice governments who are known to be deserving of them—then we have gone from "indiscriminating love" to "highly discriminating love," and Paul has undercut his radically Christian argument merely to

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mouth the trivial and obvious.

Yet that absolutist interpretation is made as much as unimpeachable when Paul proceeds to wrap up his entire disquisition on "undiscriminating love" with verse 8. He drops the "governing authorities" illustration and universalizes the principle: "Not just the taxes and honors claimed by the governing authorities, we Christians ought not resist or try to withhold anything justly (or even unjustly) claimed from us. No, the only unpaid claim that dare be found outstanding against us is that we have not given anyone as much love as God would have us give."

(2) We ought not interpret Paul's Romans-13 words without also considering what he has to say about the Roman Empire elsewhere. Elsewhere, of course, he talks about principalities and powers, rulers of the present darkness, and all such. I don't know that any of these is to be understood in direct reference to Rome; yet there is every reason to believe Paul would include Rome in that passel. And if you want the Old Testament angle, it would be this: As a well-educated rabbi, Paul would be entirely cognizant of the scriptural opinion regarding pagan oppressors of Israel from the slavemasters of Egypt through to the Seleucid tyrants of Syria. And I can't imagine anything that would lead him to exempt the current Roman regime from that long-established judgment. This in itself should warn us against a too easily legitimizing reading of Romans 13.

(3) The history of Paul's own relationship to and knowledge of Rome should also warn us against that reading. Paul would have known that Rome's was a pagan domination and military occupation of the Jewish homeland. Under the likelihood that it was as a small child he had come to Jerusalem for rabbinical training (Acts 22:3), Paul would have been fully aware of the growing Jewish restiveness and Rome's cruel, mass deportation-enslavement-crucifixion suppression of the same. Along with the rest of the church, Paul's prime name for Rome would have been "Dealer of Death to the Author of Life" (Acts 3:15). He would have known that, only a few years earlier, the Christians of Rome (to whom he was writing), under the edict of Claudius, had had their congregations broken up and dispersed. And Paul himself, of course, could point to any number of instances in which the Empire had distrupted his ministry and abused his person. Thus, to read Romans 13 as a legitimizing of *that* government should be held off as our last possible alternative of interpretation rather than welcomed as our first.

(4) In the opening line of his "governing authorities" section (13:1a), Paul tells us to "be subject" to them. I found Barth most convincing that "be subject to" has absolutely no overtones of "recognize the legitimacy of," "own allegiance to," "bow down before," or anything of the sort. It is a sheerly neutral and anarchical counsel of "not-doing"—not doing resistance, anger, assault, power play, or anything contrary to the "loving the enemy" which is, of course, Paul's main theme. Then, just as any good writer would do it, Paul's *final* reference to the authorities (verse 7) becomes a simple repetition of his opening one: "Pay all of them their dues" says nothing different from "Be subject to them."

(5) Romans 13:1b-3 proceeds to speak about government's being "instituted of God." When it is a noted Old Testament scholar who is talking so, I consider the original institution of Israelite monarchy to be our best help in understanding him. In that paradigm (I Sam. 8:1-22), it is made entirely clear, explicit, and axiomatic that the people's demand for worldly government amounts to a *rejection* of God and his government. (And if even an *Israelite* monarchy signified a rejection of God, how much more so a *Roman* one?) *But* did God therefore conclude: "That being so, Samuel, what you and I need to do is resist that government with everything we have in us. We should work at subverting Saul's government so that, in its collapse, we can convince the people to give up this crazy idea of worldly government and come back to the true government of my direct rule?"

That, surely, would pass as good *human* logic—and, I think, *is* the essential logic of today's Christian Left. But it is not the *divine* logic. God and Samuel, of course, *helped set up* the very government they so strongly disapproved. No, the word is, rather: "Samuel, if these knuckleheads insist on having a worldly government, we had better get in there with whatever influence we have left and try to limit the amount of damage such an outfit can do, see whether there is anything at all worthwhile we can manage through it."

We need to give more detailed attention to Romans 13—in that I have come to realize how firmly we are in the grip of the passage's traditional "legitimizing" interpretation.

God and Samuel accept (and honor) Israel's (bad) decision *as accomplished fact* and proceed to live with it rather than try to reverse it. God *accepts* (I didn't say *approves*) worldly government—with its taxation and conscription and all the rest—as being absolutely necessary once humanity has rejected *his* government. If you won't have *him*, you are going to have to have *it*.

And whether that government be seen as comparatively good or bad, God is using it simultaneously as a *punishment* for our having rejected his government and as a *grace*, a garment of skins making possible the continuance of the human enterprise without its falling into utter chaos and death. Of course, the ultimate promise of the kingdom still stands. But that we might stage a political revolution creating a human government which could serve us in place of the one we rejected from God—such simply is not among our options. Indeed, any effort of the kind would be just as serious a usurpation of his power as was our original move *to* worldly government. What God has *accepted* let no man put in *question*—whether by trying to resist the punishment or to deny the grace of instituted government.

So, is Paul correct in saying the fact a government exists shows that it has been instituted of God? Yes—if he be read *dialectically*, as with his Old Testament source. Paul knows that worldly government is an illegitimate usurpation of God's power—knows it as well as God and Samuel did. However, what his well-justified-in-hating-Rome readers need also to know is that God *accepted* his own rejection as accomplished fact and thus proceeded to accept (yet hardly "legitimate") worldly government as a "given," a human necessity through which he just might be able to prevent some damage and perhaps even gain a bit of good. So Paul is warning his Christians against thinking they can go God one better: if God has shown himself willing to put up with a monstrosity like Rome, your *unwillingness* to do so turns out to be, not moral heroism, but an arrogant bucking of what God has instituted (instituted by his *accepting* it, not *approving* it).

(6) In verse 4, then, Paul calls these governing authorities "servants of God." Within his dialectical framework, he can do this with the best sort of biblical precedent. In this regard, the prophet Isaiah has Yahweh say the following about the bloodthirsty Assyrian hordes poised to sack Israel:

> I have given my warriors their orders and summoned my fighting men to launch my anger; they are eager for my triumph.
> Hark, a tumult in the mountains, the second of a vast multitude;
> Hark, the roar of kingdoms, of nations gathering!
> Yahweh of Hosts is mustering a host of war, men from a far country, from beyond the horizon.
> It is Yahweh with the weapons of his wrath coming to lay the whole land waste.
>
> —Isaiah 13:3-5

Here we have caught Isaiah—in cahoots with Paul—calling the representatives of a pagan conqueror "warriors (and to that extent 'servants') of God." However, in another passage the prophet makes it plain that this carries absolutely no implications of "legitimizing":

> The Assyrian! He is the rod that I wield in my anger, and the staff of my wrath is in his hand.
> I send him against a godless nation,
> I bid him march against a people who rouse my wrath, to spoil and plunder at will and trample them down like mud in the streets.
> But this man's [i.e., the Assyrian's] purpose is lawless, lawless are the plans in his mind; for this thought is only to destroy and wipe out nation after nation.
>
> When Yahweh has finished all that he means to do on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, he will punish the king of Assyria for this fruit of his pride and for his arrogance and vainglory, because he said: By my own might I have acted and in my own wisdom I have laid my schemes.
>
> —Isaiah 10:5-7, 12-13

Later, with Deutero-Isaiah and the pagan *Persian* conqueror Cyrus, the dialectic contradiction becomes even more extreme:

> Tell me, who raised up that one from the east, one greeted by victory wherever he goes?
> [or for that matter, the one from the west that Paul knows.]
> Who is it that puts nations into his power and makes kings go down before him?. . .
> Whose work is this, I ask, who has brought it to pass?. . .It is I, Yahweh.
>
> —Isaiah 41:2-4
>
> Thus says Yahweh to his anointed,
> [that's the word "messiah," or "christ"—for crying out loud!]
> to *Cyrus*,. . .
>
> For the sake of Jacob my servant and Israel my chosen
> I have called you by name
> and given you your title,
> though you have not known me.
>
> I alone have roused this man in righteousness,
> and I will smooth his path before him;
> he shall rebuild my city
> and let my exiles go free—
> not for a price nor a bribe
> [but simply because I commanded my servant],
> says Yahweh of Hosts.
>
> —Isaiah 45:1, 4, 13

When Paul calls the Roman governing authorities "servants of God," it makes no sense at all to take him as meaning that they are good Christians whose deepest desire is to obey and serve God. However, read him along with his Old Testament prophetic mentors and his entire passage makes perfectly good sense. If God can make such use of Assyrian warriors that Isaiah calls them "God's boys"—and if God can make such use of a Persian Emperor that Deutero-Isaiah calls him "God's messiah"—then we better consider that God may be using Roman No-Goods in the very same way.

(7) The Old Testament parallel holds throughout verses 2-5. About as much as Paul can see as a possible godly use for God's Roman "servants" is that (precisely as with the Assyrian warriors) they are quite adept in punishing bad people (come to think about it, if this is Paul's "legitimizing" of Rome, it is a most backhanded compliment). Yes, just as with the Assyrians, the Romans always go overboard on the punishing bit—and God will have to take that little matter up with them, jsut as he did with the Assyrians. Yet this does not change the fact that God can use Roman punishment in the service of his own justifying of humanity.

Therefore, Christians of Rome, here is what all this means for you: (a) You should take care not to be an evildoer whose governmental punishment represents the just anger of God you have brought upon yourself. That God's "servant of punishment" is himself "bad" is no evidence that you are "good" and your punishment therefore undeserved. That the U.S. Government is divinely-illegitimate is no evidence at all that its punishment of the Berrigans' "civil disobedience" is wrong and outside the will of God. The expose of Assyrian evil does not amount to an argument for Israelite innocence. Rome does punish many innocent people (and God will hold it accountable for that:" 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" [Rom. 12:19]). Yet this does not prohibit Rome from being used "in God's service" to punish some who really need it for their own good.

(b)Then consider verses 4-5 in particular. Just because you Christians can see that the Roman Empire is obviously godless and wicked, don't draw the simple, human-minded conclusion that it must be God's will for you to resist, contest, and fight it.

Paul, yes; Isaiah, yes; but Jeremiah is the one most insistent that the pagan oppressor is *not to be resisted*—precisely because that rod of punishment may be acting in the service of God: "Bring your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon [Paul words it 'be subject'], and serve him and his people [Paul words it 'pay whatever they claim as their due'], and live. Why will you and your people die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, as the Lord has spoken concerning any nation which will not serve the king of Babylon [as actually happened to the Jewish nation that ignored Paul's counsel of nonresistance, fought the Romans, and died]?" (Jer. 27:12-13).

You could find yourself resisting the particular use God has in mind for that Empire; and at the very least, you definitely are trying to take over and do his work for him, pulling up the tares he told you to leave for *his* harvesting. When he wants that Empire overthrown, he is fully capable of doing it on his own.

And if, in your fighting the Empire, you happen to get yourself killed, the fault is not necessarily that of the Evil Empire; it does not automatically follow that yours was a heroic martyr's death in the service of God. It could as likely

represent God's righteous anger against those who are just as guilty of wanting to be "lord of history" as the Romans themselves are.

(8) And so, in verses 5-8, Paul asks us again to "be subject"—always loving; never resisting, contesting, trying to impose our own wisdom and will. And this is why you pay taxes (better: do not resist their being collected), so as not to have Jesus accuse *you* (as Paul got himself accused) of "kicking against the goads" (Acts 26:14)—i.e., trying to obstruct God's *Roman* servants as Paul had tried to obstruct his *Christian* ones. Never owe anybody—*anybody*—anything except to love them.

Nobody ever said loving Assyrian warriors was going to be easy; but when they are obeying God by loving instead of resisting them, don't let any holy-joes try to make you feel guilty by telling you that you are actually approving and supporting Assyrian evil. There is not one word in Romans 13, or anywhere else in the New Testament, implying that to "not resist one who is evil" (Mt. 5:39) is tantamount to legitimizing him—this no more than Isaiah's nonresistance legitimized Assyrian militarism, Jeremiah's Babylonian, Deutero-Isaiah's Persian, Paul's Roman, or a modern Christian's nonresistance legitimizes American militarism.

Finally, notice that, our way, Romans 13 reads as *anarchically* as all get out. It carefully declines to legitimize either Rome or resistance against Rome. It will give neither recognition nor honor to any political entity whatever—nation, party, ideology, or cause group. There is only one Lord of History—and that is God. And he shows no cognizance of our commonly-accepted distinction between the holy arkys he supposedly sponsors and the unholy ones he opposes (though this is not to deny that he acknowledges a degree of relative difference between the moral performance of one arky and another). Yet, after the model of the Israelite original, *every* arky starts out under the sinful illegitimacy of messianic pretension, claiming for itself recognition as world-savior and a true lord of history. Nevertheless, though the arkys all be under judgment (as all of us individuals are, too), God will *use* as "servant" whatever arky he chooses (when he chooses and how he chooses). He will also *punish* these servants the same way—even while *loving* each and every human individual involved the whole time. That's Christian Anarchy.

Love and War: Augustine And The Problem of Nuclear Weapons

by Bernard T. Adeney

Introduction

One of the major problems in the history of Christian ethics has been how to reconcile the rigorous requirements of Jesus' teaching on love with the morally ambiguous "necessities" of politics in a fallen world. Reinhold Niebuhr commented, for example, that the greatest problem for ethics is to bridge the gap between the ideal and the real. The purpose of this article is to redefine and explore this question.

The most extreme test of this problem is the test of war. Whatever may be held abstractly about Jesus' command to love your enemy, most Christians throughout history have also believed in national defense. Today many believe that national defense is impossible without nuclear weapons. The contrast between love of enemy and nuclear war could not be more extreme. This article will explore the nature of ethical dualism, first through Augustine's justification of Christian participation in war and then through the unique problems of the nuclear issue. Ethical dualism is the holding of two (or more) methods of moral evaluation for different sets of people or situations.

Augustine: Justifiable War in Tension

Augustine hated war. Not only was he the first Christian architect of a theory of justifiable war, he was also the first great anti-war writer. Augustine's view of war is especially startling when compared with classical thinkers. Like Plato and Cicero, Augustine saw war as a fact of life. However, unlike them, he never saw it as an honorable, let alone glorious activity. Nor was Augustine's just war theory simply a Christianization of Cicero's natural law thinking. Augustine's thought was born in the crucible of strongly conflicting elements in his mind. Augustine struggled to synthesize the rigorous demands of Christian love with a keen understanding of political realities and a pessimistic view of human nature.

We do not have space here for an extensive analysis of Augustine's hatred of war, or of his theory of justifiable war, but a brief survey should be sufficient. "God did not intend," Augustine lamented, "that his rational creature, who was made in his image, should have dominion over anything but the irrational creation—not man over man but man over beasts."[1] To Augustine war enslaved not only the loser but the winner. It is better to be a slave than to be captured by the emotions unleashed by war.[2]

Augustine saw the horror in all war, whether justifiable or not. "But they say, the wise man will wage just wars. As if he would not all the rather lament the necessity of just wars, if he remembers that he is a man."[3] The evil of war could not be over exaggerated, according to Augustine.

> Let everyone who thinks with pain on these great evils, so horrible, so ruthless acknowledge that this is misery. And if anyone either endures or thinks of them without mental pain, this is a more miserable plight still, for he thinks himself happy because he has lost human feeling.[4]

The words "glory" and "victory" are evil masks that hide the true character of warfare. Asked Augustine, "Why allege to me the mere names and words of 'glory' and 'victory?' Tear off the disguise of wild delusion, and look at the naked deeds; weigh them naked, judge them naked."[5] Augustine denied that any war could bring lasting peace. Even the noblest and best intentioned victory cannot keep peace for long. "Of this calamitous history we have no small proof, in the fact that no subsequent king has closed the gates of war."[6] The "man of war," said Augustine, is worse than a slave because he is ruled by lust:

> What prudence is there in wishing to glory in the greatness and extent of the empire, when you cannot point out that the happiness of men, who are always

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rolling with dark fear and cruel lust in warlike slaughters and in blood, which, whether shed in civil or foreign war, is still human blood.[7]

The universal outrage that Augustine expressed toward war is a welcome addition to ancient moral literature which was certainly more familiar with the terms of honor and fatalism than compassion and love. Augustine's hatred of war is matched by his longing for peace. Peace for Augustine was not simply the absence of conflict, but the "perfectly ordered, harmonious enjoyment of God and one another in God."[8] This peace is the true end of humanity and will come when the human city is swallowed up by the city of God.

If it is supposed that God could not enjoin warfare because . . . Jesus said . . . 'Resist not evil' . . . the answer is that what is here required is not a bodily action but an inward disposition . . . Moses, in putting to death sinners, was not moved by cruelty but by love. Love does not preclude a benevolent severity nor that correction which compassion itself dictates.[12]

Augustine made this ethic of love almost beyond the pale of human wartime virtue by suggesting that a soldier or magistrate who is forced by duty to kill must do so with love in his heart. "No one indeed is fit to inflict punishment save the one who has first overcome hate in his heart. The love of

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enemy admits no dispensation, but love does not exclude wars of mercy waged by the good."[13]

In keeping with his love of peace, Augustine did not believe that the Christian individual should ever use violent force, even in self defense. The foundation of Augustine's whole theology and ethics is love. Augustine believed that the Sermon on the Mount should be literally followed by the believer. The individual citizen must not defend him or herself, even from robbery, rape or murder, not because it would not be just but because a person cannot do so without passion, self-assertion and a loss of love for their enemy.

As to killing others to defend one's own life, I do not approve of this, unless one happens to be a soldier or a public functionary acting not for himself but in defense of others or of the city in which he resides.[9]

How then could Augustine justify any warfare for the Christian? Augustine held two paradoxical views of the state. On the one hand, the state is ordained by God and as such is the instrument of his justice. As God's instrument of justice, Augustine conceded to the state a right to wield the sword which could never be right for the individual Christian:

They who have waged war in obedience to the divine command or in conformity with His laws have represented in their persons the public justice or the wisdom of government, and in this capacity have put to death wicked men; such men have by no means violated the command, 'Thou shalt not kill.'[10]

Augustine would not allow even the barest self-defense to the Christian as an individual, but as delegated by the state, justice could be accomplished by killing.

In tension with this view of the state, Augustine denied that any earthly state was founded on justice. The fundamental criteria of justice, according to Augustine, is worship of the only true God. Augustine rejected Cicero's requirement that a state must be just in order to be a true state. A state is simply a group of people who have a common agreement. "A robber band has the essential features of a state."[11]

Even if the state as ordained by God must wield the sword, it does not necessarily follow that Christians should do so. Does Augustine abrogate the love commandments for Christians in public office? This is the point at which Augustine proposed his solution to the contradiciton between love and political necessity. Love, argued Augustine, is not incompatible with killing because it is an attitude of the heart, not an action.

While there is a distinction in Augustine's thought between political responsibility and perfect love, these are by no means to be considered polarities. Love is to rule responsibly and must be incarnated in just political action. This is only possible through a radical emphasis on love as an inward disposition. Augustine's political ethics heavily rely on subjective intent. If a magistrate must cause the death of a person it should be done with love and sorrow. Hence, Augustine's "mournful magistrate." Those who go to war must cherish the spirit of a peacemaker. If they must kill they should let necessity and not their own hand do the killing.

Augustine knew that the tension between responsibility and the Gospel could never be fully resolved so he emphasized the difference between different callings. Different demands are placed by God on the ruler, the soldier, the citizen and the cleric or monk. Only the cleric or monk is bound by the "counsels of perfection." The highest or most perfect calling requires a nonviolent life. But not all Christians have that calling.[14] Thus Augustine made room for political necessity without making it normative.

The intellectual virtues of Augustine's resolution of the problem of dualism are apparent. Neither side of the dilemma is compromised. The radical absolute of love is preserved as the basic norm of every situation. Justice and love are not in conflict. Political realism is not sacrificed. Necessity does not compromise Christian discipleship. Augustine's solution allows for an individual to seek perfect union with God through monastic withdrawal from the ambiguous requirements of public life yet does not release any Christian from the ethics of Jesus. Even public officials must keep the love commandments internally.

But the problems with this solution are also serious. The interiorization of love promotes a spirit/flesh dichotomy and separates love from its concrete manifestation in the real world. The requirement that Christian soldiers must kill with love in their hearts for the enemy invites extreme hyprocrisy or guilt. The door is opened for subjective rationalization of any act as long as the requisite good motivation is there. Furthermore, Augustine ends up with two kinds of dualism: private versus public ethics and cleric versus lay ethics.

The agonizing approach of Augustine is still instructive for today's problems. This does not mean that Augustine solved the problem even for his own day. Augustine shared many

of the blindnesses of a high-born Roman citizen in the fifth century. But he grasped the tension between freedom and necessity, between justice and love and between Christian morality and practical politics. Augustine's solution of internalizing love was inadequate. But the tension he displayed illuminated the problem.

The Problem of Dualism in Ethics

The dilemma addressed by Augustine has been a perennial one for Christian ethics. Augustine's contrast between the city of God and the city of "man," Luther's two kingdoms, the Anabaptist contrast between Kingdom ethics and worldly ethics, Reinhold Niebuhr's dualism of individual and corporate ethics and Jacques Ellul's contrast between freedom and necessity are but a few examples of thinkers who have resorted to dualism in grappling with this problem. H. Richard Niebuhr's classic text, *Christ and Culture*, provides a typology of different approaches to a closely related problem.

Nuclear ethics brings the problem of dualism to an acute head. The simplest formulation of the political problem of nuclear weapons is that they are both intolerable and permanent.

Most writers tend to come down on one side of the duality, however they may define it. Thus Anabaptist ethics emphasize separation from political compromise and strict allegiance to Kingdom ethics. Reinhold Niebuhr, on the other hand, emphasized the impossibility of purity and the need to take moral risks for the sake of political justice. Luther held the two in tension but allowed too sharp a separation between personal and public responsibility. The result was to separate personal morality from political and social problems.

Nuclear Ethics and the Problem of Dualism

Nuclear ethics brings the problem of dualism to an acute head. The simplest formulation of the political problem of nuclear weapons is that they are both intolerable and permanent. They are intolerable morally because they make willingness to commit genocide and destroy most of the world a routine part of politics. The evils Augustine lamented are paltry compared to the necessary results of a nuclear war. Nuclear weapons are permanent for two reasons. First, unless industrial society is destroyed there will always be people who know how to make nuclear weapons. Even if total disarmament were achieved, nuclear weapons could be rapidly manufactured by an advanced industrial society in the event of war. Nuclear weapons will always be a threat. Second, despite the rhetoric of both Soviet and U.S. leaders, the political possibilities of complete disarmament are so slim as to be negligible. Apart from a fundamental change in the patterns of international political behavior that have persisted for all of recorded history, rational suspicion and self-protection will not disappear. Nuclear weapons are not hard to hide or break down into components. Even if disarmament were agreed upon, there would be no way to stop cheating.

Another way to state the problem is to say that they are immoral and politically necessary. They are immoral for obvious reasons. Nuclear weapons are a potent symbol of immorality in international relations. Routine willingness to commit nuclear genocide is subversive of ethical commitment.

The political necessity of nuclear weapons is in one sense merely a matter of the polls. If enough people could be persuaded to change their mind and support disarmament then it would be possible. If it happened in Holland, why not here? There are many reasons why not. Holland's weapons are insignificant in relation to the perceived balance of power in international relations. Those of the United States are essential. Roger Shinn articulates a fear that cannot be simply denied. While he supports dramatic unilateral initiatives he rejects unilateral disarmament. He says:

> It would not enhance the peace of the world. The one situation more dangerous and more fraught with injustice than a balance of terror is a monopoly of terror. The unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons may be a rational and ethically responsible act for some nations. It is not a political possibility for all nations.[15]

As it stands this is an empirical prediction, not necessarily a normative judgment. The Soviets might very well increase aggressive and oppressive activity all over the world if they were unimpeded by nuclear deterrence. The same might be true of the United States. But this is not certain for either the Soviet Union or the United States. There might be other kinds of deterrence made available to a nation with the political and moral courage to renounce nuclear weapons. Of course both sides will not disarm for many reasons besides fear. These include technological and bureaucratic momentum, the international influence and prestige of being a nuclear superpower, both internal and foreign economic interests, ideological commitment, etc.[16]

The immorality and political necessity of nuclear weapons cannot be reconciled within a single political/ethical strategy. Part of the problem has to do with the necessity for the use of power in political relations. Reinhold Niebuhr wrestled cogently with this issue. The need for justice in the relationship between groups requires that each group's power be limited by the power of others. Unimpeded power is dangerous. Kenneth Waltz argues that it is also impossible.[17] Nation states will do all they can to prevent their rivals from gaining an unqualified advantage over them. For Niebuhr this was an ethical issue. Unimpeded power would lead to great injustice in the world. No nation is virtuous enough to be trusted with an unopposed ability to work its will on the world. The inescapable conclusion of this line of reasoning is that if one nation has nuclear weapons, justice and/or necessity requires that at least one other nation also have them.

In conflict with this line of thought is the stark truth that the evils restrained by nuclear deterrence are far outweighed by the evils of nuclear war. Even the horrors of world-wide Stalinism pale in comparison to nuclear war. It has always been questionable whether the issues that wars are fought over outweigh the destructiveness of war. In the past it was at least plausible to argue that they did. It is no longer plausible. If the destructiveness of conventional warfare could be seen as preventing an even greater evil, the same could never be said for nuclear war. The evil it threatens cannot be surpassed.

Christian ethics cannot be simply applied to the state. Too often Christians ignore reality and, as William Temple put it, "bleat fatuously of love." The major gap Niebuhr pointed to between the ideals of love and the necessities of practical politics cannot be denied (though it may be narrower than he thought). As he said, to assert that if only people loved each

other all the complex problems of the political order would be solved, begs the most basic problem in human history.[18] Most people do not love each other.

A Christian individual's response to nuclear weapons is not necessarily a gauge of how he or she would formulate policy if put in the pressurized position of a government executive. Political policy makers must use strategic, teleological reasoning. Most decisions are the outcome of a complex, bureaucratic process through which competing interests are compromised. The realist writings of Reinhold Niebuhr, John Herz and others, convincingly suggest that politics involves tragic, moral risk. As Niebuhr commented:

> Political morality must always be morally ambiguous because it cannot merely reject but must also reflect, beguile, harness and use self-interest for the sake of a tolerable harmony of the whole.[19]

faith and implicitly allowing a different set of rules for their job or their politics. This is especially acute in the economic and political realms of national defense. Thousands of Christians, who believe they should love their enemies, are employed in the nuclear defense industry. At best they may adopt an Augustinian inwardness to their understanding of love. Few are likely to share his anguish over the contradictions involved in preparing for war in a spirit of peace. Yet the production and deployment of nuclear weapons threatens a form of war far more evil than the worst nightmares of Augustine. Nuclear missles are not neutral until fired. They incarnate a blasphemous threat to the future and purpose of the earth.

How then can a Christian participate in a political order that is premised on the necessity of these weapons?

No politician can simply construct what they consider the best policy. Choices must be made from real possibilities. Politicians must distinguish between the present, actual policy, the politically possible (as things stand), the realistic (given certain changes), the desirable (conceivable but unlikely), and the ideal (a utopian vision). To mistake the ideal for the possible not only consigns one to irrelavance, it may well strengthen the status quo. As Richard Falk said, "... genuine moral encounter requires that we choose only from among those genuine possibilities implicit within the living tissue of human affairs."[24] Moral action is always contextual, not abstract.

When Christians take office they will have to act according to the prudential perspectives, possibilities and responsibilities that adhere to their position. This will inevitably result in the tensions and paradox of a double calling.

Insofar as Christians take part in policy formation they will have to share in the tension, or even anguish of working through a political process in which ethical fervor and moral clarity are sapped. Politics is a method, to use Niebuhr's words, "of finding proximate solutions to insolvable problems."[20] What then becomes of the radical simplicity of the Sermon on the Mount? Are we left, as Paul Ramsey put it, "wandering over the wasteland of utility since the day we completely surrendered to technical political reason the choice of the way to the goals we seek?"[21]

Ways Out of the Impasse

Like John Howard Yoder, I am convinced that the teaching of Jesus strongly requires pacifism of the believer, but that, "in our present age it is impossible to do away with the need for violent action in the political or economic realm."[22] Yoder rejects the separation of personal from political ethics. Christian ethics are inescapably political but one cannot require the same standards of behavior from the state as are incumbent upon the Christian. He says:

> We need to distinguish between the ethics of discipleship which are laid upon every Christian ... and an ethics of justice within the limits of relative prudence and self-preservation, which is all one can ask of the larger society.[23]

Yoder suggests that the ideals of discipleship revealed in Jesus Christ are indirectly relevant to the state in that relative, middle axioms can be derived from them. These middle axioms call the state to alternative ways of acting that are politically conceivable. Yoder's methodology undercuts the idealism that expects the state to embody nonviolent morality. At the same time Yoder refuses to erode the radical politcal challenge Jesus gave to those who wish to follow him.

This approach may suffice for Christians who remain outside public office but leaves unresolved difficulties for those who hold governing positions in a pluralistic society. When Christians take office they will have to act according to the prudential perspectives, possibilities and responsibilities that adhere to their position. This will inevitably result in the tensions and paradox of a double calling. Christians in America have typically responded to this tension by privatizing their faith...

Overcoming Ethical Dualism: Eight Directions

I would like to suggest eight avenues for overcoming ethical dualism in a nuclear age. These are not "solutions" to the problem posed in this article. Rather they are directions for bypassing the problem.

1. When a question cannot be answered, a good approach is to redefine the question! The realist-idealist split has produced many questions which assume one side of the dichotomy. Such questions include, "How may wars be fought justly? How can the balancing of power produce security? How can we live without war? How may we abolish nuclear weapons?"

Like the question, "How can I reconcile the real and ideal?," these problems have no answer. Nevertheless, they must be asked. But the primary moral political question in international relations today is this: How can we reduce the criminal burden of the possesion of nuclear weapons? This question defines the problem as a technical, corporate, political, moral, costly and ongoing problem. It takes the focus off the quest for hypothetical personal purity or safety and onto the immediate context which we all face.

2. Rather than starting with theological or strategic abstractions, we need to begin with praxis: with concrete activities of peacemaking and resistance. Such activities are solidly based in commitments to real people and (for Christians) to the values of the Kingdom of God. Peacemaking and resistance can and must take place at all levels of human political relations: in the family, the church, the community, the nation and the world. Political/ethical theory can grow piecemeal out of committed action. Since World War II there has not been a single successful attempt to formulate a convincing political morality that can link military strategy to modern technological reali-

ties. Perhaps such a master theory of political ethics is impossible. In any case it should not hinder us from action or the theoretical insights which spring from it.

3. The values of the Gospel of reconciliation should guide us to set clear limits to what we may do as Christians and what we may advocate as policy. Morality requires that we choose the imperfect real over the abstract ideal. This does not mean that political ethics is exclusively teleological. It is not possible to predict all the good and bad consequences of questionable political means. Nowhere is this more obvious than in nuclear weapons policy. Teleological ethics overvalue human control of history. People need clear moral and, if possible, legal limits to political behavior. While a Christian politician may not choose the ideal, there should be clear limits to what she may choose in the realm of the real.

The values of the Gospel of reconciliation should guide us to set clear limits to what we may do as Christians and what we may advocate as policy. Morality requires that we choose the imperfect real over the abstract ideal.

A good starting place for such limits in Augustine's motivation of love. Whatever cannot be reconciled with love should be excluded. However, more concrete principles relevant to the context and consistent with love also need to be developed. These principles operate deontologically but are contextually formulated. They include limitations on what a policy maker could support as national policy in a fallen world (for example, no first strike in nuclear policy). They would also include limitations on what any Christian could personally do as a follower of Jesus Christ (for example, order a nuclear strike of any kind).

4. The combination of moral urgency and political complexity which surrounds nuclear policy indicates that there is room both for the politics of reform and the politics of protest. The need for sophisticated political realism in addressing national policy does not nullify the moral outrage which nuclear defense should inspire in all human beings ("if they remember that they are human"). The politics of protest operate by a different set of rules than the politics of reform, but they can be complementary, not contradictory.

5. Attitude is as important as ideas in our response to the nuclear crisis. A follower of "the way of the cross" should not be primarily concerned with personal survival. Rather we should be driven to seek peace with all human beings. Often peace activists project the attitude that our nation is evil while our opponents are innocent. Strong defense advocates argue exactly the reverse. All the evil in the political realm is projected "out there." Augustine's pessimistic realism about the tendency of all humans toward egoism should lend us all humility, while his conviction of the almost infinite value of every person should lend us hope. Of course the heart of any Christian approach to peacemaking is love.

6. A Christian ethic of peacemaking is a communal ethic. The individual lone ranger peacemaker is almost a contradiction in terms. We need a community of people in which to learn the skills of being a peaceful people. We also need a community to lend corporate power to our quest for political peace. Third, a community will provide the context for seeking peace within ourselves. Those who wish to spread peace need to develop the character of peacemakers.

7. While it is important to distinguish between the politically possible and the ideal, it is equally important to have a vision of the future that indicates a clear direction for political struggle. Gustavo Gutierrez's idea of "utopia" is a helpful concept in this regard. "Utopia" is a synthesis of a theological vision of peace (shalom), and a social scientific construction of the political requirements for the creation of material peace in the real world. A community provides a context for the development of such a vision. A community can keep alive the idea of peace even when its immediate applicability is doubtful.

8. The final synthesis of a Christian's faith and politics does not happen at the level of ideas or principles, but is incarnated in the total response of a person to God. We respond in the context of our communities and of our analysis of our world. This response to God is not abstract but expresses who we are as people in the world. Christian faith is valid only as it is expressed in the context of a person's life and social situation. The challenge to love God, our neighbor and our enemy cannot be adequately articulated in abstract terms that are separate from the life and "story" of an individual or community. The task of the Church in relation to the bond is to be a community that expresses the truth it has received in the style of its life. The nature of Christian ethics is expressed in the being of the Church as it responds to God and to the concrete historical/political events of its day. Dietrich Bonhoeffer asked:

> Who stands fast? Only the man whose final standard is not his reason, his principles, his conscience, his freedom or his virtue, but who is ready to sacrifice all this when he is called to obedient and responsible allegiance to God—the responsible man who tries to make his whole life an answer to the question and call of God.[25]

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[1] Augustine, *The City of God*, Marcus Dods, Trans., Book XIX, Ch. 15, p. 521.
[2] *City*, Book XIX, Ch. 15, p. 521.
[3] *City*, Book XIX, Ch. 7, p. 515.
[4] *City*, Book XIX, Ch. 7, p. 515.
[5] *City*, Book III, Ch. 13, p. 174.
[6] *City*, Book XIX, Ch. 14, p. 176.
[7] *City*, Book XIX, Ch. 3, p. 190.
[8] *City*, Book XIX, Ch. 11, p. 519.
[9] *Epist.* 47 5. Quoted in Roland Bainton, *Christian Attitudes to War and Peace*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press), 1960, p. 96.
[10] *City*, Book I, Ch. 21, p. 142.
[11] *City*, Book XIX, Ch. 24, p. 528.
[12] *Contra Faustum*, XXII, pp. 76 & 79. Quoted in Bainton, pp. 95ff.
[13] *Sermo Dom* I, XX, pp. 63 & 70. Quoted in Bainton, p. 96.
[14] *Epist.* 99, CSEL XXIV, pp. 553f.
[15] Roger Shinn, "A Dilemma Seen from Several Sides," *Christianity & Crises* 41, No. 22 (Jan. 18, 1982), p. 375.
[16] Alan Geyer's book, *The Idea of Disarmament* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1985), amply documents the myriad political factors that have dogged and defeated attempts at disarmament.
[17] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Relations*, (Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).
[18] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christianity and Power Politics*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. 14.
[19] *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), p. 73.
[20] *Children of Light*, p. 118.
[21] Paul Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1961), p. 6.
[22] John Howard Yoder, *The Christian Witness to the State*, (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1964), p. 7.
[23] *Witness*, p. 23.
[24] Richard A. Falk, *Law Morality and War in the Contemporary World* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1963), p. 6.
[25] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers From Prison*, Eberland Bethage, ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1972), p. 5.

Nuclear Ethics: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography

by Mark Nation

Compiling a useful bibliography is always a challenge, particularly in terms of selection. If that is generally true, it is especially true in treating two topics as complex as ethics and nuclear arms.

There are many facets to ethics, from the multifaceted dimensions of moral philosophy to the numerous recent creative discussions of the use of Scripture in formulating ethics. However, to limit the number of entries, I have eliminated virtually all resources not directly related to the nuclear issue. A few exceptions pertain to the classical Christian approaches to war and peace.

It is also the case that an understanding of nuclear ethics is contingent upon knowledge about the nuclear arms race, including issues ranging from capabilities of nuclear weapons to an understanding of the Soviet Union to knowledge of strategies for use and non-use of nuclear weapons. Again, with few exceptions, I have refrained from listing resources not directly connected to ethical discussions, realizing that some of the entries listed deal with issues relating to nuclear arms. There are a couple of exceptions. Though aware of its biases, I have included the Ground Zero book as a general, readable overview of the nuclear arms race. The other exception pertains to an issue that repeatedly cropped up, implicitly or explicitly, in discussions of nuclear ethics as *the* decisive issue. It is a matter related to nuclear doctrine. To oversimplify, is the engagement in nuclear war so awful to contemplate that our best talent and strategizing should go into the effort to prevent nuclear war? Or, rather, should we expend a considerable allotment of time and energy contemplating how we might fight and, perhaps, win a nuclear war? The articles by Gray and Payne, Howard, Keeney and Panofsky, and Wohlstetter were added to the bibliography to give examples of some of the best thinking on various sides of these issues.

Another question I confronted was whether to limit the entries to Christian writers. I decided not to for two reasons. First, many Christian writers, through employment of natural law or for other reasons, debate this kind of issue in terms that are not specifically theological or Christian. Second, even for others, the questions raised and issues discussed by many of the writers listed here are definitely relevant for Christians of every ilk—even if their final conclusions might be based on different beliefs and values.

Finally, every attempt has been made to be fair in selecting and annotating the entries. However, in order to maximize the usefulness of the bibliography, I have, when appropriate, rendered what I considered to be fair judgments.

Asterisks indicate the books or essays I would most recommend to someone who wants a brief course on nuclear ethics.

Aukerman, Dale. *Darkening Valley: A Biblical Perspective on Nuclear War.* Seabury Press, 1981, 229 pp., $8.95. Though not explicitly written about ethics, this book bristles with numerous thought-provoking insights that have relevance for ethical deliberation. *The Christian Century* has said about this book that it "is unlikely to be surpassed by anything written on nuclear war from a religious perspective."

Barrs, Jerram. *Who are the Peacemakers? The Christian Case for Nuclear Deterrence.* Crossway Books, 1983, 64 pp., $2.95. Introduced by the late, well-known Francis Schaeffer, this brief polemical book argues for a "peace through strength" position on the basis of Barrs' understanding of the demands of justice. Contains some rather weak and strange arguments.

*Bernbaum, John, ed. *Perspectives on Peacemaking: Biblical Options in the Nuclear Age.* Regal Books, 1984, 265 pp., $6.95. A collection of some interesting essays, mostly from the evangelical conference that was held in Pasadena in May 1983. Various perspectives are represented. Includes essays by people such as Senators William Armstrong and Mark Hatfield, Jim Wallis, Edmund W. Robb, and Richard J. Mouw.

Bonkovsky, Frederick O. *International Norms and National Policy.* Eerdmans, 1980, 220 pp., O.P.—available from UMI for $58.50). Bonkovsky challenges much just-war theorizing as unrealistic and impractical. He proposes some specific guidance for formulating realistic international "procedural" norms and means for more objectively evaluating conflicting values. The book raises some interesting questions.

Brown, Dale W., ed. *What About the Russians? A Christian Approach to U.S.-Soviet Conflict.* The Brethren Press, 1984, 159 pp., $6.95. An interesting collection of essays divided into three sections: 1) "Who Are the Russians?" 2) "Why Do We Fear the Russians?" 3) "Can Christians Trust Russians?"

Cesaretti, C. A. and Joseph T. Vitale, eds. *Rumors of War: A Moral and Theological Perspective on the Arms Race.* Seabury Press, 1982, 138 pp., $6.95. This is a a study guide for four sessions of study: "Peace," "Security," "Just War," and "Stewardship and Christian Responsibility." There are four appendices, the first two of which contain almost 100 pages of readings to supplement the lessons. There is little attempt to present a balanced perspective. And though present policies are not discussed, the readings would tend to be critical of them.

*Clouse, Robert G., ed. *War: Four Christian Views.* InterVarsity Press, 1981, 210 pp., $6.95. Nonresistance, pacifism, the just war, and the crusade or preventive war positions are defended as Christian positions by proponents of the respective positions. Also each author responds to the others' positions. Good format and discussions.

Curry, Dean C., ed. *Evangelicals and the Bishops' Pastoral Letter.* Eerdmans, 1984, 254 pp., $10.95. A nice collection of essays from various theological and political perspectives.

Davidson, David L. *Nuclear Weapons and the American Churches: Ethical Positions on Modern Warfare.* Westview Press, 1983, 208 pp, O.P. This book was written by a chaplain in the U.S. Army and "prepared under the auspices of the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania." This is a good, objective survey of some current attitudes regarding the ethics of the nuclear

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arms race, including most major denominations and several Christian ethicists. Includes a chart of church positions on specific issues in response to a questionnaire prepared for this study.

Dougherty, James E. *The Bishops and Nuclear Weapons: The Catholic Pastoral Letter on War and Peace.* Archon Books, 1984, 255 pp., $22.50. Written by a political scientist, this is the most serious, substantive, critical response to the Bishops' letter I have seen. Dougherty especially takes issue with specific policy recommendations of the Bishops.

*Duke, David N. "Christians, Enemies and Nuclear Weapons," *The Christian Century,* Vol. 100, No. 32 (Nov. 2, 1983), 986-989. Explores the relevance in a nuclear age of Jesus' teaching regarding love for enemies. Stimulating and helpful.

Dwyer, Judith A. "Catholic Thought on Nuclear Weapons: A Review of the Literature," *Religious Studies Review,* Vol. 10, No. 2 (April 1984), 103-107. A very helpful, brief overview of current Catholic thought.

Falwell, Jerry. "Peace Through Strength—Preserving Our Freedom," *Fundamentalist Journal,* May 1983, 8-9. When I was writing an article on Jerry Falwell and the nuclear arms race in 1983, I wrote to him to ask for anything he had written on the subject. This article was what I received. The key to his argument is his statement: "Freedom is the basic moral issue of all issues."

Geyer, Alan. *The Idea of Disarmament: Rethinking the Unthinkable.* The Brethren Press, 1982, 256 pp., $11.95. As Geyer says, this is "more of a think-book than a fact-book." As such it offers some interesting critiques of deterrence and counterforce doctrines as well as possible scenarios for disarmament. I believe this was revised for a 1985 edition.

Glynn, Patrick. "Why an American Arms Build-Up is Morally Necessary," *Commentary,* Vol. 77, No. 2 (Feb. 1984), 17-28. A spirited argument against the M.A.D. (Mutually Assured Destruction) strategy as supported, e.g., by Spurgeon Keeny and Wolfgang Panofsky and most mutual, verifiable, nuclear weapons freeze proponents.

Goodwin, Geoffrey, ed. *Ethics and Nuclear Deterrence.* St. Martin Press, 1982, 199 pp., $22.50. A collection of articles representing various viewpoints from discussions sponsored by the British Council on Christian Approaches to Defense and Disarmament.

*Gray, Colin S. and Keith Payne. "Victory is Possible," *Foreign Policy,* No. 39 (Summer 1980), 14-27. Colin Gray is one of the most impressive, capable apologists for current administration nuclear policies. This influential article argues that we should develop nuclear strategy that is focused much more on fighting and winning a nuclear war than the M.A.D. logic allows for.

*Ground Zero. *Nuclear War: What's In It For You?* Pocket Books, 1982, 272 pp., $2.95. A readable, general introduction to the nuclear arms race.

Hardin, Russell, et al., eds. *Nuclear Deterrence: Ethics and Strategy.* University of Chicago Press, 1985, 395 pp., $10.95. This book represents some of the best thinking on the subject by people within the moral philosophy guild. All but two essays are from the April 1985 issue of the journal *Ethics.*

*Hauerwas, Stanley. *Against the Nations: War and Survival in a Liberal Society.* Winston Press, 1985, 208 pp., $16.95. This book contains three of Hauerwas' essays on war, two specifically on nuclear war. Hauerwas wants to press us to ask what it means to be specifically Christian in nuclear and other contexts. These three essays take on greater meaning in the context of the rest of the essays in this book and his *The Peaceable Kingdom.* However, if we are willing to weather Hauerwas' dense writing, we will emerge with new questions and, perhaps, a more Christian vantage point from which to view the issues involved.

Heyer, Robert, ed. *Nuclear Disarmament: Key Statements of Popes, Bishops, Councils and Churches.* Paulist Press, 1982, 278 pp., $7.95. A good collection of formal statements, including more than thirty pages of Protestant church statements.

Hoekema, David A. "Nuclear Issues Resources (Part I)," *The Christian Century,* Vol. 100, No. 26 (Sept. 14-21, 1984), 819-825. A good discussion of a number of books on the nuclear arms race, most of which are not listed here. The only limitation is that so much has been published in the last two years.

________. "Nuclear Issues Resources (Part II)," *The Christian Century,* Vol. 100, No. 27 (Sept. 28, 1983), 850-854.

________. "Protestant Statements on Nuclear Disarmament," *Religious Studies Review,* Vol. 10, No. 2 (April 1984), 97-102. A good overview of official statements.

*Hollenbach, David, S.J. *Nuclear Ethics: A Christian Moral Argument.* Paulist Press, 1983, 100 pp., $3.95. Though one might want to supplement it with other readings, this is a good, brief text on nuclear ethics. This fine study is well-written and thoughtful.

Howard, Michael E. "On Fighting a Nuclear War," *International Security,* Vol. 5, No. 4 (Spring 1981), 3-17. A response to Colin Gray et al. (see Gray and Payne above) by one of the foremost British historians of war.

Johnson, James Turner. *Can Modern War Be Just?* Yale University Press, 1984, 215 pp., $17.95. This book is comprised of eight essays by a former student of Paul Ramsey and one of the most prominent and prolific just-war theorists writing today. Johnson wants to take issue with those who answer "no" too quickly to the question posed by the title. Therefore he is somewhat critical of the Catholic Bishops' Letter (see Wohlstetter, Albert & Critics below) and would lean more toward endorsing policies of limited nuclear war, flexible response, etc. But he seems somewhat more cautious than, e.g., W. V. O'Brien.

*Johnson, James T. and David Smith, eds. *Love and Society: Essays in the Ethics of Paul Ramsey.* Scholars Press, 1974, 251 pp. Includes four fine essays on the just-war tradition. Johnson's essay gives a good overview of the jwt as well as a good, brief explication of Ramsey's understanding of the jwt. LeRoy Walters' essay is one of the few to discuss how the jwt has actually worked in practice.

*Keeny, Spurgeon M., Jr., and Wolfgang K. H. Panofsky. "MAD Versus NUTS: Can Doctrine or Weaponry Remedy the Mutual Hostage Relationship of the Superpowers?" *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 60, No. 2 (Winter 1981/82), 287-304. A key article in discussions about Colin Gray's and Albert Wohlstetter's writings (see biblio. entries) as well as other proposals regarding nuclear strategies and, therefore, nuclear ethics. Keeny and Panofsky contend that given the properties of nuclear weapons and the reality of other components of conceivable nuclear war scenarios, it is dangerous to ignore the fact that the Superpowers are in a mutual hostage relationship. To formulate strategies of nuclear war fighting, etc., while ignoring these realities makes mutually assured destruction much more of a possibility. An important essay.

Lackey, Douglas P. *Moral Principles and Nuclear Weapons.* Rowman & Allanheld Pubs., 1984, 265 pp., $25.00. Whether or not one agrees with all of the specific recommendations, this book is quite instructive. Lackey, a philosophy professor, not only relates just-war categories to the nuclear

arms race but also illuminates the discussion by applying the moral categories of common good, human rights, and justice in a way that responds to a broader range of concerns. Has a good, fifteen-page bibliography.

Lawler, Philip F. *The Ultimate Weapon.* Regnery Gateway, 1984, 126 pp., $8.95. Lawler is the president of the American Catholic Conference, an independent organization founded to help Catholic lay people express their views on political and social issues that affect their church. Written as a study-guide for the pastoral letter, the book is quite critical of the letter, particularly regarding specific policy recommendations. The title makes a dual reference to prayer and nuclear weaponry.

Miller, Richard B. "Tradition and Modernity in the Nuclear Age," *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (April 1985), 258-270. An interesting, illuminating discussion of Jerram Barrs' *Who Are the Peacemakers?*, David Hollenbach's *Nuclear Ethics*, Stanley Hauerwas' *Should War Be Eliminated?* (included in *Against the Nations*), and Edward LeRoy Long's *Peace Thinking in a Warring World.*

Murnion, Philip, ed. *Catholics and Nuclear War: A Commentary on the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter.* Crossroads, 1983, 346 pp., $10.95. The book is divided into sections corresponding to the Letter. Includes the text of the Letter. Writers include David Hollenbach, Peter Steinfels, Charles E. Curran, J. Bryan Hehir, James Finn, and Richard A. McCormick.

*National Conference of Catholic Bishops. *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response.* U.S. Catholic Conference, 1983, 103 pp., $1.50. The Bishops' Pastoral Letter on war and peace. A carefully wrought document. Very influential.

Novak, Michael. "Moral Clarity in the Nuclear Age," *National Review*, Vol. XXXV, No. 6 (April 1, 1983), 354-392. An influential essay by a conservative Catholic. Also available, slightly expanded, with other essays, in book form from Thomas Nelson.

O'Brien, William V. *The Conduct of Just and Limited War.* Praeger Pubs., 1981, 495 pp., $15.95. A Catholic political scientist, O'Brien is one of the foremost experts on the just-war tradition. This book discusses the history of the jwt, the justifiability of U.S. involvement in some major conflicts and the possibility of just and limited warfare today. On the nuclear issue O'Brien's positions would, for the most part, be consistent with current Administration policies. It seems to me that his conclusions largely depend on siding with Gray and Payne (see above) over against Keeny and Panofsky (see also above). O'Brien is a serious scholar. Even for those who disagree with him, by implication he raises some of the right questions.

*O'Brien, William V. "Just-War Doctrine in a Nuclear Context," *Theological Studies*, Vol. 44 (1983), 191-220. See entry on *The Conduct of Just and Limited War.*

*Potter, Ralph B. *War and Moral Discourse.* John Knox Press, 1969, 123 pp., $1.95. This often quoted little volume was written in the context of the Vietnam War. However, Chapter 2,"The Complexity of Policy Recommendations," and Chapter 3, "Uses and Abuses of Moral Discourse," would contribute greatly to many discussions of nuclear ethics and public policies.

Ramsey, Paul. *The Just War.* Univ. of America Press, 1983 (original ed. 1968), 554 pp., $15.75. One of the two basic collections of essays by the dean of just-war theorists of the past generation. Because of his continuing influence, it is important to be familiar with Ramsey's writings.

Ramsey, Paul. *War and the Christian Conscience: How Shall Modern War Be Conducted Justly?* Duke Univ. Press, 1961, 331 pp., O.P. See entry on *The Just War.*

Schaeffer, Francis, Vladimir Bukovsky and James Hitchcock. *Who is for Peace?* Thomas Nelson, 1983, 112 pp., $3.95. Arguments for a "peace through strength" kind of position by a deceased, influential evangelical, a Soviet dissident, and a conservative Catholic historian. Schaeffer's essay is weak in substance. All three essays leave much to be desired.

Schall, James V., ed. *Out of Justice Peace—Joint Pastoral Letter of the West German Bishops; Winning the Peace—Joint Pastoral Letter of the French Bishops.* Ignatius Press, 1984, 124 pp., $3.95. The approach and time (particularly in the French Bishops' Letter) is significantly different from the U.S. Bishops' Letter, also published in 1983. And one could assume that they would make what are generally considered to be more conservative practical suggestions regarding, e.g., deterrence, first-use, etc. However, they don't spell out specific recommendations as the U.S. Bishops did.

*Shannon, Thomas A., ed. *War or Peace? The Search for New Answers.* Orbis Books, 1980, 255 pp., $9.95. Some fine articles. The one by James Childress on "Just-War Criteria" is particularly helpful with the nuclear issue. The asterisk applies to Childress' article.

Shaw, William H. "Nuclear Deterrence and Deontology," *Ethics*, Vol. 94 (Jan. 1984), 248-260. Raises good questions regarding the ways in which people argue for and against deterrence.

Sider, Ronald J. and Richard K. Taylor. *Nuclear Holocaust & Christian Hope.* InterVarsity Press, 1982, 368 pp., $6.95. A carefully conceived, articulate book by two convinced Christian pacifists. They relate their position to Scripture and the just-war tradition. And they also discuss practical steps toward peace, including a lengthy discussion of non-military means of national defense.

Sterba, James. P., ed. *The Ethics of War and Nuclear Deterrence.* Wadsworth Pub. Co., 1985, 182 pp., $9.50. A collection of articles by several prominent philosophers et al., including George Mavrodes, W.V. O'Brien, Douglas Lackey, and George Kavka.

Voorst, L. Bruce. "The Churches and Nuclear Deterrence," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (Spring 1983), 827-852. A good survey of recent church positions.

Wallis, Jim, ed. *Peacemakers.* Harper & Row, 1983, approx. 170 pp., $5.95. A collection of brief autobiographical sketches of some interesting contemporary peacemakers.

Wallis, Jim, ed. *Waging Peace: A Handbook for the Struggle to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.* Harper & Row, 1982, 304 pp., $4.95. Intended as a study guide for churches, this is a good collection of essays of facts, analyses, ethical positions, and practical suggestions. There is no attempt to represent a full range of perspectives.

Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument With Historical Illustrations.* Basic Books, Inc., 1977, 361 pp., $7.50. James Childress, himself a scholar of the just-war theory, said this is "one of the most important books on just-war theory in this century." It has certainly been an important and influential contribution to the literature.

Weigel, George. *Peace and Freedom: Christian Faith, Democracy and the Problem of War.* Institute on Religion and Democracy, 1983, 80 pp., $6.00. According to Weigel there are three major obstacales to peace in the world today. These are the threat of nuclear weapons, the threat of "the armed totalitarian power of the Soviet Union," and the threat of a "survivalist" ethic which is "so single-mindedly focused on the threat of nuclear weapons that it ignores or mini-

mizes the Soviet threat, while at the same time draining us of the vital moral energy necessary to work for both peace and freedom." If we remain conscious of these obstacles and pursue certain goals outlined in this book, Weigel believes we can move much closer to true international peace. Weigel also has a little booklet on the Bishops' Letter entitled *The Peace Bishops and the Arms Race.*

Wohlstetter, Albert. "Bishops, Statesmen, and Other Strategists on the Bombing of Innocents," *Commentary*, Vol. 75, No. 6 (June 1983), 15-35. Written by a mathematical logician, fomerly of RAND, the article challenges some basic components of the Bishops' Letter. This is the kind of essay that challenges one to know the facts and reason carefully. The Keeny and Panofsky article (above) as well as various *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* articles challenge some of Wohlstetter's claims.

*Yoder, John Howard. *The Christian Witness to the State.* Faith and Life Press, 1977, 3rd ed., 90 pp., $3.95. Gives a theological and ethical rationale for why Christians engage in politics in a partisan manner. Incidentally this book belies the notion that pacifists have no right to be, or rationale for being, involved in politics.

Yoder, John Howard. *Nevertheless: Varieties of Religious Pacifism.* 2nd ed., Herald Press, 1976, 143 pp., $2.50. This small book helps correct the stereotypes of pacifism that continue to exist in the minds of many. It also offers a powerful apologetic on behalf of pacifism.

*Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus.* Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972, 260 pp., $4.95. This very influential book argues for the relevance of the New Testament to social ethical thought.

Yoder, John Howard. *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics As Gospel.* Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1984, 222 pp., $8.95. An important collection of essays that illustrate several dimensions of Yoder's understanding of Christian social ethics. James Childress says that this book ". . . should be read by all Christians interested in the meaning of their faith and its ethical implications."

*Yoder, John Howard. *When War is Unjust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking.* Augsburg Pub. House, 1984, 95 pp., $5.95. This book raises a lot of good questions for Christians (and others) intent on taking the just-war tradition seriously. As Charles P. Lutz, a jwt proponent, says in the introduction, "[Yoder] asks us, for the sake of the world, to demonstrate the credibility of our ethic, to put it to the test, to be honest about where it leads us."

The Church: A Social Institution?

by Dennis P. Hollinger

Scrutinizing the church as a social institution has never been popular among evangelicals. Sociological inquiry, it is feared, will inevitably lead to a reductionist view of the church, systematically stripping away all supernatural explanation of the church's origins, forms, and message, until all that remains is another human institution. Evangelicals have chosen instead to affirm the church as a Body of Christ, a royal priesthood, a holy Temple, the *ecclesia*—a divine body that transcends socio-cultural explanations and owes its very existence to Christ, its founder, Savior, and Lord.

Certainly sociology has not always been kind to the church or to religion in general. To acknowledge that "the Christian Church is a natural community. . .," says James Gustafson, "appears to reduce a special creation of God's gracious work to the dismal and uninspiring realm of natural man with his physical, social, and psychological needs."[1] Durkheim, Marx, Freud, and a host of other modern behavioral scientists have joined the ranks of those opting for monolithic explanations of the church's existence based solely on social, economic, and psychological factors.

But one need not be a reductionist to utilize sociological categories. Indeed one need not assume a skeptical stance to view the church from a socio-cultural perspective. It is both possible and desirable to analyze the church using theological categories which affirm its unique origins, message, and purposes, in conjunction with sociological categories which reckon with the socio-cultural milieu out of which it emerged.

The sociological perspective is important for several reasons. First, it helps us distinguish those dimensions of the church which emanate from the culture and those which come from God. Too often throughout history well-meaning Christians have argued that particular forms, polities, ideas, and styles within the church were divine in origin. A century or so later when those aspects of ecclesiastical life had changed, one was almost left to conclude that God was fickle, since he had presumably ordained them. Sociological study can be a valuable tool in helping us discern how and why certain trends emerge within the church. To attribute all human forms and practices to divine initiation is akin to idolatry, even when those forms and practices are good and beneficial. God has indeed ordained certain things for the church, but in many areas there is also freedom in order that the church may adapt its God-given mandates to the needs of particular socio-cultural contexts. But to do this effectively one must distinguish that which is cultural from that which is supracultural.[2]

A further rationale for sociological inquiry is the insidious inclination to succumb to cultural Christianity. Cultural Christianity involves a syncretism of biblical ideals and practices with those cultural ideals and practices which are antithetical to Christian principles. The use of cultural motifs serves a vital function in contextualizing the gospel, as many missiologists have recently contended.[3] To do so requires careful socio-cultural analysis in order to identify modes of thought, organizational methods, and stylistic forms which can be adapted to church life. However, there are limits. When aspects of the socio-cultural context which conflict with the gospel are utilized, or when relative cultural motifs are baptized as absolute Christian principles, cultural religion results. Sociological analysis can be used to help illuminate the distinction between legitimate contextualization and illegitimate cultural captivity by clarifying relevant social processes, norms, and role expectations.

A final reason for sociological analysis of the church is to understand the ways in which the church helps shape its culture and related social insitutions. Many social scientists have studied religion primarily as a dependent variable in which religion is acted upon by society. Karl Marx, for example, saw religion and the church as mere reflections of the economic institution in that the owners of production utilized religious ideas to placate their workers. In such analysis religion has no dynamic of its own to impact upon society.

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Other sociologists, while acknowledging religion as a dependent variable, would argue for its concurrent role as an independent variable, dynamically acting upon the society and other social institutions. One of the classic works setting forth this thesis is Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* In it Weber observes that the modern capitalistic ethos, not capitalism per se, rose to prominence in Protestant countries where Calvinism prevailed. From this observation he argued that "the principle explanation. . .must be sought in the permanent intrinsic character of their religious beliefs, and not only in their temporary external historico-political situation."[4] Weber's primary contention was that religion generates a powerful, though often unintended, socio-cultural impact of its own—a fact that can be sociologically documented.

Having noted the importance of sociological study for the church, let us move on to selected manifestations of the church as a social institution. Three ecclesiastical dimensions will be examined to show the interaction of divine elements with socio-cultural elements—theology, polity and structure, and style of expression. My objective is to demonstrate how the church functions as a social institution, though at the same time acknowledging it is more than just that. In the following discussion I am using "church" to mean concrete embodiments of the Body of Christ, both local and world-wide. At this point some might be prone to make a sharp distinction between the visible church, which exists in a cultural milieu, and the invisible church, which transcends cultural frames of reference. The problem with such dichotomizing is that the invisible church is always visibly manifest within the world. It cannot remain invisible and acultural. Therefore, appealing to the invisible church as a pure ideal untainted by cultural and social elements is simply a platonic myth. The Church of Jesus Christ, composed of all true believers and followers of their Lord, is always manifest as a human community in concrete historical situations. It is those concrete embodiments which we now turn.

The Church's Theology

To suggest that the church's theology reflects its nature as a social institution may be initially unsettling for some. Many evangelicals have tended to argue that theology is absolute, unchanging, transcendent, and beyond cultural influence. Charles Hodge, for example, seemingly viewed theology as beyond historical and socio-cultural mediation in his comparison of the discipline to the natural sciences:

> The Bible is to the theologian what nature is to the man of science. It is his storehouse of facts; and his method of ascertaining what the Bible teaches, is the same as that which the natural philosopher adapts to ascertain what nature teaches.[5]

For Hodge the theological enterprise is a collection of facts revealed in Scripture and a systematization of those facts according to their internal consistency, thereby ascertaining "God's System."[6]

In similar fashion Augustus Strong contended that "the aim of theology is the ascertainment of the facts respecting God and the relations between God and the universe, and the exhibition of these facts in their rational unity, as connected parts of a formulated and organic system of truth." For Strong there appears to be little human or cultural dimension to theology for even the "arrangement of facts is not optional, but is determined by the nature of the material with which is deals. A true theology thinks over again God's thoughts and brings them into God's order."[7]

In such perceptions theology is wrested from its cultural context in that the Bible and our perceptions and systematizing of it are at no point filtered through a socio-altered grid. As David Wells so aptly put it, for many evangelicals "theology is seen to yield a kind of universal transcendent knowledge that encompasses all cultures but is localized in none in particular."[8]

In contrast to this static understanding of theology, there is an alternative evangelical view which is faithful to God's infallible rule of faith, Scripture, while acknowledging a legitimate social and cultural impact upon theological reflection. In this perspective theology may be defined as the human attempt to systematize and apply what revelation teaches about given themes. Such a task is no mere human enterprise, for the primary content and test of all theology is rooted in authoritative objective revelation. This endeavor is further aided by guidance of the Holy Spirit. However, the human theologian cannot avoid expressing these divine truths in categories which reflect in part the social setting.

Scrutinizing the church as a social institution has never been popular among evangelicals. Sociological inquiry, it is feared, will inevitably lead to a reductionist view of the church.

Theology in its essence is language about God and the realities of the Christian faith. Language is a tool of culture and as such employs culturally agreed-upon symbols to express particular realities. Language will always reflect its socio-cultural setting, for no set of linguistic symbols can exist in a vacuum. God did not choose to reveal His written Word in a divine language but rather in the common language of a social group. This understanding need not relativize the Word of God, for "men spoke from God [in their own language, style, and thought categories] as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). What must be acknowledged, however, is that the divine reality is not synonymous with the words used in Scripture, but rather the biblical words, as cultural symbols, point to the divine reality. To do theology requires a commitment to God's Word (written and incarnate) as the primary content and test of all theology, but the God-breathed words of the original text are also tools of a culture.

There are two socio-cultural processes through which we must pass to construct a theology. The first is interpretation. The interpreter is aided by Spirit-filled illumination, but this in no way insures interpretive infallibility. One need only examine the history of exegesis to realize that varying interpretations of Scripture have existed from the early church on. Why is this so? One explanatory factor, and there are many, is the socio-cultural context of the interpreter. This context affects what is seen and not seen in Scripture, how meaning is transferred across ages and cultures to a new context with a new language, and how Scripture is specifically applied to a given issue in the church or the world that may be quite different from analogous issues addressed in the biblical text. Such interpretive variation need not result in hermeneutical chaos. There is always the objective Word to which we go again and again, and there is the ever-deepening insight from extra-biblical sources of the original setting. Historical theol-

ogy is also a tool which informs our biblical interpretation. True, applications to new contexts may vary, but that does not nullify the possibility of an ultimate criterion against which we judge our theology. Yet, the interpreter is never totally free from his/her social setting, and this limitation must always humbly be acknowledged.

The second socio-cultural process through which we must pass in doing theology is a systematization of the interpreted Word. Theology involves organizing into human categories of thought what we understand Scripture to say. Some may not feel the urgency to move beyond biblical theology—that is, clarifying what John or Paul or Peter say about particular themes in their own language. But if we believe that Scripture is unified and that the parts are not ultimately inconsistent, then we must press on with the task of systematizing revealed knowledge about God, Christ, salvation, the church, ethics, etc. This may require language categories beyond those available in the biblical language for two reasons. First, the biblical writers themselves don't always use the same categories to describe particular divine realities; and at other times the same linguistic categories may be used but with varying shades of meaning.[9] In order to reconcile these differences, the theologian may search for categories which harmonize the varieties in biblical language. Second, the systematization must be integrated with the particular issues and questions arising from within or without the church. To do so requires language that is relevant to those concerns.

Appealing to the invisible church as a pure ideal untainted by cultural and social elements is simply a platonic myth. The Church of Jesus Christ, composed of all true believers and followers of their Lord, is always manifest as a human community in concrete historical situations.

The whole of historical theology illustrates the fact that theology reflects its social setting. This is exemplified in both the issues that are raised and the ways they are handled. Specific theological issues addressed by the church in a given place and time reflect to some degree what is happening in the surrounding culture. As the socio-historical situation exerts pressure on the church to grapple with these issues, it responds by hammering out particular tenets in more systematic form. Until that time the church may only have general teachings on the subject which emerges during the course of Bible study. But a full-blown systematic doctrinal statement normally develops in response to cultural impingement.

For example, when the early church worked out the theology of Christ's relationship to God, it did so in terms which reflected the philosophical questions of its socio-historical setting. The debate centered over whether Christ was *homoousion* (of the same essence or substance as the Father), *homoiousion* (of a similar essence or substance) or *heteroousion* (of a different essence or substance). Nowhere in Scripture is the issue of *ousia* or essence discussed, at least in those terms. However, finding itself in the midst of a culture that asked questions of essence and substance, the church was forced to formulate a theology of Christ's essence, and chose to do so in the thought categories of contemporary philosophy. The church's strategy was to begin with the Word, but once that Word was interpreted (in a socio-cultural framework), the interpretations were then systematized into the language and thought patterns of its culture.

A further illustration of how the socio-cultural context influences theology is evidenced in the rise of eschatological concerns in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Throughout the first eighteen centuries of the church there were certainly teachings on the "last things." However, a more full-orbed eschatology has emerged in the last two centuries. Why? Primarily, I believe, because Western culture has been raising questions about history which have in turn caused the church to ask, "Where is history going?" Nineteenth-century notions of evolution, dialectic, and optimism were reflected in a popular post-millennial eschatology that saw history's progress culminating in the return of Christ. This does not imply a reductionism in which the cultural milieu was the sole source of post-millennialism, for the Puritans two centuries earlier had already begun to construct such an eschatology.[10] But as Stanley Gundry has noted:

> Time and again there seems to be a connection between eschatology and the church's perception of itself in its historical situation. Eschatologies have been a reflection of the current mood or *Zeitgeist* or response to historical conditions. In other words, in many cases eschatologies appear to have been sociologically conditioned.[11]

When the horrors of urban industrialism, war, and international conflict began to play havoc with nineteenth-century optimism, the post-millennial bubble burst and a form of premillennialism began to flourish. There is no question that the doomsday prophecies of dispensational premillennialism was a reading not only of the Bible but also of the times, fueled by the rude awakening of socio-cultural experience.

Is one left to conclude that theology merely blows with the winds of its times? That it is forever doomed to cultural relativism, having little or no transcendent message? Not at all. Because there is an objective Word we are not lost in a maze of cultural relativities. There is ultimate truth and final authority against which all human thought can and must be judged. But our theology must not be confused with eternal truth. Theology is, rather, the systematic reflection and human categorization of that divine truth, as recorded in Scripture, and in dialogue with contextually relevant questions. As John Jefferson Davis puts it:

> The calls for the contextualization of the gospel (in actuality, a recontextualization) are simply based on the recognition of the need to communicate the faith in a context-specific fashion, and to make a critical assessment of the ways in which the church's or theologian's own social situation may be distorting the understanding of the message.[12]

All of this means that theology can never be done once and for all. It represents the on-going attempt of the church in a culturally-specific locale to address the biblical issues in a way that is understandable to that culture. This approach to theology will mean that to some extent the issues addressed and the packaging of those issues will differ from place to place and in different periods of history. For example, in the West, systematic theologies often begin sections on God with the classical arguments for the existence of God. In Africa where few doubt the supernatural realm and where Aristotelian philosophy has little significance, such arguments are almost nonsensical. Conversely, an area of theology with great

significance to the African mind, but one never highly developed in the West, is that of power encounter—the encounter of God with the spirit world and demons. Therefore, it seems reasonable that the theologies of the secularist West will address the existence of God in language relevant to its skeptical minds, while African theologies will emphasize more the relationship of God's power to the animated world.

The problem with believing that theology is absolute, unchanging, and given once-for-all is well illustrated by R.H.S. Boyd's *India and the Latin Captivity of the Church.* Boyd analyzes the Westminster Confession through Indian eyes and shows the confusion that arises when context is not considered. The section on the Trinity includes these words, "In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance. . . .The Son is eternally begotten of the Father." Boyd notes:

> The word 'person' cannot be translated directly from English into say, Gujarati, for in common parlance 'person' means 'individual,' and that is precisely what it does not mean in this context. 'Substance' is also a difficult word, implying something solid and material. . .then the word 'begotten.' . . . Any translation into Gujarati would imply a sexual relationship, and would cause misunderstanding to a Hindu and scandal to a Muslim.[13]

When the Westminster Confession was composed in 1646 the words were carefully chosen in light of that social situation—namely a context in which the church felt the need to distinguish its doctrine and church government from that of Roman Catholicism. But to impose that same type of theological language on another culture may be a travesty.

Evangelicals, who strongly affirm the authority of Scripture, must be quick to point out that not every socio-cultural expression of theology is acceptable. There are heterodox theologies which, though they may be culturally relevant, are not biblically faithful. Each rendition of theology must find its ultimate origins in the Word and must be continually tested by that Word. Though the issues, language, categorization, and specific applications of a theology will be reflective of a socio-cultural milieu, the meaning must be analogous to the meaning of Scripture's own language, categories, and applications.

While the church must always guard against theologies that do not reflect revealed truth, it must also take care not to judge a theology as heresy simply because it employs different language and categories of thought. Many church splits and denominational schisms have been championed under the guise of wrong versus right theology. But as H. Richard Niebuhr has documented in *The Social Sources of Denominationalism,* the multiplicity of Christian groups has emerged not so much over theological differences as underlying social differences. Niebuhr attempts to show that economic status, nationalism, sectionalism, ethnic differences, and race have all been contributing factors leading to schism and new denominations. As an example, Niebuhr notes that language change (from native to English) was the covert cause of divisiveness in the Dutch Reformed, German Lutheran, and German Reformed Churches, even though the issues were touted as theological in nature. The inclination of some immigrants toward conformity to new cultural customs caused others to "find themselves ill at ease among their partly Americanized kindred and feel compelled to organize new denominations which will be truer to the Old World customs."[14] Thus, denominationalism is born of social sources as well as conquests for theological purity. Niebuhr may overstate his case, but careful, honest scrutiny of church history leads to the conclusion that some church wars heralded in the name of theology are in actuality confrontations of culture.

The theological enterprise, then, is one of the dimensions in which the church reflects that it is a social institution. Theology, as the on-going attempt to systematize and apply revealed truth as interpreted by a particular people, reflects socio-cultural knowledge and needs. Such an agenda is inherently fraught with syncretistic temptations. But the great solace of the Christian church is that God has clearly spoken in the incarnate Word and the written Word, both of which serve as the ultimate content and test of the church's thought in every age and in every culture. It is the possession of this revealed truth that makes the church different from all other social institutions.

The Church's Policy and Structure

No human organization can exist without structure and polity. A church may be highly anti-institutional and informal, but it will not maintain itself without some structure, regulation, and exercise of power. In this sense the church is a social institution like any other social grouping. It may plead its uniqueness, and well it should, but like all human organizations its political structure corresponds in identifiable ways to its socio-cultural matrix. The political structure of the church may be defined as "the patterns of relationships and action through which policy is determined and social power exercised."[15]

Rather than defending one polity as more biblical in its origins than another, it may be more honest to acknowledge the socio-cultural roots of each type.

Throughout Western church history three main types of church polity have existed—episcopal, presbyterian, and congregational. The pivotal issue in distinguishing these three types is their locus of power or authority. In the past, adherents of each type have declared their polity to be the biblical or God-given one.[16] Close scrutiny of Scripture, however, reveals that while there may be elements of each type in the Bible, no clear-cut form of church government is set forth. As Gordon Fee notes in his analysis of church order in The Pastoral Epistles,

> One must ruefully admit that we are left with far more questions about church order than answers. (Surely this whole perspective should have been questioned long ago simply on the existential grounds that such diverse groups as Roman Catholics, Plymouth Brethren and Presbyterians all use the PE [Pastoral Epistles] to support their ecclesiastical structures.[17]

Moreover, analysis of church history reveals that each type came to prominence in a particular socio-historical context. More specifically, each polity type bears striking resemblance to a construction of civil government and emerged in the context of that type of state rule. Therefore, the explanation for church structures is far more sociological in nature than theological.

In episcopalian polity the primary power and authority re-

sides with the bishops (the *episkopoi*), who are regarded in some traditions as successors in the line of apostolic authority. This is an hierarchical approach in which power moves from the top down by means of graduation or rank among church officials. Episcopalian polity has found variable expression within Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and to some degree Methodist churches. While its adherents have appealed to a New Testament order of apostles, bishops, pastors and deacons to support this approach, it is sociologically significant that episcopalian polity corresponds to a monarchical form of statehood. It is likely that the episcopacy development during the late Roman Empire reflected in part the familiar hierarchical patterns of civil government. When episcopalian polity gained new momentum during the sixteenth century English Reformation, it was clearly embedded in a strong political monarchy deemed to be legitimized and ordained by God.

Rather than defending one polity as more biblical in its origins than another, it may be more honest to acknowledge the socio-cultural roots of each type. In turn, the appropriate use of a given structure is probably best determined by the cultural context. In a tribal society where elders make community decisions, church structure should then be roughly analogous to existing community and political power, an adequate polity will likely include some features of congregationalism.

Utilizing cultural motifs does not preclude a search for biblical guidelines relative to church government. New Testament leadership qualifications and the revolutionary servanthood model for those leaders are among the divine principles that should permeate all church polities. The use of power and authority in the Christian community must differ radically from the power ploys of society, for as Jesus put it, "The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves" (Luke 22:26). But it is quite conceivable that Jesus' approach to power and authority can be applied to all three polity types.

Evangelicals must be quick to point out that not every socio-cultural expression of theology is acceptable. There are heterodox theologies which, though they may be culturally relevant, are not biblically faithful.

Presbyterian polity is a representative form of government with power residing in both representative hierarchies and local congregations. Finding expression in the Reformed tradition, presbyterian structure incorporates concepts of representation, delegation, and systems of checks and balances. Normally a session or consistory is elected by the congregation to govern the major affairs of the local church. A presbytery, composed of all pastors and one ruling elder from each congregation in a local area, functions to both legitimize and limit the powers of any local congregation. This ecclesiastical structure is roughly equivalent to a republic or parliamentary form of civil government. Although adherents may wish to believe that presbyterianism is the biblical pattern, it is significant that the polity emerged in those areas where ideas of political representation were gaining popularity. For example, in Geneva and throughout Switzerland dimensions of representation and parliamentarianism were emerging just as the Swiss Reformation began. The Reformed church adopted these ideas and gave them further impetus in society, so that Presbyterian polity then helped extend notions of Republicanism in some Western countries.

In congregational polity authority and power rests with the members of a local congregation. The only designated authority other than the congregation is Christ Himself. As Eric Jay puts it:

> Authority resides in the congregation itself which receives it immediately from Christ and may exercise it immediately .... The ministers, however, possess their power through the congregation, and cannot, therefore, be said to exercise their power "immediately." As the congregation has power to call, test, and ordain its officers, so it has power to depose them if they prove unworthy.[18]

These self-governing churches usually own their own property, often write their own by-laws and constitutions, and associate with the larger church (such as a denomination) in terms of a loose fellowship. Although congregationalists often argue that local church autonomy is the New Testament way, it is important to note that these churches emerged in the context of political democracy and bear the hallmarks of all democratic, voluntary institutions.

Sociological factors not only account for the emergence of given polity types, but generate continual change and adaptation within those types. This is clearly seen in the North American context. Due to a national ethos accentuating democratization and individuality, episcopal structures have been modified in the direction of more diffuse power and thus greater congregational participation in decision making. Because of increased bureaucratization and specialization within the culture, congregationalism has experienced greater hierarchical and structural solidification. Paul Harrison in *Authority and Power in the Free Church Tradition* examines the effects of implementing specialized tasks within congregational church settings. In studying the American Baptist Convention, Harrison notes that pure congregationalism is often compromised for the sake of efficiency. When a decision is pressing and authorized directives from the congregation or delegation are not available, an individual or small group of leaders is forced to assume authority and make the decision.[19] In this way bureaucracy begins to emerge and appropriate some of the power that constitutionally resides with the congregation or delegated bodies. This ecclesiastical process is most evident within cultures that eulogize efficiency and specialization.

Socio-cultural influences upon church structure can be good, bad or neutral from a normative perspective. To make a value judgment about society's impact requires knowledge of both Scripture and sociological processes. Ministers and church leaders need some sociological understanding in order to assimilate acceptable patterns and structures and to reject those patterns and structures which are incompatible with the nature of the church.

The church must corporately demonstrate that it is more than just another social institution. Its structural patterns and uses of power should reveal its call as a new society in the midst of an old and fallen one. But the church cannot escape bearing the marks of its social context, some of which will be manifest in its ecclesiastical polity and structure. One of the enduring challenges facing the church is to fill those familiar social patterns and structures with new meaning and Christ-

like behavior.

Style of Expression

Worship, fellowship, evangelism, instruction, and service are all God-ordained purposes of the church. Precisely how these tasks are to be accomplished, however, is not divinely mandated. Every church develops its own style which in part reflects the culture and personalities of its people.

Paradoxically, the style of expression adopted to carry out these basic ecclesiastical tasks functions simultaneously to unify and divide people. Particular styles of worship or evangelism serve as vehicles to engender a sense of kinship among people. Parishioners grow familiar with the words, demeanor, and spirit of these activities and therefore feel akin to others who identify with them as well. But modes of expression can also be divisive in that some Christians inevitably feel alienated from certain language, hymns, liturgies, and forms. Such persons may not be rejecting the church's message but rather the cultural expression selected to convey that message.

Because there is an objective Word we are not lost in a maze of cultural relativities. There is ultimate truth and final authority against which all human thought can and must be judged. But our theology must not be confused with eternal truth.

It is vitally important to recognize the socio-cultural forces which help shape styles of expression within the church. This in no way minimizes the God-centered orientation of each expression but rather acknowledges that God uses diverse cultural forms. Two specific expressions will serve to illustrate this point—conversion experience and worship.

Conversion involves a turning from one oath to another. Theologically it represents the human turning from sin to righteousness, from self to Christ, from idolatry to the living God, or from an old way of life to Christ's new way of life. Conversion portrays the human side of the salvation process, whereas terms like justification and redemption portray more the divine side. By referring to the human side of salvation I do not mean to minimize God's work but rather to emphasize that throughout Scripture the word conversion focuses on the changes within the individual involved in the salvific process. The profile of the conversion experience varies from person to person, depending on his/her psychological makeup and cultural background.

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience* William James notes two kinds of conversion experience, volitional and self-surrender. In volitional conversion "the regenerative change is usually gradual, and consists in the building up, piece by piece, of a new set of moral and spiritual habits."[20] In this type there is no specific known time of conversion. By contrast self-surrender conversion is an instantaneous experience marked by a dramatic change from the old to the new.

Biblical descriptions do not conform to one exclusive style of conversion. The divine elements of forgiveness, justification, and regeneration are universal but the sequential profile of human turning is particularistic, depending on individual and cultural factors. Western revivalistic traditions have often accentuated a "sawdust trail" or highly emotional, instantaneous conversion. But in reality many committed Christians have no such analogous experience, nor can they point to a time of conversion. Missiologists have noted that in some cultures a whole tribe or village may undergo corporate conversion. From our individualistic vantage point this may seem problematic, but for a people with strong corporate and community world views it is the only imaginable route. In such settings individuals would rarely "turn" alone, but rather in the context of family and community to which they are organically connected.

Human conversion experiences should never be forced into a monolithic mold, for God works with each person in light of their own socio-cultural context and psychological disposition. As missiologist Hans Kasdorf puts it, "God wants to touch and change persons within their own cultural and sociological milieu. Conversion thus becomes the critical point at which the supracultural God meets with culture-bound humanity."[21]

Worship is a second evidence that styles of expression are largely dependent on culture and personality types. The goal of worship is universal, but the precise means by which the worshipper is led to meaningful praise and adoration should reflect familiar socio-cultural patterns of expression.

Styles of worship can be analyzed along a continuum from highly structured/formal to unstructured/informal.[22] It is possible, of course, to be informal and highly structured but generally speaking the preceding categories represent the prevailing polar types. There has been a tendency for those in pietistic traditions to accentuate the unstructured/informal pole, for it is regarded as symbolic of real, "heart-felt" faith in which the Spirit of God moves freely and spontaneously. Highly structured/formal services are judged to be spiritually dead. On the other hand Christians from more liturgical traditions have viewed their style as conducive to true worship that avoids the "superficial emotionalism" of pietism.

Rather than rendering theological judgments on divergent styles of expression, it is better to view each type as reflective of its socio-cultural context. For example, there seems to be a relationship between what one does during the week and how one worships God on Sunday. Generally speaking, many blue collars who experience regimentation, sameness, and clockwork during the week crave a more spontaneous and emotional worship experience. They seek release from regimentation and predictable order. Conversely, white collar workers who must cope with irregular schedules and unpredictable changes of events during the week tend to take refuge in predictable ecclesiastical form, order and structure at the end of their week. Moreover, blue collar culture finds folk-type music (broadly defined) more akin to its aesthetic tastes, while an educated white collar culture is more at home with the classics. These culturally linked worship style differences are well illustrated in Liston Pope's classical work, *Millhands and Preachers*—a study of churches and economics in the mill town of Gastonia, North Carolina. In contrasting blue collar mill churches with the white collar uptown churches Pope states:

> Religious services in a mill church are, correspondingly, more intense in mood than those found elsewhere. Lack of social security is compensated for by fervor of congregational response. . . .Music is more concrete and rhythmic; it conjures up pictures rather than describes attitudes or ideas, and it appeals to the hands and feet more than to the head. The entire service in mill churches has an enthusiasm lacking in the more restrained worship of the "respectable people" uptown.[23]

Certainly there are potential forms and styles inconducive to the worship of God. Not every available means is compatible with our understanding of the nature of God and worship. But the human activity of worship is not accomplished through supracultural means. Worship styles which approximate patterns found in the socio-cultural milieu are most effective in ushering worshippers into the presence of God. As in all styles of Spiritual expression, worship will and must use appropriate, available forms relevant to the social setting.

Conclusion

The church is the Body of Christ, a holy nation, and a royal priesthood. It is indeed God's new society in the midst of an old and fallen one. The church of Christ must unabashedly verbalize that claim and give concrete evidence to such in its pilgrimage within the world. But the church can never be acultural or asocial. It always exists within a society and intentionally or otherwise reflects cultural motifs in its theology, polity and styles of expression.

The aim of the church is not to purge itself of all identifying features of its culture. Rather it is to wisely encorporate those cultural themes and patterns which give flesh and blood to God's transcendent message. It is to prudently reject those cultural aspects that are incongruent with the faith and distort the essence of God's message and work.

The church is a social institution. Sociologists can analyze its descriptive features in much the same manner as any other social grouping such as family, state, or community. It is incumbent upon the church to demonstrate that in its earthly manifestation it is more than a social institution—that it is indeed the Body of Jesus Christ.

[1] James Gustafson, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels: The Church as a Human Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 14.

[2] For an analysis of these concepts see G. Linwood Barney, "The Supracultural and the Cultural," in *The Gospel and Frontier Peoples*, edited by R. Pierce Beaver (South Pasadena: William Carey, 1973), pp. 48-55.

[3] For a good survey of the possibilities and limitations of contextualization see John Stott and Robert Coote, eds., *Down to Earth: Studies in Christianity and Culture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980).

[4] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribners, 1958), p. 40.

[5] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 Vols. (New York: Scribners, 1899), 1:10.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[7] Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907), p. 2.

[8] David F. Wells, "An Evangelical Theology: The Painful Transition from *Theoria* to *Praxis*" in George Marsden (ed.), *Evangelicalism and Modern America* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1984), p. 85.

[9] Note, for example, the difference between James' treatment of the term "justification" and Paul's. The two are not contradictory, but because language is symbol two writers may mean different things by the same word.

[10] See Peter Toon (ed.), *Puritan Eschatology* (London: James Clarkes, 1970).

[11] Stanley Gundry, "Hermeneutics or *Zeitgeist* as the Determining Factor in the History of Eschatologies," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* (May, 1977), p. 50.

[12] John Jefferson Davis, *The Necessity of Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), p. 172.

[13] R.H.S. Boyd, *India and the Latin Captivity of the Church* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 36.

[14] H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Meridian, 1929), pp. 213-214.

[15] Gustafson, p. 31.

[16] A good example is the Puritan "Cambridge Platform" of 1648 which claimed, "The parties of Church-Government are all of them exactly described in the Word of God. . .and therefore to continue one and the same, unto the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1960), p. 203.

[17] Gordon Fee, "Reflections on Church Order in the Pastoral Epistles." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (June, 1985), p. 142.

[18] Eric C. Jay, *The Church: Its Changing Image Through Twenty Centuries* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977), p. 214.

[19] Paul M. Harrison, *Authority and Power in the Free Church Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), pp. 98 ff.

[20] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Mentor, 1958), p. 169. It should be noted that James' typology is drawn from E.O. Starbuck's *The Psychology of Religion.*

[21] Hans Kasdorf, *Christian Conversion in Context* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980), p. 29.

[22] A different but related analysis is set forth by Andrew Greeley with his notions of Apollonian and Dionysian orientations in religious ritual. The Apollonian orientation stresses logical understanding and reason in worship, while the Dionysian is emotively orientated. See Greeley's *The Denominational Society* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1972).

[23] Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), p. 86.

Normativity, Relevance and Relativism

by Harvie M. Conn

Can one believe in the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice and, at the same time, affirm its culturally-oriented particularity? Must the evangelical tremble in fear every time he hears scholars ask, "How does our understanding of the cultural setting of the Corinthian church affect the way we understand Paul's appeal to women to be silent in the church?" Will our current sensitivity to the New Testament as a word addressed to our century relativize our parallel commitment to it as a word addressed also to the first century?

These are the questions addressed in this article. We do not intend to lay out particular hermeneutical rules to help us in this inquiry. We will touch on them but only as they aid us in our larger research. Nor will we cover the whole sweep of scholarship. Our consideration will be on discussions within the evangelical community.

Many of our case studies will come from those texts central to a study of the place of women in culture. Much current evangelical thinking on the Bible's particularity has revolved around these texts. It is not, however, the issue of the Bible's approach to women that we seek to resolve. Our attention is directed to the larger question of the Bible and its culturally-related character. We examine these texts (and others) only to the degree they relate to this larger agenda.

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The Evangelical Agenda of the Past

Evangelicals, in a sense, have wrestled with the problems associated with cultural relativity in earlier decades. Linked more with terms like relevance and applicability, the questions seemed easier then. Is foot washing a continuing ceremony? Must women wear hats or veils in church? Are there times in the official ministry of the church when a woman can teach adult males? What about the use of tobacco and the drinking of alcoholic beverages in moderation?

Then, as now, answers have not always been the same. Evangelicals, in seeking to uphold the infallible authority of Scripture, sought a variety of ways to account for the diversity of opinion. Some noted that mistakes can occur in applying a scriptural injunction to conditions other than those to which it was truly applicable. Cultural distance between dusty roads and concrete sidewalks translates foot washing into humble Christian service for others. The passage of time transforms the hat from a symbol of modesty to one of fashion.

It was also noted that "there are injustices which are simultaneously appropriate to certain undertakings and circumstances and not to others."[1] The same Jesus who told his disciples at the Last Supper to buy a sword (Luke 22:36) a few hours later warned the same group, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:32). Biblical texts, it was argued, cannot be applied as a universal plaster for any

conceivable condition. Their use depends upon their specific applicability.

Often resorted to in such debates was the concept of *adiaphora* (literally, "things indifferent"). Here, under the rubric of Christian liberty, were included those agenda items thought to be non-fundamentals of the faith. Generally ethical and not doctrinal issues, they became centers of discussion about which charity toward differences was to be exercised. The popular mind regarded them as peripheral to the centrality of the gospel, disputed areas of the Christian life over which unanimous agreement could not be reached in the community. Dominated by a North American fundamentalist mentality, the disputed areas included such issues as dancing, theatre attendance, the use of tobacco and alcoholic beverages.

In many respects, these responses carried a large measure of truth, and still do. But the development of biblical studies has corrected and complicated the situation.

Contemporary Discussion

Earlier scholarship carried on these discussions in the name of "hermeneutics," the discipline that taught us skills in exegesis, in determining the meaning of the original author. "Application," an afterthought of this, was a homiletical art focusing on the relatively simple extension of exegesis to contemporary faith and life. No guidelines, however, were available to leap the gulf between exegesis and application. No discipline existed to bridge the gap between the two worlds of then and now, there and here.

The awareness of that gap came to the attention of evangelical theology outside its camp, through the work of the early Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann and those who followed them. These scholars, though disagreeing in many areas, had joined in emphasizing the kerygmatic nature of the New Testament, the importance of the interpreting subject and his or her pre-understanding in the act or process of communication. Making use of neo-orthodox dependence on existentialism, they saw the New Testament as more than some "objectively perceived" word from God. It did not convey timeless, eternal information unrelated to situations and hearers. The objectivism of liberal (or fundamentalist) scholarship was repudiated; it could not do justice to the biblical text.

Evangelical scholarship could not listen to these men. Their questioning of the authenticity of the New Testament message, their resorting to existentialism to provide a relevant word from Paul or Jesus, were trails down which the evangelical properly did not go. But as a side effect, their hermeneutical call for attention to how to speak the word of the Lord in the twentieth century was lost.

Only in the last decades of biblical research has the significance of the hermeneutical issue been recognized by the evangelical. Combined with a new sensitivity to what has been called "reader-response" and audience criticism, hermeneutics increasingly has come to be seen "as the operative engagement or interaction between the horizon of the reader. The problem of hermeneutics was the problem of two horizons."[2]

The two horizons were those of the biblical text and those of the twentieth century reader. And the hermeneutical question became not simply, "What did the Scripture mean to those to whom it was first given?," but rather, "What does the Scripture mean to me?" The earlier question of relevance has now become an essential part of the quest for biblical meaning. We are called to "grasp first of all what Scripture *meant* as communication from its human writers speaking on God's behalf to their own envisaged readers, and from that what it *means* for us."[3] The question, "What do these texts mean *to us*?," has given the old question of relevance a new importance. With it we now search for the nature of biblical "meaning" itself.[4]

In formulating the issue this way, the evangelical has not capitulated to the Barthian formula that Scripture becomes the Word of God to its readers and hearers. The biblical horizon remains the norm of the twentieth century setting. It is translation we undertake, not transformation. Whether we begin our hermeneutical adventure with problems raised by our world or with a struggle to understand the biblical author's intended meaning, we cannot finish the search without resorting to the final judge of our struggle, the Scriptures themselves. Whether we examine the text or our context, we are always aware that the text is examining us.

In this process, the heart of the hermeneutical task takes on a significance it did not have forty years ago. That heart does not lie simply in the effort to find the biblical "principles" that emerge out of the historical meaning of each passage. The Bible does not passively lie there while we search it for theories that we later fit realistically into our setting. The Word is a divine instrument of action. And our hermeneutical task is to see how it applies to each of us in the cultural context and social setting we occupy in God's redemptive history. We are involved in looking for the place where the horizons of the text and the interpreter intersect or engage.

Drawn into this search for fusion, then, has come a new sensitivity to human cultures and their role in the process of understanding. Both horizons are embedded in different cultures, sometimes comparable, sometimes not. How is meaning found when what is common sense in one culture is not common sense in another? The exhortation of Paul to obey one's master in everything (Col. 3:22) is addressed to a world of silent, involuntary slaves. But what does it mean in a culture where employers are to some extent partners in work with their employees? "If we say that the biblical command means today that we should give appropriate respect and loyalty to employers rather than unconditional obedience, are we watering it down, or are we rather expressing the nub of the matter in terms appropriate to modern working conditions?"[5]

A linguist asks a group made up of Africans and missionaries to tell him the main point of the story of Joseph in the Old Testament. The Europeans speak of Joseph as a man who remained faithful to God no matter what happened to him. The Africans, on the other hand, point to Joseph as a man who, no matter how far he travelled, never forgot his family. Differing cultural backgrounds prompted each of the two answers. Which is legitimate understanding? Are both?

In American hippie culture of the 1960s, long hair on boys had become the symbol of a new era, for some a sign of rebellion against the status quo. "For Christians to wear that symbol, especially in light of I Corinthians 11:14, 'Does not nature itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is degrading to him' (RSV), seemed like an open defiance of God Himself. Yet most of those who quoted that text against youth culture allowed for Christian women to cut their hair short (despite verse 15), did not insist on women's heads being covered in worship, and never considered that 'nature' came about by a very *un*natural means—a haircut."[6] Have our cultural, social meanings been read back into the author's intended meanings?

A New Agenda of Problems

From this discussion has emerged a new set of questions or, at least, an old set with new emphases. What are some of them?

1. Given the historical/cultural nature of divine revelation,

how can we better understand the process? And how do we relate this process to the inerrancy of the written revelation?

Up to the recent past, evangelicals have been able to keep separate the questions in inerrancy and hermeneutics. The affirmation of biblical veracity was seen as the foundation for understanding the record, a given presupposition isolated enough from exegetical study to stand on its own as a touchstone for truth. The touchstone still stands. But its isolation is questioned. The issue of inerrancy has become for many "essentially the question of *how* the evangelical is going to *do* theology while holding to biblical authority."[7]

This closer link between norm and the interpretation of norm has come as scholarship has paid more attention to the occasional character of Scripture. This is more obvious in dealing with the letters of Paul, for example. It is less obvious, but also equally true, of historical narratives like the Books of Chronicles or Luke-Acts. They are not first of all systematic, theological treatises, compendia collections of Paul's theology or Luke's. The theology they present has been called by some "task theology," theology oriented to pastoral issues, born out of the struggles of the church as it seeks to understand its task in God's history and man's world.

Previously formulated evangelical norms in this search for guidelines and hermeneutical clues can lead astray. Much of it was formulated in earlier discussions and still reflects the background of that agenda.

To understand their theological intention, then, the reader or hearer must understand the original intent of the text. The cultural particularity of the biblical message must be acknowledged in our search for its message for all people pf all cultures. Whether we speak of the "culture bound" character of Scripture or of its "culture relatedness," we are recognizing that "the eternal message of God's salvation was incarnated in a specific, cultural language of an ancient, historical people."[8]

But given this reality, can we never find permanent, culturally universal, normative teaching in Scripture? If cultural factors constantly interact to shape the message of Scripture, does not the authority of the text die the death of a thousand qualifications?

2. Given the cultural, social and world-view dispositions of the interpreter, how can we ever penetrate either to a true understanding of the text or of its significance in the here and now? How do we keep our private meanings from constantly intruding into the text as the final word?

In the past evangelicals have shared with liberal scholarship a deep appreciation for the merits and necessity of historico-grammatical exegesis in the exposition of Scripture. Often characterizing it as "objective" research, the evangelical has properly defined the rules for this research in terms of grammatical interpretation, formal analysis and sensitivity to the redemptive history that surrounds and defines the text.

Yet there have also been warnings against the ease with which the goal of "objectivity" can be reached. The work of Cornelius Van Til in the area of apologetics has called attention repeatedly to the myth of "objectivity." The translator engaged in eavesdropping on the Scripture in the world comes with what Van Til has called presuppositions that effect the process of listening. Van Til's warning has not been well heeded in the evangelical community. The popularity of a view of human reason as an hermeneutical instrument relatively untouched by sin or culture has helped to create an evangelical malaise.

Post-Bultmannian scholarship has, however, reinforced the warning against a purist self-projection of the interpreter's consciousness on the text. The interpreter brings his or her own built-in limitations to the process of understanding. Meanings are provided by pre-judgments or pre-understanding and become part of the hermeneutical search.[9] These warnings have also been underlined by a growing sensitivity on the part of the evangelical toward cultural anthropology and its awareness of the place of cultural settings in creating meaning and significance.[10]

So, "if the social context we move in tends to be politically conservative, it is surprising how, when we read the Bible, it seems to support separation of church and state, decentralized government, a 'no-work-no-food' concept, strong military, separation of the races, etc. On the other hand, others find it easy to see how concerned the Bible is with social problems, activism, poverty programs, integration of the races, demilitarism, and the general criticism of middle-America, especially when they live within a context of political leftism or liberalism."[11]

In short, we are all biased already in our thinking and knowing, bringing assumptions structured by our cultural preceptions, even by the language symbols we use to interpret reality. "We are, that is, 'interested' before we begin to read a text and remain active as we read it. We belong, to a great extent through language, to the theological, social, and psychological traditions that have moulded us as subjects and without whose mediation we could understand nothing."[12] D.A. Carson puts it bluntly: "No human being living in time and speaking any language can ever be entirely culture-free about anything."[13]

In sum, the idea that the interpreter is a neutral observer of biblical data is a myth. How then do we avoid hermeneutical discoveries based largely on what we have assumed? If what we hear from the text, and how we act upon what we have heard, is so heavily influenced by the baggage we carry with us in the process, how do we avoid the relativism of selective listening and selective obedience?

3. Given the hermeneutical gap separating the biblical world from ours, what interpretive clues will help us cross legitimately from what is culturally specific in our world? What are the limitations of "application?" How do we measure the comparable contexts of at least two cultural horizons?

How, for example, do we judge the wisdom of President Ronald Reagan's 1985 usage of Luke 14:31-32 in his support of administrative proposals for a continued military buildup? Reagan listens to Jesus asking, "What king, going to encounter another king in war, will sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes with twenty thousand?" And then the President crosses the hermeneutical gap by commenting, "I don't think the Lord that blessed this country as no other country has ever been blessed intends for us to some day negotiate because of our weakness."[14] Did Reagan stumble in the gap?

In the past evangelicals have dealt with such insecurities by appealing to a "plain meaning" in Scripture, a meaning that is clear and unambiguous. Cultural factors may "clarify"

that plain meaning, but they may not challenge it. A recent statement warns, "If an understanding of some biblical cultural context or some contemporary cultural form is used to contravene the plain meaning of the text, Scripture itself is no longer the authority.[15]

Increasingly, however, this appeal to "plain meaning" is being questioned by scholars within the evangelical community. It is said to be oriented basically to only one of the two horizons under discussion, that of the text itself. And it therefore assumes that our interpretation can fairly safely correspond with that of the authors of Scripture. But it makes it very easy for those interpreters or communicators unaware of the pervasive influence of their own culture on their own interpretations to slip unconsciously into the assumption that our interpretational reflexes will give us the meaning that the original author intended.

For example, when Jesus refers to Herod as a fox (Luke 13:32), our contemporary cultural reflex can interpret the plain meaning to be sly. But in the biblical world, the reference may be intended to signify treachery (cf. v. 31). When a well-off, white North American pastor or scholar reads, "Blessed are you who are poor" (Luke 6:20), hermeneutical reflexes tend to interpret the poor as the pious, the humble, those who do not seek their own wealth and life in earthly things. An American black believer, reflecting on years of racism and oppression, will identify more quickly with what are perceived to be the political and economic implications of the term. But, against the background of the culture of the Old Testament, the category may take on significance different from both readings.[16]

When Paul speaks of the husband as the "head" of the wife (Eph. 5:23), our hermeneutical reflexes think of a "boss" or "general manager" in a corporation. The dominant image becomes authority as lawful power to act, to control or use. And while something resembling this idea is argued as its exclusive sense in the New Testament[17], the term is also said to be used as that which nourishes the rest of the body, the fountain of life which feeds the body (Eph. 4:15-16, Col. 2:19). Which meaning is appropriate in Ephesians 5:23 cannot be determined by the cultural connotations we give it now, but by its usage in the passage. The plain meaning is not so plain.

A call for the plain meaning of Scripture assumes too easily a larger measure of cultural agreement between our two horizons than is sometimes there. And where the Scriptures use cultural, verbal symbols that are familiar to us (foxes, the poor, head), the danger of hermeneutical error becomes even larger. We may assume a number of cultural agreements on meaning which are not intended in the text. It is exegesis of the text and of our own culturally intended meanings that will provide a way out, not the plain meaning of only one partner in the understanding process.[18] With these assertions, we return to our earlier observation concerning evangelical hermeneutics: mistakes can occur in applying a scriptural injunction to conditions other than those to which it was truly applicable.

Given this obligation for a bicultural approach to hermeneutics (complicated by the presence of a third cultural set of perceptions when we begin communicating to others), does not the biblical message to our world lose its timelessness? Does not the normativity of Scripture disappear in placing undue emphasis on the meaning the text has for the people who read it? Are cultural universals dislocated in our study of the culturally specific?

The three questions we have cited (and there are more) raise legitimate questions about relativism. And they cannot be ignored. "What constitutes a valid interpretation if we loosen up the link between text and meaning? How is the Scripture our authority if its meaning for us is different from what the text actually says? What is to prevent this kind of two-sided hermeneutics from becoming a cloak for Scripture twisting and subversion? Have we not landed ourselves in the liberal camp by a circuitous route? Is it not fatal to give up total continuity between what the text says and what it means for us? Is not the door wide open to private revelations in interpretative guise?"[19]

Living in the Hermeneutical Spiral

Following the lead of Hans-Georg Gadamer, scholars associated with what has been called "the New Hermeneutic" have described this process of understanding as a hermeneutical circle. But the model has its problems. Evangelicals have feared that to bind text and exegete into a circle is to create a relationship of mutuality where "what is true for me" becomes the criterion of "what is true."[20] Instead, it has become more popular among evangelicals to speak of a hermeneutical spiral.

Behind the idea of the Spiral is the idea of Progress in understanding; it is closer to the biblical image of sanctification, of growth in grace. Within the spiral, two complementary processes are taking place. As our cultural setting is matched with the text and the text is matched with the cultural setting, the text progressively reshapes the questions we bring to it and, in turn, our questions force us to look at the text in a fresh way. As J.I. Packer puts it, "Within the circle of presuppositionally conditioned interpretation it is always possible for dialogue and critical questioning to develop between what in the text does not easily or naturally fit in with our presupposition and those presuppositions themselves, and for both our interpretation and our presuppositions to be modified as a result."[21]

The interpreter or communicator comes to the text with an awareness of concerns stemming from his or her cultural background or personal situation. "These concerns will influence the questions which are put to the Scriptures. What is received back, however, will not be answers only, but more questions. As we address Scripture, Scripture addresses us. We find that our culturally conditioned presuppositions are being challenged and our questions corrected. In fact, we are compelled to reformulate our previous questions and to ask fresh ones. . .In the process of interaction our knowledge of God and our response to his will are continuously being deepened. The more we come to know him, the greater our responsibility becomes to obey him in our situation, and the more we respond obediently, the more he makes himself known."[22] The process is a kind of upward spiral. And in the spiral the Bible always remains central and normative.

How does one avoid overstepping boundary limitations within the spiral? Are there guidelines that will help us?

False Leads

Previously formulated evangelical norms in this search for guidelines and hermeneutical clues can, we believe, lead astray. Much of it was formulated in earlier discussions and still reflects the background of that agenda. The battles fought in these verbal symbols were significant and still are. But, in the contemporary search, they can sometimes mislead.

One problematic reference is the term "principles," usually linked with adjectives like "eternal," "abiding," "timeless" or "normative." Often the term is associated properly with a desire to defend the integrity and canonicity of the biblical record. It continues to find use in responding to those practitioners of the "New Hermeneutic" who move toward subjectivity in their tendency to relegate the quest for the original author's meaning to a secondary place in the spiral. Behind

the term lies a commitment to the ultimate authority of Scripture and to the certainty of hermeneutical answers in seeking understanding. None of these concerns can be laid aside.

At the same time, the term can also carry meanings into the debate that do not aid in the discussion. If associated with the concept of the plain meaning of Scripture and an appeal to the clarity and sufficiency of Scripture, it can minimize the complexity in the Bible. Too often the word can be used to convey the implication (intended or not) that minimal modification of these "principles" will help us move with relative safety from our world to the biblical world and back again.

The Spirit does not play the role of some "God out of a box," a deus ex machina, undertaking some mechanical, hermeneutic homework assignment. The Holy Spirit is the God who addresses us, not an intermediary between God and us.

Linked to this usage is often a sharp distinction made between what are regarded as normative commands in Scripture and culturally conditioned injunctions. The interpreter's task is then seen as determining in which category a particular imperative or admonition belongs. The assumption is that the normative command yields a cultural universal, whereas the culturally conditioned injunctions are limited in their movement from then to now.

Again, there is much value in this distinction. Behind it is most assuredly the desire to maintain the authority of the Word in the face of some sort of cultural relativizing of the commands of Scripture. And flowing out of it can come related guidelines of much use for hermeneutics. At the same time, this distinction can easily encourage polarization. It appears to assume that historical and cultural particularity are essentially limitations, making all knowledge tentative and conditioned. Finding cultural universals then demands a search for those commands of Scripture with no, or as few as possible, cultural qualifications.

But all reading is necessarily culture-dependent, both in the text and in its translation by the reader. Even our human commonality as image of God (Gen. 1:27-28) does not eliminate that dependency. There is a "pre-understanding" written into the Bible as a partner in the hermeneutical dialogue that must be recognized. The Scriptures were not written only for our culture or for all cultures, but also for the ancient culture. And they assume, even in what to us are perceivable universals, a number of cultural givens which surround and amplify the text itself. Even such cultural universals as the Ten Commandments come in a wrapper of cultural conditioning. The prohibition of idolatry assumes a cultural world of polytheistic orientation. The forbidding of taking the name of the Lord in vain is structured in an animistic world where it was felt that word-magic, the manipulation of the world and the gods through some divine name, could be used for blessing or curse.[23]

And there is a further complication to the distinction between cultural universals and culturally conditioned injunctions. It is provided by the second partner in the hermeneutical dialogue, our own cultural understanding. Assuming we accurately assess the Bible's universals, how do we transpose them into our cultural settings with their own cultural ideals? What actions display kindness or self-control (Galatians 5:22-23) in a given setting? Comments a missionary, "An executive in an industrial country is being patient if he waits for someone ten minutes. A Bahinemo of Papua New Guinea would think nothing of waiting two hours. In one village of southern Mindanao, my daughter and I were given gifts equal to a month's wages, as a demonstration of their hospitality. In the U.S. the most lavish hospitality to a stranger seldom adds us to a day's wages."[24]

Perhaps, however, the largest problem with the distinction is that it can possibly lead to a rift between the reader and the text as that reader searches for cultural universals to which he or she feels committed to obey and culturally conditioned injunctions that one believes, in the nature of the case, are less normative. The distinction can have the effect of creating a "canon within the canon." And some evangelical discussions already hint at some danger in this precise area. Plans are made for distinguishing between the "central core" of the biblical message and what is dependent upon or peripheral to it, between what is "inherently moral" and what is not. The motivations behind the distinctions, as we have noted already, are laudable ones. No evangelical wants to deliberately twist the Scripture into any conceivable cultural wax nose. But there may be other distinctions to be made that will safeguard the gospel in a more useful way. If "all the Scriptures" could be utilized by Jesus to explain his ministry (Luke 24:27), surely we, as "witnesses of these things" cannot be restricted in doing any less. Cultural conditioning, maximal or minimal, does not stand in the way of the scribes of Christ seeking to bring forth things new and old from the treasury of their illumined understanding.

Some Clues from the Godward Side of Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics, on the one hand, is a human vocation to rightly handle the message of truth (II Tim. 2:15). In our struggles with Isaiah 53 and Revelation 20, it is still proper to ask, "How can I understand unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:31).

At the same time, our object of study is the Word of God and the goal of the process is sanctification (II Tim. 3:16-17). And, in this sense, hermeneutics also has a Godward side, a divine participation in the spiral that we cannot forget. The Lord, in the Scriptures, has accomodated Himself to the limits and needs of the human condition. As Father, he baby-talks to his creation in the Bible (Heb. 1:1-2), describing himself in human languages and human images. As Teacher, he fits his infinity to our small measure, bridging the great hermeneutical gap between himself and the creation by descending to meet the limitations of human nature. He is tutor, not tyrant, fitting the instruction where the pupil is. As physician, he stoops to heal the diseased creature. We do not wander through the hermeneutical spiral alone. God has accomodated even his ways of revelation to our condition.[25] And in that Godward accomodation in Scripture, there are guidelines to aid in our manward search for meaning and significance.

1. The most obvious is our recourse to Scripture for hermeneutical stability. Wherever we begin in the spiral, the only proper control for our judgments remains the original intent of the biblical text. "In the Protestant tradition since the Reformation, a central concern of biblical hermeneutics has been that the interpreter allows the text of Scripture to control and mold his or her own judgments and does not subordinate the text to the interpretive tradition to which the interpreter belongs."[26] The parameters of meaning, the outer limits beyond which our search for contemporary significance cannot go, are always defined by the biblical text.

This is easily said but often not as easily done. "Although everyone employs exegesis at times, and although quite often such exegesis is well done, it nontheless tends to be *only* when there is an obvious problem between the biblical texts and modern culture."[27] Witness the massive volume of biblical studies in the last decade centering on women and women's roles in home, church and society. These can be directly traced to the stimulation provided by the issues revolving around women's liberation in the world's cultures. The rise of the Gay Movement has played a similar role in our intense study of those texts dealing with homosexuality.

Hopefully we have reaffirmed one conviction on the part of the reader: Scripture stands, its veracity untainted by either the cultures in which it comes to us or the cultures to which it goes. God's revelation can make use of our cultures but always stands in judgment over them.

None of this is meant to say that learning to think exegetically is the only task in hermeneutics. But it is a basic task. A powerful safeguard against relativism and a barrier to inappropriate "application" remains the priority of exegesis in looking for meaning and significance.

Suppose, for example, in our congregation in Chicago there existed an absolute prohibition against women speaking or preaching in public worship. How would we judge its hermeneutical propriety? One key textual control would be the words of Paul, "Women should remain silent in the churches" (I Cor. 14:34). And our question would be, What did that text mean to the original readers at Corinth? Is it a prohibition "precise, absolute and all-inclusive?" Are its grounds universal, turning "on the difference in sex, and particularly on the relative places given to the sexes in creation and in the fundamental history of the race (the fall)?"[28]

The solution to the dilemma must come from a close examination of the text. What does Paul mean by "speaking" (v. 34)? Is its meaning "simple and natural," an obvious contrast to the silence or not speaking mentioned in the same verse? What of the probable parallel to "speaking" in verse 35, Paul's admonition to the wives "to ask their own husbands at home?" Does this indicate that Paul is not dealing with just any speaking of the women at all but rather with the kind of speaking that can be silenced by the women asking their husbands at home? Is the easiest way to understand the talking, in the light of verse 35, as that of "asking questions," not to preaching, teaching or prophesying?

How are we to understand words like, "they are not allowed to speak but they must be in submission as the Law says?" Is this an appeal to a general law apart from Paul's personal command? Perhaps to the Old Testament, as the term, "law," frequently does? Or to Gen. 3:16? Is not Paul, with this kind of language, stressing the universality of the prohibition?

Exegesis must wrestle with these difficult issues. Is the submission of the women, for example, submission to the husbands or to the law? If the latter, could "the law" be a reference to the order of worship, the women being thus exorted to avoid whatever unseemingly behavior had been disturbing the order of worship at Corinth? Or could it be that verses 34 and 35 are not in fact expressing Paul's own opinion but are quoting perhaps directly from a previous letter to the apostle, the views of one group within the church? The reference to "the law" then could be a reference to "some type of legalistic bondage newly raised by the Jewish community." And verse 36 is Paul's strong repudiation of these views. Or, again, are these verses a commentary on verse 29, "Let two or three prophets speak and let the others weigh what is said?" Women were then, in this view, taking part in judgment of the prophets, in the culturally shameful act of participation in public debate.

None of these alternatives, some more plausible than others, is meant to deny what has been called "the universality of the prohibition." Nor would our choices render the universal culturally relative. Most assuredly the choice would define the nature of the universal prohibition. Is Paul prohibiting all speaking by women in public worship? Or is he perhaps prohibiting the boisterous flaunting of a woman's new-found freedom in Christ and in his worship? Is he prohibiting women from passing judgment on the prophets and leaving themselves and the church open to misunderstanding from "those who are outside?" Or is it simply a judgment against culturally perceived immodest behavior?

Whatever we answer, only one of these alternatives could be used in support of a Chicago church's decision to bar women from teaching in public worship. But whatever our choice, the universalism of the prohibition is not lost in the text's cultural setting. A better understanding of the situation addressed makes more likely the possibility of a better understanding of the "universal" imbedded in the text.

2. Another Godward side to hermeneutics aids in our search for what has been called universals. We speak of the dynamic process of the self-revelation of God recorded in Scripture. There is a history of redemption that sweeps us in unity from the first promise of the gospel in the garden to its fulfillment in the new Jerusalem. God leads history to its redemptive consummation in cultural epochs determined by God's saving acts. And revelation follows that epochal structure, amplifying the unitary message of salvation as redemptive history progresses.

In this history of special revelation, cultural particulars are recognized through their links with God's redemptive epochs. But their significance is kept in place when the interpreter, a participant in the history of redemption, grasps the organic relation of these successive eras. They become part of the God-centered design.

Time and place, then and there, are points in the whole line or continuum of God's progressing work throughout the ages. They do not cloud God's self-disclosure. They are the setting which God gives it and out of which He shapes it. The promise of covenant faithfulness comes to childless Abraham in terms of numberless star children; to an enslaved race in Egypt it takes the form of divine deliverance from oppression (Ex. 3:12). To a David anxious to build a house for God it comes with the return assurance that God will build a house for David (II Sam. 7:11-14). At a meal, cultural eating habits become kingdom designations of the new covenant in the broken body and shed blood of Christ (Luke 22:19-20). God not only gives his transcultural word in culture; he uses the cultural moment and historical time to deliver that word to culture-bound people.

Culture does not simply provide the Lord with sermon illustrations and examples for spiritualizing fodder. It becomes

the providentially controlled matrix out of which his revelation comes to us. Part of the task of the discipline called biblical theology becomes the searching of that cultural particularity for those "universals" that link Rahab's act of faith to ours.

This redemptive history also fuses the horizon of the biblical text to ours. To quote Geerhardus Vos, "we ourselves live just as much in the New Testament as did Peter and Paul and John."[29] We share a common hermeneutical task, those of us "on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" (I. Cor. 10:11). We are part of the eschatological history of redemption.

Viewed in this light, the traditional sermonic distinctions between explication and application become highly suspect. Scripture presents no truth divorced from reality, no theory, information or doctrine which must be bent towards and applied to genuine life by the effort of preacher or teacher. Every hermeneutical struggle with the word in our cultural setting is, by the nature of redemptive history, "a link in the chain of God's acts" in history; the sermon "extends 'the lines of God's redemptive history to contemporary man.'"[30]

How does one determine what is culturally restricted to the biblical time period and not also to ours? In view of the progressive nature of Scripture, one looks at subsequent revelation and the light it throws on earlier texts. The goal of the development is never the correction of previous errors, for God does not lie. The goal in the consummation of all things, the restoration of creation to what it was intended to be.

Again, the biblical materials on women supply a useful sample. In keeping with the divine accomodation to the word, the Lord allows polygamy, even laying down rules for its regulation (Deut. 21:15-17). He permits divorce because of the hardness of our cultural hearts (Matt. 19:8), in spite of his divine creation intent for lasting monogamy (Gen. 2:24-25, Mark 10:4-9). Even in the New Testament, the pattern continues. Culturally perceived improprieties prompt Paul to warn against married women appearing in worship service with hair uncovered (I Cor. 11:4-7) or "speaking in church" (I Cor. 14:34-35). Our liberty in Christ must not be curtailed, but always it must be exercised with a view to possible cultural misunderstandings by "outsiders" (I Cor. 11:5, 13:14).

And yet, this accomodation is always accompanied by a divine eschatological polemic against the culture, pointing to Christ as the transformer, the re-possessor, of our social settings. Even within the old order, there is an "intrusion ethic," an intrusion into the present of the final order to be brought by Christ. Divorce, though permitted in the old order, is thus re-examined by Christ in the new day of the kingdom of God (Matt. 5:32, 19:9). In the new age of the Spirit, daughters as well as sons, servants both male and female, will be filled by the Spirit and be participants in the prophethood of all believers (Acts 2:16-18). Over against those forms of Judaistic chauvinism of the first century that prohibited women from being legal witnesses in law courts or studying the law of God, women will testify before men of the resurrection of Christ (Luke 24:1-10). They will be exhorted by Paul to study the covenant word, to "learn in silence" (I Tim. 2:11). Mary will be commended for staying out of the kitchen (a culturally defined role responsibility) and "listening to what he said" (Luke 10:38-42). It is not simply the context that "limits the recipient or application." It is the place of that context in the history of unfolding special revelation.

3. The Holy Spirit is an active participant in the hermeneutical spiral. He brings into being the first horizon of the text (II Peter 1:20-21). He opens our understanding (John 14:16-17, 26) and, through what has been called illumination in the past, "causes the letter of the Bible to become charged with life and to become the living voice of God to us."[31] The closed canon is opened to our world through the ministry of that Spirit.

All this means an activity of the Spirit in connection with both horizons. How can we bring the text over the hermeneutical gap of the centuries and watch it address our situation? Here too the Spirit leads us into all the truth and takes things of Christ and declares them to us (John 16:13-15).

The Word of the Spirit sets up parameters within which the people of God are to move. We ought to love our neighbor. We ought to do justice. We ought to help the poor. The Spirit of the Word gives guidance in our search for when and how. How can we love our neighbor in Russia or Honduras? How is justice done on our block when homeowners join in denying access to a black family to purchase a house? What does our commitment to the poor mean in a society where black salaries are sometimes 20% of whites in comparable jobs? The same Spirit who communicates the meaning of the text communicates also its significance for our setting.

This is not intended to make the Spirit into some kind of magical answering service floating somewhere between God and humanity in the spiral. The Spirit does not play the role of some "God out of a box," a *deus ex machina*, undertaking some mechanical, hermeneutic homework assignment. The Holy Spirit is the God who addresses us, not an intermediary between God and us.

And when He does address us, it is through the human perception of those whom he speaks. "When the biblical writers or Christian theologians speak of the testimony of the Spirit, this is not to invoke some additional *means* of communicating the word of God, but is to claim that a message which is communicated in human language to human understanding addresses man *as* the word of God."[32]

Here is another reason why we can trust the reliability of our perceptions of God's culture-related truth. The Holy Spirit's blessing makes the Bible a mirror in which the common people look and can cry, "We are pilgrims like Abraham; We are in bondage in Egypt and Jesus liberates us also." Without benefit of theologian or erudite language, Spirit-filled people can say, "God speaks my language."

Here is also why we sometimes see in a clouded and misguided way. The Spirit does not bypass our cultural and experiential conditioning, our finiteness and sinfulness. The Spirit works through all these conditioning factors, enabling us to see adequately. But all these things may hinder us from the message of the Spirit more adequately.

Some Clues from the Manward Side of Hermeneutics

Looking at the hermeneutical spiral from the human side is not as awesome and frightening when we remember the process begins with, is participated in and consummated by the Lord. Cultural particularities, in spite of their complexities, are not barriers to a sovereign God but merely part of His providential design. His word, set loose in his creation, does not return empty (Isa. 55:11).

At the same time, our participation in hermeneutics is real also. And, as we have noted, that is not a neutral participation without presuppositions theological, cultural or psychological. We cannot escape the influence of our preunderstandings in looking for meaning and significance. How then does my specific socio-cultural and psychological background aid or distort my reading of Scripture? That is a basic question.[33] Limitations of space allow us only a few suggestions.

1. Before a proper "fusing" of the two or three horizons can take place, there must also take place a "distancing." That is, "we must become aware of the differences between the culture and thought-background out of which the words of

the text come and that of our own thought and speech. Only so can we be saved from the particular naivete that H.J. Cadbury pinpointed when he wrote *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus.*"[34] We can and must bring our preunderstandings to a level of self-consciousness. In the light of day we then evaluate their appropriateness in relation to the cultural setting and to the text. Borrowing language from some liberation theologians, we must cultivate a "hermeneutics of suspicion."

Or again it may be a set of circumstances in which the providence of God places you. The situation may be new enough to make you look again at the Scriptures and new light breaks forth. My own Bible studies held with beggar boys in Seoul, Korea began to open my eyes to seeing the biblical category of the poor in a new light. And out of that experience my understanding of the Bible and my ministry were changed.

Or again: cultural value changes on a larger, social scale may create an atmosphere, planned by God's design, that shakes our equilibrium long enough and hard enough to "distance" us from our long held assumptions. The counter-cultural movement in the United States in the 1960s touched the ministry of a traditional church in California. And out of the influx of hippies and their conversion into "Jesus people" came a new understanding of body life in the church, an understanding that has since affected the hermeneutics of the wider church. In the same way, missionaries have testified to the new meaning they have found in Scripture, and its significance for life, that has come from immersion into a culture foreign to them. Old cultural ways of perception have been jolted by the block-buster of culture shock. And out of the shock has come a rearranged hermeneutics.

The popularity of a view of human reason as an hermeneutical instrument relatively untouched by sin or culture has helped to create an evangelical malaise.

Strange though it may seem, over-familiarity with the Bible can sometimes inhibit that process. "By a very young age most people with a Christian upbringing know the parable of the prodigal son so well that it loses all force for them. They *know* right from the beginning that the father will welcome the wayward son back home and that the father typifies God. The father's forgiving love is taken for granted, and so the original force of the parable gets lost. But the first hearers, who had never heard the story before, probably expected that the son would suffer some kind of chastisement from his father—just as the son himself expected. They would listen with bated breath to see just what would happen when he came near his home again. They were in for a surprise when Jesus reached the climax of his story, a surprise that we may fail to experience, with the result that the story loses its intended emotional impact."[35]

The same process of familiarity breeding misunderstanding takes place as we study the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9-14). Our familiarity with the text gives its surprise ending the wrong meaning and reduces its shock value for us. We know that Pharisees are hypocrites, understood by us in terms of insincerity. We have already identified them as stereotyped villains. In the same way, the Publican is not the greedy robber familiar to its first listeners; he has become the humble hero. The parable then, shaped by our cultural understanding, becomes "a reassuring moral tale which condemns the kind of Pharasaism that everyone already wishes to avoid."[36]

But to the first hearers, the Pharisee was an example of godliness and piety, themes underlined by Jesus with no irony or tongue in cheek intended. The shock then was over Jesus' affirmation of the justification of the wrong person, the ungodly. The double-take ending has been lost in the changed attitudes between now and then over Pharasaism.

These parable studies are more than samples of misunderstanding; they are also demonstrations of the technique of "distancing" we are commending at this point. The cultural, social expectations of the hearer are suddenly jolted by the surprising meaning of the speaker. And a reassessment of meaning is demanded. Using technical language, the horizon of the communicator (speaker) and the horizon of the receptor (hearer) suddenly intersect in a way that demands the receptor look again. The receptor must reevaluate what before seemed clear, familiar and firm. Like humor, the punch line works with our assumptions by questioning them.

There are many ways in which that may take place. Sometimes it will be a Bible verse, long nestled securely amid our preunderstanding, suddenly erupting into our consciousness to shake past assumptions. For Martin Luther it was a word from the past first addressed to the Romans, "The just shall live by faith." The encounter with Romans totally rearranged Luther's hermeneutics.

Extra-biblical disciplines have also initiated the irritation process that leads to "distancing." The behavioral sciences—psychology, cultural anthropology, linguistics, sociology, communications—are more and more shaking the cloistered world of the theologian and the church member. And out of this engagement, this intersection, new re-examinations are taking place in the hermeneutical spiral.[37]

For some evangelicals today, this interaction is viewed with special concern. Negative pictures of these disciplines fear the relativism they may bring. And sometimes this is related to what is called the "independent authority" of Scripture.

One of the dangers in this kind of response is that it can split apart the word of God in the Bible (special revelation) from the word of God in creation (general revelation). Is not creation also a continual source of God's truth (Ps. 19:1, Rom. 1:20)? Cannot wise men, touched by the Spirit, also unlock divine truth through disciplined study of the creation? The hermeneutical task, after all, does not allow us to isolate the world we live in from the world of the Bible.

2. Most of our discussion has concentrated on the distortions that our presuppositions bring to understanding. We also need to recognize that there are times when those same assumptions may aid us in the task.

In our turning to God, we are increasingly drawn by the Holy Spirit into a new cultural world. Our way of perceiving the cosmos, our worldview, begins to undergo reshaping. We are given a spiritual predisposition to understand the things of the Spirit (I Cor. 2:14). He makes over our values and perspectives. We become, in this process called conversion, increasingly familiar with the structure of biblical narrative. What seemed like nonsense before now becomes the only sense we can make of things. We see more and more the world as God wants us to see it, from creation to fall to redemption to consummation.[38]

In short, we find ourselves more and more operating in a context increasingly comparable to the design of God. Our predispositions to understand what God says and does be-

come more closely proximate to His vision of reality. God has not changed but we have. Two horizons are fusing in our "heart" level, the control box that touches also our pursuit for meaning and significance.

Now, a sentence like "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23) matches our new predispositions. We no longer tie it solely to our next door neighbor's children but to ourselves. Axeheads that float, fish that swallow men, city walls that collapse with the blowing of trumpets are no longer answered with a scientific smerk and wink. One man's death and resurrection for others was foolishness; now it becomes the wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:23-24). The biblical context remains the same. But ours has been changed by faith.

On still another level our presuppositions can aid us. This occurs when there are comparable contexts in the two horizons. "Whenever we share comparable particulars (i.e., similar specific life situations) with the first-century setting, God's Word to us is the same as His Word to them."[39]

If the culture of the first horizon is at any given point very similar to ours, our interpretational reflexes are going to serve us fairly well. At this point the element of truth in the idea of "plain meaning" becomes visible. No matter then how we understand the image of the husband as the head of the wife, the call for a husband to love his wife as his own body, to love her to the point of self-sacrifice on her behalf (Eph. 5:28-29), conveys meaning fairly easy to transpose to twentieth century Philadelphia or Buenos Aires. We may struggle with Peter's judgments against "braiding of hair, decoration of gold and wearing of robes" (I Peter 3:3). Is he condemning ostentation and extravegance? Or does it cover eye makeup and hair coloring also? But his description of the "unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit" (3:4) is much easier to grasp.

Such cultural universals as the Ten Commandments also intersect with our interpretational horizons fairly easily. "Creation mandates," so called because they were given by God before the fall, by their very nature may be extrapolated into our world with a minimum of struggle. The call to marry, to cultivate the earth and rule over it, to work, defines the duties of Adam and Eve and of Harvie and Dorothy Conn. And it defines them without a heavy measure of complications.

> Similarly, if a Scriptural statement relates to experiences that are common to all mankind our culturally-conditioned interpretational reflexes can be of considerable help. When the Scriptures say "go," "come," "trust," "be patient," and the like, they are dealing with experiences that are common to all human beings and therefore readily interpretable. Likewise with respect to illness and death, childbirth and rearing, obtaining and preparing food, and the like.[40]

Again, though, we must be wary. Identifying comparable contexts requires careful judgment of both the biblical setting and our own. And we may go astray in either or both of these areas.

3. It will help and not simply hinder us to acknowledge that there are levels of cultural particularity in both horizons and therefore levels of particularity in interpretation. Much of the biblical material, for example, is presented in cultural forms that are very specific to cultural practices quite different from ours. In fact, because of their specificity to the cultural agreements of the first readers, these materials communicated with maximum impact. But they have minimum impact on us.

Generally evangelical writers today see cultural bound perceptions as a handicap. They spin off guidelines for hermeneutics that discard the peripheral for the core, or divide the theological from the moral, in their search for the usable. More general rules can also be brought into play. The priority of didactic passages over the record of historical events, of more systematic passages with those less so, are used.

With modifications, many of these standard arguments can be very useful. We do not speak against them *per se*. But they are often negative in their attitude toward culture's specificity. What we are concerned to underline here is the value, not simply the danger, of cultural particularity. Cultural perceptions are not to be obliterated in our search for the significance of the Bible for us. They aided the first-century reader in better grasping the significance of revelation for them. And they do for us also.

Paul's sensitivity to cultural perceptions in his day was acute. In I Cor. 11:14 he writes, "Does not even nature *(phusis)* itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is dishonor to him?" And, in speaking of women without some sort of hair covering in worship, he calls it "shameful" (11:6), not "proper" (11"13). The same word, "shameful," appears in his evaluation of "women speaking in the church" (I Cor. 14:35) or his sensitivity to "even mentioning what the disobedient do in secret" (Eph. 5:12).

What does Paul have in mind in these passages? Is he concerned over violation of some kind of Stoic "natural order?" We think not. He seems most naturally to be referring to the general order of human cultural values that designate a practice as seemly and becoming, unseemly and unbecoming. And he is arguing for the inappropriateness of a Christian's practice in the light of cultural mores.

His goal in this is not the obliteration of cultural perceptions as a hindrance to hermeneutics. Nor is he promoting the rule of cultural perceptions over hermeneutics. It is an understanding of cultural particularities as an aid to the application of the law in our day. There is what Herman Ridderbos calls a relativizing element in such appeals to custom,[41] a positive concern for the judgment of people that we must seek, not to expunge or ignore, but to listen to and find.

This cultural relativism is not the kind that allows a person to do anything that conforms to his or her own culture, anything that party pleases, as it were. Paul's ultimate motivation here and elsewhere is his concern that the church not give unnecessary offense to the world. He remains apprehensive in so many of the texts we have cited that the church will be perceived by the world's cultures as licentious in its consciousness of our new freedom in Christ. We are to have a good reputation with outsiders.

As an exhibition of our calling to love "those who are without" (I Cor. 5:12-13, Col. 4:5, I Thess. 4:12), we are obliged "to respect that which is right in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12:17). Paul's focus here is on the need for maintaining a deportment that approves itself to all people[42] (cf. II Cor. 8:21). The cultural norms of behavior governing Christian conduct are norms that even unbelievers recognize as worthy of approval. When Christians violate these cultural proprieties, they bring reproach upon the name of Christ and upon their own profession. This does not mean that the unbelieving world prescribes cultural norms of conduct for the Christian in, for example, his or her attitude to women. But it certainly means that the Christian in determining the will of God for here and now must have regard to what can be vindicated as honorable in the forum of men's and women's judgment. Again, Paul is nodding to the insights of human culture as a proper partner in the hermeneutical process. Stamped on those things honorable and just is the effect of the work of the law written on the hearts of all people (Rom. 2:15).

Cultural perceptions are not only problems of hermeneutics; they are also aids. And again, as always, it is the task of

exegesis of the Scripture to make the final determination.

Conclusions

Obviously this article leaves many questions unanswered. We have left out a study of the nature of language as it touches the question of culture and relativism. We have done very little to define specifically the levels of cultural particularity. And still waiting is the massive question of what might be called extrapolation. That is, what legitimate procedures allow us such an extended application of the text as to cover nineteenth century slavery practices or twentieth century biomedical ethics? What are the ground rules for "a developmental hermeneutics?"

But hopefully we have reaffirmed one conviction on the part of the reader: Scripture stands, its veracity untainted by either the cultures in which it comes to us or the cultures to which it goes. God's revelation can make use of our cultures but always stands in judgment over them. The hermeneutical spiral should not leave us dizzy in confusion but always moving ahead. The Bible still shines "forth as a great, many-faceted jewel, sparkling with an internal divine fire and giving clear and adequate light to every pilgrim upon his pathway to the Celestial City."[43]

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[1] Paul Woolley, "The Relevance of Scripture," *The Infallible Word*, N.B. Stonehouse and Paul Woolley, eds. (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian Guardian Publ. Corp., 1946), p. 204.
[2] Roger Lundin, Anthony C. Thiselton and Clarence Walhout, *The Responsibility of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Comp., 1985), p. 95.
[3] James I. Packer, "Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics," *Scripture and Truth*, D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1983), p. 337.
[4] For an overview of evangelical participation in these discussions, consult: J. Julius Scott, Jr., "Some Problems in Hermeneutics for Contemporary Evangelicals," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 22, no. 1 (1979): 66-67. Cf. also: Grant R. Osborne, "Preaching the Gospels: Methodology and Contextualization," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27, no. 1 (1984): 27-42; Gordon D. Fee, "Hermeneutics and Common Sense: An Exploratory Essay on the Hermeneutics of the Epistles," *Inerrancy and Common Sense*, Roger R. Nicole and J. Ramsey Michaels, eds. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), pp. 161-186.
[5] I. Howard Marshall, *Biblical Inspiration* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Comp., 1983), p. 105.
[6] Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All It's Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1981), p. 59.
[7] Robert K. Johnston, *Evangelicals at an Impasse* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), p. 2.
[8] Alan Johnson, "History and Culture in New Testament Interpretation," *Interpreting the Word of God*, Samuel Schultz and Morris Inch, eds. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), p. 131.
[9] A careful survey of the development of the idea of "pre-understanding" will be found in Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Comp., 1980), pp. 103-114, 133-139, 303-310.
[10] The volume that has created this awareness, more than any other, is Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979).
[11] Johnson, "History and Culture in New Testament Interpretation," p. 133.
[12] Lundin, Thiselton and Walhout, *The Responsibility of Hermeneutics*, p. 27.
[13] D.A. Carson, ed., *Biblical Interpretation and the Church: The Problem of Contextualization* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984), p. 19.
[14] Quoted in: "Reading the Bible Ecumenically," *One World* 8 no. 4 (March-April, 1985): 11.
[15] J. Robertson McQuilkin, "Problems of Normativeness in Scripture: Cultural Versus Permanent," *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preuss, eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1984), p. 222.
[16] A helpful approach to this text will be found in: Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publ. Comp., 1962), p. 188. For another, and more debatable, perspective on these same perceptions, using the discipline of cultural anthropology, consult: Bruce J. Malina, "Interpreting the Bible with Anthropology: The Case of the Poor and the Rich," *Listening* 21, no. 2 (1986): 148-159.
[17] A lengthy essay by Wayne Grudem examines this question of the meaning of "head" in Greek literature and argues that the connotation of "source, origin" is nowhere clearly attested. See: "Does *kephale* ('head') Mean 'Source' or 'Authority over' in Greek Literature? A survey of 2,336 Examples," *The Role Relationship of Men and Women* by George W. Knight III (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), pp. 49-80.
[18] A rich discussion of "plain meaning and interpretational reflexes" will be found in Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, pp. 131-134.
[19] Clark Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1984), p. 215.
[20] For evangelical criticisms of the circle model, consult: Anthony C. Thiselton, "The New Hermeneutic," *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, I. Howard Marshall, ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Comp., 1977), pp. 323-329.
[21] Packer, "Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics," p. 348.
[22] John R.W. Stott and Robert Coote, eds., *Down to Earth: Studies in Christianity and Culture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Comp., 1980), p. 317.
[23] Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Comp., 1948), pp. 154-155.
[24] Quoted in Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, pp. 248-249.
[25] Ford Lewis Battles, "God Was Accomodating Himself to Human Capacity," *Interpretation* 31 (1977): 34-36; Clinton M. Ashley, "John Calvin's Utilization of the Principle of Accomodation and Its Continuing Significance for an Understanding of Biblical Language" (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972), pp. 91-121.
[26] Lundin, Thiselton and Walhout, *The Responsibility of Hermeneutics*, p. 80.
[27] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All It's Worth*, p. 21.
[28] B.B. Warfield, "Paul on Women Speaking in Church," *The Outlook (March, 1981): 23-24.*
[29] Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 326.
[30] Sidney Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts* (Toronto: Wedge Publ. Foundation, 1970), pp. 91-93, 232.
[31] Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, p. 163.
[32] Thiselton, *The Two Horizons*, p. 90.
[33] This is only one question out of several asked by Alan Johnson in his extremely helpful essay, "A Response to Problems of Normativeness in Scripture: Cultural Versus Permanent," *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preuss, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1984), pp. 257-282.
[34] Packer, "Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics," pp. 339-340.
[35] Marshall, *Biblical Inspiration*, p. 99.
[36] Thiselton, *The Two Horizons*, p. 15.
[37] For samples of this interaction, consult: Charles Kraft, "Can Anthropological Insight Assist Evangelical Theology?," *Christian Scholar's Review* 7 (1977): 165-202; Harvie M. Conn, *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds: Theology, Anthropology, and Missions in Trialogue* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1984), pp. 330-338.
[38] For a full treatment of this four-fold structure of biblical narrative, consult: Henry Vander Goot, *Interpreting the Bible in Theology and the Church* (New York and Toronto: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2984), pp. 67-78.
[39] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All It's Worth*, p. 60.
[40] Charles Kraft, "Interpreting in Cultural Context," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21 (1978): 362.
[41] Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Comp., 1975), p. 463.
[42] John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Comp., 1959, 1965), 2: 138.
[43] Woolley, "The Relevancy of Scripture," p. 207.

Power Evangelism
by John Wimber with Kevin Springer (Harper and Row, 1986, 201 pp., $13.95). Reviewed by David Werther, graduate student in philosophy, the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

For years the lack of sophistication in the presentation of Pentecostal/Charismatic theology has been lamented. Many expected former Fuller Seminary professor John Wimber to provide the church with a carefully developed theological statement on the question of signs and wonders. Unfortunately *Power Evangelism* touches on many topics, but fails to give any of those topics adequate treatment.

Wimber devotes a chapter to each of the following topics: the kingdom of God, power encounters-clashes of God's kingdom and satan's kingdom, power evangelism-evangelism enhanced by demonstrations of God's power, worldviews, and miracles in the early church. Chapters also inlcude illustrations from Wimber's experiences in the ministry. Herein lies one of the central flaws of this book. One could not do justice to G.E. Ladd's view of the kingdom in fourteen pages or treat the topic of worldview in twenty-five pages, even if personal illustrations were left out. Wimber's efforts to treat his topic comprehensively have resulted in a series of significant theses presented in outline form.

Wimber does present some theses worthy of further development. As the title suggests the author's concern is with the church growth and the way in which church growth is related to demonstrations of God's power. Third world countries are experiencing church growth at a dramatic rate whereas Western countries are lagging behind. The crucial element in third world evangelism is the free operation of God's Spirit. Western Christians are berated for quenching the Spirit.

Wimber may very well be correct in charging Western Christians with quenching the Spirit and maintaining that the growth of the church in the West will be retarded until there is an openness to dynamic works of the Spirit. But again one wishes that Wimber clearly developed his theses. For example, in addressing the question of "the baptism of the Holy Spirit," a crucial question with regard to openness to the Spirit's activity, Wimber limits his comments to less than three pages and notes:

> I have discovered that the argument concerning the baptism of the Spirit usually comes down to a question of labels (p. 145).

Even when addressing topics that seem to be paramount importance for his theory of church growth, Wimber is content to leave the discussion at a superficial level.

If one wants to find clear careful presentations of the kingdom of God and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the authors to turn to are still G.E. Ladd and James D.G. Dunn. *Power Evangelism* may be useful to theological neophytes, but it will be inadequate for the work of seminarians and pastors. Those who wish to fill in the outline presented in *Power Evangelism* have a lot of homework to do.

God and Science: The Death and Rebirth of Theism
by Charles P. Henderson, Jr. (John Knox Press, 1986, 186 pp., $10.95). Reviewed by Richard H. Bube, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, Stanford University (CA).

Charles P. Henderson, Jr., pastor of Central Presbyterian in New York and Assistant Dean of the Chapel at Princeton University, deals in this book with some of the major arguments advanced against belief in God, is generally effective in turning them inside out, and considers possible new evidence for theism. Although he spends considerable space on indicating why classical "proofs" for the existence of God do not fulfil that role, the author still insists throughout the book on speaking of a "new proof for the existence of God," and to attempt to formulate such a new "proof," rather than simply recognizing that to speak of such "proofs" is to misuse language. He concludes the entire book by saying that:

> When it is shown that faith is internally consistent, coherent, and responsive to new insights which arise at the forward frontier of knowledge, then one has in fact established a new proof for God.

But this is to use language in a misleading way. When we speak about establishing "proofs," when what we have really done is to supply further evidence, or, as the author states a few lines further, "to state the case for God in the strongest possible terms," we misrepresent our own arguments and lead others to misunderstand us as well.

The book starts with a chapter dealing with the thought of Einstein (unfortunately entitled, "New Proof for the Existence of God"), and then completes its first half with analyses of the thought of Freud, Darwin and Marx. In the next two chapters, the author turns to two prominent modern contributors to theological thought: Teilhard de Chardin and Paul Tillich. There follows a chapter on Fritjof Capra's and Gary Zukav's attempt to interpret modern science in terms of Eastern religion, and finally a chapter of the author's own conclusions.

Henderson's purpose in this undertaking is wholly commendable, namely to resolve the stance of conflict between science and religion. Many of his conclusions are closely related to those of informed evangelical Christians, but sometimes he arrives at them in a roundabout and ambiguous way, attributing weak positions to Christian writers and thinkers, which those committed to integrating authentic science and authentic theology have not held for some time. The reader often gets the feeling that the author is completely out of touch with informed evangelical hese issues.

he surprising assertions of the two references to Bonhoeffer as surrendered completely to scientific atheism; the claim that Paul Tillich was the first major theologian to see the threatening implications of seeing God as a finite being alongside other finite beings; the claim that "erotic love ... plays a central role in the religious life itself," and that "all forms of sexual expression are merely repressed spirituality;" the mistaken, or at least too broad, indictment of traditional (by which what is meant?) theology by saying that, "The high and all-powerful God of traditional theology can influence the world only by intervening in its natural processes and contradicting its natural laws;" the implications that Colossians 1:15-17 does not intend to declare "the supremacy of Jesus" are often nonsensical and paradoxical in relation to our commonsense view of the world .... The parables clearly transcend all conventional distinctions between good and bad, beautiful and ugly, birth and death;" and the conclusion that "a nuclear war which rendered this planet uninhabitable would be a precise refutation of the Judeo-Christian faith." We should no doubt grant to the author the possibility that in some of these cases, of which I have quoted a few here, he is speaking dramatically for emphasis or in exaggeration, rather than anticipating a careful interpretation of each statement.

The book has value for those who would like to see a different perspective on the thought of Freud, Darwin and Marx, as seen through the eyes of a Christian theologian. If it can lead a wide spectrum of Christians to a more healthy integration of authentic science and theology, it will make a useful contribution. Christians already committed to such an integration may be puzzled, however, at why the author regards his major conclusions to be new.

Unleashing The Church: Getting People Out of the Fortress and Into Ministry
by Frank R. Tillapaugh (Regal, 1982, 224 pp., $5.95). Reviewed by Samuel W. Henderson, Minister of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), currently serving two congregations in Selma, AL.

Tillapaugh's thesis is that the U.S. evangelical church is crippled by a "fortress mentality" which tends to assume that the life and ministry of the church consists of whatever programs take place within the four walls of the church building. He believes that excessive preoccupation with institutional maintenance and an almost exclusive focus on the middle class have made this part of the church "ministry-poor." He cites the extraordinary growth of parachurch organizations as evidence that the laity are concerned for needs they see around them, but often unable to find outlets for their concern through the programs of their churches. His plea is to get the bored and frustrated laity out of the church "housekeeping" committees and into the front lines of creative person-to-person ministry.

As a model, Tillapaugh offers the Bear Valley Baptist Church of Denver, Colorado. The book is a collection of pastoral insights arising from this congregation's all-out effort to take seriously the priesthood of believers, structuring itself around the priestly ministries of its members. This led Bear Valley church to a decentralized "entrepreneurial*" approach to ministry. Individuals and small groups in the congregation are encouraged to identify church and community needs and to discover creative ways to fill them. This approach has fostered a very high degree of grassroots initiative and enthusiasm among members. This is evidenced by rapid numerical growth, an extremely diverse congregational life, and an almost bewildering variety of ministries at the local, denominational, and international levels.

One may or may not agree with Tillapaugh's critique of the institutional church. Fortunately, he devotes most of his effort to telling the story of one congregation's renewal in worship and ministry. This is not a book about church growth, or social action, or evangelism, or leadership development per se, though it touches on all these areas in a substantive way. It is the story of one congregation's pilgrimage of discovery into what it means to be the church. As such it offers a wealth of encouragement and practical wisdom to congregations of most any size and ecclesiastical persuasion.

* reviewer's term, not author's

The Uses of the Old Testament in the New
by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. (Moody Press, 1985, 270 pp., $12.95). Reviewed by Elmer A. Martens, Professor of Old Testament, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary.

This book is about interpreting the Bible. Increasingly it is held, even by evangelicals, that the way in which the New Testament used and interpreted the Old Testament is too culture-bound to provide a present-day model of interpretation. Kaiser disagrees. His book aims to show that when the New Testament quoted the Old Testament, it did so in line with the intended meaning of the Old Testament writer, and that the NT writers played fair with the Scripture they quoted. It would follow, then, that moderns can use the same methods.

Walter Kaiser, Dean and professor of Old Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, is a prolific writer. Several chapters are reprints or adaptations of previously published articles. A few such as "Understanding Old Testament Types as 'Types of Us,'" are new. In 11 chapters Kaiser offers selected examples within a five-fold classification of the NT uses of the OT: apologetic (Ps. 16/Acts 2:29-33; Hosea 11:1, Jer. 31:15/Matt. 2:15, 18); prophetic (Malachi 4:4-5/Matt. 11:10; Joel 2:28-32/Acts 2); typological (I Cor. 10:1-2; Ps. 40:6-8); theological (Heb. 3:1-4; Amos 9:9-15); and practical (Deut. 25:4/I Cor. 9:8-10; Lev. 19/James).

Kaiser knows the current scholars in the field, but also quotes from 19th century writers, especially Willis Beecher, whom he often follows. The list of authors cited extends over four pages; the bibliography is 20 pages in

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length. A welcome feature is the frequent reference to insights and citations offered by Kaiser's students. While grammatical niceties of Hebrew and Greek are sprinkled throughout, the book aspires to a popular, rather than technical style.

Kaiser leaves few comfortable. He disallows the pesher method as an explanation for NT usage of the OT. Those who champion the idea of *sensus plenior*, namely that a text can have a fuller meaning beyond the consciousness of the original author, are rebuked, in part, with the arguments of Bruce Vawter. Dispensationalists who resort to double fulfilments (the two mountain-peak theory) will hear their claim criticized. In its place Kaiser puts "generic fulfilment," by which he means that prophecy deals with the entire plan even though segments of it may be selected for emphasis. For that matter, Kaiser also takes on covenant theology and all others who try to make sense of the Old Testament by the "spiritualizing" method.

He contends that a text has a single meaning—a meaning defined by authorial intent. Prophets, for example did not "write better than they knew;" they knew the meaning of what they wrote.

Kaiser's method certainly strengthens the continuity between the testaments: one of the best chapters compares the meaning of Amos 9:9-11 with Acts 15. Kaiser concludes that the OT clearly saw the Gentiles to be part of God's people—one people, not two. Other conclusions, correct in my opinion: the law, excluding ceremonial and cultic aspects, has validity for today's believer; the "days of the Lord" are repeatable.

Kaiser's book is an appropriate check to those who are all too ready to write off New Testament uses of the OT as non-normative for today. By following C.H. Dodd's "principle of context," Kaiser brings great rigor to exegesis. He has marshalled impressive evidence. He has chosen difficult texts to illumine his proposition that there is a single meaning discernible in any text and that the NT writers did not impose alien meanings on the texts they quoted. The discussion of actual texts rather than only interpretation theory is commendable. His position is clearly articulated and promoted: "We urge Christ's church to adopt the single meaning of the text and a generic meaning for prophecies . . . ."

Can one perhaps claim too much for NT usage? Would it really take away from the force of the quotations if some of the NT writers had utilized the OT charismatically, much as a preacher uses Scripture? The most problematic chapter is the one that deals with Messianic predictions. Despite an extended argument about a single meaning in Ps. 16 (cf. Ps. 40), which entails David having a "clear prevision of Christ's resurrection" one is left wondering if the text is not over-interpreted. More attention to the meaning of "fulfilment" especially in the sense of "correspondence" would allow both the original meaning and a later application.

While Kaiser forces one to exegete more carefully, do we really want to draw the lines so tight? But before we decide we must get back to the text. That is good. Here, then, is a most helpful and provocative book.

Losing Ground
by Charles Murray (Basic Books, 1984, 323 pp., $23.95). Reviewed by John P. Tiemstra, Professor of Economics, Calvin College.

This very influential book argues that the welfare, educational, criminal justice, and civil rights policies adopted by the federal government in the middle 1960's have worsened the plight of the poor. Murray argues for a social policy that would provide free education from kindergarten through graduate school at the institution of your choice, and would return responsibility for aid to the working-aged poor to state and local governments and private agencies. Many reviews of this book have already appeared. Most economists are willing to accept Murray's assumptions about the goals and motivations of poor people but find his research to be technically inadequate. I will leave aside the technical questions, and instead take up the underlying assumptions of the book.

For the first two-thirds of the work, Murray very consistently assumes that the motivations of poor people are no different from those of middle-class people, and that therefore the differences in their behavior are caused by their circumstances. This is not very flattering to the poor, however, since Murray assumes (along with most economists) that *everybody* is lazy and selfish. I believe that a Christian must object. The aspirations of the poor are indeed the same as everybody else's, but surely these include good work, independence, security, a comfortable family life, and a better chance for the children. In many cases poor people are forced to sacrifice these longer term goals for the sake of short-term survival, but that is often the fault of poorly designed government programs.

Later in the book, the author shifts ground on this issue. He admits "status rewards" to the list of motivating factors. He claims that the poor no longer derive status from working, since the working poor are not independent, but receive benefits (like food stamps and housing assistance) from the federal government. It is not clear that the working poor ever were independent, however, and Murray does not offer an argument about why being dependent on federal entitlement programs offers less status than dependence on family help, private charity, or local government relief. It would seem that the federal programs offer more dignity to the poor than begging for handouts from relatives or standing in line at soup kitchens. The poor work for the same reason the rest of us do: for status, for money, for a sense of purpose and belonging, and for the sake of advancement in the future. The federal programs often discourage work, but that is because they offer *too little* assistance to the working poor, not too much. The sad fact is that many jobs in our economy do not offer any likelihood of advancement. There will always be people who can not support themselves, some of them people who work, and it is not sufficient for us to say to them, "Be warm and fed."

Murray finally completes the contradiction by claiming a distinction between deserving and undeserving poor people. The deserving poor are those who work, or at least are willing to work. Of course, this distinction is meaningless if poor and nonpoor alike work only for financial and status rewards. For Murray, only the "deserving" ones are morally entitled to welfare. But if we in fact give them assistance, we destroy the status rewards for working. And then, if we don't give them assistance, but give assistance to those who apparently can't work, we destroy the financial rewards for working.

Given the box that he has worked himself into, it is probably not surprising that Murray wants to abandon the whole federal welfare structure. In making this proposal, he ignores the history he presents in his early chapters. The federal programs were put in place because the traditional private and local approach to the poverty problem did not work, mostly because insufficient resources were devoted to it. Murray points out many irrationalities in current programs, but does not give any reason to think that inadequately funded but locally run programs would be any better. In fact, his whole argument is that any program will work equally bad. So why change?

Losing Ground is full of such contradictions. Sometimes one suspects that the author started with his conclusions and worked backward, because the argument is so tortured. Ultimately, we must reject the premises of the book. The poor deserve help because they are made in the image of God, and if we allow them to remain destitute we dishonor God's image. People generally prefer to work because they are made in the image of God, the maker of all things; and we must provide jobs and a decent income to all who are capable of working. Those who merely want a free ride on the back of society are such a small number that they are not worth worrying about.

Charles Murray has given us a critique of the welfare system that is based on a faulty view of human nature and motivation, and so it is ultimately unpersuasive. The reforms he suggests would only return us to the totally unsatisfactory situation that prevailed in this country before the legislation of the 1960s. In view of the Christian duty to insure the right of the poor to an adequate living, Murray's proposals are irresponsible.

Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines, 1898-1916: An Inquiry Into the American Colonial Mentality
by Kenton J. Clymer (University of Illinois Press, 1986, 267 pp.). Reviewed by Paul Heidebrecht, Ph.D. graduate in History of Education, University of Illinois.

A growing number of scholars in recent years have begun exploring Philippine-American history, and given current developments in the Philippines, there is also an expanding audience of interested readers. Not

only are the Philippines the scene of several military initiatives by the United States during the past century, but they also represent one of the earliest objects of U.S. imperialism. The colonization of the Philippines marks a critical stage in the emergence of the United States as a world power. Accompanying this takeover of the islands was a major Protestant missionary effort, unusual only because it was spearheaded by Americans almost exclusively.

University of Texas historian Kenton Clymer has provided an intimate glimpse into the motivations and personal experiences of the first contingent of missionaries who entered the Philippines on the heels of the U.S. occupying forces in 1898. Every Protestant denomination sent its own workers, and while in total these individuals were an insufficient missionary force, they nevertheless represented a powerful Protestant stake in a land that had been subjected to four centuries of Spanish Catholicism. Clymer has culled through the personal records of all the missionaries who served in the Philippines between 1898 and 1916, the year in which the U.S. Congress determined to give the Filipinos their independence (that year also marked a transition of first-generation missionaries to a younger force). The resulting portrait, while necessarily narrow in focus, brings to life the tensions that these missionaries felt spreading both the Good News and the "good life" of American civilization.

Clymer's work offers some important insights. The missionary endeavor in the Philippines is often cited as an example of remarkable comity among Protestant denominations. The Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Disciples and the Alliance divided up the territory, and according to most accounts, avoided competing with each other. Clymer acknowledges the general spirit of unity among the missionaries but demonstrates from their own journals and letters that bitter disputes and frequent ad hominem attacks upon rivals characterized the first two decades. Some Protestant missions, like the Episcopal and the Seventh-Day Adventist, never joined the Evangelical Union and operated independently (the Episcopalians were the only communion that did not proselytize among Catholic Filipinos).

Clymer traces the attitudes of the Protestant pioneers toward the Filipinos and uncovers an undeniable strain of racism. Inbred with the Anglo-Saxon propensity to note racial differences and create hierarchies among cultural groups, the missionaries indulged in unfavorable generalizations about Filipino society. There were exceptions, of course, but many of them returned to the United States disillusioned because of the apparent failure to raise the standards of Filipino life. Immorality, gambling and drinking among Filipinos distressed the missionaries particularly.

The response to cultural deficiencies in Filipino culture by the Protestants paralleled the Progressive agenda in the U.S. Inferior people became the beneficiaries of social uplift efforts of high-minded reformers. Athletics was introduced into Protestant schools to build self-discipline and eliminate the "mañana habit." Industrial education was another favorite antidote to the problem of indolence.

Not only were the Protestant missionaries patronizing toward the Filipinos, but they were positively opposed to the nationalist spirit that led to violent skirmishes with American troops. Viewing themselves as knowledgeable observers, many of the missionaries lobbied U.S. congressmen and cabinet officials to "go slow" in granting independence to the islands. The Episcopalian bishop, Charles Brent, was a close friend of Theodore Roosevelt and urged the President to keep the Philippines under American control. But the Protestants were disappointed by Woodrow Wilson whose administration encouraged the movement toward Filipinization.

The missionaries also resisted nationalistic urges within the Protestant churches. Their low opinion of Filipino abilities and morality made them unwilling to share leadership with the rising generation of Filipino believers. Missions executives in the United States tended to be far more accomodating than their representatives in the field.

The distinct impression that Clymer's account leaves is of dedicated but conservative Protestants who were unable to keep pace with the Filipino drive for independence and the more crass materialistic goals that justified the American presence in the Philippines. Many sacrificed their health, if not their lives, in a genuine desire to win souls (they accounted for almost 100,000 converts during this early period) but they were always plagued by an ambivalent relationship to the society which they had invaded.

Yet, as Clymer argues, the Protestant missionaries made an impact. Perhaps more than any other Americans, they carried the values and priorities of the pan-Protestant American culture to the Philippines and helped keep this nation within the American orbit. Ironically, Filipino Protestants may have learned too well; many were strong supporters of the Marcos regime during the last decade.

A Tale of Two Churches: Can Protestants and Catholics Get Together?
by George Carey (InterVarsity, 1985, 172 pp., $5.95). Reviewed by Bob Moran, CSP, Catholic Chaplain, McGill University, Montreal, Canada.

George Carey, the principal of Trinity Theological College in England, has given us a book which is both challenging and gracious: challenging in its willingness to ask the hard questions, and gracious in its positive and well-informed assessments of contemporary Catholicism.

Using throughout a poetic image of the confluence of waters to describe rapprochement between Protestants and Catholics, he begins with "The Renewing Stream," a concise account of the major reforms in Catholicism coming from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). In the second chapter, "Troubled Waters," he reviews the Reformation period, focusing on four central areas of disagreement. First, who saves—Jesus, Mary, or the Saints? Second, how is one saved? This is the faith-works polarity. Third is the tension between those who upheld the Bible as the source of revelation and those who held that Tradition was an equal source of revelation. The fourth issue is access to salvation, the function of the Church in providing grace.

Carey expands each of these issues in Chapter Three. His discussion and footnotes reveal the breadth and depth of his reading; he includes helpful material coming from recent interfaith theological discussions. In the fourth chapter, "The Common Reservoir," he highlights major areas of agreement: our belief in God, reliance on Scripture as God's inspired Word, the importance of the Church, the centrality of faith, and the value of Holy Communion.

In Chapters Five and Six, "The Reservoir of Rome," and "Protestant Wellsprings of Faith," he depicts the positive aspects of each tradition. He is irenic yet frank in confronting points of contention. In Chapter Seven, "All at Sea," he offers fresh definitions of the four criteria for the true Church, one, holy, catholic and apostolic. He concludes the book by giving some estimate about the chances for unity, as well as some advice for achieving it.

Viewing this book with Roman Catholic eyes, I find much to recommend, yet I need to haggle somewhat. In Chapter Two, "Troubled Waters," in discussing the means of salvation (p. 31), he makes a passing reference to indulgences, leaving the impression that they were forgiveness for sin. Late medieval clerical hucksters may have taken this view, but the official teaching was different. Indulgences were supposed to lessen what was called the "temporal punishment" due to sin. In concept, the indulgence was not intended to provide pardon for sin.

In the third chapter, "Currents of Faith," he refers to the troubling Marian doctrines, Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. Carey finds in Pope Pius XII's (1943) encyclical *Mystici Corporis* exegetically incorrect assertions about Mary. Carey's reaction touches a deeper issue, the way Catholics and Protestants have done and perhaps still do exegesis. Avery Dulles' perceptive book *Models of Revelation* leads me to think that the Catholic and Protestant traditions have at times converged, at other times diverged in the way they used the sacred texts. Dulles has good suggestions for easing the painful divergence.

Chapter Four, "Common Reservoir," is well done, yet I was startled to see on p. 71 a critique of the idea of the infallibility of the Church which was based on the sinfulness of the members. Catholic approaches to the notion of the Church's infallibility argue that while many individuals did and do sin, we cannot doubt Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit's guidance. We view the Holy Spirit's work as that of preventing the Body of Christ from corrupting or losing key truths needed for salvation by men and women of every age. We do not argue that the Holy Spirit has

directly inspired or prevented error in every particular formulation of teaching, sermon or theological tract.

In Chapter Six, "Protestant Wellsprings of Faith," Carey provides on p. 114 a brief description of the Mass. I am uneasy with his phrase, "the benefits of salvation are made directly through the Mass, which is considered to be an extension of the cross." The latter half of the phrase, "extension of the cross," is true provided one adds the phrase, "and resurrection." The first part of the phrase leaves the unfortunate impression that we believe the Mass to be the only source of the benefits of salvation. Even before the Second Vatican Council we believed that faith, prayer, and the other sacraments brought us into contact with the benefits of salvation. We also believed then and now that God's giving of grace is not confined to or restricted by the sacramental framework.

In the closing chapter, "Harbor in Sight," I find much that is good, but I am puzzled by his assertion that the path to unity is barred on both sides by minority groups in well-established and well-entrenched positions. It would have helped me to learn which minority groups he means. I find it hard to imagine that a minority of Southern Baptists prevents them from union with Catholics, or that a minority of Catholics prevents us from deeper fellowship with them.

Carey, while pointing to the common ground between us, has put his finger on old issues which are unresolved: Marian doctrines, infallibility of the Church, etc. He suggests that the notion that there is a hierarchy of truths—some, let us say, more peripheral than others—might be a bridge toward unity. I like this suggestion even though there are perhaps difficult truth claims involved.

Finally, beyond the old issues, it must be said that new obstacles to unity arise. If prominent Protestant church figures give public notice of their inability to believe in the Resurrection, more than a minority of Catholics might find this an obstacle. Catholic reluctance to ordain women has become a new obstacle to unity with certain Protestant denominations who see here a matter of biblical truth and justice.

Having haggled, I am nonetheless happy for this good work which I recommend to the general reading public. Seminarians or theological students would find it a good beginning on some topics, and can find a fuller motherlode in the footnotes.

Students

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Creationism on Trial: Evolution and God at Little Rock
by Langdon Gilkey (Winston Press, 234 pp., $12.95). Reviewed by Richard H. Bube, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, Stanford University (CA).

Langdon Gilkey, author of the classic *Maker of Heaven and Earth* and Professor of Theology at the University of Chicago Divinity School, served as a "theological witness" for the American Civil Liberties Union at the "creationist" trial in Little Rock, Arkansas, December 7-9, 1981. In this marvelous book Gilkey gives us, in about two-thirds of the text, his personal experiences related to the trial, and then reflects for the remainder on the significance of the issues. It is a book that anyone even remotely concerned about the interaction between "scientific religion" and "religious science" should read carefully.

In the first three chapters Gilkey gives us his experiences as he prepares for the trial and is deposed by the opposition lawyers. Believing that the enactment of the proposed law posed a major threat to religion, the teaching of science, and academic freedom, Gilkey was ready to serve as a witness. He shares with the reader his reactions to the material representing the background of the trial and his conclusion that "creation science represents a quite contemporary, even (alas) 'up-to-date' synthesis of both modern science and contemporary religion, a synthesis to which each one had substantially contributed" (p. 40). He also sees another synthesis that goes beyond the trial and threatens our future:

> Our present political life illustrates another unfortunate but also very modern form of union: that of contemporary right-wing economic and imperialist politics on the one hand, combined with old-time fundamentalist religion on the other hand, both seemingly intent on forming a "Christian, capitalist America." As fundamentalism has joined with science to form creation science, so the politics of the Moral Majority is dominated by a union of fundamentalism with modern conservative social theory-and regrettably, neither one seems about to go away (p. 41).

The dramatic experience of the deposition is laid out in fascinating detail, in which a witness faces the opposition lawyer's questions before the trial with the knowledge that any small error or misjudgment may become the basis for a major assault during the actual trial.

The next three chapters cover the details of the trial itself, up to the moment when Gilkey had to leave to return to Chicago. His own testimony is given us in detail, and it is a model of clear statement and delineation both in respect to the nature of science and to the relationship between science and religion. Anyone who has faced public interview can empathize with the problems in stating clearly and fairly under stress to avoid misunderstanding; in fact, anyone facing public questioning about these issues could hardly do better than review Gilkey's testimony. Especially telling in the trial itself are those moments when advocates of "creation science" are charged with heresy because they seek to talk about creation without talking about God as Creator, and when they are charged with following in the footsteps of Stalinist Russia where ideology attempted to rule scientific activities.

Part II of the book is entitled, "Analysis and Reflection: The Implications of Creation Science for Modern Society and Modern Religion." It consists of two chapters, the first of which analyzes the interactions between "Science and Religion in an Advanced Scientific Culture," and the second of which deals with the religious significance of creation. I would like to share many of the cogent arguments set forth. I will, however, content myself with sharing a couple of remarks to indicate the nature of the approach:

> Creation science embodies a common error of our cultural life, that all relevant truth is of the same sort: factual, empirical truth, truth referent to secondary causes—in a word, scientific truth" (p. 171).
> Despite this almost universal agreement among religious leaders, *the wider public*, both those who attend church and those who do not, remains apparantly quite unaware that there is no longer any such conflict between science and religion. . . . The century-old rapprochment between science and theology is the best-kept secret in our cultural life (p. 187).

> In a "Time of Troubles" such as we are entering, the religious dimension tends to expand and, unfortunately, to grow in fanaticism, intolerance, and violence; science and technology tend accordingly to concentrate more and more on developing greater means of destructive and repressive power. This combination represents, as we can all agree, a most dependable recipe for self-destruction (p. 206).

Gilkey gives us no one-sided attack on fundamentalism in the name of science; rather he provides us with a careful analysis of both science and religion and the problems one encounters when one forgets the religious dimension of all human endeavor.

The book concludes with 25 pages of Notes, and two Appendices giving the text

of Arkansas Act 590, and the Judgment by the Federal Court at the conclusion of the trial.

Beyond its immediate relevance, the book can be strongly recommended as a clear presentation of the proper and improper uses of scientific and religious approaches to life and its problems.

God So Loved the Third World: The Biblical Vocabulary of Oppression
by Thomas D. Hanks (Orbis Books, 1983, 152 pp., $8.95). Reviewed by William C. Williams, Professor of Old Testament, Southern California College.

This book, written in much the spirit of R.J. Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, sets before it as its task the formulation of a biblical theology of oppression (pp. 3-4). It begins with an analysis of the most common Hebrew word roots that convey in some way the notion of oppression. A case in point is the first root, *'ashaq*. Hanks points to Ecclesiastes 4:1, where the tears of the oppressed and the power of their oppressors make it clear that the root *'ashaq*, in this passage at least, clearly means "to oppress." Since there is no serious dispute about this meaning for the root, so far, so good.

In a similar manner, Hanks analyzes nineteen other Hebrew "roots" found in the Old Testament (*yanah, nagas, lahats, ratsats, daka', 'anah, tsar-tsarar, tsarar-tsar-tsarah, tsug, dhq, zw', hamots, kff, matsor, 'awwatah, 'otser-'etser, qshh, tolal,* and *tok*).* In each of them he finds an articulation of oppression in some manner or another.

Having satisfied himself that he has adequately demonstrated that there is a wide variety of biblical material and terms in the Old Testament expressing the concept of oppression, Hanks now pauses to reaffirm his belief in the truthfulness (=inerrancy) of Scripture. Then he turns to an examination of oppression in the New Testament. The first word he takes up is *thlipsis* (which he curiously transliterates *thlipsis*). He takes sharp issue with the lexicons for omitting "oppression" from the list of meanings for this word. Instead, he says, "they are content to use softer, more ambiguous terms such as 'affliction', 'tribulation,' 'difficulty,' 'suffering,' and the like" (p. 47).

Hanks does not follow his treatment of *thlipsis* by a systematic treatment of other words meaning oppression in keeping with his model of Old Testament treatment. Instead, he turns to Luke-Acts, appealing to passages such as Acts 10:38: "[You know] how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed (*katadunasteúo*) by the devil, for God was with him."

The third movement in Hanks' treatment is an analysis of the Reformation in terms of liberation theology. He concludes that the Reformation failed to curb the abuses of justice in the church. The church, with few exceptions, had sided *with* the power structure, rather than against it. And the Reformation did not change this.

Hanks, like Sider before him, says some things that need to be heard by evangelicals, even though they are not pleasant and though they will make the hearer uncomfortable. Surely in this world of misery and suffering, Christians should be the first to be touched by the need of others, but all too often they are the last. One has the feeling that the author is struggling to break free from the middle-class perspective that he attributes to evangelicalism, while at the same time avoiding the Marxist presuppositions that underlie the more radical of the liberation theologians.

One could easily quibble with Hanks over minutiae. One could note that a number of the words adduced as "roots" are not roots at all, but words. One could also note that he confines his research to the lexicons and ignores the scholarly journals entirely. But it would be a mistake to dismiss him so cheaply. The issues he raises are real ones, and the discomfort they occasion is not to be so casually shrugged off. They must be tasted, even savored, to be appreciated.

On the other hand, one has the feeling that in reading Hanks, one is reading, not a biblical theology, but a tract, and that the author is an evangelist determined to persuade, rather than a scholar in search of the truth. I cringe when twenty Hebrew roots are leveled to mean "oppression." I do not agree that the definitions "suffering" or "affliction" are always "softer" or "more ambiguous" than "oppression." I find that there is a great deal of what seems to me to be over-simplification of a highly complex issue: why are people poor? The author's answer, "oppression," with hardly any qualification, seems to be *an* answer, but I remain unconvinced that the issue is that simple. And while I feel oppression needs to be addressed by the church, I believe it does not constitute an entity in and of itself. Instead it becomes a part of a larger deficiency: a lack of a well thought out theology of economics (such as C.J.H. Wright attempts to present in *An Eye for an Eye* [IVP, 1983]), governance (fertile areas for such an examination would be the recent studies on the Kingdom of God in the OT [e.g., J. Gray's *The Biblical Doctrine of the Reign of God*, T & T Clark, 1979]), and power.

* The transliterations are Hanks' own.

The Parish Help Book: A Guide to Social Ministry in the Parish
by Herbert F. Weber (Ave Maria, 1983, 112 pp., $3.95). Reviewed by Samuel Henderson, Minister of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), currently serving two congregations in Selma, AL.

But can it happen in *this* parish? Author Herbert Weber encourages us to believe it can, developing broad guidelines for helping parishes to develop social concern and to act on it. His extensive parish experience shows itself in much shared pastoral wisdom on the kinds of change processes to be nurtured in individuals and congregations if viable social ministries are to be initiated and sustained.

The book is not addressed only to "dyed-in-the-wool" social activists, but to all Christians. Weber begins with examples of glaring social needs and gently challenges church members to see themselves as part of the solution, asking, "If not us, then who?" The book provides suggestions on getting started, using resources, and sustaining ministries over the long haul. Suggestions are weighted toward personal and institutional charity, but Weber does introduce the need for structural justice concerns in addition to charity.

The volume contains some very helpful reflections on the nature of ministry. Examples are chapters on establishing connections with persons in pain, the need to know one's self as well as community needs, and the relational dimensions of the helping process. The author avoids the long lists of ministry possibilities and resources that fill many such books. His aim is to help develop a mindset and a dynamic at the parish level that will lead to creative local surveys of needs and resources. This is a most worthy goal, but as a basic handbook, this work would have been strengthened by a few more concrete suggestions, models, and resource lists. The balance of the book might also have been improved somewhat by more extensive treatment of the needs and possibilities for making structures and institutions more just.

The *Parish Help Book* is nonetheless a well-rounded, practical, and encouraging guide to social ministry. It is broad enough to prove helpful to individuals or groups at varying levels of social concern and ministry experience.

Living Faith
by Jacques Ellul (Harper & Row, 1983, 287 pp., $9.95). Reviewed by David W. Gill, Associate Professor of Christian Ethics, New College Berkeley.

Having just re-read *Fear and Trembling* by Soren Kierkegaard, I am again struck, on this re-reading of *Living Faith* by Jacques Ellul, by the powerful similarities between the two authors. In both style and content, Ellul is the closest thing I know to a 20th century Kierkegaard. Neither SK nor Ellul can be understood out of context; they both write passionate, contextually-engaged theological reflections, not abstract doctrinal manuals.

For SK, the context was the deadening influence of a philosophical system (Hegelianism). For Ellul it is the crushing influence of the politicized, technological society. Aside from this difference of historical context, and some differences in terminology, I can find no difference in basic perspective between SK and JE on the meaning of faith. It is no surprise that Ellul explicitly avows his appreciation of SK in this volume: SK has "given us the best, the most genuine, the most radical account of the existential reality of faith" (p. 106).

The original title of Ellul's book (in French) translates as "Faith at the Cost of Doubt." Ellul's tactic throughout this study is to set up a vivid contrast between "belief" and "faith." This is paralleled by his discussion

of "religion" and "revelation." "Belief" and "religion" are human phenomena, expressing the human quest to reach up to (or construct) a god. They are useful, even necessary, components of human experience—though not for those reasons to be considered good in a Christian sense. They are corporate phenomena, uniting adherents and providing answers to basic human questions and needs. Whether in the form of traditional religion or modern "secular" religions (e.g., Marxism), these phenomena are booming today. The problem is that they serve as substitutes for the true relation to God, rather than as the avenues they usually claim to be.

By contrast, "faith" is the individual response to God's Word, to revelation, to God's questions for me. Faith "isolates" me, separates me out of the crowd and locates me in living relation to a living, speaking God. Faith brings about holiness (otherness). While religious beliefs are often reassuring, true faith is always accompanied by elements of doubt and uncertainty (SK calls it "dread," and "fear and trembling").

But the living God to whom faith relates me turns out to be the loving God. His challenge to me must therefore be expressed in my daily life in terms of concrete acts of love to my neighbor. Faith, for Ellul, must be an unconditional, gratuitous relationship to God, i.e., it is not exercised "for the sake of" one result or another. Nevertheless, a good bit of Ellul's argument is intended to show the desparate need in our contemporary world for people whose lives are guided by the transcendent God. If Christians will live out this kind of faith, this "cosmic lever" may just open up some new possibilities for a world closed and locked into a deadly downward cycle.

Ellul's study has three parts: an opening, rambling dialogue on the status of belief (and to a lesser extent faith) in the modern world; a middle section more expository and analytical in form; and a closing chronicle of the horrors of a world without (enough) authentic faith.

Ellul does not conceal his angry rejection of the theological and ethical positions of many of his contemporary French thinkers. Nor is it difficult in these sections to find many personal laments and a few "I told you so's." One should note as well, however, Ellul's bouquets to several writers and his confession that above all he is attacking himself for failing to live the consistent life of faithful response to God's revelation.

As always, I find that Ellul's thought is brilliant, insightful, and vastly more stimulating and helpful than most contemporary Christian writers. I think that in basic outline his dialectical thought and his sense of the paradox inherent in all of truth and life are on target both biblically and existentially. But I think his arguments are unnecessarily extreme and are thus, for many readers, unacceptable. Three examples: revelation and Scripture, the individual and the crowd, and faith and belief.

"We should never think of the Bible as any sort of talisman or oracle constantly at our disposal that we need only open and read to be in relation to the Word of God and God himself" (p. 191). "The Bible . . .is never automatically and in itself the Word of God, but is always capable of becoming that Word . . .in a way denied to all other writings" (p. 128). Nothing is clearer *in practice* than that Ellul is profoundly submissive to the text of Scripture from cover to cover. But his fears of a "paper pope" and of separating Scripture from its Author do *not* require the dichotomy espoused by his theory. A letter from me does not cease to be my word when you are bored with me, out of daily relation to me, etc. Still less need this be the case with God who has *chosen* to put his word in writing. There are better ways of stressing the essential transition from written Word of God to obedient reception of God's command.

So too, Ellul is brilliant in describing the individual standing in faith before God—and the poverty of the crowd. But it is too extreme to suggest that authentic faith always isolates (and only love reunites). It is common faith (true faith) that draws the community of faith together (sometimes without much love in evidence to begin with!). What is missing is an adequate view of the church, the body of Christ, for which there is "one faith" (Eph. 4:5)—not just "one love"—creating community.

Finally, it is too strong to oppose faith and belief (allowing Ellul's definitions) as intransigently as Ellul does. The point, it seems to me, is that our articulation of Christian beliefs must always be rigorously subordinated to what Ellul calls faith. Not eliminated or opposed—subordinated and corrected!

Having made these critical observations, I must stress again, in conclusion, that on the whole Ellul's discussion is brilliant, timely, and essential. It is on target and breathes the spirit of Holy Scripture. It is a powerful antidote to many flaws in our thinking. It is not a *sufficient* statement; in my view, however, it is clearly *necessary*.

BOOK COMMENTS

To Be A Revolutionary
by Padre J. Guadalupe Carney (Harper & Row Publishers, 1985, 473 pp.).

Padre J. Guadalupe Carney has written an autobiographical account of his "metamorphosis" resulting from his experiences and involvement in the peasant agrarian struggles of Central America. *To Be A Revolutionary* is a chronicle of his experience written for the Latin America Campesino (translated from Spanish). While not graduate reading level, it does offer a thorough introduction to Campesino struggles from their prespective, clearly outlining their relationship to the Roman Catholic church and the state.

Padre Guadalupe or Father Jim Carney was born in Chicago, IL in 1924. His story begins with recollection of his childhood and teen years, focusing on his decision to enter the priesthood as a Jesuit Missionary.

He shares his theological-socio-economic transformation, which he calls his metamorphosis, by reliving scene-by-scene the events,

David Bosch

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situations and the theological-psychological struggles that led to his joining a revolutionary force in Honduras as a chaplain and his eventual death, the circumstances of which to this day are unknown.

To Be A Revolutionary offers excellent insights into the struggles many Christian individuals in Central America must go through. Carney gives excellent observations on peasant life, Latin American popular religion and culture. His information on Honduran agrarian reform and local political struggle are outstanding, as they provide an excellent political history.

—Rev. Luis Cortes, Jr.

Coming Home, A Handbook for Exploring the Sanctuary Within
by Betsy Caprio and Thomas M. Hedberg (Paulist Press, 1986, 279 pp.).

For the pragmatist, the busy student or pastor, the "concerned with the practical person," yet for one aware of the deep, deep inner desire to "come home" this book is an invitation, a *roadmap*, that entices us away from a formless wandering to discover our roots, our own authentic being, a promised land, familiar and mysterious.

Deeply founded in the psychoanalytic insights of C.G. Jung, this volume is a fantastic melange of aphorisms, fables, Scriptures, stories, nineteenth century illustrations and drawings, philosophical quotations, dreams, all probings of the "inner world of the soul," dialogues between consciousness and the unconscious, without giving the content of the unconscious *too much* (the authors' emphasis), focusing on the "both-and" rather than the "either-or" of mysticism, psychoanalytic cultivation of the inner world, practical evangelism and seeking justice-peace-practical-applications of the concerned Christian.

Many fascinating insights are here, such as the prayer, "Thank you, Lord, for sending that rotten person into my life this morning-I'd really like to punch him in the nose, but I know there's a reason he's here right now . . . and that you are helping me learn one more thing about myself. Please keep me from breaking his neck-and, as I said before, thanks a lot . . . I think . . . Amen (and please don't do it again)" (p. 112).

Or again, "the teachings of all the world religions tell us that, yes, we can live that life of intimacy with the Divine Lover in this lifetime" (p. 191). Or the story of the 51 year old who dreamed of a cross made of circles, on a 45 degree angle, "it was as if Jesus had said to me, 'Lay down your cross. Let go. It's time to rest.' "

Just for pleasure and humor, read this book. And suddenly your Self-centered (in the Jungian sense, the Self is the core of our being that we call the dwelling place of God) Self will say, in a wondering voice, "my detective has found the (or another) Holy solution to my mystery."

Finally, as one who drives through Ute Pass (Colorado) in the high mountains every day going to work, this spoke to me, "people travel to wonder at the mountains, the sea, the stars, and pass by themselves without wonderment" (p. 64).

These authors are Roman Catholic religious, and strongly Jungian oriented, and this volume reflects the best from Jung and the Catholic faith, and is extremely useful, particularly for the activist evangelist, in the inward search "for home" in God.

—John M. Vayhinger

The Spirit of the Earth
by John Hart (Paulist Press, 1984, 165 pp., $8.95).

John Hart, associate professor of religious studies at the College of Great Falls, Montana has set forth a reflection on the relationship of land ethics and Christian theology in his work, *The Spirit of the Earth*.

After establishing the case of poor prior stewardship of American land resources, he attempts to develop "ideas with the hope that people who are unaware of problems of land ownership and use might become educated about them and inspired to work in their own contexts to resolve them, and that people who are aware of them might find . . . a theoretical base for their ongoing labors to promote an equitable distribution of and care for the land and its resources." His theoretical base is an attempted blend of American Indian and Judeo-Christian ways of seeing the land.

Though his Catholic theological bias is somewhat limiting, *The Spirit of the Earth* provides a helpful starting place for a theology of land use. As well Hart makes no attempt to mask his sided socio/political sources which lead him to some of his "obvious" conclusions.

The summation of the ten "Principles of Land Stewardship" from the *Catholic Bishops' Statement on Land Use* and the twenty steps for land reform are helpful inclusions which make this book a helpful reference for relevant study and discussion in ecological ethics.

—Steve Moore

The Rise of Moralism: The Proclamation of the Gospel from Hooker to Baxter
by C. FitzSimons Allison (Morehouse Barlow, 1984, 250 pp., $8.95).

C.F. Allison, the Episcopal Bishop of South Carolina, first published this work in 1966. Now it has been reprinted by Morehouse Barlow in an attractively priced paperback. The book's thesis is that the theology of English Episcopalianism underwent a thoroughgoing humanization over the course of the seventeenth century. Allison argues that Anglican divines early in that century (for example, Richard Hooker, John Donne, and Lancelot Andrewes) had succeeded in establishing a view of salvation which balanced "doctrine and ethics, Christian dogma and morals, justification and sanctification." This view, moreover, was distinct from both the Catholic soteriology of the Council of Trent and Reformed predestinarianism on the continent. Later in the century, however, Anglical theologians (especially Jeremy Taylor and Richard Baxter) moved away from this balance to a much more self-confident view of human capabilities. The result was a moralism which stressed natural capacity and which pointed toward eighteenth-century deism and twentieth-century secularism.

Allison may have overestimated the difficulties of seventeenth-century Calvinism. He could also have tied theological developments more closely to other intellectual and social changes. Yet this is still a very good book which clearly presents a message which is as sobering for the late twentieth century as for the late seventeenth century. That message tells how easily Christian theology with a proper place for human activity slides toward humanitarianism lightly veneered with Christian language. With this book Allison performs the same worthwhile service for Anglican theology that Joseph Haroutunian offered for American in his telling book, *From Piety to Moralism: The Passing of the New England Theology* (1932).

—Mark A. Noll

We Confess The Church
by Hermann Sasse (Concordia, 1986, 136 pp., $11.95).

This is a work of undoubted expertise. "Hermann Sasse (1895-1976) [the book's jacket tells us] is widely recognized as one of the 20th century's foremost confessional Lutheran scholars."

At the same time, the work's lack of scope makes it as much as useless for ecumenical dialogue. The title quite properly could read: *We (Lutherans) Confess (a highly Lutheran view of) the Church*. Throughout, the primary authority to which Sasse has recourse is not scripture, is not the history of Christian thought as such, is not even the theology of Martin Luther. His prime authority is found in the classic confessions of Lutheranism.

For those who stand with him in this premise, the book would probably be very helpful. For any who would feel a need to question or test the premise, there is hardly left room to do so. Sasse's approach does not invite dialogue.

—Vernard Eller

Moses, A Psychodynamic Study
by Dorothy F. Zeligs (Human Sciences Press, 1986, 460 pp.).

Dorothy Zeligs, a practicing psychoanalyst in New York with a doctorate from Columbia University, has written often in the arena of the Bible and psychoanalysis. In this study of Moses, she uses analytic methodology to reveal "a genuine human being as well as a giant of the Pentateuch," a law giver with whom much of the ethical base of both Judaism and Christianity rests. Especially the religious student preparing for *leadership* of the people of God, will identify with Moses' struggle through his weaknesses and strengths.

With great respect for both Freud and Biblical Higher Criticism, Zeligs is not paralyzed by either but assumes "an underlying unity in the Biblical Theme that goes beyond theoretic diversity of the sources," (p. 16) with a cohesiveness of purpose and meaning that had long been central in Judeo-Christian belief, especially among evangelicals. This man of the Pentateuchal story is described as *The Hero* (i.e. Rank's mythic hero) and she uses *empathy* as base for the story itself.

This volume is a relief after our youthful simplistic reading of the Scriptures and what the so-called Higher Critics taught us in theological school. Many of the critical problems of the text with their baffling features in the modern world, our author resolves through analytic explanation, i.e., identification, transference, sexuality in relation to incestuous objects, rivalry between fathers and sons, the return of the repressed, etc. Yet, making sense for who we believe in the trustworthiness and authority of the Bible, and deepening our faith in the accuracy of the Scriptures.

A key paragraph summarizes this fascinating book, "what becomes clear is the lifetime quest for greater intimacy with the Deity and the conflicting fear of such closeness, with its dangers of the loss of self-identity. There is a struggle, with the wish for fusion, for being one with God, and the anxieties inherent in such a situation" (p. 21). The same struggle is here that the psychotherapists finds in treating students studying for ministry and Christian service, the identical anxiety and depression, whose healing comes through personal Christian faith.

Dr. Zeligs has kept up with current historical and archeological discoveries and finds "a distinctive feature of Hebrew biblical life that its leaders and heroes were psychologically understandable beings," (p. 409) a factor known to those of us training in both psychology and theology.

This volume is a valuable purchase for any seminary student with an interest in the integration of historical Christian faith and its psychological applications to human behavior.

—John M. Vayhinger

Trouble Enough: Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon
by Ernest H. Taves (Prometheus Books, 1984, 210 pp., $19.95).

Popularly written yet scholarly, this account is divided into two parts. The first (three-fourths of the book) is a history of Joseph Smith and early Mormonism up to 1844 when Smith was assassinated and the faithful laid plans to leave Nauvoo, Illinois beginning in 1846. Part two explains stylometry and applies it to parts of the *Book of Mormon* and the *Book of Abraham*, concluding that there is "no evidence of multiple authorship" (260), thus indicating that Smith may have written the whole corpus.

The burden of *Trouble Enough* is "to set forth the truth" (xi) while being both sympathetic to Mormonism yet faithful to the demands of historical evidence. Taves, with a Mormon background but not a Mormon, succeeds admirably in a field where the historian is confronted at every point with "pervasive conflict and discrepancy between Mormon and non-Mormon data" (15). Following Smith from birth in 1805 in Sharon, Vermont through all of his peregrinations westward, Taves presents a well-documented account of carefully-sifted evidence. His conclusions are suggestive rather than dogmatic. For example, on the question of whether or not the golden plates from which the *Book of Mormon* was allegedly transcribed ever existed Taves says, "the phenomenon of the Emperor's Clothes comes to mind" (48). More footnotes and fewer parentheses would help, but *Trouble Enough* is a fair, readable account which calls the Mormon church to deal with its questionable history with something other than "platitude, half-truth, omission, and denial" (262).

—Mark Bishop Newell

Religion Southern Style: Southern Baptists and Society in Historical Perspective
by Norman A. Yance (Assoc. of Baptist Professors of Religion, 1978, 66 pp., $3.95).

Norman Yance's study is inappropriately titled. Southern religion, individualistic, culturally captive, traditional and conservative, is the explanation, not the subject, of this study. A reworked version of Yance's doctoral dissertation, the book traces the devel-

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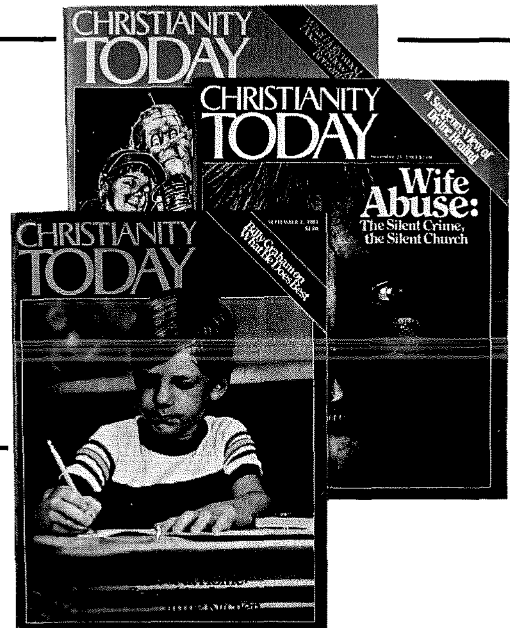

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opment of the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Commission, Yance tells us, has had a rocky history among Southern Baptists. From 1845 to 1908 concern for social issues was virtually non-existent. In the latter year the Commission's antecedent, the Committee on Temperance, was organized as temperance was the social issue that mattered most to Southern Baptists. Since 1942 the list of social concerns had grown. Yance's explanation for the course of development is that the Convention's attitudes have followed those of the South. As the region has become less isolated from the movements and issues of American society, Southern Baptists, the quintessential expression of Southern Protestantism, followed in train.

The monograph provides basic information about an important agency of the largest Protestant denomination in the United States. It is useful, but not particularly instructive because it leaves major questions unexplored. Why, for example, did Southern Methodists and Presbyterians, whom Yance compares with Southern Baptists, make much stronger statements on social issues, even though they too were part of Southern culture? Yance's narrowly focused study does not offer answers to these kinds of questions.

—Merle D. Strege

William Ellery Channing: Selected Writings **edited by David Robinson (Paulist Press, 1985, 310 pp., $12.95).**

There is small wonder that the editors of the *Sources of American Spirituality* should include the writings of William Ellery Channing in their new multi-volume series. Pastor to Boston's Federal Street Church (1803-1842) and literary essayist, Channing played an integral role in New England ecclesiastical affairs by founding Unitarianism and inspiring those who would eventually rally under the banner of Transcendentalism.

What is surprising about this collection of Channing's work is the distinctiveness of his spirituality when compared to the pieties of his contemporaries. Channing shared with the Protestants of his time a firm reliance on Scottish Realism in his historical and ethical arguments for Christianity. But he had no sympathy for evangelical piety and its more passionate outbursts. Instead he stressed the idealistic character of Christianity and hopes to cultivate the spiritual capacities of the individual through his sermons.

Perhaps what accounts for Channing's unusual spirituality in his conception of human nature. Revolting against the constraints of Calvinism, Channing regarded human nature as a source of unending spiritual potential in which divinity is present. In this light, spirituality for Channing became the continuous pursuit of "self-culture," "the unfolding and perfecting" of man's nature.

The works that David Robinson has selected all show the marks of Channing's spirituality. Whether in his polemical writings, his sermons, his literary essays, or in his remarks on social problems, Channing reiterated his high estimate of human nature and always pleaded for a culture and religion that would expand man's faculties.

Although the essentials of the Christian religion sometimes seem lost to Channing, this volume still makes for interesting reading. To students of American church history, it offers insights into the decline of Calvinism in New England, and to those interested in American culture, Channing's writings mark the beginnings of the Genteel Tradition in this nation's literature.

—D.G. Hart

Letters to the Editor

TSF Bulletin welcomes letters to the editor. We especially enjoy those that carry on creative dialogue with material we've published. Send your letters to the Editor, TSF Bulletin, P.O. Box 7895, Madison, WI 53707-7895.

The Bible Cookbook: Lore of Food in Biblical Times Plus Modern Adaptations of Ancient Recipes **by Daniel S. Cutler (William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1985, 416 pp., $19.95).**

This is a book in which the subtitle is a better indication of the contents than the title. About one third of the book includes lists of recipes and about two thirds of the book explains the lore of food in biblical times. The first four chapters are basically introductory. The next fourteen chapters are devoted to the following food items which were eaten in biblical times: spices, lentils, milk, eggs, grains and vegetables, fish, herbs, fruit, beef, veal, lamb, fowl, bread, and honey. Each of the last thirteen chapters begins with a discussion of a particular food item and concludes with a list of recipes which contain that item.

This book is written for a popular audience and would be useful both for those interested in recipes and also those interested in the role of food in biblical times. Cutler is by profession a medical illustrator but has received instruction in Jewish schools. One of the strengths of this work is the author's extensive usage of evidence related to food from the Mishnah and the Talmud. Yet the work is by no means directed only to a Jewish audience. The author also cites evidence from the New Testament and comments on Christian practices. Cutler's attention to both Jewish and Christian perspectives related to food helps to illuminate a number of biblical texts

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as well as current customs and practices related to food.

Lest any one be led astray, few if any ancient recipes of biblical times exist. We know very little about how foods were prepared for eating. The second part of the subtitle of this book might better be rendered "Modern recipes which include typical foods eaten in biblical times."

Cutler rightly draws attention to the much neglected subject of food in the Bible. He quotes and comments on a number of biblical and post-biblical texts which relate to food. While he does have a good topical index, it would have been useful to have an index of his profuse citations of primary sources.

Cutler draws upon texts which were written over a period of about two thousand years. One should not assume that practices concerning agriculture, cooking, diet, and meals did not change over a lengthy span of time. Cutler's comments must not be considered as normative for all periods of time. While he does show some historical awareness of the changes in the role of particular food items, further critical distinctions need to be made.

—Stephen A. Reed

The Psalms: Prayers for the Ups, Downs and In-Betweens of Life
by John F. Craghan (Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985, 200 pp., $7.95).

It is harvest time in Psalms studies: Craghan is an excellent harvest hand. He swings a sharp scythe through the fields sown and cultivated by Psalms scholars for the past thirty years, fields now white unto harvest, and winnows out the chaff.

After his opening chapter in which he correlates the nature of prayer, the character of the Psalms, and the rhythms of human life, he arranges six groups of psalms: psalms of descriptive praise, trust, wisdom, royal psalms, laments, and declarative praise. Five psalms are placed in each group, except for the laments, which gets ten. The format is conducive to study, individually or in groups. The academic substructure is rigorous, but in no way ponderous. He wears his learning lightly.

He does better, though, than guide us in study; he directs us to prayer. He shows how the Psalms were and can be prayed, and develops in us a mind-set (spirit-set, soul-set) toward prayer. He concludes each chapter with a New Testament passage, encouraging a continuity between the prayers that lead to Christ and the prayers that are fulfilled in the name of Christ.

—Eugene H. Peterson

Augustine of Hippo: Selected Writings
Translated and introduction by Mary T. Clark (Paulist Press, 1984, 514 pp.).

This compilation of sources takes its place in the Paulist Press series on *The Classics of Western Spirituality.* Its purpose is to make the spirituality of Augustine available to Augustine readers and others interested in the subject. Mary T. Clark, a Religious of the Sacred Heart and professor of Philosophy at Manhattanville College, is well known among philosophers and theologians for her thoughtful analysis and careful translation of Augustine.

Clark draws substantial excerpts from *Confession, The Happy Life, Homilies on the Psalms 119-122, Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homily on the First Epistle of St. John, On the Trinity, On Seeing God, On the Presence of God, The City of God* and *The Rule of St. Augustine.* Brief introductions put each selection in its setting and point to the essential contribution of the work. Each translation is fresh, crisp and readable, and the book contains a substantial bibliography and helpful index.

Augustine's religious experience develops in the *Confessions,* the first of the readings. Then each of the succeeding writings accents a particular insight into spirituality developed by Augustine. Finally in *The Rule of St. Augustine* one sees how closely Augustine articulates the spirituality espoused in the documents of Vatican II. Indeed, one cannot read this material without acknowledging the debt Western Christian spirituality owes to Augustine. Recommended for Augustine scholars and students, and all interested in the nature of spirituality in general.

—Robert E. Webber

Reaching the Unreached: the Old-New Challenge
by Harvie M. Conn, ed. (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1984, 178 pp., $8.95).

This is a valuable set of essays that is remarkable for its vitality and openness. Most were originally given at a conference at Westminster Theological Seminary; hence they aim to challenge the Reformed community. But they deserve a wider readership, not the least because they give ready access to the concept of unreached peoples. Three articles are devoted to this, two of which are by Ralph Winter. The remainder focus on the need to reach unreached peoples, on avoiding past mistakes, and on concrete suggestions for mission boards, seminaries and churches. The writers are seasoned experts and they achieve a good balance between theory and strategy. There is a healthy desire to enter into discussion with the Third World and with the other Christians. As a whole there is here a lot of good sense on missions and it is presented in a refreshing and self-critical manner.

—William J. Abraham

C.S. Lewis: The Man and His Achievement
by John Peters (Paternoster Press, 1985, 143 pp., $5.95).

Mr. Peters adds one more book to the growing list of secondary literature devoted to the life and writing of C.S. Lewis. This slender volume of barely one hundred and thirty pages is a clearly and concisely written introduction to the man and some of his major works. Serious students of Lewisiana will find little new in this book. Indeed, it is a brief sketch of the man's life, and an overview of his work as an allegorist, Christian apologist, literary critic, writer of science fiction, and "letter writer extraordinary." Finally the book concludes with a few pages of appraisal based upon insights from Michael Aeschliman, Clyde S. Kilby, Walter Hooper, as well as some of Peters's own opinions.

C.S. Lewis: The Man and His Achievement is written for and will be helpful to the student who is just becoming acquainted with Lewis. It will be less useful to those who have read most of Lewis's books, as well as the major secondary works such as Clyde S. Kilby's *The Christian World of C.S. Lewis* and the Hooper and Green biography. Unfortunately, the book will be slightly limited in appeal because there is no bibliography, some of the most recent scholarship is overlooked in the analyses, and many of the endnotes for chapter three were inadvertently omitted. Nevertheless, this is the most up-to-date primer.

—Lyle W. Dorsett

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Response to Donald Bloesch

I am glad that Donald Bloesch has responded, under eight headings, to issues which I raised in discussing his book, *The Battle for the Trinity.* Since three of Bloesch's headings (#1, #2 and #4) concern terminology which I found ambiguous, I am happy to find some of this clarified. I find his elucidation of the relationship between symbol and concept (#4) very precise.

While I never suspected that Bloesch opposed "feminism" pure and simple, I am glad

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to hear that it is "ideological feminism" which he (like myself) wishes to critique (#1). Nevertheless, despite his claim that he uses this latter term "consistently," I find it a mere four times in *The Battle for the Trinity* (pp. 5, 6, 77 and 81). I am also happy that Bloesch does not intend to "associate feminism with the demonic side of Nazism" (#2). Still, I suspect that many will suppose that such an association is implied in his "striking parallels between the two ideologies. . . ." (However, I accept his correction that feminism is no more racially and nationally inclusive than are socialism and welfare liberalism (#3).

In general, though, little purpose would be served by arguing further as to how clear Bloesch's terminology was. While I think my criticisms could be supported by further examples, his recent explanations can only enhance discussion of the important issues he raises.

Far more crucial is Bloesch's understanding of his cardinal doctrine, the Trinity, and especially of the relationships among the trinitarian Persons (#5). While Bloesch affirms the equality of these Persons, he gives "equal weight" to a "basic subordination" in which initiative flows from Father to Son to Spirit. This pattern is indeed found in Scripture, especially where it speaks of creation and preservation. The Father created the universe through the Son, who upholds it (Heb. 1:2-3, Col. 1:16-17), while the Spirit hovers over the creation and brings it to life (Gen. 1:2, Psalm 104:30).

Bloesch, however, gives little attention to my basic point that this is only one pattern of trinitarian relationship found in Scripture. For instance, the Spirit not only "carries out the decisions of the Father and the Son," but often takes initiative. The Spirit empowers Jesus' ministry, raises him from the dead, and bestows new birth upon believers. Generally speaking, as Scripture turns from the origin of all things towards their eschatological goal, initiative originates increasingly from Son and Spirit.

The more one is impressed by the varying relational patterns among the Persons, the less weighty does Bloesch's "basic subordination" appear, and the more fundamental do interaction and intercommunion become to trinitarian reality. In general, the more subordination is stressed, the more does the Trinity appear to support hierarchical relationships in Church, society and between the sexes; the more interaction among equals is stressed, the more important does mutality in all these spheres become. While Bloesch critiques ecclesiastical and social hierarchies in various ways, I suspect that his preference for masculine God-language is related to his emphasis on intra-trinitarian subordination; for this can imply that, within the Godhead itself, "the Father" most fully represents what is meant by "God."

When Scripture deals with creation and preservation, it views God primarily as transcendent; when it speaks of the initiation of salvation, it views him as irrupting into history. These activities, I argued in my article, are often best symbolized by masculine imagery. But when Scripture points towards the eschatological goal of all things, it envisions God dwelling in the midst of creation. This, I argued, is often best symbolized by the feminine. I am surprised, then, that Bloesch apparently finds me dismissing God's male-like initiatory activity "as of minimal importance" (#8). For I had repeatedly affirmed that the protological/"masculine" and the eschatological/"feminine" are equally significant. Without a counter-balancing emphasis on transcendence, talk of divine immanence will indeed lead towards the panentheism that Bloesch rightly fears.

Bloesch also notes that eschatology itself involves "a divine intervention into human history" (#8). While I fully agree, I would emphasize, as Bloesch goes on to say, that this is followed by "the creation of a new heaven and a new earth"; and that this creation, where God dwells among us (Rev. 21:1-4), is the goal of that very intervention. Moreover, I would stress that this new creation has already begun—largely through the outpouring of the spirit who gives us birth, comforts and nurtures us.

Finally, Bloesch claims that use of feminine God-imagery leads to increasingly "impersonal language concerning God." He supposes that my own appreciation for feminine expressions stems from a preference for "symbolic abstractions" over personal terms (#7, cf. #6). To be sure, feminine symbols have often been used to depict the divine as an impersonal, nature-like womb or matrix from which all things ceaselessly and thoughtlessly spring. This kind of depersonalization Bloesch is rightly concerned to avoid.

But surely a God-language adequately expressing the birthing, nurturing, caressing, encompassing activity of the Holy Spirit—and the responsive, serving, self-giving character of the Son—would be far distant from any such impersonal paganism. In fact, by sensitively incorporating such emphases, Christian God-language might well give better expression to some "personal" characteristics which its traditional stress on initiating, commanding and ruling sometimes slights. With Bloesch, I agree that this is difficult to do. I too find that "changing back and forth from Father to Mother" often "draws attention to sexuality" in a way the Bible does not (#7). Nonetheless, I can hardly agree that a use of feminine imagery which is truly rooted in Scripture and Christian tradition will make our God-language less personal. It is far more likely to do the reverse.

Thomas N. Finger
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Eller on Barth

At a number of points in the Sept.-Oct. 1986 **Bulletin** there are to be found writers suggesting (and other scholars cited as having suggested) that one of Karl Barth's major contributions came in his insisting that authentic theological disquisition *must* give attention to the social context and be relevant to the political praxis of those to whom the theology is addressed.

Surely, that observation regarding Barth is correct. However, it says nothing of significance—nothing one way or another—and this for the fact that it stops short. That is, it stops short of recognizing that there are two contrary ways in which theology might be relevant to social praxis. Either theology could come in as *supportive* of particular political ideologies and programs/or it could come in as *critical* of the human presumption represented in any and all political ideology. But *critique* can be just as relevant to praxis as *support* can be.

Nevertheless, the **Bulletin** people see only the supportive alternative and thus present Barth as a forerunner of our contemporary liberal, liberationist, social-activist, revolutionist, politico-theological praxis. This, at least, is their *thesis*—though I haven't seen that much has been done in the way of making their *case*.

On the other hand, what is so very clear is that the first consequence following from Barth's primal centering upon *God* is a radical *critique* of everything human—of everything representative of our trying to run history on our own. And thus *my* thesis is that Barth's social relevance comes in using the Gospel to *critique* both the regnant leftist political praxis of our day and all political praxis else, rightist, centrist, socialist, capitalist, or whatever.

That—against the **Bulletin** commentators— is *my* thesis. And my new book, *Christian Anarchy* (from Eerdmans), is the argument of my case. I give major attention to Karl Barth but also use great gobs of Scripture—and that not only as interpreted by Barth but by Kierkegaard, the Blumhardts, Bonhoeffer, Ellul, and a number of contemporary NT scholars as well.

Vernard Eller
Professor of Religion
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Bromiley on Barth as Socialist

May I make a few comments on Steve de Gruchy's interesting article on socialism and hermeneutics in Barth (Sept.-Oct. 1986 **Bulletin**)?

He makes two good points for which we should be grateful. Barth's social concern undoubtedly contributed to the revolution in his approach to scripture. He also maintained a lifelong inclination to leftish programmes that would remedy economic and social injustices.

Nevertheless, we should also be aware of some counterbalancing facts warning us against too broad conclusions.

Thus in 1914 Barth was just as disenchanted with the Social Democrats as with the churches, and did not want Rade to treat him merely as a champion of the Religious Socialists (*Barth-Rade Briefwechsel*, p. 120).

Again, he joined the Social Democrats, first in Switzerland, later in Germany, only for specific reasons, and was not a party member either at Göttingen and Münster, or in the

later years in Basel (*Letters 1961-8*, pp. 303f.; *Final Testimonies*, p. 25).

Again, he stated categorically that he was "never a doctrinaire Socialist" (*Final Testimonies*, p. 39; cf. *Letters 1961-8*, p. 303).

Finally, he warned Hromadka against the trap of "not letting the *analogans*" (the gospel) "be clearly, soberly, and irreversably superior to the *analogatum*" (political insights and opinions), just as we must never understand the gospel or the biblical witness in terms of any specific philosophy.

Advocates of a Socialist Barth seem to be imposing on Barth himself the very thing he feared in Hromadka. As he put it, he had an "extremely allergic reaction" to "all identifications" and "all the drawing of parallels and analogies" in which reversal takes place, resulting in "a philosophy of history which does harm to theology and Christian proclamation" (*Letters 1961-8*, p. 105, cf. also p. 83).

Geoffrey W. Bromiley
Emeritus Prof. of Historical Theology
Fuller Theological Seminary

Was Barth Really A Liberation Theologian?

Karl Barth would probably be astounded by Steven de Gruchy's suggestion that he was a "proto" liberation theologian in his methodology (Sept.-Oct. 1986 **Bulletin**). The line of argument is not a particularly new one, and it represents an attempt by the liberation theology people to read back into Barth their own presuppositions.

To accept de Gruchy's thesis that Barth had a liberation hermeneutic, one must accept his argument that Barth's method arose *directly* out of his socialist political sympathies. While there is no doubt that Barth was a socialist, it is a dubious suggestion that his hermeneutic was based *simply* in his praxis.

One has to remember that Barth is reacting off of *ideas*—theological ideas—not simply his social situation. He is constantly pulling against the over-realized theologies of liberalism and throughout all his work he wants to maintain the transcendent "otherness" of God. Barth's methodology is always that of "theology from above," whereas liberation theology starts from below. In Barth, everything is revelation from God; in liberation theologies, revelation occurs in the community of the oppressed. A consistant Barthian position would move in the exact opposite direction of that of liberation theology.

Liberation theologies find hope in the elimination of earthly injustice. Barth finds hope in God alone: "Evangelical theology . . . relies on God who himself seeks out, heals, and saves man and his work. This God is the hope of theology. What we have just said about evangelical theology cannot be said about any of the theologies that are devoted to the gods of man's devising . . ." (*Evangelical Theology*, p. 152).

Had Barth lived longer, I think he would have rejected the liberation theologies as "theologies that are devoted to the gods of man's devising," while remainly sympathetic to *some* of the earthly goals of the same. Barth's socialist leanings were a matter of convenience in agreement with his Christian convictions. It should be remembered that political allegiances in the early part of this century tended toward extremes and that caring, committed Christians were frequently political socialists. Even de Gruchy quotes Barth as saying, "I was less interested in the ideological aspect of the party then in its organizing of unions."

Barth only used socialism as a means to an ends (earthly justice)—not as the basis of a theological agenda to bring about the Kingdom of God. Only Christ can do that—a fact Karl Barth knew and liberation theologians would do well to remember.

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