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TSF BULLETIN

OCTOBER 1980

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TSF BULLETIN (Formerly TSF News & Reviews) is published five times during the school year (October-May). Membership in TSF (\$10/yr; \$8-students) includes both *Bulletin* and *THEMELIOS* (3 issues), the theological journal of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. Separate subscription rates are: *Bulletin*-\$6.50/yr; *Themelios*-\$4.50/yr. Bulk rates are available on request. Student Group Rate-10 or more copies delivered to one address at \$7. per person. All subscriptions and correspondence (except as noted on special order forms) should be sent to Theological Students Fellowship, 233 Langdon, Madison, WI 53703. TSF is a division of Inter-Varsity Christian

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TSF MEMBERSHIP SURVEY AND TSF BULLETIN

by Mark Lau Branson

I hope readers can enjoy the following comments as well as gain a perspective on the variety of people reading *TSF N&R*. The survey taken last May brought numerous evaluations, suggestions, praise and criticisms. Included in these comments will be a brief survey of projected plans for 1980-81.

TSF Bulletin

Looking up from *TSF Newsletter* and *TSF News and Views*, now *TSF Bulletin* is the (expanded) periodical for North American members of Theological Students Fellowship. This name was used by British TSF until that journal merged with the current *Themelios*. We will no longer mail these items together. Shipping delays from England often interfered with regular mailings to our subscribers. You will receive *TSF Bulletin* in October, November, February, March and April. *Themelios*, published in September, January and April will be mailed whenever it arrives. Catalogs for cassette tapes, discount books, pamphlets and articles will be included twice each year (November and March) with *TSF Bulletin*. We hope that our readers like these changes.

Articles

Apparently our "cover articles" have been received as helpful by a significant number of our readers. Although articles were aimed at different needs, beginning seminarians were seen as the median recipients. Ratings averaged from 3.4 to 4.4 (all scales have a 5.0 high) with lower ratings coming mainly from more advanced students. Pinnock's bibliography (March) received the highest rating, indicating that many appreciate help in finding resources.

Survey comments:

Being a non-theologian (lay?) I sometimes get the impression that we could also use a lot more interdisciplinary discussion: sometimes there's something more challenging than someone from another field, with another perspective; hopefully as a motivation to do research ourselves.... I like the bibliographic essays such as the recent one by Pinnock with additions by Phillips. Perhaps brief subject bibliographies would be useful, e.g., one per issue.... Unfortunately many students I know will not read theologically or philosophically oriented articles unless it can be demonstrated to them that it is an issue "people in my church will be faced with." Possibly spend a little more time and effort defining and demonstrating the importance of the problem; you may then find more students willing to read on!... I do not think TSF caters to undergraduate students to a large extent. However, I think you can't please everybody. As I begin seminary, I will find it easier to follow. Often you answer questions I haven't asked.... Is it possible to address issues such as the Christian attitude to war, the state, nationalism, etc. I feel it would be beneficial if theological students were prepared on these issues; issues which the present world situation is making extremely crucial.... I'd like to see an article or two on relating to the evangelical subculture. A lot of the language and mentality baffles me. Over-all, I like that you select for copies and how they are addressed.... The synopsis of J.H. Yoder's paper on nabaptist/Reformed contrasts was great!... Although I do not separate scholarship from my spiritual life, I do think that an academic journal's first purpose is to do top notch work in this area. For spiritual formation I employ scripture, prayer and

group interaction.... After a year at seminary, I can now see the danger of being so caught up in studies that I forget about the Person I'm studying about. Perhaps it would be helpful to have a devotional Bible study to accompany each article on spiritual formation.... As "spiritual formation" is usually presumed in religious studies but so often forgotten and neglected, I believe this is one factor of *N&R* must not neglect, but continually explore, broaden and seek interaction from its readers.... Open-ended forums between two viewpoints."

Because a variety of factors affect the needs of students (theological-sociological background, year of study, vocational pursuit, academic emphasis, milieu, the seminary's theological-sociological context, etc.), the TSF Advisory Committee has suggested an extensive format change which you see in this issue. Our goal is to offer articles which meet student academic and personal concerns at various levels. The major sections delineate the concerns: Foundations will offer suggestions, expositions and bibliographies on the basics of the Christian faith (see Pinnock on Scripture in this issue); Intersection will be a forum for integrating theological studies with the world around us, including ecclesiastical institutions (Gill on Homosexuality and Pinnock on the Melbourne meeting of the WCC are included in this issue; Orlando Costas and Peter Wagner will write on the Thailand COWE gathering in our November issue); Inquiry will present proposals, questions, apologetics and creative thinking regarding theological and biblical questions which are alive in academic settings currently (a report on F.I. Andersen's OT language and dating research is included here); Spiritual Formation will approach issues of personal and family concern (like prayer, meditation, marriage--see the included article on burnout); *Academe* will report on campus happenings in classrooms or with TSF chapters (we need your letters here--what positive contributions have helped you?); and *Reviews* (including our usual array of books and suggested magazine articles).

Reviews

Survey comments:

"Recommend fewer articles (it is psychologically difficult to overcome anxiety of looking at a whole page of recommended reading).... "Worthwhile Reading" is a very good way to help us find worthwhile reading--Maybe increase its coverage but put them in categories.... Recommended reading is excellent. I read about 1/2 of the suggestions.... I am very pleased that the reviewers include students besides professors and besides the editors of *TSF N&R*. This diminishes paternalism. It opens opportunities for the reviewers that otherwise might not exist. I like the selection of reprints and new editions, of the selection of scholarly, devotional helps."

We are increasing the number of student reviewers and attempting to diversify from the Anglo-male-Protestant dominance. Associate Editors are now given the option of writing brief comments when a book deserves mention but either does not require extensive commentary or has received wide attention elsewhere. This will allow us to include more books. A supplementary issue is being considered--in which reviews would be oriented toward doctoral students (any comments?). Plans currently call for one-third of the reviews to concern biblical issues and the rest to cover theology, philosophy, practical theology, world religions, ethics, church history, etc. Also, we hope to meet the requests for differing reviewers of particularly significant books. I am grateful for the incredible team of writers who are helping coordinate and execute this task.

General

Survey comments:

"Perhaps a more rigorously conservative doctrinal stance would attract more students. Beginning students would feel more confident about N&R's position and recommendations...more, briefly-annotated bibliography by conservatives....Perhaps the biggest problem is making TSF known to students ("What's a TSF?"). Once N&R is in their hands then the scholarship and interest created by the article itself should encourage and stimulate the thinking of the student. Also, get another printer--your last two issues were all screwed up!... Specific needs for thesis and dissertation topics in the world of evangelical scholarship. Guide us as to the greatest areas of need for research. Also (for married students) articles on avoiding divorce and family disruption while in school.... why so many pictures of that heretic Branson?... I appreciate the resources TSF makes available; they serve as a guide to what is worthwhile and often mention things I would not have found. It is indispensable to keeping me aware of what is available....The photos add a very necessary personal quality to N&R... Most of us are not at the level where we see the significance of much that is reported on.... Seems highly selective and involved in only one circle of conservative scholarship.... They are a good source for "what's happening" in evangelical student-dom.... TSF was primarily responsible for introducing me to Henri Nouwen and I'm grateful for the spiritual formation emphasis. It was realistic, helpful and sober instead of spiritual cliché. (The construct of the "Wounded Healer" is so helpful and valuable).... Let us know "what is going on where" in terms of seminars, noted speakers, etc. at seminaries; How about an annual placement issue with names of both seminaries and churches looking for each other?... more "people" news about what various chapters of TSF are up to.... A feeling that N&R will never be willing to take a firm, conservative doctrinal stance on anything. JUST ONCE I'd like to see a responsible, conservative critique of the (at best) liberalism of Bloesch and Marshall. Why do we tremble with gushy excitement when men such as these put out works which are only remotely biblical in their stance? Was the command to bring "every thought captive" only for the Apostolic Age? Likewise, re. B. Childs and his (again "at best") lukewarm stance. Have the N&R staffers NEVER made themselves familiar with the works of Van Til, Reymond, Rushdoony, et. al.? Doctrinal fuzziness seems to be the rule.... Add some material of practical skill nature for those of us who are graduating--and want to continue taking TSF to keep up with what's going on.... Providing a support group for serious evangelical students plus acting as a "clearing house" in making the best in evangelical biblical/theological scholarship available to students (and pastors!).... I pass TSF materials on to a minister/chaplain friend of mine; recently I gave him the Pinnock articles and he finds these helpful and a delight, too. I appreciate very much the work you are doing to build bridges to non-evangelical theologians and institutions and the help this is for evangelical students.... Encourage in students the same love for the church and her ministries that Jesus Christ has.... TSF helps me keep in mind that studying theology is not an exercise in intellectual self-indulgence but rather a means by which I serve the Kingdom.... I eagerly open every envelope I receive with a TSF postmark. Your publications feed my soul and continually open up new "vistas" for my mind."

TSF's Primary Ministry: There you see some of the variety. We often have to make decisions concerning which members of our readership have the more immediate or particular needs. We have not sought to be an evangelical periodical for evangelical students in evangelical schools. We welcome members in those settings and affirm that God

is mightily at work in preparing church leaders in their midst. A number of excellent journals and magazines serve such students, often with resources which they would consider more appropriate. Rather, the foci of TSF ministries are the students at pluralistic seminaries and secular institutions who affirm or are open to consider classical, orthodox theology, and who seek to discover the academic, ethical and personal spiritual dimensions of that commitment. It is definitely a select group. TSF has sought to be a unique service to those students through publications, chapters and conferences. We have been encouraged by students in evangelical institutions who voice their support as well as their gratefulness for the TSF ministry (some have recently started local chapters to provide a particular emphasis which they believe is needed at their schools, like theological discussions or explorations of ethical implications of the Christian faith). A number of our Associate and Contributing Editors are professors or students at evangelical schools, and that helps us hear perspectives which are seldom received in other locales. They all readily admit, however, that issues, emphases and needs are often different. These editors are part of TSF because they are able to transcend their own setting and are active beyond that school through ties with a denomination or a professional society. These "bridging" people, like those with evangelical convictions in pluralistic schools, are using their gifts to help people understand each other in spite of sociological and even theological differences. TSF editors and staff, as a part of IVCF, affirm a doctrinal basis which is in the classical tradition. We also have concerns about ethics, spiritual formation and ministerial preparation. Our goal is to serve our Lord Jesus Christ and his church, and to do that in a specific area where a vision has brought us and which is not served by other organizations. We are working alongside several other evangelical groups: the Institute for Biblical Research, Evangelicals for Social Action and Evangelical Women's Caucus. These, too, are involved in bridge-building. Your comments on these concerns are welcome. Unless specified otherwise, such correspondence will be considered for publication.

University Students: University students, especially undergraduates, also find themselves in need of evangelical resources. Those taking religious studies courses or who are planning to go to seminary are the target audience for TSF. Through the recent format changes, we hope to better serve these students. Comments from seminary students who went through undergraduate years reading TSF have assured us that they were better prepared for the issues and nature of seminary or graduate education than they would have been otherwise. TSF groups exist, often within an Inter-Varsity chapter, with specific goals for discussions and support. Undergraduates can serve each other by 1) letting classmates know about TSF; 2) letting us know what articles and reviews can best help you; 3) encouraging your IV staffer to have TSF seminars at conferences; and 4) initiating a TSF group on your campus, hopefully with the assistance of a graduate student, a professor, a local minister or an IV staffer.

Graduate students, especially those in doctoral studies, have already researched beyond the limited bibliographies offered by TSF. Also, one's faith commitment may be somewhat more stable after earlier trials. However, mutual intellectual and personal support groups still play a vital role. Studies can be enhanced, interdisciplinary thinking encouraged and faith can be fed by such groups. Also, graduate students play a key role in most undergraduate and seminary groups. *TSF Bulletin* will provide some beneficial articles and reviews, as well as an opportunity for students to

publish reviews. For those in biblical studies, student membership in the IBR would be worthwhile (write to Carl Armending, 2330 Westbrook Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1W6). We also know of many areas of study which would benefit from special bibliographies--and graduate students would be welcome writers. Again, let us know what you are doing and what we can do.

Printing: We have received some comments on type size (too small) and pictures (too dark). We may need to go with a typesetter rather than our trusty typewriter, but that would up costs about \$500 per issue. We may change the reduction or type style (both will be attempted in coming months). We don't want to cut back on the amount of content we can have or increase the number of pages significantly. All this is to say we hear you and will try new approaches. We want to maintain the informality without making the *Bulletin* hard to read. We have hit about 50% on clear reproduction of pictures with our current printer. If we are able to overcome difficulties, we will resume that feature in coming months. Upside-down pages and printing "holidays" are also on our hit list. Return any poorly printed issues for replacment--this keeps us informed.

Effective November, subscription to *TSF Bulletin* and *Themelios* will be \$10--the student rate will be \$8. This includes three issues of *Themelios* (\$4.50 if billed separately) and five issues of *TSF Bulletin* (\$6.50). Single-year student subscriptions at the \$5.00 rate will be accepted through October. Although we continue to subsidize subscriptions for students, other recipients will be asked to pay full price. As before, all subscriptions begin in October and end in May.

TSF is also expanding its operations--with a full-time General Secretary last year and a full-time Administrative Assistant this year. Opportunities to meet with students and faculty, publish booklets and periodicals, initiate conferences and retreats and correspond with chapters increase constantly. Over the next five years we would like to have a field staffer in each of six regions. We need the support of members, friends and churches to accomplish this. If you believe we are providing a needed ministry, please support us through donations, encouragement and prayer. We are looking for 100 friends who will be "sustaining subscribers" at \$50 a year. This will allow us to continue the above rates in spite of printing and postage increases. Please prayerfully consider this for yourself and speak with friends.

A discount price of \$7 per person will be available for student groups ordering 10 or more copies to one address (for both the *Bulletin* and *Themelios*).

TSF AT PERKINS

Dear Mark,

I am now writing as representative of the newly-formed Athanasian Theological Society at Perkins. We have worked out the following Statement of Purpose for the Society:

The Athanasian Theological Society is a group of students in the Perkins Community interested in the study of new evangelical theologies. By "new evangelical theologies" we understand those theologies which affirm the centrality of Scripture and the use of modern critical scholarship, and which emphasize the necessity of a personal experience of conversion from self to Christ and the necessity of the Church's social witness.

We adopted this statement in lieu of a doctrinal confession.

When we first began, we went by the title Bullwinkle Theological Society. I rather liked that one, but sobriety prevailed, and thus we were sanctified.

Although it is not expressly stated in our Statement of Purpose, one of the aims of the group will be to maintain liaisons with TSF, Evangelicals for Social Action, and the Evangelical Women's Caucus. I do not know if TSF has any provision for such an "unofficial" relationship, but please let us know how we can keep in touch. I'd like to begin receiving *TSF News and Reviews*. If it's possible, you might send some information on how others in the community can subscribe.

We're excited about our organization, and are interested in maintaining close links with TSF. We want to thank you for your visit, which served to solidify interest in the group. Looking forward to hearing from you, I am

Yours in Christ,
Ted Campbell

DATES

Nov. 4 (6 p.m.) - Nov. 5 (12 noon). The Institute of Biblical Research, Decennial Meeting, Dallas. Papers by Metzger & Hubbard, seminars by Oswalt and Longenecker. (For information, write to Carl Armending, 2330 Westbrook Mall, Vancouver, VC V6T 1W6.)

Nov. 6-9. American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature Annual meetings, Dallas. (AAR - Consultation on Evangelical Theology: Gerald Sheppard on Rogers-McKim; a panel including Clark Pinnock and Martin Marty on "The Future of Evangelical Theology.")

Nov. 7-8. Wesleyan Theological Society at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, MO. Focus on hermeneutics. (For information, write to Don Dayton, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, 660 E. Butterfield Road, Lombard, IL 60148.)

FOUNDATIONS *(Doing Theology on the basics of classical faith.)*

THE INSPIRATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

By Clark H. Pinnock

The Crucial Link

The question of the authority and interpretation of the Bible is a critical one for the church because it is irrevocably linked to it as the indispensable source of it's knowledge of God's word and revelation. Although we all wish that debates about the Bible would go away leaving us to get on with the all-important task of living out its message, a better understanding of its nature and authority is still needed in many parts of the church, and the quest to achieve it cannot be put aside.

The context for our thinking about this issue in North America, at least in Protestant circles, is a serious polarization between "liberal" elements which have let the subject drop out of sight, and "conservative" forces which have raised the stakes by inflating the categories involved, creating a major chasm at least for popular theology and church life. Somehow we have to transcend this gulf and bring about reconciliation by proposing an understanding of biblical authority which is really comprehensive and satisfying.