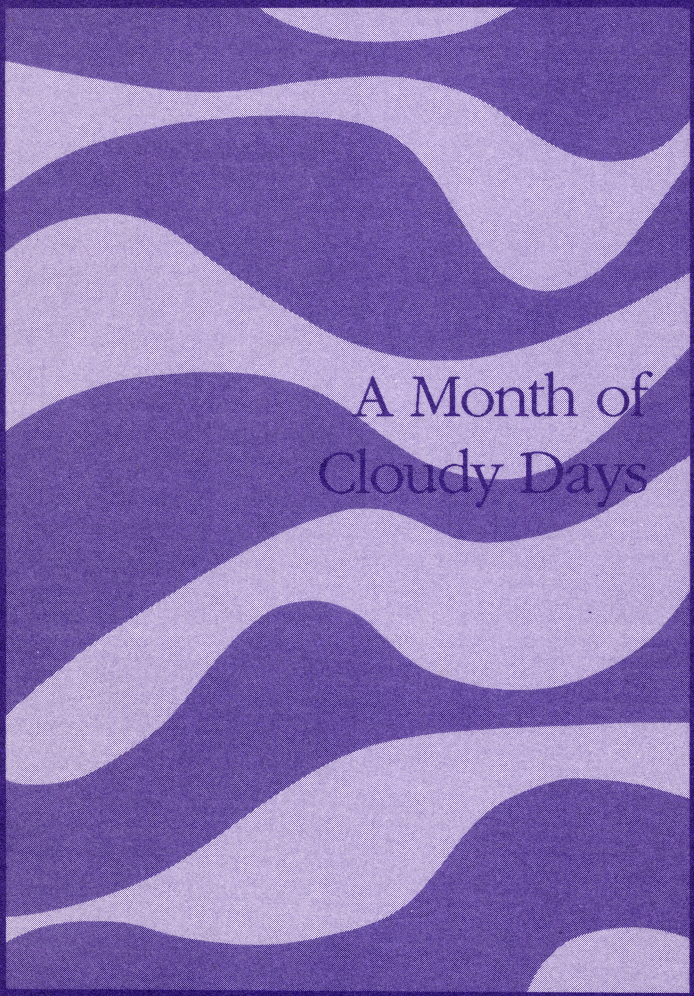
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CURRENTS

in Theology and Mission

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Contents

A Month of Cloudy Days 2
Ralph W. Klein

Depression: What Clergy Need to Know! 5
Andrew J. Weaver

The Bible is More than a Book 17
Christine Helmer

Mary as Metaphor: A Lingustic Proposal for the Recovery of Ecclesiology 29
Mark E. Chapman

Our Lutheran Hymnic Heritage and Responsibility 40
Paul Westermeyer

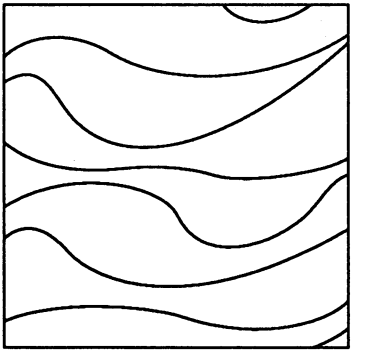
Commentary Recommendations for the Old Testament 45
Ralph W. Klein

New Testament Library: A Recommended List for Pastors and Teachers 49
Edgar Krentz

Book Reviews 54

Intercessory Prayer: A Spirituality for Modern Times
William E. Lesher
Inside back cover

Drawings by Jack and Liz Eldredge



Preaching Helps 67
Series A
The Resurrection of Our Lord—Seventh Sunday of Easter

A Month of Cloudy Days

We've had thirty straight days or so of cloudy weather in Chicago, the winter price we pay for living by the natural air conditioning of Lake Michigan in the summer. Great timing for writing an introduction for an issue whose lead article is about depression!

Do I feel sorry for myself?

It's also my birthday today—writing is such a great way to celebrate—and I just came back from a successful Christmas shopping trip that had only one down side: the clerk thought I might qualify for a senior citizen's discount. Perhaps the strain of teaching and editing over the years has taken a greater toll than I imagined.

Each of these cloudy days, of course, came from the creator's hand; each offered opportunities for growth and service; each was marked with some fresh sign of God's goodness and with traces of revolutionary and transcendent hope; day by cloudy day we magnified God.

With this issue we begin the twentieth year of *Currents*; I think this is the 112th issue. One enduring goal over those 8,000 or so pages has been to cheer up our readers with the gospel itself, with reflections about that gospel (theology), and with suggestions on how to implement its power in daily life (mission). In a small way, in an often cloudy world, we have wanted to be part of God's "nevertheless."

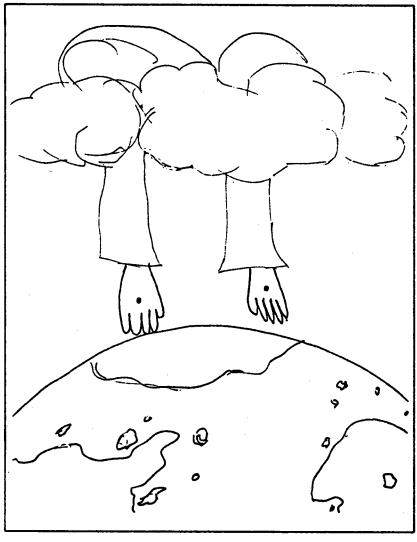
Andrew J. Weaver wants to assist clergy in evaluating depression, the most frequent problem brought to them. He offers a definition of depression and identifies its basic symptoms. He also tells clergy how to A-C-T, through assessment, consultation/referral, and treatment. An opening vignette whets the appetite while the article closes with a helpful unpacking of the same vignette.

Christine Helmer proposes that the Word of Christ is authoritative because it alone constructs the human condition in the presence of God. Through her discussion she links the confessional theology of Arthur Carl Piepkorn to the postmodern discussion. The same God who defines the identity of the church as the community of justified sinners is the author of the life of the world. Law and gospel are interwoven into the fabric of the church's experience. God authorizes the historical church as the community of justified sinners, whose necessary response is doxology, theology, and vocation. Because the gospel is the truth of the real presence of the Word, the Bible is more than a book.

Mark E. Chapman presents a linguistic proposal for the recovery of ecclesiology. Back in the Middle Ages Realism held that the church could understand its own being and essence by observing Mary, but Nominalism shattered the unity of Mary and the church. The Lutheran Confessions tried to preserve and reestablish the older Mariology in its unity with ecclesiology. Our task today is to find the conceptual language that makes possible Marian devotion and piety without displacing the sole sufficiency of Christ or the sole authority of Holy Scripture in the church. Perhaps we can see Mary afresh as a metaphor for the church: without losing her own identity, she becomes the means by which time and space are transcended in the church's self-understanding. The recovery of a Mariological ecclesiology, or an ecclesiological Mariology, may provide the whole church a transcendent renewing power that could restore humanity and personhood to the church, and thereby restore the church to humanity.

Paul Westermeyer asks what we Lutherans might contribute to the ecumenical church in light of its confessional, evangelical, and catholic tension, or in light of the consumerism and individualism of secular

culture. His answer lies in the area of our diverse hymnody that gives the whole story, from creation to consummation, addressed to our individual and cultural needs, and with Christ's death and resurrection at the center.



Ralph W. Klein and **Edgar Krentz** supply recommendations for the best English commentaries on each book of the Old and New Testaments. This latest update in a series of articles on commentaries identifies the pick of the litter (from their point of view) in commentary resources, all designed to open the Bible for widest possible use in parish ministry.

Chances are, you will receive this issue a few days before or a few days after Ash Wednesday. Clouds may still hang heavy over wintry Chicago. But during the great forty days of Lent the only cloudy day of significance is *that* Friday, when darkness came over the whole land until three o'clock in the afternoon. Then the soldiers came and made the tomb secure.

Sure they did. Talk about God's "nevertheless."

With thanksgiving,

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

Depression: What Clergy Need to Know!

Andrew J. Weaver
Church Counseling and Career Center of Southern California
Los Angeles, California

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad
It wearies me; you say it wearies you
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, where of it is born,
I am to learn
William Shakespeare
Merchant of Venice, I,1,II. I-5

She found him one evening in his favorite chair in front of the television. He had died of a heart attack. She did not cry at the funeral and kept herself extra busy after his death. About six months after his death she began to be less active at church and began to miss activities she had once attended and enjoyed for years. As her pastor, I became concerned when others commented that she appeared to be increasingly downcast. I made a pastoral visit. She looked pale and gaunt when she opened the door. She was in her bathrobe and slippers. She apologized that her house was such a mess and said that she had not felt like herself for the last couple of weeks. Her movements were slow and ponderous as she brought me a cup of tea. "Reverend," she began, "I want to ask you a question. What did I do to God to make God so spiteful? Why would God hurt me so much? I just can not understand why God does not care about me anymore. I miss my husband. I don't know if I can go on without him. Sometimes I think I see my dear husband sitting over there in his favorite chair. Sometimes I can hear him talking to me."

Do you think this woman is having a normal grief reaction, or is she suffering from a depressive disorder? What factors do you consider important in making your decision? What additional information would be helpful? If you came to the conclusion that the woman was very depressed, what action would you take?

This article is written to assist clergy in the task of evaluating depression, the most common form of mental disorder. In terms of frequency of occurrence it is the "common cold" of emotional distress. According to a leading expert in the field, depression has increased ten-fold in the United States



since the Second World War.[1] Almost everyone has at least a mild case of "the blues" or "down feelings" at one time or another. Approximately ten percent of Americans experience a more intense form of depression that significantly interferes with their ability to function at work and/or socially. These "major" or "clinical" depressions are about one and one-half times more likely to occur in a woman than a man. The risk of a clinical depression increases with age until eighty. Only about 50 percent of the people who suffer from a major depression seek treatment from a mental health professional.[2]

Suicide is an extremely serious risk among the chronically depressed. Thoughts of suicide occur to about 75 percent of individuals who are depressed, and 15 percent of this group attempt suicide.[3] One study found that the rate of suicide among people suffering depression was 36 times greater than the general population.[4] There is a suicide in the United States every 20 minutes.[5]

Given the epidemic levels of depression in our society, it should come as no surprise to learn that clergy report in several research studies that depression is either the most frequent or very nearly the most frequent presenting problem among people seeking their help. These same studies reveal that clergy report that they see themselves as inadequately trained to meet the mental health needs of the persons that come to them for help, and that they are aware of their need for additional training. Many clergy report they are eager to engage in continuing education in the mental health field.[6]

These published findings are further supported by a study published in 1990 by George Domino at the University of Arizona. Using a geographically representative sample of 157 American clergy, the

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[1]M. E. P. Seligman, "Why is there so much depression today? The waxing of the individual and the waning of the commons," in *Contemporary Psychological Approaches to Depression,* ed. R. E. Ingram (New York: Plenium Press,1990), 1-9.

[2]J. H. Griest and J. W. Jefferson, *Depression and Its Treatment* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press, Inc., 1984).

[3]R. W. Fairchild, *Finding Hope Again: A Pastor's Guide to Counseling Depressed Persons* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).

[4]A. T. Beck, *Depression: Clinical, Experimental, and Theoretical Aspects* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

[5]J. M. Stillion, E. E. McDowell, & J. H. May, *Suicide: Across the life span* (New York: Hemisphere, 1989).

[6]H. A. Virkler, "Counseling demands, procedures, and preparation of parish ministers: A descriptive study," in *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 7:4 (1979), 271-80; L. W. Abramczyk, "The counseling function of pastors: A study in practice and preparation," in *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 9:3 (1981), 257-65; D. W. Lowe, "Counseling activities and referral practices of ministers," in *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 5:1 (1986), 22-29; B. L. Ingram and D. Lowe, "Counseling activities and referral practices of rabbis," in *Journal of Psychology and Judaism*, 13:3 (1989), 133-48.

study found that Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish clergy demonstrated about the same level of knowledge of the symptoms of emotional distress (such as depression) as a group of college students in an introductory psychology class. The clergy had a significantly lower level of knowledge than graduate students in clinical and counseling psychology. These findings are consistent with recent research demonstrating that even experienced clergy are woefully unprepared to assess for suicide potential in persons at risk. When compared to mental health professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and marriage and family therapists, clergy scored significantly lower on the ability to assess for suicide lethality.[7] One researcher wrote: "the results indicate that clergy as a group are not able to recognize signs of suicide lethality any better than educated laypersons...."[8] There is an urgent need to train clergy in suicide prevention.[9]

These facts are particularly disconcerting when we recognize that tens of millions of Americans seek clergy first when they have personal problems. In 1981 a University of Michigan research group published findings of a survey using a representative sample of 2,267 Americans. The study revealed that about 4 out of 10 Americans reported that they sought counsel from a member of the clergy when confronted with a personal problem. Among people who stated they attended religious services once a week, the number rose to 53 percent. Even among people who declared they never attended religious services, 16 percent reported they sought guidance from clergy for assistance with personal problems. The authors summarized the results of the study by asserting that "one cannot fail to be impressed by the continuing role that clergy play in assisting many Americans in dealing with personal problems."[10]

In 1986 Mollica, Streets, Boscarino & Redlich, at Yale, surveyed 214 clergy in Connecticut (Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish). The results further support the evidence that clergy are called upon by many Americans to be front-line mental health workers. Eighty-five percent of the clergy surveyed reported that they had counseled dangerous or suicidal persons, and 100 percent said they did some crisis intervention counseling in the course of their pastoral work. These authors concluded that "parish-based clergy, especially the black clergy, function as a major mental health resource to communities with limited access to professional mental health services."[11]

In 1988 Larson, Hohmann, Kessler, Meador, Boyd, and McSherry published research findings from a national survey of 18,495 adults. The study revealed that a person was as likely to seek out a member of the clergy for counsel when suffering a serious psychiatric disorder, including major depression or manic-depressive disorder, as a mental health professional. They

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[7]C. B. Holmes and M. E. Howard, "Recognition of suicide lethality factors by physicians, mental health professionals, ministers, and college students," in *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 48 (1980): 383-87.

[8]G. Domino, "Clergy's attitudes toward suicide and recognition of suicide lethality," in *Death Studies* 9 (1985): 187.

[9]A. J. Weaver, "Suicide Prevention: What Clergy Need to Know," in *The Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 12:1 (1993), 70-79.

[10]J. Veroff, R. A. Kulka, and E. Douvan, *Mental Health in America; Patterns of Help-seeking from 1957 to 1976* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

[11]R. C. Mollica, F. J. Streets, J. Boscarino, and F. C. Redlich, "A community study of formal pastoral counseling activities of the clergy," in *American Journal of Psychiatry* 143:3 (1986), 323.

concluded that "the clergy are coping, with or without the assistance of mental health professionals, with parishioners who have a broad spectrum of psychiatric disorders."[12]

The fact is, with adequate training clergy are in a particularly advantageous position to recognize depression. We are often in long term relationships with individuals and their families, enabling us to observe changes in behavior that may be signs of depression. Clergy who are familiar with a person over prolonged periods can compare present behavior with past behavior, greatly assisting in the assessment of depression.[13] We are often called upon in times of crisis when many depressions have their beginnings. Researchers have discovered that clergy are most often sought for counseling in crisis situations associated with grief or depressive reactions: "personal illness or injury, death of spouse, death of a close family member, divorce or marital separation, change in health of a family member, death of a close friend."[14] Perhaps, most importantly, clergy are visible and available leaders in communities that have a language of faith and hope. Undoubtedly depressed and suicidal persons go to clergy in such large numbers because accompanying the depressive state for many individuals are questions of meaning and purpose uniquely addressed by the community of faith.[15]

With adequate training clergy are in a particularly advantageous position to recognize depression.

Clergy must be assisted in the difficult and often multi-dimensional task of assessing depression in people who come to them for help. There are two basic facts to keep in mind when identifying depression. First, depression can be thought of as a constellation of symptoms, with several inter-connected components. These symptoms can vary in intensity from mild to severe. When we think of the common chest cold, we can recognize that it has a set of identifiable symptoms: coughing, congestion, fever, headaches, and other aches and pains. In much the same way, depression is a set of symptoms: blue mood, loss of pleasure, change in sleep patterns, change in appetite, lack of energy, and so forth. To continue with our comparison, a common chest cold and pneumonia often have many similar symptoms; the illnesses differ in the degree of intensity of the symptoms. This is also true when we compare a mild depression to a severe or "major depression." When diagnosing depression we need to be alert to its set of symptoms, and we need to recognize the degree of their manifestation.

The second basic fact to keep in mind is that depression may result from external and internal factors. Depression is often related to a life experience involving loss,

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[12]D. B. Larson, A. A. Hohmann, L. G. Kessler, K. G. Meador, J. H. Boyd, and E. McSherry, "The couch and the cloth: the need for linkage," in *Hospital and Community Psychiatry* 39:10 (1988), 1068.

[13]R. W. Miller and K. A. Jackson, *Practical Psychology for Pastors* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985).

[14]Fairchild, *Finding Hope,* 90.

[15]R. B. Caplan, *Helping the Helpers Help* (New York: Seabury, 1972).

but to a greater degree than many other emotional problems, depression often has a biological component. Increasingly research is discovering that many depressions have a biological basis.[16] No amount of talking with a pastor or mental health professional will give more than temporary relief to a person with a biologically based depression. These people need medical assistance. The general rule is that if a person complains of a persistent depression of two to three weeks in duration that is increasingly severe and has no discernible, significant loss involved, it is time to advise the person to consult with a physician to rule out a physical problem. Several medical problems may masquerade as depression, including certain types of cancer and diabetes.[17]

BLUPERSON: an acronym

The acronym *BLUPERSON* can be used to outline the basic symptoms of depression. These guidelines are based on the current standards set forth in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders—Revised, 1987. Not all of these symptoms need appear for a significant depression to be present, but generally several will appear in the course of a depressive episode. As the number of symptoms increases, the likelihood of a major depression that requires mental health and/or medical involvement increases.

A word of caution. Depression can be tricky to diagnose properly even for experienced mental health professionals. For example, it has been estimated that about ten percent of elderly persons thought to be suffering senile dementia are, in fact, clinically depressed. Depression can also be covered over or "masked" by physical symptoms such as backaches, headaches, and stomach complaints. For other persons the abuse of alcohol and/or drugs is an attempt to self-medicate the unacknowledged depression.[18] Clergy cannot be expected to make the perfect diagnosis. This article is written to sharpen skills of recognition. It is clear that training clergy in evaluative skills enhances considerably their ability to assist those who come to them with emotional problems such as depression.[19]

Blues—Depressed individuals complain of feeling blue, "down in the dumps," low, sad, lost, gloomy, hopeless, and empty. A depression is considered present when these feelings predominate, are relatively persistent and not transitory. When the person reports that these feelings are stronger in the morning and ease later in the day, this may be an indicator of a biologically based depression. Occasionally, a person can be depressed without the complaint of a sad mood. The person's predominant mood can appear to be anger or irritability, although this is the exception and not the rule. For a depression to be diagnosed as meeting the

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[16]E. S. Paykel, *Handbook of Affective Disorders* (New York: Guilford Press, 1982); Miller & Jackson, *Practical Psychology for Pastors*; M. E. Thase, E. Frank, and D. J. Kupfer, "Biological process in major depression," in *Handbook of Depression; Treatment, Assessment and Research*, ed. E. E. Beckham and W. R. Leber (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1985), 816-914.

[17]J. M. Gorman, *The Essential Guide to Psychiatric Drugs* (New York: St. Martin's, (1990); J. Preston and J. Johnson, *Clinical Psychopharmacology Made Ridiculously Simple* (Miami, FL: MedMaster, Inc., 1990).

[18]Griest and Jefferson, *Depression and Its Treatment*.

[19]M. Wasman, R. B. Corradi, and N. A. Clemens, "In-depth continuing education for clergy in mental health: Ten years of a large scale program," in *Pastoral Psychology* 27:4 (1979), 251-59.

criteria of a "major depression," this depressed mood must persist for two weeks with at least four of the following symptoms:

Lack of self-worth—Depressed persons often complain of feeling worthless. They often express self-reproach with excessive and inappropriate guilt. They can be prone to weeping without apparent cause. They report feeling helpless, ineffectual, and without hope that their prospects will get better. This set of indicators may be the most common presenting issues that clergy will see. People who go to clergy feeling that they are cursed, condemned, or unforgivable may be in a state of depression.[20]

Under- or over-eating—Change in appetite is often present in depression. Some people gain weight, and others lose their desire to eat. The more severe depressions can be characterized by a loss of appetite, with major weight loss occurring in some cases.

Pleasure loss—Depressed people often experience a loss of pleasure (anhedonia) in activities they had previously found enjoyable. They may report a decreased interest in sex. These persons may become increasingly withdrawn and isolated. With severe forms of depression, people report having no sense of pleasure and lose interest in all activities.

Energy loss—Loss of energy and becoming easily fatigued are common symptoms of depression. Some people report being "completely exhausted" much of the time.

Risk of suicide—Depressed people often dwell on thoughts of death and suicide. They may express a desire to die and are at a much higher risk of suicide than the general population. About three-quarters of the people who kill themselves are depressed when they take their life.[21] Clergy should always consider the possibility of suicide in any depressed person and should be prepared to ask appropriate questions about suicidal thoughts. Does a person have a plan of action? Does the person have a lethal means available? These are essential questions to be posed, and an affirmative answer to either requires an immediate intervention.[22]

Sleeping pattern change—Some depressed persons complain that they need much more sleep than usual; others are unable to sleep adequately. A key indicator for a biologically based depression is repeated "terminal insomnia." This is the phenomenon of waking up early in the morning (two hours or more before the usual time) and being unable to go back to sleep.

Onset of movement change—Depressed people sometimes complain of slowed movement (psychomotor retardation), and sometimes conversely they experience agitation (psychomotor agitation). In very depressed people speech may become flat and monotone. The face can become expressionless or in state of fixed melancholy.

Negative thinking—People suffering from a major depression often are very negative, extremely pessimistic and constricted in their thinking. Depression can bring with it a diminished ability to think or concentrate. Depressed persons may become slowed in their thinking and indecisive. They may begin to be increasingly

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[20]Miller & Jackson, *Practical Psychology for Pastors*.

[21]Griest and Jefferson, *Depression and Its Treatment*.

[22]J. L. Boyer and L. Guthrie, "Assessment and treatment of the suicidal patient," in *Handbook of Depression: Treatment, Assessment and Research*, ed. E. E. Beckham & W. R. Leber (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1985), 606-33.

forgetful. In about ten percent of the severe forms of depression the person will lose contact with reality and become psychotic. The risk of suicide among psychotic depressives is five to six times greater than for other forms of depression.[23] In this state of mind they may experience *delusions*—rigid, extremely unrealistic beliefs held despite of strong evidence to the contrary (e.g., believing that one is the suffering savior who is in pain for the sins of the world). Sometimes people in acute depression have *hallucinations*—the experience of sensation without an external cause (e.g., hearing the devil demanding that one must suffer agony). About 75 percent of all persons admitted to psychiatric hospitals report significant depression.[24]

Approximately ten percent of people who become clinically depressed also have a *manic* episode. These people are said to be suffering a "manic-depressive" or "bi-polar" disorder. The predominant mood during the mania is elevated, expansive, elated, or irritable. During a manic episode a person may sleep very little, talk rapidly, loudly, and continually, experience racing thoughts, and take little time to eat. They often have poor judgment and can lose touch with reality. They may become impulsive, making serious financial, social and occupational blunders. The risk of suicide is very high among persons suffering from the manic-depressive mood disorder. The salt, Lithium Carbonate, has been found to be remarkably effective in the treatment of this disorder.[25]

Researchers have discovered that when persons were asked who they seek for help in a "crisis" involving the "death of someone close" they were almost five times more likely to seek the assistance of a clergywoman or clergyman (54%) than all mental health professionals combined (11%).[26] With the likelihood that clergy are the primary caregivers among helping professionals for persons in grief, it is important to emphasize that *normal grief reactions resulting from loss are not to be considered disorders of depression.*[27] Although grief often brings with it many of the symptoms of depression such as sad mood, change in sleep patterns, temporary loss of pleasure, and change in appetite, these reactions are to be expected and viewed as normal. Many grieving people report bouts of depression that decrease in intensity over time. When a person suffers a disorder of depression there is usually little or no relief, and a continuing increase in intensity. Major de-

Clergy should always consider the possibility of suicide in a depressed person and be prepared to ask questions about suicidal thoughts.

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[23]D. Hales, *Depression* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989).

[24]H. W. Stone, "Grief and Depression," in *Handbook for Basic Types of Pastor Care and Counseling*, ed. H. W. Stone and W. M. Clements (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 173-230.

[25]Griest and Jefferson, *Depression and Its Treatment.*

[26]Veroff, Kulka and Douvan, *Mental Health in America*, 233.

[27]Griest and Jefferson, *Depression and Its Treatment*; Miller & Jackson, *Practical Psychology for Pastors.*

pressions are usually associated with a complete loss of the ability to experience pleasure, pronounced and continual sleep disturbance, significant agitation or restlessness, suicidal thoughts and attempts, and the loss of self-worth.[28] "In grief the world becomes poor and empty for the griever, whereas in depression it is the ego itself that becomes poor and empty. In depression it is one's opinion of oneself which is lowered or lost."[29] In normal grieving, the onset of depressive symptoms begins in the first three months after the loss and usually lasts no more than a year. In a major depression the symptoms may begin several months after the loss, are more severe, and the condition may not improve in a year. The loss of a child or the sudden and unexpected death of a significant other can predispose a person to a major depression.[30]

What is the appropriate response of a clergyperson to a depressed person who needs assistance? I have given my suggested guidelines the acronym *ACT: Assessment, Consultation/Referral, and Treatment.*

Assessment

It is essential to gather information to sort out the type of depression you are working with. Is it a normal grief reaction or the disorder of depression? The range of intensity in a depression runs from mild (the chest cold) to severe (pneumonia). I will use as my guidelines the criteria set forth by the psychiatrists Arieti and Bemporad[31] and the pastoral psychologist Fairchild.[32]

1) Is the depression of such intensity that it affects the total personality of the individual? Does the mood interfere with several aspects of life such as work, marital relations, social life, thinking, and physical well-being?

2) Does the person accept the depression as a part of his or her life-style? Does the individual lack the emotional strength to desire an end to the depression?

3) Are suicidal ideas actively present in the person's thinking? Do they have a plan for suicide and/or a lethal means available that they are not prepared to relinquish?

4) Is the person unable to positively respond, even in a moderate way, to uplifting experiences, and attempts to comfort?

5) Is there an excessive loss of appetite, or is there more than mild insomnia?

If there is an affirmative answer to any of these questions, there is evidence of more than a mild depression, and the clergyperson needs to consult with and probably refer the person to a mental health professional.

Consultation/Referral

If a person appears to be suffering more than a mild depression or a normal grief reaction it is essential for you to have a consultation with a mental health professional such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, licensed pastoral counselor, or marriage and family therapist, to make a more extensive evaluation and discuss treatment options. This can be the course of action except when faced with a suicidal emergency that requires immediate inter-

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[28]Stone, "Grief and Depression."

[29]Fairchild, *Finding Hope,* 14.

[30]G. M. Burnell and A. L. Burnell, *Clinical Management of Bereavement: A Handbook for Healthcare Professionals* (New York: Human Sciences Press, Inc., 1989).

[31] S. Arieti and J. R. Bemporad, *Severe and Mild Depression: The Psychotherapeutic Approach* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978).

[32]Fairchild, *Finding Hope.*

vention and referral. Develop a relationship with at least one mental health professional before you have a crisis situation. Most urban areas provide a wide selection of mental health professionals. Many churches and synagogues have mental health professional as members. In rural or low-income areas, where mental health services are in short supply, I would recommend that a group of churches and/or synagogues or the central religious body make available a consultant who could at least be reached for telephone consultation.

Choose a consultant who is open to your language of faith. Many depressed persons go to clergy with questions of meaning and purpose. It is helpful in such cases for the mental health professional to have an appreciation for the client's religious history and religious language. Scholars have expressed concern over the lack of collaboration between the mental health and religious communities with a call for better cooperation and mutuality.[33] There continues to be a lack of appreciation for the psychological and health benefits of religious commitment for many persons. These convictions are held contrary to empirical findings.[34] One study found religious commitment second only to health in predicting subjective well-being among elders 75 and over.[35]

Your assessment of the depressed person should include a careful appraisal of current symptoms, knowledge of the person's family situation, and relevant medical and religious history. A telephone consultation can be completed in a relatively short time when your assessment is developed prior to the consultation. In most cases of moderate—and certainly, severe—depression, you and your consultant will come to the conclusion that it is important to refer the person to a mental health professional for a more extensive evaluation and treatment. If you have the appropriate training and experience and choose to counsel with a mildly depressed person, you should do appropriate consultation to assure adequate treatment.

When you refer a person to a mental health professional, they become the primary caregiver, although you may well become a collaborative support professional regarding questions of faith and spiritual development.[36] Once a person becomes the client of a mental health professional the client has the right of confidentiality under the law, and you will need to discuss with the mental health professional and client where your expertise as a religious professional would be appropriately helpful in the treatment plan. Seek out mental health professionals who are willing to answer specific questions regarding their treatment

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[33]N. A. Clemens, R. B. Corradi, and M. Wasman, "The parish clergy as a mental health resource," in *Journal of Religion and Health*, 17:4 (1978), 227-32; D. B. Larson, E. M. Pattison, D. G. Blazer, A. R. Omran, and B. H. Kaplan, "Systematic analysis of research variables in four major psychiatric journals," in *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 143:3 (1986), 329-34; Larson et al., "The couch and the cloth."

[34]J. Gartner, D. B. Larson, and G. D. Allen, "Religious commitment and mental health: A review of the empirical literature," in *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 118 (1991): 6-25.

[35]H. G. Koenig, J. N. Kvale, and C. Ferrel, "Religion and well-being in later life," in *Gerontologist* 28 (1988): 18-28.

[36]M. M. Cunningham, "Consultation, collaboration and referral," in *Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling*, ed. R. J. Wicks, R. D. Parsons, and D. E. Capps (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 162-70; D. K. Switzer, *Pastoral Care Emergencies; Ministering to People in Crisis* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989).

plan, and educate yourself regarding the treatment options for depression so you can make an informed referral. An effective referral is a valuable act of pastoral care.[37]

Treatment

It is important to appreciate that the choice of treatment for a depressed person will be shaped by the level of the depression. The treatment of choice for a mildly depressed person is usually psychotherapy, sometimes referred to as "insight therapy." Psychotherapy has as its goal a change in thinking, feeling, and relating that will reduce a person's susceptibility to depression. During the early crisis stage the therapist, like the clergyperson, will work from a supportive, empathic stance to help shore up the person's sense of self. As the therapy progresses, the therapist works more with the underlying feelings that may be evoking the depression.[38] Increasingly, therapists have become interested in the role of negative thinking as it relates to depression. This "cognitive therapy" attempts to help the person re-frame the negative thinking processes into which the depressed person finds herself/himself locked.[39] I recommend as a useful, understandable summary of this type of effective therapy *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy*, by David Burns.[40] Other psychotherapists work with the depressed person from the perspective of the family. These "family systems therapists" work with the depressed person within the perspective of the impact that the various family members have on one another.[41]

The treatment of choice for moderate and severely depressed persons is a combination of anti-depressive medications and psychotherapy.[42] Antidepressive medications are employed to reduce the symptoms of depression. The good news is that if a person requires medication for depression, about 70 percent of the time the first antidepressive medication prescribed by a physician has a positive result.[43]

In the past there have been two groups of antidepressive medications: tricyclics (Tofranil, Elavil, Pamelor, and others) and Monoamine oxidase inhibitors or "MAO" (Nardil, Parnate and Marplan). Recently a new drug has been introduced, fluoxetine (Prozac) and has become, as of this writing, the most widely prescribed antidepressive medication in the United States.[44]

All of these medications usually require roughly two to four weeks to take effect, and they often have side effects. None of these medications is addictive or

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[37]R. R. Lee, "Referral as an act of pastoral care," in *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 30:10 (1976), 186-97; A. J. Weaver, "How Marriage, Family and Child Therapists Can Enhance Referrals with the Clergy," in *The California Therapist* 3:5 (1991), 53-56.

[38]D. W. Badal, *Treatment of Depression and Related Moods: A Manual for Psychotherapists* (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1988).

[39]Beck, *Depression: Clinical, Experimental, and Theoretical Aspects*; J. Preston, *You Can Beat Depression: A Guide to Recovery* (San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact Publishers, 1989); Stone, "Grief and Depression."

[40]D. D. Burns, *Feeling Good; The New Mood Therapy* (New York: Penguin, 1980).

[41]G. I. Keitner, *Depression and Families: Impact and Treatment* (Washington, D. C.: American Psychiatric Press, Inc., 1990).

[42]H. R. Conte, R. Plutchik, K. V. Wild, and T. B. Karasu, "Combined psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy for depression," in *Archives of General Psychiatry* 43 (1986): 471-9.

[43]Griest and Jefferson, *Depression and Its Treatment.*

[44]*The Medical Letter* (New Rochelle, New York, May 1991); Gorman, *The Essential Guide to Psychiatric Drugs,* 1990.

acts as a tranquilizer.[45] The tricyclics and monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAO) can cause drowsiness, low blood pressure, weight gain, dry mouth, increased heart rates, sexual dysfunction, constipation, blurred vision, difficulty in urination, and dizziness. The MAO require a special diet to which the person has to strictly adhere or risk dangerously high blood pressure. Fluoxetine (Prozac) has become widely prescribed because it has appeared to have fewer and less severe side effects. Prozac can cause nausea, headaches, nervousness, and insomnia;[46] but one recently published report asserts that Prozac may give rise to suicidal ideas and violent behaviors not formerly present.[47] When depressed persons have psychotic episodes, they are usually administered an antipsychotic drug (such as Trilafon, Haldol, or Stelazine) in addition to the antidepressive medication. All of these medications can have side effects and waiting periods of several weeks before they take effect. Given the wide use of medications for depressed persons and other emotional disorders, it would be useful to have a basic text in the area of clinical psychopharmacology in your library, such as *Clinical Psychopharmacology Made Ridiculously Simple* by Preston and Johnson; *Clinical Psychopharmacology: A Practical Reference for Nonmedical Psychotherapists* (Lawson and Cooperrider, 1988) or Gorman's text, *The Essential Guide to Psychiatric Drugs* (1990).

An effective referral is a valuable act of pastoral care.

Among some severely depressed persons the only effective therapy is electroconvulsive (ECT) or "shock" therapy. "About 70 to 80 percent of all patients who fail to respond to antidepressive medications improve after electroconvulsive therapy."[48] ECT has proven particularly effective with dangerously suicidal and psychotic depressives who have not responded to any other form of therapy.[49] ECT is administered as controlled electrical current passed through electrodes attached to the head creating a seizure that lasts about a minute. ECT is administered only under medical supervision and after anesthetic and muscle relaxants have been applied.[50] "There is no evidence that properly administered ECT causes brain damage or permanent memory loss."[51]

These two acronyms may be remembered with the memory byte: *A BLUPERSON requires a clergyperson to ACT.* Put this to memory and you have a quick reference resource to evaluate depressed persons.

Now that you have read the article, do you think the newly widowed woman in the

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[45]F. M. Mondimore, *Depression the Mood Disease* (Baltimore: The John's Hopkins University Press, 1990).

[46]Medical Letter, 1991.

[47]M. H. Teicher, C. Glod, and J. O. Cole, "Emergence of intense suicidal preoccupation during fluoxetine treatment," in *American Journal of Psychiatry* 147:2 (1990), 207-9.

[48]Hales, *Depression*, 83.

[49]D. Blazer, "Depression in the elderly," in *The New England Journal of Medicine* 320 (1989): 164-66.

[50]Mondimore, *Depression the Mood Disease.*

[51]Hales, *Depression*, 83.

opening vignette is suffering from depression, or is she having a normal grief reaction? What factors did you consider in your conclusion? What additional information would you like to have to make a more through evaluation?

Author's response to opening vignette

Several factors suggest that the newly widowed woman is suffering from more than a normal grief reaction. The sudden and unexpected loss of a life-long partner and the denial of her natural grief—not weeping at the funeral and trying to keep busy to avoid her loss—appears to have precipitated a major depression in this woman. Usually in a normal grief reaction, the depressive symptoms are more moderate and have their onset in the first three months. These depressive symptoms began after six months. She has some obvious signs of depression —downcast mood and slow and ponderous movements (psychomotor retardation). Does her "pale and gaunt" appearance denote she has disturbed sleep patterns and/or lack of proper eating? Does her withdrawal from church activities she has long enjoyed mean that she might have lost all enjoyment of formerly pleasurable events, a significant sign of a major depression? I would also want to know more about her thought processes. Her thinking sounds very pessimistic and negative. She was described as a life-long religiously committed person who is asking why God is being vengeful toward her. When she says she "sees" her former husband or "hears him talk to her," are these the normal wishes of a grieving person or the hallucinations of a psychotic depression? The fact that she recognizes her house is a "mess" and says she has not been herself argues against a loss of reality. One would most certainly want to follow up on her comment, "I don't know if I can go on without him." People suffering a major depression are at a high risk of suicide and must be carefully evaluated. Asking them in a gentle, caring manner if they are thinking of hurting themselves may save a life. If a person is thinking of suicide, the more specific the plan of action and the more lethal the means, the greater the risk.

This article is dedicated to John and Doris Tulloch in thanksgiving for their generosity and Christian witness. *Andrew Weaver is a United Methodist pastor with a doctorate in clinical psychology.* *All copyrights are reserved.* *Correspondence may be addressed to: Andrew Weaver, Ph.D., The Church Counseling and Career Center of Southern California, 1554 South Sepulveda Blvd., Suite 205, Los Angeles, California 90025.* *The author would like to express appreciation to Roy Fairchild and John Preston for their assistance in preparing this article.*

Suggested Reading

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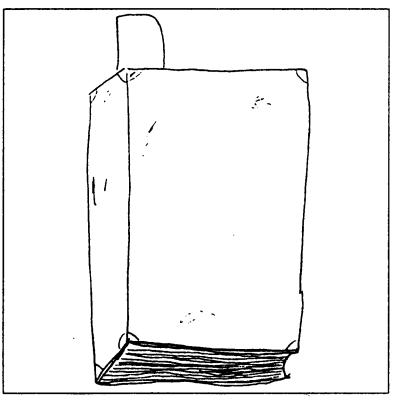
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The Bible is More Than A Book

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The "spirit" of Roland Barthes' essay, "The Death of the Author,"[1] has saturated the "letter" of literary and theological criticism in much the same way that Nietzsche's triumphant pronouncement of the "death of God"[2] inaugurated theological flurry over a century ago.



Rather than reporting the literal murder of an object named "God," the sensationalist rhetoric of both Barthes and Nietzsche is intended to criticize a worldview that sanctions the authority of a God

[1] Roland Barthes, "La mort de l'auteur," in *Le Bruissement de la Langue: Essais Critiques*, vol. IV (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1984), 61-68.

[2] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, tr. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974, No. 343), 279-80.

who has authorized, once and for all, one infallible interpretation of God's self-disclosure. The God who is sacrificed on the altar of post-modern critical consciousness atones for the sins of theological truth-claims based on doctrines of scriptural inerrancy and divine authorship. But the announcement of the "death of God" implies that there is a God to kill, and the account of the death of the author implies that there is an author to dispense with.

The deconstruction of a concept of absolute authority leaves open the possibility for us to construe authority in terms of a relational category. One theologian, whose writings combine a respect for the authority of what he repeatedly calls "the Sacred Scriptures" with responsible theological reflection emphasizing the real presence of Christ in the Word and the sacraments, is Arthur Carl Piepkorn.

For Dr. Piepkorn, the Bible is the authoritative book of the evangelical and catholic church. The Scriptures are the Word of the trinitarian God, who speaks the word of gospel and law, and in this speaking constructs the identity of the theologian, the church, and the world. The aim of this essay is to explore the interaction between authority and criticism by engaging Dr. Piepkorn's thought in the discussion of the authority of Scripture, an issue that is of crucial importance to contemporary Lutheran theology. I propose to describe briefly the current challenge to the "traditional" model of biblical authority. Subsequently, a three part theological proposal will demarcate the zone between speaking and listening, between hearing and responding as a speech community (*Sprachgemeinschaft*).[3] The first section of this proposal represents Dr. Piepkorn's Christology and the twofold Word of gospel and law that constructs the church's identity as the community of justified sinners. The second section articulates Dr. Piepkorn's christological link to the authority of the triune God whose Word creatively constructs the history of the world. The essay concludes with a description of the speech-community's experience of temptation (*Anfechtung* or *tentatio*) and its first order response of prayer (*oratio*) and meditation (*meditatio*).

Description of the problem

In *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology*[4] David Kelsey aims to provide an overarching concept of scriptural authority without advocating the normativity of any particular theological position. His theologically neutral account intends to overcome the charged intellectual impasse between theological positions that relate the authority of Scripture to the doctrine of revelation. Kelsey believes that the "translation" of the content of revelation into modern concepts is problematic for three reasons. 1) There may be a conceptual discontinuity between biblical language and twentieth century proposals. 2) The assumption that only one meaning underlies a particular revelatory event neglects exegetical and textual-critical issues. 3) The justification of a theological position that appeals to revelation is itself authorized by a particular doctrine of Scripture.[5]

Kelsey concludes that the "translation" metaphor misrepresents the variety of ways in which Scripture is actually used in the theological task because it is based on the

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[3] Oswald Bayer, *Autorität und Kritik* (Tübingen: JCB Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), 184.

[4] David Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

[5] Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture*, 189-92.

erroneous assumption that the text possesses an inherent authority, made explicit in a second order doctrine of Scripture.

Kelsey's remarks point out the problem that Piepkorn himself addresses. When a doctrine of revelation buttresses the correspondence between the authority of a particular interpretation and the truth of its scriptural referent, the challenge to authority has already been raised.[6] Piepkorn suggests that if Scripture is to function as the "absolute norm and only source of doctrine,"[7] its authority can only be acknowledged with respect to its use within the church. Thus, an explicit statement concerning scriptural authority must be moved from a privileged position in theological *prolegomena* to a discovery of the implicit uses of Scripture under the Third Article of the Creed.

Two further issues, the deconstructionist challenge and the limitation of Kelsey's functionalist account, deserve rehearsal here. First, the deconstructionists (e.g., Derrida, Foucault, Barthes) have challenged the priority of speaking over writing. The privileged position of speech has often served as an absolute authority over the word in its written form. Writing is the attempt to capture an infinitely evasive logocenter, a center absent from the recorded text yet present in the text's witness to its spoken origin. The text witnesses to a primal speech-event, yet it is unsuccessful in capturing the presence of the Word that is absent in writing.

Secondly, the religious experience of God is an issue that is raised by post-modern theologians. Kelsey claims that a theological construal of the nature of biblical authority is informed by the question, "What is God using the Bible for?"[8] The vague notion that God uses, rather than speaks in, Scripture in order to "shape identity"[9] rejects the neo-orthodox assertion that God

God's presence is conjoined in some way to the text, not *qua* text or *qua* Scripture, but as part of a hermeneutical pattern.

really speaks in and through Scripture. Kelsey's functionalist approach prefers to see God's mode of presence to the community independent of the Spirit of the Word speaking in the letter of Scripture. God's presence is conjoined in some way to the text, not *qua* text or *qua* Scripture, but as part of a hermeneutical pattern. The theological task is one that captures, in a sweeping act of the theological imagination,[10] the particular configuration of the "idiosyncratic"[11] ways in which particular churches have both regarded Scripture and God's mode of presence to the community. The central problem of both the deconstruc-

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[6] Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Position of the Church and Her Symbols," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 25:10 (October 1954), 740.

[7] Piepkorn, "The Protestant Worship Renewal and the Lutheran Liturgical Movement," in *The Liturgical Renewal of the Church*, ed. Massey H. Shepherd Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 92.

[8] Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture*, 211.

[9] Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture*, 91.

[10] Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture*, 206.

[11] Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture*, 164.

tionists and formal theological proposals like Kelsey's rests with the assumption that God is present in spirit when God is absent from the letter. The challenge can be addressed, under the *locus* of ecclesiology, when the material content of Scripture is articulated in terms of a real presence, in both spirit and letter. The move in turning to the ways in which Scripture functions meaningfully within the church must go one step further and raise the truth question (*die Wahrheitsfrage*). The gospel is the truth of the real presence of the Word. Yes, the Bible is more than a book.

Christology: the real presence

The authority of Scripture can only be articulated when we move beyond a formal account to the material content of the Word. The meaning of Scripture for the particular life of the community of faith is disclosed by the diversity of ways Scripture is used by the church. However, the truth of Scripture is its material content, that is, the real presence of Christ in the letter of the word of the Bible. For Luther, the Bible is more than the collection of Aesop's fables because in the Bible one "lays hold of the real teacher of Scripture himself."[12] Engagement with the Word of God is a lifelong, existential, active occupation that differs from any other scientific or vocational enterprise. The biologist, the sociologist, the bake, and the historical critic use their creative, physical, and intellectual capacities to discern the appropriate application of their skills on the subject matter at hand. Reason and imagination are faculties that grade particular efforts with respect to standards in the variety of human disciplines. However, the engagement with Scripture differs from the usual ways in which human reason and skill are applied to a task or a text. It is the author of Scripture who knows more about human sin and salvation than the Christian and the church are capable of discerning.[13] The Word of Christ is authoritative because it alone constructs the human condition in the presence of God (*coram deo*). The material content of both Testaments is the reality of the Word of God that judges and redeems each individual "text" in the context of the church. Thus, the linguistic space occupied by the real presence of the Word and the persons to whom the Word speaks in the church is the arena in which the Word alone is authoritative.

Dr. Piepkorn refers to the *sacramentum audible* and the *verbum visibile* in order to make the theological point that the real presence of Christ in the Word and the sacraments is first and foremost the content of the gospel.[14] The word of promise in the sacrament commits the person of Jesus Christ to being present; the church participates in the hearing of the proclaimed Word and in the seeing and tasting of the visible words. The promise spoken by Jesus and later appropriated by the catholic church as warrants for sacramental practice (Jn 6:53-58, Mt 28:19) is not the high hand of an *a priori* law from which the number and the fashion of ritual administration are deduced.[15] Rather, the authority of Jesus is

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[12] Martin Luther, "Preface to the Wittenberg Edition of Luther's German Writings" (1539), in *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 65-66.

[13] Martin Luther, "The Large Catechism" (1529), in *The Book of Concord*, tr. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 455, 77-78.

[14] Piepkorn, "The Protestant Worship Renewal," 93.

[15] Piepkorn, "The Lutheran Church A Sacramental Church," in *AuQ* 17 (1938): 45.

Engagement with the Word of God is a life-long, active occupation that differs from any other scientific or vocational enterprise.

the content of the gospel that constructs the church's identity as the site in which the spoken presence in the sacramental and visible words is heard. The use of Scripture is necessarily related, *a posteriori*, to Jesus' promise to sustain the preaching and the sacramental activity of the church. The authority of Christ's promise to be present where "two or three are gathered together in my name" (Mt 18:20) is the truth of the Word in its use in the church.

The *pro nobis* character of the Word conveys Luther's relational construal of the authority of Scripture. The distinction is derived from Luther's theological discernment that relates concrete human experience to the hunger for the comfort of God's Word.[16] Not every letter of Scripture conveys Christ (*treibt Christum*), but the gospel of Christ speaks the reliable and the certain promise of presence "for us." The external and objective word heard when the gospel is preached and when the sacraments are shared is the word of Christ who proclaims his identity with the visible words of water, wine, bread, and the pastoral absolution in the sign of the cross.[17]

The "outer" words of the baptismal formula, the eucharistic prayer, and the pronouncement of forgiveness are bound up with the "inner" Word of the Spirit that imputes the life-giving benefits of the gospel to the heart of the believer. The promise of the gospel is the self-giving of Christ in the gift of the sacramental word. The external words of the liturgical rites are better described as the "Word of gift" rather than "words of institution."[18] The Word of God, spoken by the letter of Scripture, is the gift of Christ's presence in the objective sacramental and visible words. Furthermore, the gift of the Holy Spirit is given, not as a quantitative addition to the words of Jesus, nor as a leaping hermeneutic from an object to its subjective appropriation, but as the divine person who transforms the believer's unbelief into faith in the actual efficacy of the Word. Luther writes,

> The chief article and foundation of the gospel is that... you accept and recognize him (Christ) as gift, as a present that God has given you and that is your own.... On this you may depend as surely as if you had done it yourself; indeed as if you were Christ himself.[19]

Two implications of this passage explain the real presence of Christ in the "outer" Word bound up with the Holy Spirit as the "inner" Word. The gospel is the "lively Word" that is experienced through the senses of audition, sight, and touch. The Word is heard in preaching, the presence is seen in

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[16] Martin Luther, "How Christians Should Regard Moses" (1525), in *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, 144.

[17] Piepkorn, "Christ Today: His Presence in the Sacraments," in *LuthWorld* 10 (1963): 277.

[18] Bayer, *Autorität und Kritik*, 205.

[19] Luther, "A Brief Instruction on What to Look For and Expect in the Gospels" (1521), in *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, 106.

The external word is a performative utterance actualized in the faith given by the presence of the Spirit.

the material bread and wine, and the minister's gestures pour the water over the (usually crying) baptismal candidate. The content of the word is the "great fire of the love of God"[20] that proclaims the gospel, that pronounces forgiveness of sins, that unites the community of saints in the Eucharist, and that baptizes in the trinitarian name. The external word is a performative utterance actualized in the faith given by the presence of the Spirit. Luther's German, "*das leibliche Wort*," plays on two senses of the word "lively" that convey the intimate connection between the outer and the inner word. The life-giving promise is conveyed by the letter; the spirit of the gospel is incarnate in the Word made flesh (Jn 1:14).

Secondly, the word of the gospel that speaks the personal word of God is the gift of benefits offered *pro nobis* by Christ and in Christ's Spirit. In christological terms, the gift of Christ is the communication of the divine attribute of righteousness in exchange for the not-so-divine attributes of human sin, alienation, and unrighteousness. Luther describes this happy exchange (*die froehlich Wechsel*) as the communication of Christ's benefits that then become the possession of the sinner who is freed and of the community that is justified. The self-determined identity of the person who is estranged from God and of the church that defines itself in socio-political rather than in christocentric terms is exchanged for the identity of the righteousness of God. The work of Christ, in the external Word and presence, and the work of the Spirit, that transforms unbelief into faith, actualize the promise of the gospel in the experience of the Christian and the church. The good news is more than a text when the subject of the text is identified as the author who inscribes the identity of righteousness onto the human heart and into the life of the church.

The Word is the twofold word of law and gospel. Dr. Piepkorn is theologically committed to Luther's classic distinction, and he states that the correct distinction between law and gospel is a necessary function of the church's preaching.[21] However, Piepkorn draws the distinction in a way that is useful for a post-modern construal of the authority of Scripture. He begins by adopting the theological content of an exegesis of 2 Tim 2:19 explained in the *Apology* (4, 188).[22] He assents to the *Apology*'s suggested interpretation of the word *orthotomein*, meaning "to cut a straight line" between law and gospel, and he appropriates the theological distinction as an exegetical tool in order to better hear the truth of the Word proclaimed to be *pro nobis*.

Piepkorn asserts the logical priority of the gospel over the law with respect to the

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[20] Luther, "A Brief Instruction on What to Look For and Expect," 106.

[21] Piepkorn, "What the Symbols Have to Say About the Church," in *Concordia Theological Monthly* 26:10 (October 1955), 757.

[22] Piepkorn, "Do the Lutheran Symbolical Books Speak Where the Sacred Scriptures Are Silent?" in *Concordia Theological Monthly* 43:1 (January 1972), 34.

existence of the church, yet brings the law into the discussion as the dynamic interplay between gospel and law within the life of the church. The church is "part of the gospel of God's grace, an indispensable channel through which the forgiving and fortifying power of the Holy Spirit reaches the members of Christ's mystical body."[23] Piepkorn's claim, "The Church is prior to the Christian,"[24] is an interpretation of the gospel whose Word sustains the empirical church as the eschatological kingdom of God. The church is a sacramental fellowship; it is a community of sacred things. Piepkorn recovers the Latin neuter article of the word "*sanctorum*" in the Third Article of the Creed in order to stress the dynamic relationship between individuals, the church, and the life-giving benefits of the sacramental objects.[25] The empirical church is not yet the fully realized eschatological community in the sense that the law is still operative in convicting personal and systemic sin. The Word is the two-edged sword (Heb 4:12) that announces the reality of justification (*de facto*) but also pronounces judgment on the sin permeating the individual and the church (Article VII, *AC*).

The empirical church is justified by the "already" of the gospel that continues to redeem and sustain. However, the church is also the "not yet" of the kingdom of God because it is still the site of sin, hence under the law. The theological distinction between gospel and law corresponds christologically to the twofold significance of the cross and the resurrection. "Alleluia is the church's constant word because she constantly remembers Christ's suffering and victory."[26] The real presence of the risen Christ is the same Christ who suffered and died under the law *pro nobis*. The authority behind the twofold Word of gospel and law is the risen Lord, who eternally bears the marks of sin on his body (Lk 24:39) and who continues to narrate the conflict between sin and righteousness occurring in front of the scriptural text.

Thus, the theological art of drawing the proper distinction between gospel and law is one that cannot be resolved in a metaphysical principle, or in a premature Hegelian realized eschatology. The distinction is applied to the concrete and life-long experience with the text's author, the crucified and the risen Lord.

The church is the community of justified sinners.[27] Its identity is constituted by the spoken word that justifies sinners. The unity of the community of faith is not the conversational consensus that Jürgen Habermas claims can establish the universal community on the basis of Enlightenment rationalism.[28] It is not grounded in an esperanto of pre-Babel linguistic unity. Rather, the unity of the church rests on the authority of the Word that is spoken by the author of life itself. The material content of the biblical letter is the identity-creating and identity-sustaining word of justifica-

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[23] Piepkorn, "Let Us Pray for the Church," in *Response* 6:2 (St. Michael and All Angels 1964), 71.

[24] Piepkorn, Christian Preuss, and J. Stephen Bremer, "The Life of God in the Life of the Parish," in *Response* 4:1 (Pentecost 1962), 40.

[25] Piepkorn, "What the Symbols Have to Say About the Church," 726-7.

[26] Piepkorn, "Three Words in Our Worship: Devotional Reflections," in *Concordia Theological Monthly* 32:7 (July 1961), 398, quoted in Martin Luther, *WA* 12, 210, 11-12: "vox perpetua est ecclesiae, sicut perpetua est memoria passionis et victoriae eius."

[27] Bayer, *Autorität und Kritik*, 47.

[28] William C. Placher, *Unapologetic Theology: A Christian Voice in a Pluralistic Conversation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 74-82.

tion. In post-Babel, the universal message of the gospel transcends the babbling idiosyncrasies of native speech in the speech-event of the triune God, whose Word authorizes the community of justified sinners.

The post-modern theological account of the authority of Scripture locates the function and the truth of a relational concept of authority under the Third Article of the Creed. Authority can only be understood when the material content of Scripture is experienced in the context of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. The author of Scripture is the triune God who authorizes relationship, thus creating the conditions for worship and theological response. The Christian, as a member of the church, knows God as the author of individual and communal identity because one is already known as justified (Rom 5:8). God's speech *pro nobis* joins the authority of the self-giving presence of God with the church's use of Scripture. The trinitarian God authors the identity of the church in the oral proclamation of the gospel. The *pro nobis* category is inextricably bound up with the authority of the trinitarian God who creates and sustains the historical church.

Trinitarian theology: tentatio

A trinitarian construal of authority takes into account the deconstructionist attack on the logocentric memory of a *deus ex machina's* once and for all creation. Such a God, after having created the text, leaves it to run its course alone. Piepkorn's trinitarian theology insists upon the doctrine of continuous creation (*creatio continua*) as the constant operation of the Trinity in the world. Melanchthon's distinction between the civil kingdom (*regnum civile*) and the kingdom of Christ (*regnum Christi*) is not mere binary opposition. The triune God ordains creative work in the sphere of the world and the sphere of the church.[29] The unity behind the trinitarian article, as Luther puts it,[30] is the author of the identity of the world, conceived as the material site for God's creative and blessing activity. The christological link structures the first article according to the gospel: in Christ all things were made (Col 1:16) and declared to be good (Gen 1:31). Thus, the universal scope of the trinitarian article is the gospel, confirming Christ to be God's "Amen" to the world.[31] The gospel affirms culture rather than denigrating it. The same God who defines the identity of the church as the community of justified sinners is the author of the life of the world. Furthermore, the third article is joined to the gospel as the gift of the Holy Spirit's sanctifying activity. Piepkorn defends the "wholesome secularism" in the gospel that sanctifies one so that God's good gifts can be enjoyed.[32] God's pleasure (*Wohlgefallen*) in the goodness of creation is a gift that is given in order to transform human inability to appreciate and to accept what sin has destroyed. The Spirit creates in us clean hearts (Ps 51:10) and enables us to enjoy creation that we could not otherwise see as good. The gift of all three articles of the Creed is the gospel of the triune God's continuous creativity on which all of creation is utterly dependent.

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[29] Piepkorn, "Christ and Culture: A Lutheran Approach," in *Response* 2:1 (Pentecost 1960), 8.

[30] Martin Luther, "Ein Sermon auff das Fest der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit" (1535), *WA* 41, 270, 22-23.

[31] Piepkorn, "Three Words in Our Worship," 401.

[32] Piepkorn, "Benedicite and Gratias," in *Response* 5:3 (Epiphany 1964), 141.

Piepkorn's theology emphasizes the ecumenical and the universal significance of Christ's word of gift (*Hingabe*) offered in the Eucharist. The gift is privately celebrated among the community of saints, yet it is the cosmic Christ whose body is broken and whose blood is shared. The gospel's construction of the created order as good in Christ applies to the same world for which his sacrifice is redemptive.[33]

> The gift of all three articles of the Creed is the gospel of the triune God's continuous creativity on which all of creation is utterly dependent.

Piepkorn gives two reasons for the connection between the church's participation in the rite of communion and the universal implications of the foretaste of the feast to come. First, the material elements of bread and wine are the products of an entire range of human activity within God's order of creation that are taken to be the true and real, body and blood of the crucified and risen Lord of creation.[34] Thus, the meal becomes a symbol of the First Article of the Creed in which the Father of Jesus Christ offers creation in Christ to benefit human existence. Secondly, the person of Christ is the eschatological model of humanity, really present in the bread and wine, and given for the salvation of all humanity.[35]

The world is constructed by the gospel of *creatio continua* as well as by the Word of law. However, the articulation of the distinction between gospel and law is the task of theology located in the space between hearing the Word and responding to it. The Word of law spoken to the world is theologically recognized in the personal and ecclesial experience of *Anfechtung*, a word inadequately translated into English as "temptation." Luther frequently uses the term in order to describe the experience of the theologian and the church who are caught up in the conflict between the Word of God and the history of the world. The world exists under the law to the extent that it seeks to establish its own identity in spite of God's authoring the identity of the world as good. Furthermore, the world in conflict with the gospel is also in conflict with the church whose unity, holiness, and mission are perennially threatened by factors asserting the independence of the world from God's authorship.[36] The experience of suffering, conflict, and death mark out the terrain on which the theological distinction between gospel and law is articulated in response to hearing the word of law addressed to the world.

Anfechtung is the necessary experience of the church as part of, yet in conflict with, world history. Its necessity compels the theologian to return to the Word of God "which teaches you... to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely,

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[33] Piepkorn, "The One Eucharist for the One World," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 43:2 (February 1972), 98.

[34] Piepkorn, "The One Eucharist for the One World," 103.

[35] Piepkorn, "The One Eucharist for the One World," 96.

[36] Piepkorn, "Let Us Pray for the Church," 71.

how mighty, how comforting God's Word is, wisdom beyond all wisdom."[37] It is interesting to note the subtle interweaving of distinctions. The experience of trials and suffering functions according to the second use of the law in a vicarious sense. It is the theologian who experiences the despair of the law spoken to the world, yet this anguish prompts the move to seek comfort in the gospel. Luther conjures up the entire range of sensory experience, sight, touch, taste, hearing, smell, to show that the experience of God's presence is not an abstract intellectual exercise, nor a vague experience of an omnipresent God who is best understood as absent. The experience of comfort is hearing the gospel, seeing the visible words, tasting the bread and wine, touching the water. The experience of *Anfechtung*, bound up with the experience of the pleasure of the text, produces the "good theologian."[38]

Meditatio and oratio

The activity of meditation (*meditatio*) is characterized by a subtle interweaving between gospel and law. The law, in the sense of Christian vocation in the world, is determined by living in front of the scriptural text. Luther refers to Ps 1:2 that expresses the relationship of the theologian and the church with the Word.[39] "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night" (RSV). For Luther, the experience of meditating upon the outer, objective word, avoiding the enthusiasm of silent prayer, is a speech form (*Sprachform*) that constructs the life that is lived concretely in the world (*Lebensform*).[40] Like David, Luther claims that one is never finished with the practice of meditation. In fact, the theologian who gives up meditation due to pride or fatigue is compared to a donkey who flatters itself with its knowledge.[41] The process of saturating oneself with the letter of the text shapes the vocation of the church in its relation to the world.

Piepkorn stresses frequent participation in the sacraments of holy communion and absolution and appropriates Luther's understanding of baptism as a daily exercise of remembering the sacrament as death to the old and the birth of the new. The sacramental word that accompanies the visible words of bread and wine, water and the sign of the cross, is not the word of a heteronomous command coercing conformity to ritual. The word is Christ's promise to be really present *pro nobis*, inviting the community to share his body, speaking the "word of rebirth and of new life,"[42] baptizing in the triune name. The call to a practical sacramentalism is an invitation to participate in the gospel of justification; the enticing to experience new life in Christ, rather than the slow death of "sacramental starvation,"[43] constructs a space in which hearing the gospel and the law and responding in worship is available. Secondly, the Christian life is considered as a vocation spoken in its concrete historical location by the twofold word. In a passage that deconstructs the assumption that law and gospel are related in a static opposition, Luther writes of the law in terms of the shape it takes when construed as the "smallest part" of the gospel.[44] This aspect of the gospel is

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[37] Luther, "Preface," 67.
[38] Luther, "Preface," 66.
[39] Luther, "Preface," 66.
[40] Bayer, *Autorität und Kritik*, 49.
[41] Luther, "Preface," 68.
[42] Piepkorn, "Christ Today: His Presence in the Sacraments," 276.
[43] Piepkorn, "The Lutheran Church A Sacramental Church," 51.
[44] Luther, "A Brief Instruction on What to Look For and Expect," 106.

the example of Christ that is to be imitated by the Christian living in the world. Christ as example is not the authoritarian demands of a concrete set of laws. The diversity of human experience is not reducible to a concrete set of laws, or to a formal legal theory. Luther writes that "Christ drives and compels no one. Indeed he teaches so gently that he entices rather than commands."[45] The life spoken by the word is lived in space in which gospel and law invite the response of "charity" (*caritas*). The gospel speaks the word of new life in Christ, and the law entices action in the orders of creation. The law functions in relationship to the gospel. The first use of the law as a pedagogical injunction in the social-political arena (Gal 3:24) is related to the gospel of Christ through whom the orders of creation are declared to be good. The second use of the law as the urge to seek comfort in the word of promise is related to the gospel that speaks of God's love towards us (Jn 3:16). The space in front of the biblical text in which meditation on the external word of Scripture takes place, is constituted by its author who narrates both God's own autobiography in the language of gospel related to the law and the biography of the Christian and the church who experience the word and live out the word in the world.

The second form of speech occupying the space between hearing and responding is prayer (*oratio*).[46] The theologian acknowledges through prayer that only the author of Scripture can and must teach the content of Scripture that is eternal life. The experience of praying is one in which reason bows to the Word of God that alone communicates the content of Scripture. This is not to say that Luther denied the capacity of reason in grammatical-philological study of the Bible. In fact, he completely immersed himself in wrestling with the meaning and the truth of Scripture. However, *oratio* is spoken in humility in front of the biblical text, asking for the material communication of the gospel that cannot be fathomed by any reason. Luther derives the words that are to be prayed from the Bible itself. There is no lapse into subjective relativism just because the words that are prayed emerge from the meditation on the text. In Ps 119:26 David asks to experience guidance in order to understand the content of Scripture. For Christians, this understanding is the material experience of the word of justification that is incredible to reason, yet grasped in faith. The message of justification in contained within the letter of the biblical narrative as the speech-event of the Word who became flesh (Jn 1:14). Prayer is an essential ingredient in the church's experience because in prayer the author of Scripture who is the author of the church's life is acknowledged.

The experience of praying is one in which reason bows to the Word of God that alone communicates the content of Scripture.

The rubric of prayer includes many

[45] Luther, "A Brief Instruction on What to Look For and Expect," 108.

[46] Luther, "Preface," 67.

different forms of speaking that connect the vocation of the church to the history of the world. The prayers that are offered in Christ acknowledge Christ as the head of the church and the one through whom prayers are given.[47] Petitions, thanksgiving, supplications, and praise (1 Tim 2:1) are offered on behalf of creation and are confirmed as the Father's will in Christ's name. The intercessions for the church and the world are necessary speech acts because the world as the locus of God's providence is also the place in which the conflict between the Word of God and history occur. The unity and the preservation of true teaching in the church is of particular concern to a church fractured internally by divisions and permeated by words external to God's word in Scripture.[48] The world is created and redeemed in so far as Christ is Lord. However, the vocation of praying is a necessary ecclesial occupation, boldly petitioning "thy kingdom come" (Mt 6:10) for a world still marked by grief, cruelty, and death. The liturgical forms of the Kyrie, the Agnus Dei, and the Lord's Prayer circumscribe the evangelical and catholic content of the church's vocation of prayer. *Oratio* is the church's humble response to the Word of gospel that sustains the life of the church and world.

> God is not an omnipresent God playing hide and seek with the deconstructionists.

The Bible is more than a book. The material content of the Word of God is the truth of God's authorship, that constitutes the life and the speech of the community in the space between authority and criticism, listening and speaking. Piepkorn's emphasis on the real presence of Christ offers a Lutheran perspective on the authority of the Word and the sacraments that takes seriously the meaning of Scripture in the life of the church. The authority of Christ is the christological center of the trinitarian article of the creed. The gospel and the law as the twofold word of God are not a once and for all word spoken from a silent vantage-point behind a text. God is not an omnipresent God playing hide and seek with the deconstructionists. Distinguishing between gospel and law is a theological art practiced in the historical life of the church as the interpreting response to the text of Scripture. The gospel that creates, justifies, and sanctifies and the law of example, inviting participation in meditation and prayer, are the two words interwoven into the fabric of the church's experience with the pleasure of the scriptural text and the pain of the world's text. The cosmic dimensions of the mediated presence in the church are conveyed by the word of *creatio continua* spoken by the trinitarian God in God's construction of the world's identity. The word of gospel and law mediate the experiential pattern of the church that is at home with and yet in conflict with the world. God authorizes the historical church as the community of justified sinners whose necessary response is doxology, theology, and vocation.

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[47] Piepkorn, "This Little Prayer in Addition," in *Response* 5:2 (St. Michael and All Angels 1963), 71.

[48] Piepkorn, "Let Us Pray for the Church," 71.

Mary as Metaphor: A Linguistic Proposal for the Recovery of Ecclesiology[1]

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Perhaps no topic generates so much heat and so little light between Catholics and Lutherans as that of Marian doctrine, piety, and devotion. Since the reforming efforts of Luther and his associates brought the acid critique of the principles of "Christ alone" (*solus Christus*) and "Scripture alone" (*sola Scriptura*) to bear on Roman Catholic Marian doctrine and devotion, a solid tradition of mutual distrust and condemnation has been perpetuated between the heirs of Luther and the heirs of Trent over just what to make of Mary (and by extension, all the saints) in the belief, life, and piety of the church. This remains a critical and hotly divisive issue still in ecumenical dialogue between Lutherans and Catholics.

What factors caused this rift in the Reformation over the question of Mary and the saints? To answer this, we must go back behind the Reformation, to the period of the Late Middle Ages, and observe the radical conceptual shift that happened in philosophy and theology in the 14th and 15th centuries, a major paradigm shift in worldview conveniently contained under the labels of the move from Realism to Nominalism, that brought about a complex and wrenching change in thinking that had immediate impact in all fields of inquiry, and nowhere more so than in the understanding and estimation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

To see this effect, we must remind ourselves of the major issue at stake between Realism and Nominalism, which was the whole question of the possibility of a metaphysical ontology, that is, whether existing things had a transcendent, essential Being that gave essential, transcendent unity to same or similar things; and if so, whether it was possible to know what that transcendent, essential Being might be. Are we able to know if and how Being transcends the concrete? Are we able to use that knowl-

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[1]Winner of The Arthur Carl Piepkorn Prize, 1992.

edge of transcendent Being in our thinking, in our knowledge of our self and of our world? Are we able to deduce from that knowledge of transcendent Being a final goal or ultimate future for ourselves and our world? These were the big-picture questions that radically divided Realism and Nominalism.

Realism was the position that affirmed the existence of, and the possibility of knowing about, transcendent essential Being deduced from the concrete things that contained this Being in the world. This was the basis of the great theological systems of the 13th century, both Aquinas and Bonaventure. This school of thinking held that one could abstract from particular things in the concrete world their Essence, their essential Being that grounded them in reality, because this transcendent Being that united all like things or like creatures in a particular ground of Being was in fact really present in each individual thing, so that by careful observation of like creatures it would be possible to discover the transcendent Being that made them real.[2] As this metaphysical, transcendent, essential Being, observed, deduced, and abstracted from particular creatures, is real—indeed, the *most* real Being—it can be used, in abstraction, to reason out and demonstrate other necessary truths and discover other transcendent forms of Being, ultimately reasoning one's way to the supremely transcendent essential Being, God.[3] Perhaps the most influential legacy of Realism, in this respect, was its sense of the unity of reason and revelation, and the ultimate convergence of nature and grace, and of philosophy and theology. For our purposes, though, the crucial observation is that for Realism concrete things have their truest and most real existence in their transcendent, essential, unifying Being, a universal Being hidden in the particularity of each specific creature.

Nominalism, as presented by its 14th century father, William of Ockham, and its dedicated 15th century expositor, Gabriel Biel, denied the entire metaphysical, ontological, and epistemological presuppositions of Realism, bringing the whole elegant procession of 13th century theology to a crashing halt. Put most bluntly: for Nominalism, universals are simply concepts, they are not Being.[4] We cannot know the essence or the Being of a particular thing or creature; we can only know our particular experience of that particular thing or creature. The universal conclusions we deduce about like things are only matters of probability based on repeated experience and are not the uncovering of some hidden, transcendent essential Being.[5] We can know nothing except our own experience, and all our deductions about the future are only our supposing that what we have experienced in the past will continue to be true in the future; there may well be a ground of Being, but it is utterly beyond our knowing; if there is an ultimate ground of Being (like, God), then it is accessible to us only by faith, not by knowledge. The only predictions we can make of the future are those based on our experience of cause and effect in the empirical, observable world; one cannot deduce universals from specifics.[6] A thing is just that thing; any universal application it might have is a simile—other things might be found to be "like" that thing.[7]

That Nominalism carried the field at every level of thinking is easily demon-

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[2]Diogenes Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 153.

[3]Allen, 153.

[4]Allen, 116.

[5]Allen, 155.

[6]Allen, 155.

[7]Allen, 155.

strated by asking which form of thinking is more plausible to us today. The concern of Realism for metaphysical ontology and epistemology is so difficult for most folks to follow because all Western thinking is habitually Nominalist in some form; Nominalism is the grandfather of scientific empiricism, and that scientific empiricism is the basic model for our normal ways of thinking.

The impact of the ascendancy of Nominalism on the place of Mary in theology and piety is perhaps not as apparent as with other topics because the shift, on the surface, appears to be more subtle. It was certainly no novelty that Mary should occupy a major role in Christian doctrine and devotion; such thought and practice had been part of the church's faith since very early (perhaps even New Testament) times. The 15th and 16th centuries received the full inheritance of the Patristic and Medieval development of Mariology, including such items as the parallelism of Eve and Mary, and the conciliar definition of Mary as Theotokos, Bearer of God, Mother of God.[8]

But Nominalism caused a radical and, viewed with the advantage of hindsight, catastrophic change to occur in Mariology. The Patristic and Early Medieval Mariology had always maintained a close identification of Mary with the church,[9] an identification which High Medieval Realism defended by means of its concept of universals. It was perfectly within the logical framework of Realism to understand Mary, the concrete person, Mother of Jesus and so Mother of God, to be the embodiment—indeed, the unique embodiment—of the Essence, the transcendent essential Being, of the church, so that the church might understand its own Being and Essence by observing Mary. This identification of the Essence of Mary as the Essence of the church allowed Patristic and High Medieval Mariology to develop an expansive theological and devotional relationship to Mary without ever losing sight of the primacy and sole sufficiency of Christ; for Mary was the ground of Being, not of personal salvation, but of the church. Mary stood alongside Christ as Mediatrix in the same position as the church; Mary and church shared the same Essence, the same transcendent, essential Being, so that Marian theology and devotion were, as such, ecclesial self-definition and self-renewal.

Nominalism, by denying any knowledge of transcendent Being, shattered the unity of Mary and church.

Nominalism, by denying any knowledge of transcendent Being, shattered the unity of Mary and church, and left Mary to stand on her own, and the church to stand on its own, as singular, concrete particulars in a world without universals. This radically separated personal salvation and sanctification from any corporate life in the church, and embedded the Christian life in the Mar-

[8]Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition. Volume 4: Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 39.

[9]Pelikan, 39.

ian language, now dissociated from its interpretation as expressions of the church. And with this came the Mariology against which the Reformers would rail.

Mary now became Mediatrix, Mother of All Christians, Mother of God, simply *as such*, in herself alone, and not as the embodiment of a higher, transcendent universal shared and embodied also in the church. Marian theology became concerned with discerning Mary's "prerogatives," chief of which was her being "full of grace" (as the Annunciation story taught) that set her apart from both humans and angels in her special personal relationship to God.[10] Thomas à Kempis, typical of Late Medieval piety, "called Mary 'the expiator of all the sins I have committed' and 'my only hope'; it was through her mediation that all mercy was granted, and through her intercession that all prayers were heard."[11] Gabriel Biel pronounced Mary to be Queen of Heaven and so Queen of the World, mediating between us and the Son in the same way that the Son mediates between us and the Father.[12] Thus Jean Gerson would teach that Christ had entrusted all things into the hands of his Mother, she having "maternal authority over God" in such a way that now God was subject to obey her just as a son is bound to be obedient to his mother.[13] Devotional literature of the period encouraged Christians to not seek out the intercession and mediation of only Jesus for the remission of sins, but of Mary also, equally with her Son.[14]

Nowhere is it more obvious that Mary had become dissociated from the church and in fact had replaced the church in the mystery of salvation as in the theology of Gabriel Biel. Biel taught that, after the Ascension of Christ, it was in fact the Virgin Mary who remained on earth, filled with the Holy Spirit, herself being the Comforter and Teacher of all disciples.[15] Another contemporary teacher held that Mary was the "Illuminator" who opened the eyes of preachers to understand sacred scripture and so rightly interpret the texts in their sermons.[16]

The cumulative impression one derives from Late Medieval Mariology is that the language used of Mary is properly a predicate of the church, such that Mary has become a replacement for the church. And the cause of this can only be laid at the door of Late Medieval Nominalism. Nominalism took away the idea that both Mary and the church could be transcendent in their Essence while concrete in their existence, and so could share a common transcendent Essence in unity that would mutually inform their concrete existences in reciprocally interpretive ways. Nominalism required Christian theology and piety to make an either-or choice between concrete particulars for the locus of its relationship to Christ and so salvation: either Mary or the church; and Late Medieval piety, unwilling to give up its rich Marian devotion and imagery, opted for Mary *over against* the church, giving up the crucial ingredient of the Patristic and Early Medieval Mariology, the unifying linkage of Mary to and with the church as the same transcendent Essence.

By the 16th century the triumph of Nominalism was so complete, and its subversion of Mariology so total, that it was inevitable that the Lutheran Reformers, in their effort to recover exactly the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic *church*, should find the devotion to Mary and (by an association

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[10]Pelikan, 39.
[11]Pelikan, 40.
[12]Pelikan, 41.
[13]Pelikan, 41.
[14]Pelikan, 40.
[15]Pelikan, 40.
[16]Pelikan, 41.

What the Lutheran Confessions object to is the *distortion* of Mariology that they found in the church.

which Late Medieval theology and piety itself taught and encouraged[17]) the saints to be a particularly reprehensible example of all that they found corrupt and unChristian in the Catholic Church.

The fascinating thing about the attitude towards Mary in the Lutheran Confessions[18] is the way those Confessions seek to preserve and reestablish the older, Patristic Mariology in its unity with ecclesiology. The weakness of the project of the Lutheran Confessions in this regard is that they worked in a world that had lost the conceptual framework with which to make that reconnection.

Thus the Augsburg Confession accords to Mary her traditional title of "the Blessed Virgin Mary."[19] Luther, in the Smalcald Articles, teaches as an undisputed point of doctrinal agreement "that the Son became man in this manner: he was conceived by the Holy Spirit, without the cooperation of man, and was born of the pure, holy, and ever-virgin Mary."[20] The Apology of the Augsburg Confession grants "that blessed Mary prays for the church" and "is worthy of the highest honors."[21] The Formula of Concord insists that Lutherans "believe, teach, and confess that Mary conceived and bore not only a plain, ordinary, mere man but the veritable Son of God; for this reason she is rightly called, and truly is, the Mother of God,"[22] and that Christ "demonstrated his divine majesty even in his mother's womb in that he was born of a virgin without violating her virginity. Therefore she is truly the Mother of God and yet remained a virgin."[23] The Lutheran Confessions will thus defend, indeed, take for granted, certain key items of the Patristic Mariology: her being the Mother of God and the honor due to that unique vocation; her praying for the church; her preservation in virginity and indeed her perpetual virginity (at least if one follows Luther); and a role for Marian devotion in the liturgy and prayer of the church in terms of thanksgiving, praise, and example.[24]

What the Lutheran Confessions object to is the *distortion* of Mariology that they found in the church of their time. Specifically, the Confessions object to Mary and the saints being set up as "propitiators" and "intercessors" in such a way that "transfers to the saints honor belonging to Christ alone."[25] They protest against any teaching that "would have us trust more in the mercy of the saints than in the mercy of Christ," because "if we are to trust in them for our salvation, they are being put on the same level as Christ."[26]

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[17]Pelikan, 49.

[18]*The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Church*, trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert, et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959). Hereafter cited as *BC*.

[19]*BC*, 29.

[20]*BC*, 291-2.

[21]*BC*, 232-3.

[22]*BC*, 488.

[23]*BC*, 595.

[24]Apology of the Augsburg Confession, *BC*, 229-30.

[25]Apology, *BC*, 230.

[26]Apology, *BC*, 232.

For Ricoeur a symbol is not the antithesis of something real or literal, but is contained within the real and literal.

But despite the intentions of the Confessions to not exclude Mary from Christian piety, the Reformers seemed unable to say with any clarity just how one would include Mary in the life of the church. Their best proposal is to see Mary as a model, "to have her example considered and followed."[27] The Apology of the Augsburg Confession "approves giving honor to the saints" (including at the head of the saints, the Virgin Mary), by thanksgiving to God and the offering of praise to the saints themselves, as well as the imitation of their faith and their other virtues.[28] The language used is clearly liturgical or cultic. But how are we to do this without lapsing into the error of making Mary and the saints our propitiators and intercessors again? On this point, the Confessions fall silent.

In the true spirit of the Reformation, then, this becomes the task for Lutheran Mariology today: to find the conceptual language that makes possible Marian devotion and piety without displacing the sole sufficiency of Christ or the sole authority of holy scripture in the church. And to do this, we must carry out the task which the Confessions could only intuit: to work the reunion of Mary and the church by recovering in some way a believable concept of transcendence that would unite both Mary and church and make them exemplary and explanatory, each of the other.

What may be the most fruitful path for this line of inquiry is that found in the hermeneutics and philosophy of language proposed by Paul Ricoeur, for Ricoeur's philosophy of language can work to break the strangle-hold of Nominalist empiricism on our conceptual and theological language, by returning to us precisely as terms of *transcendence* the notions of symbol and metaphor. Ricoeur moves the question of Being out of the speculative world of metaphysics and into the realm of language, noting that it is "always in language that all ontic or ontological understanding arrives at its expression."[29] Language is where ontology, the understanding of essential Being, can once again take up transcendence in the very possibility of language to transcend itself.[30]

Ricoeur points to this transcendent capacity of language by noting that all language has a certain "architecture of meaning" by which a linguistic system shows itself to have multiple layers of meaning, such that language has the unique power "to show while concealing."[31] Language is thus a system of *symbols*, but "symbol" here understood in Ricoeur's specific sense as "any structure of signification in which a direct, primary, literal meaning designates,

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[27]Apology, *BC*, 232.

[28]*BC*, 229-30.

[29]Paul Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics," in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology of His Works*, ed. Charles E. Reagan and David Stewart (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), 97.

[30]Paul Ricoeur, "Creativity in Language: Word, Polysemy, Metaphor," in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology*, 132.

[31]Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics," 97.

in addition, another meaning which is indirect, secondary, and figurative and which can be apprehended only through the first."[32] The important thing to note here is that a symbol does not replace the primary or literal meaning, but rather includes it by adding another dimension or another layer of meaning to the first. Symbol thus requires *interpretation*, which is "the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning."[33] Lutherans, who tend to react with hostility to the idea of "symbol," must be clear to note that for Ricoeur a symbol is not the antithesis of something real or literal, but is contained within the real and literal, is the ever deepening layers of meaning attached always to the real and literal.

The interpretation of symbol must take place in what Ricoeur calls "the dialectic of archaeology, teleology, and eschatology,"[34] as the experience of the encounter between the symbol and the person or community receiving it. In this three-sided dialectic both the symbol and the interpreting subject come to reflection upon each other that reveals a glimpse—but no more than a glimpse—of their true Being. It is when their mutual archaeology—that is, the study of their past, both in its historical and psychological dimensions—and their teleology—that is, their aspirations for the future, the goal they hold out toward which life drives—and their eschatology—that is, their understanding of the sacred and the structure of its ultimate power over existence—are all three brought into dialectical tension that true Being takes on the shape of the symbol and includes the interpreting subject within itself.[35]

When language is the symbol one has in mind, certain observations become apparent to Ricoeur. The first is "that remarkable feature of words in natural languages which is their ability to mean more than one thing,"[36] which is the essential symbol-nature of words. Second is the focus on the *sentence*, the actual linguistic *use* of words, as the locus of meaning and creativity, such that words have meaning by their intention and usage, not in and of themselves.[37] And third is the infinite possibility of meaning in discourse, which Ricoeur describes in this way:

> Discourse is infinite because sentences are events, because they have a speaker and a hearer, because they have meaning, and because they have reference. Each of these traits has an infinite character. With the event comes the openness of temporality; with the speaker and hearer, the depth of individual fields of experience; with meaning, the limitlessness of the thinkable; and with reference, the inexhaustibility of the world itself. On all these counts language-as-discourse appears as an open process of mediation between mind and world.[38]

Ricoeur's sense becomes clear when one observes, for example, that it is on account of this infinity of discourse that a preacher can preach an infinite number of sermons on the same biblical text.

Words, then, as the finite content of discourse, must have an infinite possibility of meanings if they take their meaning from the discourse itself, which is infinite. Thus even the simplest message must be interpreted according to its linguistic context and the cultural context that speaks and

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[32]Ricoeur, "Existence," 98.
[33]Ricoeur, "Existence," 98.
[34]Ricoeur, "Existence," 107.
[35]Ricoeur, "Existence," 108.
[36]Ricoeur, "Creativity in Language," 120.
[37]Ricoeur, "Creativity," 121-2.
[38]Ricoeur, "Creativity," 123.

hears it, and in this process of interpretation the message can be invested with many layers of meaning.[39] The kind of language that does not try to suppress this investing of discourse with ever-changing multiple layers of meaning, but in fact preserves and compels this expansive symbolism of discourse, is *metaphor.*

Metaphor invests language with the kind of transcendence that empiricism caused us to lose.

Metaphor is not simply a method of comparison or an artistic trick to make language more interesting. Metaphor has a definite dynamic to it which "consists in confusing the established logical boundaries for the sake of detecting new similarities which previous categorizations prevented our noticing," such that "the power of metaphor would be to break through previous categorization and to establish new logical boundaries on the ruins of the preceding ones."[40] Thus metaphor (just like symbol) does not eliminate or replace old meanings, but rather binds together in its metaphorical twist both the old and the new. "When we receive a metaphorical statement as meaningful, we perceive both the literal meaning... and the new meaning, which makes sense in the present context.... Two lines of interpretation are opened at the same time and several readings are allowed together and put into tension."[41] Metaphor "has the extraordinary power of redescribing reality."[42] And therein lies metaphor's claim to transcendence. Metaphor has power over reality. Metaphor can change the terms and perspectives by which we encounter and engage reality. Metaphor takes away from us the presupposition that we know before any discourse just what reality in fact is, and demands of us that we encounter a transcendence by the power of metaphor to change reality. "With metaphor we experience the metamorphosis of both language and reality."[43] That is, metaphor invests language with the kind of transcendence that empiricism caused us to lose.

Now, lest we think that we have lost track of the Blessed Virgin Mary entirely in all of this, the point to be made is that Mary functions as symbol, and the discourse about Mary functions as metaphor, for the church. Mariology is thus metaphor for ecclesiology, and in the precise sense in which Ricoeur defines symbol and metaphor, such that the literal—that is, historical—Mary, mother of Jesus, is not lost in abstraction, but rather that Mary, Mother of God, Ever-Virgin and Blessed One, transcends that historicality as the transcendent symbol that unites ontologically, in essential Being, the language used of Mary and the language used of church. This may well be a legitimate interpretation of what the Reformers meant by the church seeking to "imitate" Mary: that the church speak of itself and its behavior in the language it uses to speak about Mary, and that the church hear in the language spoken to it about Mary its own self-identity and vocation.

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[39]Ricoeur, "Creativity," 125.
[40]Ricoeur, "Creativity," 131.
[41]Ricoeur, "Creativity," 131-2.
[42]Ricoeur, "Creativity," 132.
[43]Ricoeur, "Creativity," 133.

A simple example of how this works can be seen in the use of one of the oldest and exemplary of prayers to Mary, the "Ave Maria." It begins with a petition of praise paraphrasing the Gospel of Luke ("Hail, Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus!" [Lk 1:28]) followed by the simple intercession: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

To ask Mary to pray for us both now and at the point of death is to do two things at once. It is to acknowledge, with the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, that Mary prays for the church. But exactly with that acknowledgment we are reminded that Mary prays also *with* the church, and that the church, too, prays "for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." The prayer we ask of Mary, then, is none other than the prayer we ask and offer as the church: "Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord";[44] "Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive [him] into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light."[45]

What Mary prays in heaven, the church prays on earth; and the petitions of the church on earth are one with the petitions offered on our behalf by Mary and the saints. Which is to say, that when the church prays, it is the *whole* church, that is, the *catholic* church of all time and space, that prays with one voice to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. Mary is metaphor for the church: without losing her own identity, she becomes the means by which time and space are transcended in the church's self-understanding of its prayer.

A more extended example of Mary as metaphor of the church can be found in what Vatican II, in its "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," has to say about Mary. Vatican II illustrates Ricoeur's principle of the dialectic of archaeology, teleology, and eschatology as it seeks to recover the Patristic attitude toward Mariology, in doing so reuniting Mary and church as a transcendent unity.[46]

"Lumen Gentium" seeks to ground the Marian doctrines and devotions of the Catholic Church first in an exegesis of scripture with Mary as the subject of inquiry. In this "archaeology" of the Blessed Virgin, Vatican II begins with typological anticipations of Mary in the Old Testament, from the "promise of victory over the serpent" in Gen 3:15, through the "virgin who shall conceive and bear a son" in the Emmanuel prophecy of Isaiah, to "the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently hope for and receive salvation from him," all of which point to Mary as "the exalted Daughter of Sion."[47]

Mary herself is presented as the model of faith and the model of the church, whose "cooperation" in the saving work of Jesus, her Son, is precisely "her pilgrimage of faith" and her "persevering" in this faith, shown by tracing Mary's steadfast consis-

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[44]"Holy Communion," *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg; Philadelphia: Board of Publications, Lutheran Church in America, 1978), 65.

[45]"Burial of the Dead," *Lutheran Book of Worship*, 211.

[46]"Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution of the Church," *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (Study Edition)*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 1975), 413-14. Hereafter cited as LG.

[47]LG, 415.

tency to her Son through the evangelical narrative. The Assumption of Mary into heaven is seen in the light of, and as the ultimate and inevitable conclusion of, this life of exemplary and faultless faithfulness as the final act of being fully conformed to the likeness of Christ in victory over sin and death, thus holding up Mary's assumption as a teleological image of hope for all the faithful.[48]

All of this results in an eschatological appreciation of Mary in "Lumen Gentium," where it is explicitly said: "...the Mother of God is a type of the Church in the order of faith, charity, and perfect union with Christ. For in the mystery of the Church, which is itself rightly called mother and virgin, the Blessed Virgin stands out in eminent and singular fashion as exemplar both of virgin and mother."[49] "Lumen Gentium" goes on to illustrate just what this metaphorical understanding of Mary means for the self-identity of the church:

> The church indeed contemplating her hidden sanctity, imitating her charity and faithfully fulfilling the Father's will, by receiving the word of God in faith becomes herself a mother. By preaching and baptism she brings forth sons, who are conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of God, to a new and immortal life. She herself is a virgin, who keeps in its entirety and purity the faith she pledged to her spouse. Imitating the mother of her Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she keeps intact faith, firm hope, and sincere charity.[50]

This is precisely what Ricoeur understands by metaphor, here applied to Mary as metaphor of the church. The language concerning the two simply blends, without losing one or the other. Mary is not lost; but her identifying descriptions are endowed with new levels of meaning, teleological and eschatological levels of meaning, that transcend the archaeology of her particular history to include and embrace the whole church with the same identifying descriptions.

That it is still *Mary* who we are talking about, even though we are also talking just as well about the *church*, is underscored by the eschatological tension between Mary and the church that sets up a continuing dialectic between the "yet" and the "not yet" of the Christian life:

> But while in the most Blessed Virgin the church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle (cf. Eph 5:27), the faithful still strive to conquer sin and increase in holiness. And so they turn their eyes to Mary who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtues. Devoutly meditating on her and contemplating her in the light of the Word made man, the church reverently penetrates more deeply into the great mystery of the Incarnation and becomes more and more like her spouse.[51]

"Lumen Gentium" also goes to great pains to insist that the Virgin Mary in no way displaces Christ, detracts from Christ, adds anything to Christ, or "hinder in any way the immediate union of the faithful with Christ," but rather, on the contrary, Mary fosters this union and subordinates herself in genuine humility to her Son.[52] The cult of Mary is not "the cult of adoration," which belongs exclusively to the Trinity, but is a cult of piety that honors Mary, through which honoring the Holy Trinity revealed in the saving work of the Son is loved, glorified, and obeyed.[53] Which, of

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[48]LG, 416-18.
[49]LG, 419-20.
[50]LG, 420.
[51]LG, 420.
[52]LG, 418-19.
[53]LG, 421.

course, is also exactly what the church is about. Indeed, throughout the chapter on Mary in "Lumen Gentium," the language about Mary is always immediately transferable to language about the church within that threefold dialectic of archaeology, teleology, and eschatology. The person of Mary is never lost; the concrete reality of the church is never lost; the two are simply transcended by the power of a uniting metaphor that discovers that the two separate entities are in fact one in Being. As "Lumen Gentium" concludes: "... the Mother of Jesus in the glory which she possesses in body and soul in heaven is the image and beginning of the church as it is to be perfected in the world to come. Likewise she shines forth on earth, until the day of the Lord shall come, a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God."[54]

One can still ask, legitimately, why we should take this long and controversial route through Mariology to come to an understanding of church; why not simply let ecclesiology be ecclesiology in and by itself? The answer is to be found in Protestantism itself, modern-day Lutheranism included. Having lost any connection with Mariology in the excesses of anti-Romanism in the post-Reformation era, Protestantism developed for itself entirely abstract ecclesiologies, often structured more on the political organization of the homeland and the expediency of the moment rather than on any sound theological foundation. The result has been the stultifying bureaucracies of religion that have emerged as modern denominations, alienating the faithful and at best amusing the unbelievers.

What the unity of Mariology and ecclesiology provides is a view of the church as *person*, that specific person, Mary; and at the same time, a view of person as *church*, the Christian-in-imitation-of-Mary as the person who embodies the church. This personhood of the church and churchliness of the person has the power to transcend the confines of political bureaucracy and worldly expediency precisely by the nature of persons to be in relationship beyond themselves. With Mary as the metaphorical person in question, that relationship is one to the Triune God through the incarnation of the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit, a relationship that is located, not in the most up-to-date models of "church growth," but in faith, hope, and love, as the symbol of Mary and all the saints provide the image, the "icon," of such a transcendent relationship. The metaphor of church-as-person and person-as-church mediated through the symbol and metaphor of Mary in her iconic relationship to the Triune God provides the church with its necessary historical self-interpretation (its archaeology), its necessary future orientation (its teleology), and its necessary self-confidence in the final victory of the Lord to whom it trusts its whole Being (its eschatology).

Thus the recovery of a Mariological ecclesiology that is at the same time an ecclesiological Mariology could provide the whole church—Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Protestant—with a transcendent renewing power precisely in the metaphor of Mary that could restore humanity and personhood to the church, and thereby restore the church to humanity.

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[54]LG, 422.

Our Lutheran Hymnic Heritage and Responsibility

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Context

Several years ago George Shorney, President of Hope Publishing Company in Carol Stream, Illinois, addressed the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland about his experiences as a publisher of hymnals in the United States. He was asked to publish his remarks, which appeared in pamphlet form under the title, *Hymnal Explosion in North America*. He wrote there of the "'me-first' egoism" of our period. He called it "an aggressive cultural self-centeredness that rode in like a tidal wave."[1]

That is an apt description of our culture. When you put it in the context of American capitalism, bigness accompanies it. In the popular mind the good is whatever is getting bigger. The bad is what is not getting bigger. Good is the individual getting more and more. Bad is not having *lots* of material things.

The church has to live in this culture. A constant problem for the church is how to be in but not of the world. We tend to get sucked into the bigness, growth, and money mentality. Good churches are often defined as the growing big ones. So we do what it takes to make big churches: entertain people, and attract many customers. The issues tend to be defined by quantity and how to market a product.

Enter Protestantism. Protestantism properly emphasizes the individual, that God cares for the individual. When you put that concern into the American Protestant context, which has been immensely influenced by revivalism, the individual begins to assume an overriding importance in four ways. First, the church as a sacramental body of worship, nurture, and teaching is deleted or regarded as of not much importance. Second, individual conversion as a once-for-all, unrepeatable event unrelated to an ongoing confessing body of believers is substituted for the church as a sacramen-

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[1]George H. Shorney, *The Hymnal Explosion in North America* (Carol Stream: Hope Publishing Company, 1988), p. 6.

tal and teaching body. Time itself is defined in terms of conversion, not in terms of the fullness of the story and the growth that the church year and its nurture bring with it. Third, to effect conversions an enormous importance is attached to individual feelings. Fourth, when an assembly gathers, the most important figure is the solo preacher or solo musician who can whip up the necessary emotional state so that individuals' conversions can occur.

American Protestantism with its revivalist undertones in the American capitalistic context combine to yield the business of conversion and the importance of numbers and dollars. And that leads inevitably to the televangelists or something like them.

The Lutheran Church turns out to be the whipping boy in this environment. The prophetic message of the Lutherans is hardly what the capitalist culture wants to hear, and Lutheran sacramental and liturgical contours don't allow individualism, conversion without ecclesiology, or glitzy packaging to find much of a home. So it's now "in" to attack Lutherans. From within and from without the Lutheran heritage is attacked as too prophetic or too catholic to match the culture.

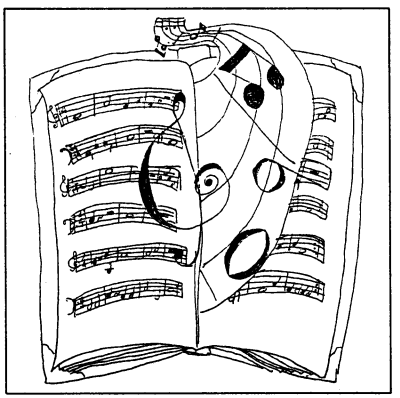
From the Protestant side Lutherans are regarded as too historical, too tied to past forms, too catholic, too confessional. If the attacks came from only the Protestant side, that would make it easier. But, as in Luther's time, there are two fronts. The attack comes from the catholic side as well. Since the Protestant individualistic mentality accords so easily with the capitalistic culture and a religion-in-general sort of popular Christianity, those with more catholic instincts have to be somewhat guarded and quiet in their comments. But if you get some Episcopalians and Roman Catholics at a weak moment, they will tell you that Lutherans (and they may even say this about themselves, given the culture) are afraid of history, afraid of the body and its senses, afraid of ceremonial, and afraid of the courtesies and hospitalities of ritual behavior. If you talk with Eastern Orthodox Christians, you get the impression that they regard Lutherans as part of the great Protestant heresy. They will simply wait us out until we eventually fade away—in a couple hundred or five hundred or a thousand years from now, whatever it takes.

What do we Lutherans say and do in the face of this? If I am reading the signs of the time rightly, we dismiss the more catholic concerns as irrelevant. They are not culturally "in," so we can afford to forget them. But Lutherans in America tend to get nervous about the Protestant attack. The tendency is to assume the Protestants are right, cave in to their perspective, and join the superficial parade.

Who are Lutherans? We are an evangelical and catholic body which confesses Christ.

Evangelical. We affirm the importance of the Word of God in all its prophetic power. We find that Word in the whole story Scripture tells and in the incarnate Christ. We preach that Word and still hear it today. With Luther we say that the Word, not our advertising efforts, can be trusted to call us to faith and repentance. The Word smashes all our words and all our communities, but also heals and forgives. It calls us over and over again to new living for the neighbor and for justice and peace in the world.

Catholic. We also affirm that we are not only ears to hear and minds to think words. We are also bodies with senses of smell and taste and touch and sight. God stills comes to us in sacramental water, bread, and wine. We are a sacramental people therefore—which means we take very seriously our history and the liturgical



forms of those who for twenty centuries have gone before is in the faith as we, like them, gather around font and table to receive the same sustenance they too received. This sacramental sustenance leads us to follow Christ into the world as his own body, bearing the world's burdens and seeking justice and peace.

Confessional. Christ and Christ's cross and resurrection are at the center of our confession. That central reality has implications which we find fleshed out in the ecumenical creeds and in the documents of the Augsburg Confession.

That means we can articulate our faith. Ours is a muscular sort of Christianity with flesh and bones—and brains. It can and must engage in dialogue with the world. Thought leads to action. In Hitler's Germany a confessing church meant thinking through the faith and taking a prophetic stand against a demonic force. In our culture the incisive thrust of the Christian message stands against a civil religion that melts the ethos of Protestant revivalism and religion-in-general into genteel warm fuzzies. A confessing church may even mean at the moment, when it is so easy to make fun of everything that relates to any continuities in human community, that the most prophetic stance is paradoxically a catholic priestly one.

What do we have to contribute to the ecumenical church? A confessional, evangelical, and catholic tension. We are neither Protestant nor catholic, but both Protestant and catholic. That tension is our responsibility, and it is precisely what makes it so hard both for us and for our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical church to figure out who we are as Lutherans. But we do not serve ourselves or others by ducking our responsibility. We are an evangelical and catholic confessing people of God. And we must say and do that if we are to embody our responsibility to the rest of the church and the world. Some groups have the responsibility to remind us of the importance of conversion and warm feelings. Others force us to attend to the importance of the bones of liturgical forms. We need to be appreciatively grateful to both groups and to the whole ecumenical community for all their various gifts. But we don't have the luxury of any either/or. We must be about both/and. We are a people of paradox, as H. Richard Niebuhr properly defines us.[2]

That means we are not about glitz. We are about far more important things. We are about being communities of believers, small enough in number so that we have meaningful relationships with one another and receive meaningful pastoral care. We are about gathering weekly for Word and Sacrament; our worship is work, not entertainment, and it belongs to all the people, not just to entertainers who are the modern equivalent of medieval priests and who hide

[2]See H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), chapter 5.

under the label of preachers or musicians. We are about proclaiming the grace of Christ in and to the world; we are called to be Christ's body in the world, working individually and systemically for justice and peace. That's what we are, that's what we need to be about, not only for our integrity, but for the sake of the ecumenical church—whether it's popular or not.

Hymnody

What does this mean for our hymnody?

To figure out what it does *not* mean, it is helpful to quote George Shorney again. Though he and his publishing house are not Lutheran (Hope Publishing Company has roots in gospel hymnody), he gives what could easily be a Lutheran analysis. After noting the "me-first" egoism and other changes that have affected our worship, he says this:

> The negative impact of this element and the wave of insipid, banal praise choruses or what we call "teeny hymns" often associated with this worship practice is of real concern to me. The direction toward music that tends to entertain, to manipulate, or titillate rather than edify, that produces more heat than light, more applause than awe, more promotion than devotion, is at the heart of the problem. Not that these short scripture choruses are by definition bad, but in some instances in our churches, a steady diet of these musical snippets has totally replaced the singing of classic or standard hymns. If you detected a note of concerned self-interest in that last statement, I, as parishioner and publisher, plead guilty! But the problem of having to orchestrate each worship service so that everybody goes home "feeling good" or the time has not been well spent, is where, it seems to me, the American version of religion gets off the track.[3]

Shorney identifies the problem. What then ought to be the content of our hymnody?

We affirm the overarching necessity of pastoral care—which means we treat people with more respect than insulting them with "teeny hymns" or anything of that ilk.

We assume our worship has evolved over two thousand years, which means that everything about it will not and should not be so superficial as to be immediately obvious to the newcomer—just as everything about a family is not obvious to the new in-law. We need to live into a family and into a family of believers, which is one reason the early church had, and we still have, catechumens—students, learners.

The image of the family is helpful, but not quite accurate. There is no in and out group here. We are all strangers and sojourners adopted in grace by God. The liturgy, in all its rich permutations (and those who argue any liturgical or anti-liturgical legalism have missed the liturgy's essence), welcomes us all. What is most hospitable is to allow the liturgy to be what it is. What is least hospitable is turning it into a sales pitch and treating people with commercial contempt.

Luther understood that psalmody was not only the cradle in which Christ is laid, but the womb of hymnody. Luther made the first Reformation era metrical psalm settings. He also used the church's whole hymnic heritage; adapted folk materials; composed and called for new materials; and asked that the standard for everything be that it squared with the faith and was of durable high quality.

Lutheran orthodoxy affirmed the head at the expense of the heart, and Lutheran pietism affirmed the heart at the expense of the head. As an evangelical and catholic

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[3]Shorney, *The Hymnal Explosion*, 7.

Ours is a muscular sort of Christianity with flesh and bones—and brains. It can and must engage in dialogue with the world.

people of paradox, we need to confess our sins and say that either of those options alone is wrong and off limits. We need both head and heart in healthy tension.

Hymns for virtually the entire Lutheran tradition relate not to arbitrary whims, but to the rhythms of the church year and the lectionary. That's what generated the Hymn of the Day and J.S. Bach's *Orgelbuechlein* which, in one edition, was appropriately called *The Liturgical Year* because Bach organized those hymn settings according to the church year.

So, where precisely does this lead? It leads to a balance of hymnody that gives the whole story, from creation to consummation, with our individual and cultural needs, and with Christ's death and resurrection at the center. And it means: psalms pointed for singing by the whole congregation; Greek hymns; Latin hymns with their Gregorian chant tunes when possible; Reformation hymns of Luther, at least in part in their original rhythmic forms—not only because they're the originals, fit the texts so well, and represent our confessional heritage, but because they are so appropriate to, and work so well in, the rhythmic and rugged contours of our age; the whole Lutheran chorale heritage in its German, Scandinavian, Slovak, orthodox, and Pietist forms; the Calvinist heritage of metrical psalms; the English heritage of Watts and Wesley and all their followers; the translations of Neale and Winkworth and the other confessional materials of the nineteenth century; hispanic currents; the American heritage of black and white spirituals along with the best of the rest of American hymnody; and the new hymnic materials that have been exploding across the world in the last several decades. In short, we need to use the best of the breadth of the church's hymnody from the past, plus materials from the present that reflect all the pasts I have mentioned (and others I have not), and ones that attempt to relate the gospel responsibly to the culture by adapting folk, jazz, ethnic, and multi-cultural materials, etc.

The present is obviously the biggest puzzle. We don't know with certainty what will really be durable and high quality until we try it. So we have to take some risks. If we follow Luther's example, we'll do this with very careful craft and forethought, but we'll also do it with the knowledge that God's grace always sustains both our failures and our successes.

Commentary Recommendations for the Old Testament

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Here is my list of the best English commentaries on each of the books of the Old Testament. The commentaries listed are of high academic standards, and I believe they are also very useful for the tasks of parish ministry. The commentaries are listed in the order of my preference, although the rank is often extremely close, and I have in any case listed only commentaries I consider first rate. Readers are urged to make their own judgments since each user of a commentary brings her or his own needs to the task.

I have tried to limit myself to one or two choices, but in a few cases I have exceeded that limit. The list starts with one-volume commentaries on the whole Bible. With a good one-volume commentary to cover all the bases, one can buy commentaries on individual books as they become needed.

One Volume Commentary

Brown, Raymond E., S. S., Fitzmyer, Joseph A., S. J., Murphy, Roland E., O. Carm. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. $69.95.

Mays, James L. ed. *Harper's Bible Commentary*. $37.95.

Newsom, Carol A. and Sharon H. Ringe, eds. *The Women's Bible Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, $20.00. (excellent, but deals almost exclusively with the presence [or absence] of women and women's issues in the text)

Genesis

Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis 1-15*. Word Biblical Commentary 1. Waco, TX: Word Books, $24.99.

Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1-11*. Minneapolis: Augsburg. $39.95.

Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 12-36*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, $39.95.

Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 37-50*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, $29.95

Rad, Gerhard Von. *Genesis*. The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, $24.00.

Exodus

Fretheim, Terence E. *Exodus*. Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching.. Louisville: John Knox, $22.00.

Childs, Brevard S. *The Book of Exodus*. The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, $30.00.

Leviticus

Milgrom, Jacob. *Leviticus 1-16* The Anchor Bible 3. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $42.00.

Wenham, G. J. *The Book of Leviticus*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $28.95.

Numbers

Budd, Philip J. *Numbers*. Word Biblical Commentary 5. Waco, TX: Word Books, $24.99.

Deuteronomy

Mayes, A. D. H. *Deuteronomy*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $15.95 (paper).

Weinfeld, Moshe. *Deuteronomy 1-11*. The Anchor Bible 5. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $34.00.

Joshua

Boling, Robert G., and Wright, G. Ernest. *Joshua*. The Anchor Bible 6. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $30.00.

Butler, Trent C. *Joshua*. Word Biblical Commentary 7. Waco, TX: Word Books, $22.99.

Judges

Boling, Robert G. *Judges*. The Anchor Bible 6A. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $28.00.

Ruth

Campbell, E. F. Jr. *Ruth*. The Anchor Bible 7. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $28.00.

Hubbard, Robert L. Jr. *The Book of Ruth*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $28.95.

1 Samuel

Klein, Ralph W. *1 Samuel*. Word Biblical Commentary 10. Waco, TX: Word Books, $22.99.

McCarter, P. Kyle. *I Samuel*. The Anchor Bible 8. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $30.00.

2 Samuel

McCarter, P. Kyle. *II Samuel*. The Anchor Bible 9. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $34.00.

Anderson, A. A. *2 Samuel*. Word Biblical Commentary 11. Waco, TX: Word Books, $24.99.

1 and 2 Kings

Jones, G. H. *1 and 2 Kings*. Two Volumes. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $16.95 each.

Nelson, Richard. *I & II Kings*. Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Atlanta: John Knox, $22.00.

1 and 2 Chronicles

Williamson, H. G. M. *1 and 2 Chronicles*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $19.95.

Braun, Roddy L. *1 Chronicles*. Word Biblical Commentary 14. Waco: Word Books, $24.99.

Dillard, Raymond B. *2 Chronicles*. Word Biblical Commentary 15. Waco: Word Books, $24.99.

Ezra and Nehemiah

Williamson, H. G. M. *Ezra, Nehemiah*. Word Biblical Commentary 16. Waco: Word Books, $24.99.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. Old Testament Library, $30.00.

Esther

Moore, Carey A. *Esther*. The Anchor Bible 7B. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $28.00.

Job

Clines, David J. A. *Job 1-20*. Word Biblical Commentary 17. Waco: Word Books, $40.00.

Habel, Norman. *Job*. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, $39.95.

Psalms

Craigie, Peter C. *Psalms 1-50*. Word Biblical Commentary 19. Waco: Word Books, $22.99.

Tate, Marvin E. *Psalms 51-100.* Word Biblical Commentary 20. Waco: Word Books, $24.99.

Allen, Leslie C. *Psalms 101-150.* Word Biblical Commentary 21. Waco: Word Books, $22.99.

Anderson, A. A. *Psalms.* Two volumes. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $22.95; 19.95. (Good, but based on RSV)

Kraus, Hans Joachim. *Psalms 1-59.* Minneapolis: Augsburg, $39.95; *Psalms 60-150.* Minneapolis: Augsburg, $39.95.

Proverbs

Farmer, Kathleen A. *Who Knows What is Good? A Commentary on the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $15.95.

Ecclesiastes

Crenshaw, James L. *Ecclesiastes, A Commentary.* Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, $20.00.

Song of Solomon

Murphy, Roland. *The Song of Songs: A Commentary on the Book of Canticles or the Song of Songs.* Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, $22.95.

Pope, Marvin H. *Song of Songs.* The Anchor Bible 7C. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $40.00.

Isaiah

Holladay, William L. *Isaiah: Scroll of a Prophetic Heritage.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $11.95. (not a commentary, but a good popular guide to the whole book)

Conrad, Edgar W. *Reading Isaiah.* Minneapolis: Fortress, $12.95. (not a commentary, but an interesting post critical or postmodern reading)

First Isaiah

Jensen, Joseph, O.S.B. *Isaiah 1-39.* Old Testament Message 8. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, $14.95.

Clements, R. E. *Isaiah 1-39.* New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $16.95 (paper).

Second and Third Isaiah

Whybray, R. N. *Isaiah 40-66.* New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $7.95.

Clifford, Richard J. *Fair Spoken and Persuading: An Interpretation of Second Isaiah.* New York: Paulist, $8.95.

Westermann, Claus. *Isaiah 40-66.* The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, $24.00.

Jeremiah

Jones, D. R. *Jeremiah.* New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $22.95.

Thompson, J. A. *The Book of Jeremiah.* The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $32.95.

Holladay, William L. *Jeremiah 1.* Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress. $44.95. (covers Jeremiah 1-25)

Holladay, William L. *Jeremiah 2.* Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, $44.95. (covers Jeremiah 26-52; introductory matters)

McKane, William. *Jeremiah 1.* International Critical Commentary. T & T Clark, $54.95. (covers Jeremiah 1-25)

Lamentations

Provan, Iain. *Lamentations.* New Century Bible Commentary. $14.95.

Hillers, Delbert R. *Lamentations.* The Anchor Bible 7A. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $24.00.

Ezekiel

Zimmerli, Walther. *Ezekiel 1, A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24.* Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, $39.95;

Zimmerli, Walther. *Ezekiel 2, A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48.* Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, $39.95.

Klein, Ralph W. *Ezekiel.* Columbia, SC: University of S. Carolina Press, $29.95.

Greenberg, Moshe. *Ezekiel, 1-20.* The Anchor Bible 22. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $28.00.

Daniel

Towner, W. Sibley. *Daniel.* Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Atlanta: John Knox, $19.00.

Collins, John J. *Daniel. With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature.* The Forms of the Old Testament Literature 20. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $18.95.

Hosea

Mays, James Luther. *Hosea.* The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, $18.00.

Wolff, Hans Walter. *Hosea.* Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, $25.95.

Limburg, James. *Hosea-Micah.* Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, $19.00.

Joel

Wolff, Hans Walter. *Joel and Amos.* Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, $31.95.

Limburg, James. See under Hosea.

Allen, Leslie C. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah.* The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $26.95.

Amos

Paul, Shalom. *Amos.* Minneapolis: Fortress, $44.95.

Mays, James L. *Amos.* The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, $18.00.

Wolff, Hans Walter. See under Joel.

Limburg, James. See under Hosea.

Obadiah

Wolff, Hans Walter. *Obadiah and Jonah.* Minneapolis: Augsburg, $24.95.

Limburg, James. See under Hosea.

Allen, Leslie. See under Joel.

Jonah

Sasson, Jack M. *Jonah.* The Anchor Bible 24B. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $28.00.

Wolff, Hans Walter. See under Obadiah.

Limburg, James. See under Hosea.

Allen, Leslie C. See under Joel.

Micah

Wolff, Hans Walter. *Micah.* Minneapolis: Augsburg, $25.95.

Hillers, Delbert R. *Micah.* Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, $21.95.

Limburg, James. See under Hosea.

Allen, Leslie. See under Joel.

Nahum

Roberts, J. J. M. *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.* The Old Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, $20.00.

Achtemeier, Elizabeth. *Nahum—Malachi.* Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Atlanta: John Knox, $20.00.

Habakkuk

Roberts, J. J. M. See under Nahum.

Achtemeier, Elizabeth. See under Nahum.

Zephaniah

Roberts, J. J. M. See under Nahum.

Achtemeier, Elizabeth. See under Nahum.

Haggai and Zechariah 1-8

Petersen, David L. *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8.* Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, $25.00.

Meyers, Carol L. and Eric M. Meyers. *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8.* The Anchor Bible 25B. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, $34.00.

Achtemeier, Elizabeth. See under Nahum.

Verhoef, Pieter A. *The Books of Haggai and Malachi.* The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, $26.95.

Zechariah 9-14

Hanson, Paul D. *The Dawn of Apocalyptic.* Philadelphia: Fortress, $17.95, pp. 280-401. (not a commentary, but the best available study of this early apocalyptic material)

Achtemeier, Elizabeth. See under Nahum.

Malachi

Achtemeier, Elizabeth. See under Nahum.

Verhoef, Pieter A. See under Haggai.

New Testament Library:

A Recommended List for Pastors and Teachers

Edgar Krentz
Christ Seminary—Seminex Professor of New Testament
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Core Library
Key resources include the best Greek New Testament, a major lexicon and grammar of NT Greek, a Greek concordance to the NT, a Bible dictionary, a Bible atlas, one volume Bible commentary, and a theological word book.

Basic Texts
Aland, Kurt, ed. *Novum Testamentum Graece.* 26th ed., Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft. $12.00.
Aland, Kurt, ed. *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum.* 13th rev. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, $27.00.

Philological tools
Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* Ed. and tr. by W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich; 2nd ed. by F. W. Danker. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [3rd ed. in preparation] $47.50.
Blass, Frederick, and Albert Debrunner. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* Tr. and rev. By Robert W. Funk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. $54,99.
Moulton, J. H., W. F. Howard, and N. Turner. *A Grammar of New Testament Greek.*
I: Prolegomena, 3rd. ed., Edinburgh: T & T Clark. $35.95
II: Accidence and Word Formation. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
III: Syntax. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
IV: Style. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. $31.95.

Concordances
Moulton, William F., and Arthur S. Geden, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament.* 5th ed., rev. H. K. Moulton. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. $59.95.
Schmoller, Alfred. *Handkonkordanz zum griechischen Neuen Testament.* Rev. Beate Köster. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft. $16.50.

Bible Dictionaries
Harper's Bible Dictionary. Ed. Paul J. Achtemeier. San Francisco: Harper & Row. $37.95.
The Anchor Bible Dictionary, ed. David Noel Freedman. 6. vol. New York: Doubleday. $360.00.
The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Ed. George Buttrick. 4 vol. + Supplement. Nashville, New York: Abingdon Press. $159.95.

Atlases
Aharoni, Y., and Michael Avi-Yonah. *The Macmillan Bible Atlas.* Rev. ed. New York: Macmillan. $34.95.

Pritchard, James B., ed. *The Harper Atlas of the Bible*. New York: Harper & Row. $49.95.

Rogerson, John. *Atlas of the Bible*. New York: Facts on File. $45.00.

Theological Dictionaries

Balz, H., and G. Schneider, ed. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. 3 vol. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $49.95 per vol.

Kittel, G., and G. Friedrich, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $499.50.

One-Volume Commentaries

Harper's Bible Commentary. Ed. James L. Mays. San Francisco: Harper & Row. $37.95.

The New Jerome Biblical Commentary. Ed. Raymond E. Brown, Jospeh A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. $69.95.

Commentaries on Individual Books

I drew up this list for clergy who wrestle with New Testament texts each week in preparation for preaching. I list three or four commentaries for each book in order of preference and two monographs. All are based on the Greek text, use critical scholarship, give references to recent literature, and aid in understanding a book's theology or historical situation. Many excellent works are unlisted—still there is more here than any one person will buy.

Matthew

Schweizer, Eduard. *The Good News According to Matthew*. Atlanta: John Knox. $23.00.

Luz, Ulrich. *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg. $39.95.

Smith, Robert H. *Matthew*. Augsburg New Testament Commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg. $16.95.

Kingsbury, Jack Dean. *Matthew*. Proclamation Commentaries. Philadelphia: Fortress. $4.25.

Overman, J. Andrew. *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community*. Minneapolis: Fortress. $12.95.

Mark

Schweizer, Eduard. *The Good News According to Mark*. Richmond: John Knox. $20.00.

Hooker, Morna D. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. Black's New Testament Commentary. Peabody: Hendrickson. $24.95.

Williamson, Lamar, Jr. *Mark*. Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox. $22.00.

Achtemeier, Paul J. *Mark*. Proclamation Commentaries. Philadelphia: Fortress. $9.95.

Rhoads, David, and Donald Michie. *Mark as Story. An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*. Philadelphia: Fortress. $10.95

Luke

Danker, Frederick W. *Jesus and the New Age*. Philadelphia: Fortress. $22.95.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Gospel According to St. Luke*. The Anchor Bible 28, 28A. Garden City: Doubleday. $40.00 each.

Schweizer, Eduard. *The Good News According to Luke*. Atlanta: John Knox. $20.00

Evans, C. F. *Saint Luke*. TPI New Testament Commentaries. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International. $39.95.

Kingsbury, Jack D. *Conflict in Luke*. Minneapolis: Fortress. $11.95.

Neyrey, Jerome H., ed. *The Social World of Luke-Acts*. Peabody: Hendrickson. $19.95.

John

Brown, Raymond. *The Gospel According to John*. The Anchor Bible 29, 29A. Garden City: Doubleday. 29: $34.00; 29A: $40.00.

Kysar, Robert. *John*. Augsburg New Testament Commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg. $16.95.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *The Gospel of John*. Philadelphia: Westminster. $27.00.

Kysar, Robert. *John: The Maverick Gospel*. Atlanta: John Knox. $9.95.

Sloyan, Gerard S. *What Are They Saying About John*. Mahwah: Paulist. $6.95.

Acts

Krodel, Gerhard. *Acts*. Augsburg New Testament Commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg. $19.95.

Conzelmann, Hans. *Acts of the Apostles*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress. $39.95.

Haenchen, Ernst. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Philadelphia: Westminster. $30.00.

Willimon, William H., *Acts*. Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox. $19.00.

Krodel, Gerhard. *Acts*. Proclamation Commentaries. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981. $3.95.

Tyson, Joseph B. *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.

Paul the Apostle

Keck, Leander E. *Paul and His Letters*. Proclamation Commentaries. Philadelphia: Fortress. $9.95.

Furnish, Victor P. *Theology and Ethics in Paul*. Nashville: Abingdon. $12.95.

Beker, J. Christian. *Paul the Apostle. The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*. Philadelphia: Fortress. $16.95.

Meeks, Wayne A. *The First Urban Christians*. New Haven: Yale. $14.00.

Neyrey, Jerome H. *Paul in Other Words: A Cultural Reading of His Letters*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox. $19.95.

Romans

Käsemann, Ernst. *Commentary on Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $25.95.

Dunn, James D. G. *Romans*. Word Biblical Commentary 38A-B. Waco: Word. $24.99 each.

Ziesler, John. *Paul's Letter to the Romans*. TPI New Testament Commentaries. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International. $24.95.

Donfried, Karl Paul, ed. *The Romans Debate*. Peabody: Hendrickson. $19.95

Wedderburn, A. J. M. *The Reasons for Romans*. Minneapolis: Fortress. $12.95.

1 Corinthians

Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress. $31.95.

Fee, Gordon D. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $32.95.

Harrisville, Roy A. *I Corinthians*. Augsburg New Testament Commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg,. $15.95.

Theissen, Gerd. *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress. $11.95.

Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *St. Paul's Corinth*. Good News Studies, vol. 6. Wilmington: Michael Glazier. $12.95.

2 Corinthians

Danker, Frederick. *II Corinthians*. Augsburg New Testament Commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg. $15.95.

Furnish, Victor Paul. *II Corinthians*. Anchor Bible 32A. Garden City: Doubleday, $40.00.

Martin, Ralph P. *2 Corinthians*. Word Biblical Commentary 40. Waco: Word. $25.99.

Young, F. M., and D. F. Ford. *Meaning and Truth in II Corinthians*. Biblical Foundations in Theology. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $16.95.

Georgi, Dieter. *The Opponents of Paul in 2 Corinthians*. Philadelphia: Fortress. OP.

Galatians

Betz, Hans Dieter. *Galatians*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress. $31.95.

Cousar, Charles B. *Galatians*. Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching. Atlanta: John Knox. $18.00.

Krentz, Edgar. *Galatians*. Augsburg New Testament Commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg,. $15.95 (with Philippians).

Matera, Frank J. *Galatians*. Sacra Pagina. Collegeville: Liturgical. $24.95.

Hayes, Richard B. *The Faith of Jesus Christ. An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 56. Chico: Scholars Press. $21.95.

Sanders, Edward P. *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*. Philadelphia: Fortress. $13.95.

Ephesians

Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*. Word Biblical Commentary 42. Dallas: Word. $24.99.

Taylor, Walter, *Ephesians*. Augsburg New Testament Commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg. $15.95 (with Colossians)

Bruce, Frederick Fyvie. *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $22.95.

Kirby, John C. *Ephesians: Baptism and Pentecost. An Inquiry into the Structure and Purpose of the Epistle to the Ephesians*. Montreal: McGill University Press. $59.20.

Philippians

Hawthorne, Gerald F. *Philippians*. Word Biblical Commentary 43. Waco: Word. $22.99.

Craddock, F. B. *Philippians*. Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Atlanta: John Knox. $16.00.

Koenig, John. *Philippians, Philemon*. Augsburg New Testament Commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg. $15.95 (with Galatians).

O'Brien, Peter T. *The Epistle to the Philippians*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $39.95.

Colossians and Philemon

Lohse, Eduard. *Colossians and Philemon*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress. $25.95.

Schweizer, Eduard. *The Letter to the Colossians*. Minneapolis: Augsburg. $13.50.

Pokorny, Petr. *Colossians: A Commentary*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson. $19.95.

O'Brien, Peter T. *Colossians*. Word Biblical Commentary 44. Waco: Word. $22.95.

1 & 2 Thessalonians

Wanamaker, Charles A. *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $29.99.

Best, Ernest. *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*. Harper New Testament Commentary. Peabody: Hendrickson. $19.95.

Marshall, I. Howard. *1 and 2 Thessalonians*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $15.95.

Malherbe, Abraham J. *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care*. Philadelphia: Fortress. $10.95

Jewett, Robert. *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety*. Philadelphia: Fortress. $27.95.

Pastoral Epistles

Dibelius, Martin. *The Pastoral Epistles*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress. $23.95.

Houldon, J. L. The *Pastoral Epistles: I and II Timothy, Titus*. TPI New Testament Commentaries. Philadelphia: Trinity Press. $14.95.

Knight, George W., III. *The Pastoral Epistles*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $39.95.

Oden, Thomas C. *First and Second Timothy and Titus*. Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching.. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox. $19.00.

Collins, Raymond F. *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*. Wilmington: Michael Glazier. $17.95.

MacDonald, Dennis R. *The Legend and the Apostle. The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon*. Philadelphia: Westminster. $

Philemon (See Colossians for commentaries)

Peterson, Norman. *Rediscovering Paul. Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World*. Philadelphia: Fortress. $29.95

Hebrews

Attridge, Harold W. *The Epistle to the Hebrews.* Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress. $39.95.

Lane, William L. *Hebrews.* Word Biblical Commentary 47 A & B. Dallas: Word, $

Smith, Robert H. *Hebrews.* Augsburg New Testament Commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg. $15.95.

Käsemann, Ernst. *The Wandering People of God. An Investigation of the Letter to the Hebrews.* Minneapolis: Augsburg. $9.00. (from Sigler Press)

James

Dibelius, Martin. *James.* Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress. $31.95

Davids, Peter H. *The Epistle of James.* New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $21.95.

Martin, Ralph P. *James.* Word Biblical Commentary 48. Waco: Word. $24.99.

1 Peter

Davids, Peter H. *The First Epistle of Peter.* New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $24.95.

Kelly, J. N. D. *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude.* Harper New Testament Commentary. Peabody: Hendrickson. $14.95.

Michaels, J. Ramsey. *1 Peter.* Word Biblical Commentary 49. Waco: Word. $24.99.

Elliott, John Hall. *A Home for the Homeless. A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy.* Minneapolis: Fortress. $16.95.

Talbert, Charles, ed. *Perspectives on First Peter.* Macon: Mercer. $15.95.

2 Peter and Jude

Bauckham, Richard J. *Jude, 2 Peter.* Word Biblical Commentary 50. Waco: Word Books. $22.99.

Kelly, as under 1 Peter.

Sidebottom, E. M. *James, Jude, and 2 Peter.* New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. $7.50.

Bauckham, Richard. *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark. $49.95.

1, 2, 3 John

Brown, Raymond E. *The Epistles of John.* The Anchor Bible 30. Garden City, NY: Doubleday. $28.00

Smalley, Stephen S. *1, 2, 3 John.* Word Biblical Commentary 51. Waco: Word. $22.99.

Smith, D, Moody. *First, Second, and Third John.* Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox. $18.00.

Brown, Raymond E. *The Community of the Beloved Disciple.* New York: Paulist. $7.95.

Revelation

Caird, George. B. *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine.* Harper New Testament Commentary. Peabody: Hendricksen. Reprint announced, price uncertain.

Krodel, Gerhard A. *Revelation.* Augsburg New Testament Commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg. $15.95.

Boring, M. Eugene. *Revelation.* Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching.. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox. $19.00.

Sweet, J. P. M. *Revelation.* TPI New Testament Commentaries .Philadelphia: Trinity, $24.95.

Fiorenza, Elizabeth Schüssler. *Revelation.* Proclamation Commentaries. Minneapolis: Fortress. $9.95.

Collins, Adela Yarbro. *Crisis and Catharsis.* Philadelphia: Westminster. $11.95.

Book Reviews

St. Isaac of Nineveh on Ascetical Life. Translated by Mary Hansbury. Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989. 116 pages. Paper. $5.95.

Who is St. Isaac of Nineveh? Isaac was born in the seventh century near Bahrain on the Persian Gulf. That much is easy to understand. For those of us whose church history courses covered the pre-Reformation period in two weeks (a long time ago!) Mary Hansbury has provided a welcome introductory chapter on the period. She even includes a glossary and a handy discussion of the needed phenomenology.

This little bit of included history opens up a new world of christological controversies, mystics, and major theologians that is unknown to many of us. In the phenomenology section, Hansbury discusses the tri-partite anthropology of St. Isaac that resembles in many ways the more familiar anthropology of Pseudo-Dionysius with whom we, in the west, are probably more familiar. In contrast to the movement toward God based on the purgation/illumination/union model, St. Isaac speaks of the way of the body, the way of the soul, and the way of the spirit.

Work in the way of the body is the ascetics of the body: fasting, vigils, etc. Work in the way of the soul is the suppression of foreign thoughts and passions. Work in the way of the spirit is inappropriate to speak of because this is God's work. Thus Isaac says little about this third form of work.

The Ascetical Discourses are set in the form of six chapters or "discourses." Within each discourse individual paragraphs are sequentially numbered. This will be familiar to those who have read collections of sayings by the desert Fathers. The discourses have the advantage over collected sayings in the ability to develop a point in greater depth and profundity.

For well over a thousand years these discourses have been read in meditation. It is not suited for bedtime reading if the focus is on sleep. However, an occasional week with St. Isaac in our *lectio divina* would bear fruit. Better still, a second daily office with one reading based on the Fathers would bring the wealth of the early church spirit into and through us.

Timothy D. Hubert
Grace Lutheran Church
Westchester, Illinois

Biblical Interpretation in Crisis. The Ratzinger Conference on Bible and Church. Edited by Richard John Neuhaus. Encounter Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. xii and 191 pages. Paper. $9.95.

In January, 1988, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome, delivered the Erasmus Lecture at St. Peter's Lutheran church in New York City under the sponsorship of The Rockford Institute Center on Religion & Society. His topic was "Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: On the Question of the Foundations and Approaches of Exegesis Today." His text is printed on pp. 1-23 of this volume.

Twenty scholars, in an ecumenical mix, met to hear three reactions to Ratzinger's lecture and to discuss his theme. The three reactors were all academic (or ex-academic) theologians. Prof. Raymond E. Brown, Roman Catholic Professor New Testament at Union Seminary in New York, spoke on "The Contribution of Historical Biblical Criticism to Ecumenical Church Discussion" (24-49). Lutheran William H. Lazareth, then bishop of the Metro-New York Synod (ELCA) and former professor at the Philadelphia Lutheran Seminary, spoke on "Luther's 'Sola Scriptura': Traditions of the Gospel for Norming Christian Righteousness" (50-73). George Lindbeck, Lutheran lay theologian teaching at Yale Divinity School, spoke on "Scripture, Consensus, and Community" (74-101). The conference partici-

pants discussed each lecture extensively. Paul Stallsworth wrote up an extensive report of the discussion (102-90), while Richard J. Neuhaus, convenor and chairperson, wrote a six-page introduction.

What is the value and contribution of this volume? Neuhaus describes the event as "a personal triumph for Cardinal Ratzinger." I was not present to experience the dynamics of personal interaction, but the printed text leads me to a quite different conclusion. I do not disagree with Neuhaus' statement that there was not "a person there who did not remark on his courtesy and learning, his capacity to listen and readiness to respond." Ratzinger's essay is important because he calls for a revaluation of historical criticism as method. He questions the philosophic basis of such criticism—on the basis of an analysis of Rudolf Bultmann.

The two professional exegetes at the conference both politely questioned Ratzinger's attack on contemporary exegesis. Karl P. Donfried, in discussion of Ratzinger's paper, pointed to "certain permanent contributions... of the last fifty years which we cannot ignore" (110), while Raymond Brown's paper gently pointed out that Ratzinger was critiquing a form of exegesis that no longer is practiced; rather contemporary exegetes are already putting into practice many of the suggestions Ratzinger makes for the future (47).

William Lazareth read a revised version of a paper arguing that Luther used the gospel as a norm for interpreting Scripture. The gospel is the criterion by which Luther criticizes and judges the apostolic value of the Scriptures. I like the paper very much, but I wish that Lazareth had cited more of the radically critical opinions of Luther. I think of the first thesis Luther set for Nicolaus Medler's doctoral defense, his argument that the Ten Commandments were written for old Israel, not Christians, and his use of the *solus Christus* in his arguments with Erasmus. Lazareth then, drawing more specific and direct lines of filiation to the Reformation proprium, might have shown that modern Protestant (German?) critical scholarship has a different relation to the Bible than does Ratzinger's Catholicism. The content criticism as practiced today lies in continuity with the past. That might have brought a more direct contrast to Ratzinger than came out of Lazareth's otherwise excellent paper.

Lindbeck's argument is strangely disappointing. He is interested in "the extent to which the Bible can be profitably read in our day as a canonically and narrationally unified and internally glossed (that is, self-referential and self-interpreting) whole centered on Jesus Christ, and telling the story of the dealings of the Triune God with his people and his world in ways which are typologically (though not, so at least the Reformers would say, allegorically) applicable to the present" (75). No one would disagree with his call for more biblical knowledge among Christians. He affirms the gains of modern critical interpretation, though he also argues that historical criticism, which neglects "the narrative meaning of Scripture" (82), lost the value of reading Scripture in the light of the [*con*-?]*sensus fidelium*. He claims, incorrectly I think, that critics confused the narrative meaning with the factual meaning of the Bible and so lost it. Therefore historical criticism, he holds, can give no guidance to what the biblical texts mean in the present (86). But the *sensus fidelium* survives in the church, and that is a possible basis for "the recovery of a consensus-and-community-building hermeneutic" (94).

The essays and the discussion lead to a sort of non-conclusion. Lindbeck at the end says that he finds himself "wondering what, if anything, has really been accomplished." Neuhaus counters that "something very important has happened here." Lindbeck is certainly correct. It does not appear that a *consensus fidelium* was arrived at among those present. The reading of Stallsworth's summary helps to explain why. Critical exegesis is, in general, blamed, but not confronted. Can narrative meaning contradict history? Is narrative meaning a new form of Gnosticism? Or again, can one return to patristic exegesis, as Prof. Thomas Oden of Drew University seems to suggest? In short, while significant questions were raised, the answers often seemed to be more assertion than theological demonstration.

But Neuhaus also is partially correct. Something important did happen. Scholars from a variety of Christian traditions seemed to agree

that critical biblical interpretation is a given in our world. They also pleaded for interpretation that would speak more directly to Christian hearts today. Their agreement is not a surprise for two reasons. (1) American biblical scholars also have been searching for meaning beyond the limitations of historical criticism. (2) In a sense this conference was too easy. All but two participants came from liturgical and/or confessional denominations that have a built-in commitment to "the tradition," however they understand it. The conference would have been more difficult, but richer, had it included one or two feminist biblical interpreters, a minority or third-world liberation theologian who works out of the Bible, and some historical critic such as Hans Walter Wolff, who has written both radically critical commentaries on the Old Testament and exemplary books of proclamation based on the same texts, or a New Testament scholar dealing with the historical Jesus out of the conviction that Jesus is important and relevant for the life of the church today. They would have been enriched by the presence of Peter Stuhlmacher of Tübingen or Robert Morgan of Oxford, both significant thinkers about historical criticism and hermeneutics.

That would make a conference whose results I would like to read. It could be more truly relevant and challenging.

Edgar Krentz
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Tyconius: The Book of Rules. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by William S. Babcock. SBL Texts and Translations 31, Early Christian Literature Series 7. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989. xiii and 152 pages. Cloth, $14.95; paper, $9.95.

Tyconius, a Latin-speaking Donatist theologian of the fourth century, wrote the oldest surviving handbook of biblical interpretation. He proposed seven rules of interpretation, a style of presentation anticipated in the rules of Hillel and other Jewish interpreters. These rules, however, differ from those of Hillel. Most deal with theological positions that (should) determine a text's meaning. For example, "On the Lord and His Body" argues that one must distinguish passages that speak of Christ from those that speak of the church. "The Particular and the General" shows that passages which refer to specific historical individuals or events may also have a wider application. "Times" deals with numerology, especially as applied to time. "Recapitulation" argues that events which happen at a particular time can also refer to events that happen at another time.

Prof. Babcock of Perkins School of Theology reprints the Latin text of F. C. Burkitt (Texts and Studies 3,1; Cambridge, 1894). He deviates only by substituting *im-* for *in-* in compound words, by substituting *v* for consonantal *u*, and by putting capital letters at the beginning of each sentence (the latter a practice which contradicts the entire Latin tradition, the former makes substitutions for the sake of clarity, though also not entirely defensible in the manuscript and inscriptional tradition).

Babcock's translation is clear and precise, without sacrificing English idiom to over-literal fidelity. He identifies the many citations of Scripture, provides short notes on textual or interpretive difficulties, and gives an index of Scripture passages. A brief five-page introduction orients the reader to Tyconius' position in the thought of the fourth century church. This manual edition will be very useful for courses in the history of interpretation and the history of theology. It makes an important text available at small cost in a trustworthy edition. A boon, indeed.

Edgar Krentz



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The Old Testament of the Old Testament. By R. W. L. Moberly. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992. xvi and 224 pages. Paper. $13.95.

According to Moberly, the Pentateuch consistently affirms that the name Yahweh was not revealed to Israel until the time of Moses. Prior scholarship ascribed this late revelation of the divine name to the sources E and P, but held that the source J reported the name of Yahweh in use as early as Gen 4:26. Moberly does not follow the documentary hypothesis, however, and argues that Gen 4:26 really means only that at an early time people began to worship God. Thus the use of the name Yahweh here and in the rest of Genesis is a kind of anachronistic slip of the tongue by adherents of Yahweh who were telling the story of their non-Yahwistic predecessors.

The author describes what the Pentateuchal writers said about the religion of the patriarchal period, which, of course, is really something different than what modern scholars reconstruct as the religion of the patriarchs. The Pentateuch itself finds a strong continuity between the patriarchs and the faith of Mosaic Yahwism, but it also notes discontinuities: the patriarchs did not use the name Yahweh, have a central sanctuary, observe the Sabbath, or have that holiness that reflects the exclusive, demanding, and mediated relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

Since one and the same God appears in patriarchal and Mosaic religion, Moberly proposes that the patriarchal accounts are related to the normative Old Testament in roughly the same way that the Old Testament is related to the New Testament. Hence the patriarchal accounts of Genesis 12-50, which have both continuity and discontinuity with Mosaic Yahwism, are the "Old Testament" of the Old Testament.

The analogy between the patriarchal and Mosaic periods, on the one hand, and the Old Testament and the New Testament, on the other, may not be quite as illuminating as Moberly thinks. We know what the Old Testament says about itself and can therefore understand how and why the New Testament finds continuity with it. We don't have the patriarchs' own religious accounts, but only their story as narrated by Mosaic Yahwism. While the latter may have thought the patriarchal accounts were its Old Testament, the real religious tenets of Israel's ancestors may have lacked most of the continuity which Mosaic Yahwism presupposes. Moberly faults modern scholars for failing to note the continuity he has discovered, but fails to see how much of the continuity results from those who told the story.

Still, this is a very stimulating monograph that finds new reasons to affirm the historicity of the patriarchs and raises additional serious questions about the future usefulness of the documentary hypothesis. Moberly also believes that the continuities he discovers between the patriarchs and Moses, as well as between the Old Testament and New, may be a great resource for Jewish Christian dialogue.

Ralph W. Klein
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The Influence of the Gospel of Saint Matthew on Christian Literature Before Saint Irenaeus. Book 1: The First Ecclesiastical Writers. By Eduard Massaux. Tr. Norman J. Belval and Suzanne Hecht, ed. with an introduction and addenda by Arthur J. Bellinzoni. New Gospel Studies 5/1. Leuven: Peeters; Macon: Mercer, 1990. xxvi and 172 pages. Cloth. $25.00.

Massaux's massive study of the influence of Matthew on Christian literature prior to Irenaeus filled 730 pages of closely printed French text in its 1950 edition. Prof. Bellinzoni is editing a three-volume translation. This first volume includes the 1986 introduction by Franz Neirynk and bibliography by B. Dehandschutter covering 1950-1985. Vol. 1, subtitled "The First Ecclesiastical Writers," covers the influence of Matthew on the Didache, Barnabas, and Ignatius of Antioch. This book requires no major approval from any reviewer, only a welcome to its appearance in English.

Massaux took a maximalist position about the influence of Matthew on the Apostolic Fathers; Helmut Koester's 1957 German monograph on the Synoptic tradition in the Apostolic Fathers came to a minimalist position. The translation of this massive French work will

certainly renew the discussion of this topic, important both for canon history and theories about the origin and dating of the synoptic gospels. The editor merged the divided bibliography of the 1986 reprint into a single bibliography and provided indexes of authors, OT references, and NT references in this volume. We hope the remaining two will appear soon, and we await the renewed discussion of the influence of the Gospel of Matthew. This book is a worthy addition to the resources for understanding second century Christianity, even where we disagree with some of the conclusions.

Edgar Krentz

The Last Shall Be First: The Rhetoric of Reversal in Luke. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 46. By John O. York. Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1991. 209 pages. Cloth. $42.50.

Most readers of Luke, both lay and scholar, notice the theme of reversal: the rich are made poor, the captive set free, etc. In his introductory chapter York reviews and summarizes previous research on this theme of reversal. He includes attempts to analyze Luke through the lens of the Aristotelian plot device of peripeteia, the reversal of fortune, various approaches utilizing literary critical methods, and socio-political, or liberationist, approaches. He concludes that the variety of approaches to the theme of reversal inadequately define "reversal" and its function in Luke's Gospel.

In the remaining three chapters York intends to closely analyze the literary function of "bi-polar reversal in Luke," the eschatological content and function of the bi-polar reversal texts, and to relate Luke's use of bi-polar reversal to the understandings and expectations of Luke's first century Mediterranean audience. York defines "bi-polar reversal" as a reversal, within the gospel narrative, in which two opposed elements are completely reversed; e.g., the rich become poor while the poor become rich, the outcasts become accepted and the accepted become outcasts. In chapters two and three York closely and thoroughly examines texts that explicitly and implicitly demonstrate bi-polar reversal. Explicit texts include the Magnificat, the Beatitudes, and the rich man and Lazarus; implicit texts include the anointing of Jesus, the Good Samaritan, and the prodigal son.

York demonstrates a wide knowledge of the literature and a grasp of the current scholarly discussion. He performs a close rhetorical and literary critical analysis while generally avoiding the arcane and obfuscating jargon of modern literary criticism. He successfully demonstrates that bi-polar reversal is a major Lukan literary device which assists in understanding individual pericopes and the Gospel as a whole. Each text is analyzed not only on its own terms, i.e. atomistically, but in relationship to the other texts. York demonstrates that the theme of bi-polar reversal is constantly repeated throughout the Gospel.

York draws very heavily upon the work of Bruce Malina on honor-shame culture in the New Testament world. This anthropological work is combined with the close literary analysis of bi-polar reversal to draw new insights from the text. He concludes that Luke, as a first century author, is more interested in the reversal of accepted categories of honor and shame than in articulating a precise socio-economic agenda.

In his concluding chapter, York successfully demonstrates that bi-polar reversal, as a literary device, would have been well understood by a first century Greco-Roman audience. Such audiences would have been influenced by the cultural personification of *τύχη*, or fate, and *Fortuna*. *Τύχη* and *Fortuna* often gave a person a reversal of fortune. Luke, however, relegates fate and fortune to the control of the Christian God who reverses fortune. Those who follow Jesus are exalted; those who rely upon themselves are brought down.

Of his three stated goals, York successfully analyzes the literary function of bi-polar reversal and the understanding and appreciation of this device by a first century audience. However, his analysis of Lukan eschatology falls short of expectations. This discussion is usually a few sentences buried in the midst of his literary analysis. He concludes that Luke poses a certain degree of tension between the "now and not yet" fulfillment of the kingdom in Luke. However,

this conclusion is facile based upon the limited discussion he devotes to it. A second edition of this book should either devote an entire chapter to this topic or add more material to the discussion of each text.

York brackets out the discussion of the historical Jesus. This permits him to concentrate on the bi-polar reversals in the final redacted form of the text. However, in doing so, he has eliminated the most significant bi-polar reversal of all: Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection and the fate of his opponents and his disciples. This topic is worthy of an entire monograph in itself. I wish York had devoted several pages in his concluding remarks to this topic, instead of just one sentence.

York has successfully integrated a literary analysis of a Lukan literary device with social science understandings of Luke's world in order to better interpret Luke. I recommend this book to Lukan scholars and to those who interpret the New Testament from social science and literary critical perspectives. Because of the expense of this volume, perhaps York would consider penning an abridged popularization.

Lynn Allan Kauppi
Tempe, Arizona

Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors. Vol. II: Poets. The Epic Poets Theodotus and Philo and Ezekiel the Tragedian. By Carl R. Holladay. SBL Texts and Translations 30. Pseudepigrapha Series 12. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989. x and 529 pages. Cloth, $25.95; paper, $16.95.

Diaspora Jews in the Hellenistic world composed Greek literature in the literary genres of Hebrew Palestinian writers (apocalypses, didactic romances, liturgical texts, etc.). But they also borrowed Hellenistic literary forms (history, epic, drama, didactic poetry, martyrology, etc.) to describe Judaism to non-Jews and to give Greek-speaking Jews a literature to preserve their identity. The Septuagint witnesses to the linguistic and cultural transformation of non-Palestinian Jews more than two centuries before the common era.

Most of this literature is lost, surviving only in citations of various length. Philo and Josephus are the major surviving Jewish Greek authors. In 1970 Albert-Marie Denis published a critical text of the fragments of these lost Jewish Hellenistic writers (*Fragmenta Pseudepigraphorum Quae Supersunt Graeca Una cum Historicorum et Auctorum Judaeorum Hellenistarum Fragmentis.* Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece 3 [Leiden: Brill, 1970]), but provided no translation or commentary.

Carl Holladay of Emory University is filling that gap in the series *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors.* Volume 1 (Scholars Press, 1983) is an edition, translation, and commentary on the fragments of ten lost Jewish historians. Now, in volume 2, Holladay does the same for Theodotus (forty-seven dactylic-hexameter lines in eight fragments) and Philo (twenty-four lines in six fragments), both epic poets, and Ezekiel, whose tragedy *The Exodus* survives in seventeen fragments comprising 269 lines in iambic trimeter, the standard meter for drama.

Holladay's edition is generously conceived. A general introduction describes the manuscript tradition of Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica* (the primary source for most of the fragments), Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*, and Epiphanius' *Panarion*, and gives an extensive general bibliography. A special introduction to each of the three writers summarizes and evaluates the content of the work, tells what can be known about the writer's life, and gives a special bibliography. Holladay's critical Greek text, based on Mras's GCS edition of Eusebius, not an independent reading of the manuscripts, is conservative; I detected no original emendations and a limited use of those by other scholars. The extensive notes give the philological basis for the translation, interpret the manuscript evidence, provide sources or parallels for the language (Homer, Septuagint, etc.), present parallels from other Jewish literature, argue points of interpretation, and provide bibliography on specific points.

Holladay pays little direct attention to poetic diction, prosody (e.g., location of the caesaura), as means for evaluating these poets' poetic ability (though he does cite earlier schol-

ars extensively). Nor does he use them for text-critical decisions or emendation. Holladay faults scholars who viewed Ezekiel's work negatively, for example, and defends a more positive evaluation in the words "Objective evaluation of his achievement is best left to those in a position to judge" (314). This discussion of Ezekiel's "literary achievement" (the phrase is Holladay's) comes in the short section titled "Sources and Literary Character." Without an extensive discussion of prosody, the aptness of Ezekiel's poetic imagery, the turgidness of his style, the evaluation of his dramatic technique (plot, character drawing, tragic nature), etc., one should scarcely offer a literary evaluation. All three authors give us valuable insight into how they interpret their own past, which makes them valuable to the historian of ideas and theology, but does not justify a high literary evaluation. At the least one expects an extensive comparison with the prosody and diction of Apollonius Rhodius, Aratus, Callimachus, and Theocritus to justify a high evaluation of their literary merits.

But enough of this literary argument. Holladay's edition, which gives us a comprehensive philological and historical commentary, will be the starting point for the interpretation of these fragments for many years. Theodotus, Philo Epicus and Ezekiel the Tragedian are significant for understanding early Diaspora Judaism in the Greek world. A projected third volume will present Aristobulus, Pseudo-Phocylides and other pseudo-Greek poets, and relevant Orphic texts. I hope that Holladay will also write a synthetic description of the treatment of historic figures or events, apologetic motifs, etc., that characterize this Jewish literature. His detailed knowledge of these writers equips him to do a magisterial interpretation.

Edgar Krentz

Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A Commentary. By J. J. M. Roberts. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991. 223 pages. Cloth. $19.95.

Most prophetic books are anthologies, Roberts argues, and so many of the conclusions drawn by canonical and literary critics are misguided. His own forte is textual criticism, philology, historical analysis, deep knowledge of the ancient Near East, and a mature theology that gives voice to the original prophet and his New Testament and modern echoes. Extensive textual notes (18 pages on Habakkuk 3 alone) make frequent reference to (transliterated) Hebrew, but the translation itself and the verse by verse commentary are easy to read, also for those without any knowledge of the original Hebrew.

Somewhere between 640-630 Nahum announced Yahweh's vengeance against Assyria, reassuring Judah that Yahweh had seen their affliction and was about to repay their oppressor in full for his evil deeds. Contrary to what some might think—the book of Jonah comes to mind—God's traditional willingness to forgive would not allow his enemies to escape their due punishment.

The book of Habakkuk was composed after the first destruction of Jerusalem in 597, but in it the prophet argued that judgment can never be God's final word. The prophet justifies God's ways in the vision of chapter 3, which describes in hymnic fashion Yahweh's coming intervention on behalf of his people against Babylon. Habakkuk's stance between vision and fulfillment is remarkably parallel to the Christian's, between the resurrection of Jesus and the second coming.

The most famous passage in the book, 2:4b, is given a new and persuasive interpretation: "The righteous person will live by its faithfulness." To live means to endure in the interim, before the fulfillment of the vision. The antecedent of "its" is the vision. Hence Habakkuk builds his theology on the reliability of the vision and of the God who gives the vision. The proper response to such a vision is to believe it and live in a way that reflects that faith. Paul, therefore, logically concluded that life is to be found by trusting in God's promises rather than by earn-

ing life through meritorious deeds. The reliability of the vision is contrasted in 2:5-20 with the deceitfulness of the wealth and power of the Babylonian ruler.

Finally, Zephaniah, early in the reign of Josiah, announced the day of Yahweh against Judah and Jerusalem, a series of judgments against the nations (climaxing with the destruction of Assyria), and the ultimate restoration of the people under the divine king Yahweh. God's ultimate goal in judgment is the transformation of his people into a remnant that will rejoice in God's restoration of Zion's fortunes.

Without a doubt, this is the best commentary on these important, if not widely used, books.

Ralph W. Klein

PC Bible Atlas. By Larry W. Twitty. Hiawatha, IA: Parsons Technology, 1992. $69 + $3 shipping and handling.

This DOS-based atlas permits the user to call sixty-six different maps to the screen:
—a general map of the Mediterranean basin
—35 maps of biblical events (25 OT; 10 NT)
—15 maps that show specific geographic features (rainfall, economy, roads, excavations, etc.) or institutional realities (tribal divisions, Levitical cities).
—15 outline maps, to which the user can add names of cities, rivers, mountains and so build one's own map.

Actually, all the maps can be edited and printed with a laser printer or even some dot matrix printers. Using the cursor and a monochrome screen, I found the atlas very exciting, but when I tried the system in the seminary library with a borrowed color monitor and a mouse, I decided what my next two computer purchases would be. The speed and the colors were remarkable!

The maps are interactive. When you point at a city, location, or event marker, a window opens up and several paragraphs of data appear (These data are accurate, but uncritical. One would never guess that there was a problem with the conquest traditions). With cursor or mouse, one can measure distances between cities, just as one does with a ruler in a conventional atlas, but with far more precise results, and with distances given in both miles and kilometers. A zoom feature allows one to blow up a section of a map for close inspection and to print out the blowup for an educational program. I found the printouts on laser and deskjet to be clear and readable—and one can vary the size quite easily.

There are a number of excellent modern Bible atlases (the best in my judgment are identified at the end of this review) that are mines of information and treats to the eye. So what advantages does a computer atlas offer?
—The user can modify data on the maps, enlarge or reduce them, and print out a customized copy.
—If you have a laptop computer, you can take your atlas—plus an English Bible concordance such as QuickVerse, also published by Parsons—wherever you go, at home, in the office, on the road. My laptop even has the whole Hebrew Bible in it, plus a highly sophisticated concordance program (LBase).
—As all of us are increasingly dependent on word processors, we simply like to work with computers for other tasks, including geography. Distances can be measured precisely, and the backup data for the maps, including discussion of the relevant biblical events, is all in one place, right there on the screen.

Congratulations are in order for Twitty of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, who edited this atlas. Congratulations also to Parsons for holding down the cost (comparable to that of a good, conventional atlas), and for designing an easy-to-learn computer program.

Aharoni, Yohanan, and Michael Avi-Yonah. *The Macmillan Bible Atlas.* New York: Macmillan.
Rogerson, John. *Atlas of the Bible.* New York: Facts on File.
Student Map Manual, ed. Richard Cleave. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
The Harper Atlas of the Bible, ed. James B. Pritchard. New York: Harper & Row.

Ralph W. Klein

Theology and Social Theory. Beyond Secular Reason. by John Milbank. Oxford/Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990. 443 pages. Cloth. $64.95.

Why should one bother reading a dense and difficult book which is longer than 400 pages and costs more than $60? Why should one climb on a high mountain? Why should one learn to play piano? Why should one take the pains and raise children? All of these activities are risky, costly, and time-consuming, but we undertake them and many more similar to them because all of them have their peculiar rewards. The same is the case with John Milbank's book. It is of a remarkable intensity and intellectual scope. Yet more important, it is a book of the highest importance for the ongoing debate between Christianity and modernity.

Milbank forcefully challenges and undermines modern social theory's privilege of defining the horizon of the discourse in the humanities, political and social theory, and the privilege of "placing" theology in its framework. He unmasks modern social theories as concealed theologies or anti-theologies. Thereby he is attempting to liberate Christian discourse from the Babylonian captivity of secular reason by demonstrating the inherently parasitic character of secular discourse on tacit theological assumptions.

In a first part Milbank interprets the history of modern thought from Hobbes' political theory to Adam Smith's and Malthus' political economy as neo-pagan Machiavellian concepts or as theological heresies. None of the concepts were what they claimed to be, namely emancipated social sciences. In the second part of the book Milbank analyzes the connection between theology and positivism and deconstrues modern sociology of religion from Parson to Berger and Luckmann as well-disguised faith in a secular mythology. In a third part Milbank focuses on modern political theory and political economy, especially in Hegel and Marx, and enters into a critical argument with political theology's and liberation theology's uncritical acceptance of modernity's philosophical core-assumptions.

In the last part of the book Milbank moves toward his constructive proposal. After a theological deconstruction of the deconstructionists and postmodernists Derrida, Deleuze, and Lyotard and a critically appreciative discussion of Alasdair MacIntyre's work, Milbank unfolds his constructive proposal. Augustine's *City of God* serves as a springboard for understanding Christianity as the "other city," and ecclesiology as the church's social theory. What is the point of this? Modernity from its very conception in the 17th century gave an ontological primacy to violence in its political and economic thought. The upshot of this development is 20th century nihilism with its philosophical and practical celebration of violence. Milbank's postmodern reading of Augustine's *City of God* restores the ontological primacy of peace as a preferable reading of the world as God's creation.

Milbank's grand strategy in this deeply impressive book is to turn the tables in the argument between modernity and Christianity. The church and theology have gotten used to being the defendant and modernity the plaintiff. Milbank's postmodern theological deconstruction of modern philosophical, political, and economic thought and the unmasking of the nihilistic core of secular modernity and post-modernity have turned the plaintiff into the defendant. Yet far from idealizing the church and the church's history, Milbank calls us to critical self-examination, since again and again the church has failed to live the ecclesial peace: "Insofar as the church has failed, and has even become a hellish anti-Church, it has confined Christianity, like everything else, within the cycle of the ceaseless exhaustion and return of violence" (433). The book is a very difficult mountain to climb, yet the view from the top is more than the work's reward.

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Briefly Noted

In the Beginning: Creation and the Priestly History. By Robert B. Coote and David Robert Ord (Fortress, $12.95). While the authors claim to represent mainline views on the priestly document in the Pentateuch, they actually have a severely jaundiced view of the priests who are behind Genesis 1 and other priestly writings. For example: "The priests used their right to delineate what was holy or common to control the nation's meat supply and to 'rule over' and give themselves access to meat in large quantities." They even have a critical attitude toward the Sabbath year, claiming that it exacerbated the indebted condition of the poor, making the legislated release of the 49th year of Jubilee all the more essential. They believe that Isa 61:1-2 (the spirit of the LORD is upon me... to bring good news to the poor) was meant also to enhance the priests' status. Reconstructions of history appear authoritatively as "voices from above," and the untutored reader knows neither why the authors hold certain opinions or how tenuous they are (e.g., their proposal that all the writings of the Levites who supported Josiah were eventually demoted to secondary rank and are known to us as the prophets). This completes C & O's trilogy on the Pentateuch (cf. *The Bible's First History* (=J) and *In Defense of Revolution* (=E). RWK

Amos. By Shalom M. Paul (Fortress, $44.95). In this magnificent commentary, the second on Amos in the Hermeneia Series, P., an Israeli scholar, departs from such predecessors as Hans Walter Wolff by arguing for the integrity of the whole book, with one or two minor exceptions. By way of contrast, Wolff uncovered six layers of editing, that extended over several centuries. P. even dismisses linguistic and ideological arguments for the secondary character of 9:11-15 and shows how it offers a sure and happy future for those who will not be cut off by the sword (This remnant's salvation is not conditional, as is that offered in 5:15: "Perhaps the Lord... will show favor to the remnant of Joseph." While repentance is a *sine qua non*, the "perhaps" actually protects the absolute sovereignty and freedom of Yahweh). The great wealth of information—almost seventy pages of bibliography and almost fifty pages of indexes—is presented with an economy of language and with great argumentative skill. Mark this down as the best commentary on Amos in any language. RWK

Analytical Key to the Old Testament. Volume 3: Ezra-Song of Solomon. By John Joseph Owens (Baker, $39.95). This wonderful aid for students with a minimal knowledge of Hebrew proceeds through the books of the Bible verse by verse and gives the grammatical identification of each word, the page number in BDB where it appears, an English translation, and the root for verbs. RWK

Far More Precious Than Jewels. Perspectives on Biblical Women. By Katheryn Pfisterer Darr (Westminster/John Knox, $15.95). This book brings together historical critical, rabbinical, and feminist insights on stories dealing with Ruth, Sarah, Hagar, and Esther. Each of the methods is carefully and simply explained in a way that will be accessible to lay people, but highly interesting also to pastors. D. decided not to adjudicate among the three hermeneutical approaches, but to "leave to readers the task of discerning the questions and concerns that motivate different interpreters." Her feminist interpretation identifies scholars who find in the book of Ruth women of independence, intelligence, and commitment, and those who find these role models projected on women by the anonymous male author. A fascinating and delightful study. RWK

Graphic Concordance to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Edited by James H. Charlesworth (Westminster/John Knox, $150). This computer-generated reference tool concords all Qumran sectarian texts published before 1990 (223 texts and 3,500

fragments). Aimed primarily at specialists in the field, this concordance lists all forms alphabetically and makes no attempt to parse them. The editor notes that references to the Righteous Teacher and to the light-darkness paradigm appear in only a few of the scrolls. RWK

The Jews in the Greek Age. By Elias J. Bickerman (Harvard, $12.95). In this posthumous work, B. surveys Judaism from the time of Alexander to the eve of the Maccabean revolt. This was the time when biblical works like Ecclesiastes and Daniel 1-6 were written, as well as such non-canonical works as Tobit, Enoch, Jubilees, Ecclesiasticus, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, but much literature has also been lost and B. laments throughout the book about the paucity of sources (We have no writings at all from those condemned as "sinners" in this literature though they, too, were Jews). Real Hellenization did not begin until later when native rulers enforced it, but at the beginning of the Greek age, contact between Greeks and Orientals was tangential, limited mostly to government. In the ancient world education did not include the learning of foreign languages, and so Jews in the dispersion gained their knowledge of the ancestral faith through the Greek Torah and through the Greek synagogal service. B. gives much attention to the temple and its leadership, to the economy and the legal system, and to characteristics of the religious life. He helps us to see them as real people and not just as descendants of the patriarchs and ancestors of the rabbis. RWK

An Introduction to Judaism. By Jacob Neusner (Westminster/John Knox, $24.99). The prolific N. has written a textbook that explores Judaism as an ancient religion, with influence on Christianity and Islam, and as a modern religion that still transforms the lives of people. Part I surveys contemporary Judaism; part II looks at the Old Testament, the Talmud, and the triumph of rabbinic Judaism; and part III defines the relationship between Judaism and the Torah. In each section he also provides an anthology of secondary readings. RWK

The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary. Volume 1: Hosea, Joel, and Amos. Edited by Thomas Edward McComiskey (Baker, $34.95). M., Raymond Dillard, and Jeffrey Niehaus here present "consistently evangelical" commentaries on the first three minor prophets. The commentator's own translation and that of the NRSV appear at the head of every section; Hebrew is frequently cited (in Hebrew script for the Exegesis and in transliteration for the Exposition), but always immediately translated for the uninitiated. "Exegesis" (lexicographic and text critical issues) appears at the top of each page and "Exposition" (other exegetical issues and homiletical suggestions), always much longer, at the bottom. To my taste Dillard has written the best of the three commentaries. Niehaus ends his essay with an unfortunate, anti-Judaistic note: "the Jewish rejection of Christ brought about yet another exile...." Consistently evangelical? RWK

The Women's Bible Commentary. Edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Westminster/John Knox, $19.95). In this one-volume commentary on the canon and the apocrypha, the editors have gathered some of the fruits of feminist biblical scholarship on each book of the Bible in order to share it with the larger community of women who read the Bible. They recognize that knowledge is perspectival—who we are and what we have experienced affects even the questions we ask. The forty-one women authors included in this volume typically provide a brief introduction to each book and then select for comment those passages they judge to be of particular relevance for women. Some treatments of books, therefore, are very short (2 Corinthians gets only 2.5 pages), and this volume must be used as a complement to other exegetical aids. In this role, however, it is an eye-opener. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, for example, reviews the laws dealing with women and sexuality in Deuteronomy and notes how power in that book passed from the *pater familias* to the wider community (especially the elders). The right of the ancient state to protect its disadvantaged members often collided with the autonomy of the family—a conflict not irrelevant to modern concerns with abortion or custody of chil-

dren. Kathleen M. O'Connor observes that much of Jeremiah's God language justifies violence against women and subordinates them to their human kings, judges, and fathers—see especially Jer 13:22, 26. Jane Schaberg interprets the story of Mary and Martha as a late first century attempt to limit the *diakonia*—the eucharistic table service—of women and restrict their role to listening to the word. There are also excellent essays on the everyday life of women in both testaments. RWK

Samuel. Geschichte und Überlieferung (Samuel. History and Tradition). By Peter Mommer (Neukirchener Verlag, DM 68). M. identifies older documents within the Deuteronomistic History and reconstructs on this basis a history of pre monarchical and early monarchical Israel. At first Saul was a military leader against the Philistines in the central Palestinian hill country. Later the Northern tribes recognized him as a more permanent leader, although not really as a "king." In the old traditions Samuel has nothing to do with the rise of kingship. Rather, he opposed it from his office of "judge of Israel." Samuel's reputation as a prophet was based on his demonstration of charismatic attributes. RWK.

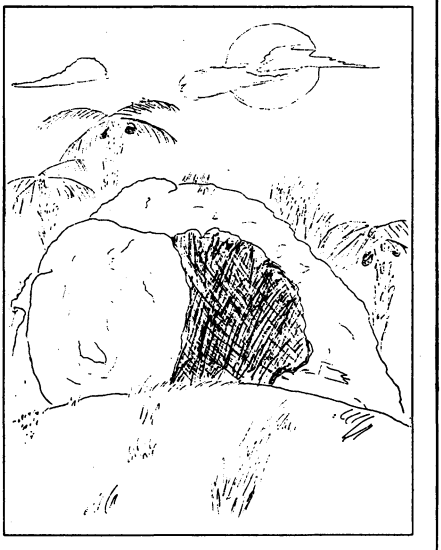
Das wahre Israel. Die "genealogische Vorhalle" 1 Chronik 1-9 (The True Israel. The "Genealogical Vestibule" 1 Chronicles 1-9). By Manfred Oeming (Kohlhammer, DM 79). The books of Chronicles, written in the mid to late 4th century, begin with nine chapters of genealogies that bore the average reader and have often been dismissed as secondary in critical scholarship. O. shows that the genealogies are original and that their message summarizes in advance that of the Chronicler's History: The northern tribes had disqualified themselves by their turning away from the divinely elected dynasty of David and from the temple in Jerusalem, but they still belonged to the rest of Israel (see 1 Chr 2:1-2). Hence they were invited to return to Jerusalem, which they had already done in part, according to 9:3. The genealogies show by a series of concentric circles that Israel (with emphasis on Judah, Levi, and Benjamin), has been elected out of all the peoples of the world, that out of Israel David and his dynasty were elected as spiritual founders, that Jerusalem and the temple were the spiritual center, and that the cult personnel, especially the Levites, were mediators between God and humanity. The Jerusalem temple community claims the title Israel exclusively for itself—the true Israel!—and is in contention with Samaritans and early apocalyptic groups. Thus, the genealogical vestibule is a theological treatise for those who have eyes to see. RWK

Prophetic Oracles of Salvation in the Old Testament. By Claus Westermann (Westminster/John Knox, $18.95). The genre called oracles of salvation only began with Second Isaiah, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the ending of temple worship. These oracles, first delivered in response to laments, later separated themselves from this *Sitz im Leben* and were attached to many pre-exilic judgment oracles. In Second Isaiah and his heirs, salvation meant restoration to wholeness in the land, with no promise of political or military power. This line of tradition finds fulfillment in the New Testament, while the double oracles, which promise salvation for Israel and judgment for the nations, find no echo there. Whereas the salvation envisaged in the Old Testament always involves a community, the salvation proclaimed in the NT primarily involves individuals who believe the promissory message. The Old Testament notion of salvation includes both a restoration of a relationship with God and the restoration of all other areas of life as well. RWK

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Preaching Helps

The Resurrection of Our Lord—Seventh Sunday of Easter, Series A



Hearts Not Flowers

Years ago (in 1961, actually) John Updike published a poem called "Seven Stanzas for Easter" in *The Christian Century*. In it he ridiculed the way we fall back on talk about "the flowers, each soft Spring recurrent." He begged, "Let us not mock God with metaphor, analogy, sidestepping transcendence." Are we embarrassed to speak of a real resurrection, a real stone really rolled aside? "Let us not seek to make it less monstrous, for our own convenience, our own sense of beauty."

What does he want? He wants molecules that reknit and amino acids that rekindle. He says that "the same valved heart" that was pierced must pump again. No papier mache story-book stone but "the vast rock of materiality that in the slow grinding of time will eclipse for each of us the wide light of day." God cast aside real stone, weighty stone, deadly stone on the first Easter.

Planet earth and our brothers and sisters in the human family are pierced and scarred by atrocities of economics and racism, of forsaking and despairing. But "in this wide graveyard of the earth there is one

empty tomb." God has uttered a new word and done a new deed in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, promising new life to psyches and spirits, to hands and hearts, to bodies and social systems, to our economics and politics, to mountains and valleys, to rivers and oceans.

The challenge of Easter is not to define our problems or to urge one another to action. It is to fix our eyes on God's being and God's doing. It is to speak and hear again as Good News the word of God's invincible and passionate love for Jesus and for the whole of creation.

Helping us to think and preach on the resurrection in all the texts of the Easter season is Dennis R. Bolton, pastor of Lutheran Chapel Church in Gastonia, North Carolina.

Pastor Bolton earned his M.Div. at Lutheran Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina and his D.Min. at Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. He brings both parish and clinical experience to bear in his Pastoral Reflections on the texts, as he works to crack them open and suggest approaches to the task of preaching.

Thank you, Dennis, and to all of you
Hearty Easter greetings!

Robert H. Smith
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The Resurrection of Our Lord
April 11, 1993

Psalm 118:1-2, 15-24
Matthew 28:1-10
or John 20:1-9 (10-18)
Colossians 3:1-4
Acts 10:34-43

FIRST READING

Matthew likes "a great earthquake" (*seismos megas*, 8:24, 28:2) almost as much as he likes mountains. The earth shook (*seiō*, 27:51) when Jesus died, and it shook again on Easter morning, indicating that Matthew thinks of Good Friday and Easter as a single event, even though he must write about them one at a time.

When Jesus died, the temple curtain split (*schizō*), and the rocks split, and with the splitting of the rocks of the earth the tops of coffins popped off, and the earthquake was so violent that it woke the dead. Not all the dead, but the dead saints, holy people of old. They woke up and sat up (Mt 27:51-53).

And here the narrating runs into difficulty. The saints were wakened at the dying of Jesus. That clearly reflects the common Christian conviction that Jesus' death means our own life. But another Christian conviction is that Jesus is the first born of the dead. So the wakened saints remained in their tombs, and only after Jesus' resurrection, says Matthew, did they leave them to enter the holy city. It seems a bit messy, but Matthew is working to convey to us the conviction that by his death-and-resurrection (a single convulsive moment) Jesus ushers in the new world of God.

And it is a world of righteousness, where the saints and prophets of old are no longer hounded to death but instead live forever in the presence of God. Their saintliness is vindicated.

Nevertheless, the heart of this Easter pericope is the word of the angel of the Lord to the women. The angel preaches an Easter sermon, brief but complete. The angel names "Jesus who was crucified. This one is not here in a tomb but has been raised up from death to newness of life." This Jesus, about whom Matthew has been writing through the 27 preceding chapters, lives. Of all the people who have ever lived—sages and seers, prophets and poets, kings and generals—this is the one whom God resurrected on Easter, and then all those others who have some connection with him began to share in his fresh life.

Jesus, who touches the world and makes it "all right," has not been abandoned but has been resurrected.

Giver of Righteousness, he is also Teacher of Righteousness. This is the gospel of the Sermon on the Mount. This Teacher of a higher righteousness, surpassing righteousness, has been exalted by God.

And he lives not alone, not for himself, but in the midst of a new community. And so the pericope ends not just with the word of the angel about Jesus but with the appearing of Jesus to the women and with the word of Jesus speaking of those dreadful, frail disciples of his as "my brothers and my sisters."

Later in the chapter they will be sent to make more brothers and sisters. Jesus lives forever (28:20) in the midst of the new community of women and men discipled to him. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

It's Wednesday of Holy Week, and I am sitting in the church office staring at the Easter texts. Between two hospital calls, a new member visit, a crisis counseling session, and two finished sermons for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, I'm tired but ready to work on the Easter sermon. I notice the candy eggs piled up in the corner for the children's Easter Egg Hunt, and I am reminded of all the people who will show up for the Easter church festivities.

It will be a full house on Sunday; it always is at Easter. There will be the beautiful music, the packed pews, the smell and beauty of the lilies, and the variety of faces, filled to their necks in new clothes. So, how am I going to present the dominant image of these Easter texts—"an empty grave"—in such a way that the Risen Lord is central to this Easter congregation?

I'm tempted to offer a series of historical and logical arguments based on the empty tomb theories: the wrong tomb, the twin brother of Jesus, the cool tomb resuscitation of a really-not-dead Jesus, etc. Maybe these theories might lead the folks to struggle with how any of us comes to understand a "missing Jesus." "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him" (Jn 20:13 NRSV). Yet, this approach doesn't speak to me or to my own struggling faith in front of an open grave. Is it because I'm assuming that people want an Easter sermon to tell them what really happened or an Easter sermon that can explain the resurrection to those once a year visitors?

Thomas Long's article, "The Easter Sermon" (*Journal for Preachers*, Easter 1987), offers a much needed corrective in my homiletical approach.

> Easter preaching does not begin, then, with people's general inquisitiveness about what really happened that Sunday morning long ago, trying to coax that curiosity gradually into a reasonable recitation of the Apostles' Creed. Nor does it begin by explaining the mechanics of the doctrine of the resurrection and then the beckoning people to muster up what it takes to believe in it. Easter preaching begins with the vision that the Risen Christ is present and at work in the world and that people everywhere experience the power of this living Christ and feel Christ's claim upon their lives.... Most of those who show up in the pews on Easter are there because, to some degree and in some way, they have heard Christ calling to them, and they have come searching for the words which will enable them to say, "Our faith is not in vain." The gift of being able to speak those words is what the Easter sermon is all about. (7)

Forgive me, Lord, for my arrogant assumption that *I* must somehow convince the people of your Resurrection and for my judgmental attitude about the people who normally never attend worship until Easter. Instead, let me proclaim through Word and Sacrament: Alleluia—Christ is Risen!
DRB

Second Sunday of Easter
April 18, 1993

Psalm 105:1-7
Acts 2:14a, 22-32
1 Peter 1:3-9
John 20:19-31

FIRST READING

John focuses on the nature of Christian faith. What is it, and how do people get it?

John's Easter narrative revolves around individuals: not on a group of women but on Mary Magdalene, not on the eleven or twelve but on Peter and the Beloved Disciple, not on doubts and fears in every heart but on Thomas. Each figure is John's opportunity to treat some one aspect of faith, and each is our opportunity to see something about ourselves and our faith and our doubts.

At the beginning of the passage for this Sunday Jesus just suddenly materializes in the room in the midst of his disciples, bringing them gifts they neither expected nor deserved. "Peace," he said (and how many other things he might have said to those fearfully disappointing disciples!). And he breathed out the Holy Spirit on them, so that the same breath, the same life, the same spirit that animated Jesus, is now in the disciples. And therefore he says, "As the Father sent me, so I send you." He had a mission, and now they have the same mission.

That mission is stated in words that do not sound especially Johannine: "If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; and if you do not forgive them they are not forgiven." "Sin" in John's Gospel is unbelief. That's key. So, inspired and commissioned, the disciples decided to begin their mission with Thomas. He was not present that first Easter night, so they find him and announce, "We have seen the Lord." That is shorthand for the whole Easter message. When he heard their testimony, Thomas had the opportunity to be the first person in the history of the world to come out of sin, out of unbelief, to faith, on the basis of the Christian gospel. But instead of believing quickly, he made his famous de-

mands. He wanted to see Jesus and touch him. Note how he did not ask simply to touch Jesus' arm or shoulder to see that he is solid, or to watch him eat or hear his voice. Thomas talks about Jesus' wounds.

Jesus' wounds. Here's the issue. Does God really gain the victory by means of wounds, wounds on the body of Jesus, wounds on the body of the church? Shouldn't God rather win the victory over the world by overpowering the world? Can the crucified one really be God's agent, God's Son?

It is John's faith that God defeats the world, gains victory over the world, through self-giving love. And so Jesus still bears the wounds. His hands and side have not healed. The wounds will not go away. The universe is held secure in wounded hands and reclines on a wounded breast. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

The school system where my oldest daughter, Jessica, attends junior high decided to take their week of Easter break during Holy Week. Therefore, that most sacred time of clergy vacation—the week following Easter Sunday—is not an option for me or my family. So, I'll be here on the second Sunday, preaching to the expected small crowd on Jn 20:19-31: peace and doubting Thomas.

The other small crowd were the disciples who were left alone, huddled together, scared out of their wits for their very lives, while hiding behind some locked doors. Into the middle of this group steps Jesus with his greeting, "Peace be with you." But as Alan Jones reminds us in *Passion for Pilgrimage* (Harper SF, 1989), the peace of Jesus is the bringing together of woundedness and our longing for peace. Peace, for us and for the disciples, is always a wounded peace. "After he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side" (Jn 20:20 NRSV).

> An ancient legend recounts how the Devil tried to get into heaven by pretending to be the risen Christ. The Devil, being a master of disguises, took with him a contingent of demons made up as angels of light and shouted up at the gates of heaven, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." The angels looked down on what they thought was their king returning in triumph from the dead. So they shouted back with joy the refrain from the psalm, "Who is the King of glory?" Then the devil made a fatal mistake. In every particular save one he was just like Christ. When the angels in heaven thundered, "Who is the King of glory?" the devil opened his arms and said, "I am!" In an act of arrogance he showed the angels his out-stretched palms. There were no wounding marks of the nails. The angels of heaven refused to let the impostor in. (Jones, 150)

No wonder the crowds are small, the doubters are many, and the text so frightening. The Risen Lord Jesus, showing us his wounds, sends us out into the world to be wounded for love. The resurrection invites us to live a new and full life, but one that will bring pain and woundedness in our following the Christ. The Risen Christ touches my wounds and raises the dead in me to life. Maybe I need to share my wounds with the other wounded in my parish. I can because the Lord Jesus meets me in my doubt and fear with open arms of healing and forgiveness. DRB

Third Sunday of Easter
April 25, 1993

Psalm 16
Acts 2:14a, 36-47
1 Peter 1:17-21
Luke 24:13-35

FIRST READING

Here we have a passage that has often been described as one of the most charming in the Bible. It does charm us with its magic, drawing us into the Easter experience. Luke is a master story teller and invites us not simply to watch the disciples walk but to walk with them.

Two disciples, their faces etched with sorrow and disappointment, quit Jerusalem and are trudging back home to Emmaus. They may be husband and wife. One of them is named Cleopas, and that is a man's name. The other is unnamed, but they are traveling together and they are returning, Luke says, to their home in the village of Emmaus, and when they get there they enter the same house together. Sounds like husband and wife, and they may take their place alongside other couples about whom Luke talks, like Priscilla and Aquila, for example.

We feel their frustration, and we are meant to. In fact it is useful to read through the entire chapter, including this passage, and see how Luke describes feelings from beginning to end, noting changes in emotions as the story goes on. Luke invites us to journey from feelings of defeat at the start to the expression of great joy at the end, from blindness to eyes wide open.

The usual interpretation of the passage is that the resurrected Jesus continues to come to the church in scripture and in the Lord's Supper, corresponding to the two parts of the passage. In the first part they are walking with Jesus, and he speaks to them of the scriptures; the second part is enacted in the house, where Jesus breaks bread with them and for them.

But there may be more here. Jesus says, "Look at the content of scripture." It speaks of a Messiah who goes through suffering to glory. Suffering is "necessary," a part of God's plan. By crucifying Jesus, people thought they were defeating him. But ironically God took the evil that people intended and made something supremely good come out of it. Scripture speaks of God's strange way of accomplishing great good.

What about the breaking of the bread? Like scripture, the bread speaks of a body broken, of blood outpoured, of a life given up.

Some of the silliest stuff I have ever read on the Emmaus pericope suggests that Jesus was recognized in the breaking of the bread because he had a peculiar way of doing the breaking or a unique way of saying the blessing.

Their experience can be our experience: Their hearts were warmed and their eyes were opened when they finally comprehended the hard lesson that suffering and service and self-giving are not defeats, not frustrations of the will of God, but are the path to glory. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

On Tuesday morning, as I reached for the phone, it wasn't working. So, on behalf of clergy everywhere, I laughed out loud joking about quiet time, not being able to be reached, and all those salespersons getting a busy signal when they call me. But this didn't last too long, and I made arrangements for phone repair.

He arrived about 2:00 that same afternoon in the phone truck. As he worked in my office, he told me about his religious life and commented on the beauty of our church. Then, he pointed out that something had been overlooked on the church lawn. "Preacher, you must have forgotten to take down your Easter cross. That was three weeks ago."

"Oh, no," I said. "Our Easter cross stays up for the seven weeks in the Easter season."

"Seven weeks? How can you keep celebrating Easter for seven weeks after Easter Sunday? It must be pretty hard to keep everyone up for so long."

When the stranger-telephone man left, I thought about what he said. Yes, it was hard at times to celebrate Easter in a community that is mostly non-liturgical with only the one Sunday Easter service. It is the Easter let-down in the life of the parish that the stranger touched upon.

It might have been a couple who were on their way to Emmaus when they were joined by a stranger. They told him of their sorrow and hopelessness about Jesus. "We had been hoping he was the one to liberate Israel, but now it's three days since everything happened." Then Jesus began to open the scriptures and to "break bread" and they "recognized him" (Lk 24:21). Suddenly life was no longer the same for this couple who had met Jesus in a most unexpected and strange way.

Loren Eiseley, the great naturalist, once spent time in a seaside town called Costabel and, plagued by his lifelong insomnia, spent the early morning hours walking the beach. Each day at sunrise he found townspeople combing the sand for starfish which had washed ashore during the night, to kill them for commercial purposes. It was, for Eiseley, a sign, however small, of all the ways the world says *no to life.*

But one morning Eiseley got up unusually early and discovered a solitary stranger on the beach. This man, too, was gathering starfish, but each time he found one alive he would pick it up and throw it as far as he could out beyond the breaking surf, back to the nurturing ocean from which it came. As days went by Eiseley found this man embarked on his mission of mercy each morning, seven days a week, no matter the weather.

Eiseley named this man "the star thrower," and in a moving meditation he writes of how this man and his predawn work contradicted everything that Eiseley had been taught about evolution and the survival of the fittest. Here on the beach in Costabel the strong reached down to save, not crush, the weak. And *Eiseley wonders*: Is there a star thrower at work in the universe, a God who contradicts death?

Or a stranger who meets us even three weeks after Easter? DRB

Fourth Sunday of Easter
May 2, 1993

Psalm 23
Acts 6:1-9; 7:2a, 51-60
1 Peter 2:19-25
John 10:1-10

FIRST READING

In the Bible and in much of the ancient near east, "Shepherd" was a metaphor for the ruler, for the king, for the general of the army. Shepherd is a political or military metaphor. It's all about a community of people and their leadership.

That is a concern of the Gospel of John from beginning to end. John includes terrible indictments of religious and political leaders. Think of John's scathing portraits of Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate.

Concern for leadership connects chapters 9 and 10. In John 9 (see the Third Sunday of Lent) Jesus criticizes the religious leaders as truly and incurably blind. Now John continues in chapter 10 with more talk of leaders or shepherds, both good and bad.

It seems that the gospel selection for this Sunday stops short of the good stuff. Our reading does not include the great punch line, "I am the good shepherd." But the passage as it stands has its own riches.

It helps to pay very careful attention to a strange phrase in verse one: "Whoever does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way is a thief and a robber." Literally, these interlopers or false leaders "ascend" by another way. In the Fourth Gospel "ascend" (*anabainō*) has a very specific sense. It refers to Jesus' movement toward glory. Jesus ascends to his glory by means of the cross. He climbs the cross like a ladder (Jacob's ladder in 1:51) to glory, to oneness with the Father, to his privileged place of unique leadership over the church.

Others, however, wish to have glory and want to be leaders over God's people without the cross. They keep trying to ascend by some other way. They do not believe that the cross, that self-

giving, that loving and sharing, can be any part of oneness with God or of glory in the church.

These are the people (and we have them in every generation) whom Jesus brands as "thieves and robbers." They hold out the promise of victory and glory of various kinds.

They are false shepherds and, shifting the metaphor with John, they are doors to death. They send people to their deaths. They live on the deaths of other people. They propose strategies of death and point the way to destruction.

Jesus is the door to life. He has come that the sheep (leaders and people together) may enter through him and have life and have it abundantly. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

In our church sanctuary, there is a beautiful stained glass window of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. But even as visible as it is, the text for the fourth Sunday in Easter is still culturally distant. How can the people of Gastonia, North Carolina, in 1993, relate to a first century shepherd in Palestine? When was the last time that I, or anyone else, sat down over a Big Mac and fries with a shepherd? So, as I struggle with this text, I decide to focus on the *hearing* relationship between the Shepherd and the sheep.

Hearing is one of the strongest images that the Bible uses in relationship to God. Frederich Buechner expresses this well:

> If I can't see you for some reason but can only hear you, you don't exist for me in space, which is where seeing happens, but in time, which is where hearing happens. Your words follow one after the other the way tock follows tick. When I have only the sound of you to go by, I don't experience you as an object the way I would if you stood before me—something that I can walk around, inspect from all angles, more or less definite. I experience you more the way I experience the beating of my own heart or the flow of my own thoughts. A deaf man coming upon me listening to you would think that nothing of importance was going on. But something of extraordinary importance is going on. I am taking you more fully into myself than I can any other way. Hearing you speak brings me by the most direct of all routes something of the innermost secret of who you are.
>
> It is no surprise that the Bible uses hearing, not seeing, as the predominant image for the way human beings know God. They can't walk around him and take him in like a cathedral or an artichoke. They can only listen to time for the sound of him—to the good times and bad times of their own lives for the words which out of his innermost secrets he is addressing to, of all people, them. (*Whistling in the Dark* [HarperSF, 1988], 58)

Maybe I need to ask how I am listening for the voice of Christ.

Maybe we need to ask how we, in this congregation, are listening for the voice of Christ.

One thing is certain: The Lord Jesus will speak, and we will know his voice because he is the Good Shepherd. DRB

Fifth Sunday of Easter
May 9, 1993

Psalm 33:1-11
Acts 17:1-15
1 Peter 2:4-10
John 14:1-12

FIRST READING

What makes most sense here is to imagine that Jesus offers the first very familiar lines of the gospel selection as "text" for his sermon. The opening words paint a traditional picture, and what Jesus will do is turn these words over and over, just like a good preacher, and as he does so, he will help us to see fresh aspects of his text.

Here is the verse that serves as text, and it helps to see the underlying Greek in a few of the key phrases: "In my Father's house are many dwelling places" (NRSV). The word behind

"rooms" (RSV) or "dwelling places" (NRSV) is *monai*, a noun cognate of the verb *meno* = dwell or remain. The words *meno* and *monai* occur only five times in the chapter, but they are key phrases (and they occur frequently elsewhere in the Gospel of John).

John continually raises the question, "Where does Jesus dwell, where does God dwell, where do and where will the believers dwell?"

In 14:10 Jesus says, "The Father who dwells in me does his works." So Jesus is the dwelling place of God. In 14:23 Jesus says that God will love the person who loves Jesus, and he goes on to say that "we" (the Father and Jesus) "will come to such believers and lovers and we will make our 'home' with them." Here in 14:23 "home" is the same word as "dwelling place" in v. 2. Backing up to v. 17, Jesus says that he will send the Spirit of truth to dwell (*meno*) with you and in you.

So the chapter begins on what seems to be a traditional apocalyptic note: Jesus will go by means of death and resurrection and ascension up to the Father, to the great palace of the Father in heaven. It is a large house with rooms enough for all the people of God. He goes to get everything ready to receive us. When he has made all preparations he will return (the second coming or parousia). We need not fear his absence or his second coming, because he will return to take us to himself, so that we may always be with the Lord.

However, by the time we read down to verse 24, we see things differently. On the basis of the traditional picture in the text, Jesus has preached a sermon on life with God not in the future but in the present. Jesus has not just gone to a palace in heaven. He has ascended into God. God is his dwelling place, and he is God's dwelling place. And God and Christ dwell now in those who believe and love. And believers and lovers dwell in God and in Christ, not just later but even right now.

Jesus "manifests" himself (more apocalyptic language, 14:21) already now to all who trust him and love him. Jesus is talking about his death and resurrection, as the great turning points in the world's history. That turning is a present experience for all who believe. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

I can't help but think of Alan Jones' *Passion for Pilgrimage* while reading Jn 14:1-12. Jones says, "God has fallen in love with you so much that he has sent his son into the world to bring you home" (79). The Lord Jesus tells us that he has a room for us in his Father's house and that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life in going home.

The very best smell in the whole wide world is my mother's kitchen when she's in a baking frenzy. The aromas of hot German yeast cakes, fresh dark crusty breads, home-made biscuits, and fresh baked German cookies are the smells of home to me. When I think of home, I remember the love and warmth pulled from the oven for me, my family, and any of my friends who happened to be around at that time.

As one who is to preach on the fifth Sunday of Easter, I know the danger of using "home" as a metaphor for the Christian life. Many people came from terrible, cold, abusive, and unforgiving homes while sitting in the church listening to me. Yet, they might imagine the most perfect home so full of love and wonder that anyone and everyone was welcomed.

> There is a legend concerning Judas Iscariot. Judas, having betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver, went out and hanged himself. After this, Judas found himself at the bottom of a dark and dank pit. He lay there on his stomach for a million years. (Since he was in eternity, he experienced "time" in his own peculiar way.) Slowly and painfully he turned himself over on his back and lay in the darkness for another million years. He then saw, or thought he saw, a faint light miles above him at the mouth of the pit. Something in him drew him towards the light, or was it the light itself that did the drawing? He couldn't tell. With great difficulty, he stood up and began to climb. For years and years he climbed. Often he slipped back and had to wait a century or two to regain his strength to go on. As he climbed, the light grew stronger, and the closer he got to the mouth of the pit, the more Judas drew strength from the light. Eventually, after many aeons, he pulled himself over

> the edge and, much to his astonishment, he found himself in an Upper Room where a young rabbi was having a meal with his friends. The young rabbi came over to him, helped him to his feet and said, "Judas! Welcome! We've been waiting for you. We couldn't continue the supper without you. —Welcome home! (Jones, 90)

Maybe I will preach a sermon that reminds us we are all spiritually homesick for the smells of God's welcoming kitchen. The church is where we hear Jesus' invitation to "Come Home, Because All is Forgiven." DRB

Sixth Sunday of Easter
May 16, 1993

Psalm 66:1-6, 14-18
Acts 17:22-31
1 Peter 3:15-22
John 14:15-21

FIRST READING

Although John 14 is one complex whole, we find ourselves chopping up things that belong together as we read the lessons on Sunday morning and try to deal with the riches in these chapters. The preceding study and this one are not following precisely the divisions of the lectionary but are contemplating themes in all of John 14.

John 14 presents the first two of the five Paraclete passages. These passages fit oddly into their context, as Jesus rather abruptly begins to talk not of his own or the Father's indwelling in Christians but of his own absence and of the Spirit's indwelling presence.

It has often been noted that the Paraclete passages could be cut out of these chapters and the transitions from paragraph to paragraph would not be rougher and might actually be smoother. The Paraclete passages seem to interrupt the flow, throwing in material that is a bit hard to digest.

The Gospel was of course written long before the trinitarian controversies that led to the Nicene Creed with its three articles. But the New Testament bears witness that the earliest church had its own controversies, sometimes about the Spirit. We are accustomed to thinking of Paul's struggles with charismatic leaders in Corinth. Something like that was going on in the Johannine community (see 1 Jn 4:1-6; Rev 2:20; cf. 1 Thess 5:19-22; Didache 11-15). People with all kinds of ideas were appealing to the guidance of the Spirit.

It seems that the evangelist has included the Paraclete passages not in order to promote thinking about the Paraclete where such thinking was absent. He has included these passages in order to tame spirited speculation by providing the closest possible connection between Spirit and Jesus.

The fundamental assertion of the author of the Fourth Gospel concerning the Spirit-Paraclete is that the Spirit is from the Father and comes in answer to Jesus' prayer. That means that there can be no tension between the Spirit's program and the old, well known program of Jesus. Jn 14:25-26 says that the Spirit-Paraclete brings to remembrance all that Jesus has said. The Spirit activates the program of Jesus and does not lead God's people off into new paths. And the Gospels tell us what the program and ministry of Jesus was all about. As John 14 itself indicates, that program was not about apocalyptic speculation (the time of the parousia, the dawn of the millennium, novel teaching like the rapture). Jesus' teaching focused on trust in God and love (*agapē*; see also 1 Jn 4 and 1 Cor 13).

If there is a perceptible difference between any Christian prophet's teaching and the program of Jesus, then it is not the Spirit of God but some other spirit that is talking through that prophet. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

There are many self-help groups in our community of Gastonia, North Carolina: AA's, addiction groups, mental health meetings, support groups, grief groups, Parents Without Partners, and more. I'm thankful for such organizations and the lives that are strengthened by them. So as

I read Jn 14:15-21, I am struck by Jesus' promise to send his disciples a Helper: the Holy Spirit. But how does the Holy Spirit help? This is the sermon question.

I wonder what the congregation is feeling or thinking when they hear that the Holy Spirit is a Helper. Do they believe that the Holy Spirit *helps* them to be more successful? Do they think that the Holy Spirit *helps* them to be more popular? Does the Holy Spirit *help* them to be as strong as Samson, as charismatic as David, or as faithful as Mary? Who can say that the Holy Spirit doesn't help in all of these cases; but for me, this is not the primary *help* of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is who helps us in our ability to witness. The Holy Spirit helped the disciples tell the story of Jesus Christ. How many times have you heard or said, "It's the life you lead that counts. Don't ask me to talk about Jesus," or "I'll paint the sanctuary or mow the grass, but don't ask me to speak of Christ." It's very difficult to speak about our faith in Jesus, and all of us need help to do it. Our excuses are many: we're not qualified or we're not good enough or we're not trained. What if Simon Peter said he couldn't speak about Jesus because he was a betrayer? Or St. Paul said he couldn't tell of Jesus because he persecuted Christians? But because of the Holy Spirit, the Helper, they were able to speak. So too are we. DRB

The Ascension of Our Lord May 20, 1993

Psalm 110
Acts 1:1-11
Ephesians 1:16-23
Luke 24:44-53

FIRST READING

Luke offers three reports of the ascension of Jesus, focusing in turn on priestly, prophetic, and royal aspects of Jesus' exaltation. In the final chapter of the Gospel, Luke connects the ascension to priestly blessing. Zechariah had emerged from the temple at the beginning (1:22), speechless and unable to bless the worshipers. At the end, Jesus is pictured as parting from his disciples after lifting up his hands and blessing them (24:50-53), whereupon they return to Jerusalem and the temple, praising God.

In Acts 1:9-11 Jesus looks like the prophet Elijah, carried up to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kgs 2) while his disciples stand and watch. And in Acts 2, Peter compares and contrasts Jesus at his ascension with King David. Jesus, not David, has been exalted to the right hand of God and now pours out royal gifts (the Holy Spirit) and offers amnesty in celebration of his coronation (the forgiveness of sins).

Luke makes sure that we are aware that all three of these scenes are played out in or near the temple of Jerusalem. Contrary to what the other evangelists report, Luke has no scenes of post-resurrection appearances of Jesus in Galilee. In fact the disciples in Luke's Gospel are commanded to stay in Jerusalem (Lk 24:49 and Acts 1:4), waiting for the gift of the Spirit which will empower them for their mission, which in Luke's presentation leads steadily and inexorably to Rome.

Blessed by Jesus' pilgrimage across the face of the earth and up to the right hand of God, the community is empowered and summoned to herald the good news of his gracious sovereignty in Jerusalem and in Rome, to those who are near and to those who are far off, crossing old boundaries to bind people into a kingdom the likes of which the world has never seen before.

The author of Ephesians outdreams Luke. He thinks beyond Jerusalem and Rome, beyond Jews and Samaritans and Gentiles. He pictures Jesus as enthroned over the entire universe, over sovereignties visible and invisible, over names human and demonic and angelic and godly, over the past and the present and the future. And he calls us to celebrate the ascension by pondering the "immeasurable greatness of God's power" which he says has been unleashed not only outside of us and for us but even "in us who believe." RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Whenever the festival of the Ascension arrives, I always see the same image in my mind: the disciples standing with their heads titled back, mouths hung oven, eyes squinted and pointing up toward the sky in disbelief as Jesus ascends to heaven. They are in such shock that it takes two angels to bring them back to their worldly sense. "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven?" (Acts 1:11 NRSV)

I wonder what it was like for these disciples, who had lived through Good Friday and Easter, to suddenly see the Lord Jesus leave. Is he really gone? Death did not destroy him, so where is he? For forty days, he had suddenly appeared and disappeared in such strange ways: a breakfast cook on the beach, a gardener, a stranger.

Maybe he was trying to teach the disciples (and us) about how to discern his presence when he seems to be absent. This is a hard thing to do, and there are times I feel as if Jesus might have ascended beyond my reach.

Earlier in the Easter season Jesus told his disciples that they will always know his presence through love (Jn 14:15-24). But now this love is not grounded in his physical body or in a physical place or in historical time. The love of Christ is set free beyond the world as we know it.

T. S. Eliot once wrote: "Love is most nearly itself when here and now cease to matter."

The Ascension is the event where the physical absence of Jesus insures each of us of his never-ending presence. The love of Christ collapses any distance between us and him, because the "here and now ceases to matter" in the Ascension. "And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God" (Lk 24:52 NRSV). DRB

Seventh Sunday of Easter May 23, 1993

Psalm 47
Acts 1:(1-7) 8-14
1 Peter 4:12-17; 5:6-11
John 17:1-11

FIRST READING

This great prayer of Jesus is in many ways like the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane. Not in terms of geographical space but in terms of literary space, it comes in the identical spot: between the conversation at the Last Supper on the one hand and the arrest in the garden on the other. And some of the same themes are present: Jesus is mulling over the meaning of his dying. And his thinking is done out loud, for our benefit.

The language is all thoroughly Johannine. Jesus is about to be "glorified." What is his glory (*doxa*)? He speaks of it as a task to which he has dedicated himself (17:19). In John's Gospel, the glory of Jesus is the climax of his mission accomplished on the cross. The cross in John is glorious.

"Glory" speaks of light and splendor. Jesus is crucified at high noon in John, and there is no darkness over the whole earth. It is Jesus' most splendid and brilliant hour, because at the cross he wins victories for God, and God is most fully revealed.

The cross is the high point, not the low point, of Jesus' way in the Gospel of John. At the cross Jesus is lifted up, literally, with his feet no longer touching the earth. The cross is his ladder to heaven, the first step on his journey into the heart of God.

Because he goes the way of the cross not for himself alone, the cross is the link between God and all of us. So Jesus dedicates himself to finishing his work in this prayer.

His dying does not mean that he is destroyed. He dies out on the world but dies into God. By dying into God and living fully in God he will give the gift of oneness to his disciples. What is that oneness?

His prayer, that all may be one, has long been associated with the ecumenical movement. That's

fine. It is right for Christians to find their way to one another and to set aside old obstacles. But is that what Jesus had in mind on the night he was arrested?

In the Fourth Gospel "oneness" is the equivalent of "Godness." Earth is marked by manyness, brokenness, confusion, distance from God and from one another, enmity with God and enmity with one another. The mark of heaven is peace, clarity, integrity, oneness. Jesus prays that we may all have the peace of God, the health and wholeness and integrity of God. He prays that in place of brokenness and confusion, we may through his dying into God have the benefit of life with God and in God. That's oneness. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

"Good-byes" are difficult for me. I'm not comfortable with them, and I'd rather avoid a good-bye and pretend it's not important. It took me a lot of years and some very personal life-work to get a sense of why good-byes are such a struggle in my life. Part of my story is that I grew up an "Army brat" and moved frequently during my childhood. It didn't take me very long to learn how painful good-byes can be at age 6, or 9, or 12. Somewhere along my childhood journey I quit saying the forbidden word and slipped quietly away.

All of us struggle with good-byes. They are simply a given in life. We come into the world saying good-bye to our mother's body. Soon, we say good-bye to home for the first day of school; good-bye to elementary school, or middle school; good-bye at graduation; so many good-byes. Sometimes, there are even good-byes to loved ones while riding behind long, black cars with burning headlights at two o'clock in the afternoon.

For me, there is some comfort in knowing that Jesus struggled with good-bye. The New English Bible names chapters 14-17 in John's Gospel as "Farewell Discourses." It took Jesus four chapters to say good-bye, beginning as far back as the Fifth Sunday of Easter. Now, Jesus is about to leave us and we hear his final good-bye.

It's an unusual good-bye that is found in Jn 17:1-11. Jesus is getting ready to ascend to the Father, and even as death could not make him stay, neither can his disciples and neither can we. As he leaves us, Jesus doesn't promise us a "rose garden" or an "easy life." Rather, he promises to pray for us. "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those you gave me, for they belong to you" (Jn 17:9 TEV).

The Lord Jesus prays for us and brings us closer to him, and the Father and the presence of the Holy Spirit. So as we wait and say good-bye to the bus, the climbing jet, and the back window full of waving hands, the Lord Jesus enriches our lives with a new Hello: the Holy Spirit. The deeper the good-bye, the richer the hello. Good-bye, Lord Jesus. DRB

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Intercessory Prayer: A Spirituality for Modern Times

William E. Lesher
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Spirituality is on our minds.

Recently a woman who directs an educational program at a large medical center spoke to students about the importance of developing a sense of spirituality. For her, she said, spirituality has to do with such things as her own self understanding, how she fits into the universe, how she understands and relates to the purpose, direction, and destiny of her life. Her description fits "spirituality in general," where spirituality is a person's stance before life or one's own personal world view. It is the manifestation of what Christians have called "general revelation"—that irrepressible suspicion, possibility, or hope that lingers in the human mind that there is, as Paul Tillich said, a mystery, depth, and greatness to life.

We can probably agree that it is a great advance to engage health care workers in discussions of such ultimate concerns and anticipate the good effect this could have on their relations to patients. Yet, for Christians, spirituality has a much more specific definition. We live, after all, not by general revelation but by the special revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is our world view. The gospel is our personal stance before the world. The cross shows forth the mystery, depth, and greatness of God. Some things are not up for grabs any more. This suggests that the term "spirituality," or at least the notion of the special spirituality of Christians, is not about the search, but about getting on with the task of being Christian. Special spirituality is about the business of living out of the special revelation that is the treasure of the faith. Spirituality, even in the general sense, cannot deny its relation to "the Spirit." The word "spirituality" itself makes the connection inescapable. While the special revelation of Christian faith locates the Spirit as the motivator of every search, still, for those who have been or who are being formed, the Spirit is one new life force that urges action that conforms to Christ and the cross. Again, as Tillich once put it, the Spirit is the power of God driving us to unambiguity.

All this is to say that I am thinking of spirituality more and more in relation to very specific things that Christians do to live the faith in the modern world. Specifically, I think of prayer as the foundational ingredient of spirituality. Even more specifically, I think of intercessory prayer as a

particularly appropriate part of spirituality for modern times. Intercessory prayer functions spiritually like an inter-active computer or mobile phone. It can link us to God and bind us to one another in a lively ongoing network of care and support at any time, wherever we are.

When I served as pastor of St. Luke's Church in Logan Square, Chicago, we had 15-minute prayer services at 7:00 each morning. The gathered few—three or thirty, whoever came—knew the assignment: to greet the day and to pray for God's blessing "on behalf of" ourselves, our families, the parish, the church throughout the world, all humanity, and the whole creation. My inspiration for beginning this parish practice came from a Good Friday sermon preached by Dr. F. Eppling Reincuty, at one time president of Southern Seminary. He said, "To be a Christian is to have the sense of being prayed for." To be a member of St. Luke's in those days meant that every day at 7:00 a.m. one could have the sense of being prayed for. Members could also join in the intercessory network, wherever they were at 7:00 or whenever time permitted, and they could know the unity, the fellowship, and the caring of a congregation in Christ.

Intercessory prayer is a spirituality for modern times that is important to cultivate in communities of faith today. We long for the support of others in facing the difficult demands of contemporary life. We are aware of the world's woes, and we want to be spiritually responsible for them, but we are often overwhelmed by the extent of the need and the complexity of the problems. A strong, disciplined practice of intercessory prayer as part of a personal and congregational life style is a practical, possible way to meet these spiritual needs of modern life.

The spirituality of Christian people can be distinguished from the general spiritual hunger expressed today in many forms of searching. Christian spirituality is not a search, but action. It is our "liturgy"—our work as the people of God. It is to intercede where we are, when we can, on behalf of all the conditions of humankind and the whole creation and, in so doing, respond to the stirring in our souls.

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