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

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

REFERENCES

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 134-138.

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WHERE ARE THE TSF GROUPS?

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

INTERSECTION

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

A BREAK IN THE BATTLE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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