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CURRENTS in theology and mission

Bearing Witness to the Light

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Bearing Witness to the Light

John the Baptist bore a unique kind of witness to the light, but each Christian, both at Christmas and throughout the year, has John's same vocation, albeit in a never-ending array of variations and possibilities: to hail and proclaim the true light that came, and comes, into the world. Sometimes our witness-bearing gets choked by the commercialism, sentimentality, or repetitiousness of the Christmas season; sometimes it fails because the rest of the worship year exists neither in adequate anticipation of, nor in the full wake of, the light. But all of us are Christians simply because someone in our family or congregation or circle of friends brought us quite effectively to the light. Such creative light-bearers have also contributed their living witness in this issue of *Currents.*

Walter Wangerin, Jr. tries to "make us small and tuck us home again" with a major poem on the incarnation. It consists of five pairs of strophes and antistrophes, with each strophe and antistrophe being a metaphorical interpretation of the other. The strophes deal with various events in nature while the antistrophes begin with the actual birth of Jesus and move us backward in time from the birthing and the tearing of membranes to Mary's moment of conceiving Jesus. A reprise draws out the implications of this journey for our faith life. Readers will discover that each reading will bring out new insights, new perspectives, new ironies, and new witness. One cannot get away with reading this poem only once.

Paul Bauermeister has written a motivational piece to try to get pastors to take ministry to families more seriously. He helps us see the significance of God's holy family, his own holy family, and our holy families. Through a moving recollection of the witness born in his childhood by an Advent creche and through a concluding poem, he shows how each single heart, in lively interaction with the other hearts in the family, is a proper cradle for the Christ child.

It is in our baptism, **S. Anita Stauffer** reminds us, that the light first shined for us; there we participated already in the death

and resurrection of Christ. She unlocks the richness of the baptismal liturgy in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* and calls attention to its emphases on the presence of the Spirit, the corporate character of baptism, and the inescapable ties between baptism and Eucharist. To baptize with this rite is to employ a rich treasury of actions and signs.

For **Paul Rorem** the texts employed in worship form the only adequate basis for interpreting the liturgy. His evidence for textual priority consists of summaries of such Orthodox forebears as Cyril of Jerusalem (4th century) and Nicholas Cabasilas (14th century). Other liturgical hermeneuts from the 4th to the 8th centuries employed symbolic interpretations that sought to transcend the here and now and that suggest an inability to believe that God meets us in our own historical time and place. Hermeneutical questions with regard to the liturgy rival and parallel in importance the hermeneutical questions with regard to Scripture.

Timothy J. Keyl and **Frank C. Senn** provide an historical introduction to the Phos Hilaron, the ancient hymn at Vespers, that appears now in LBW as Joyous Light of Glory. This hymn expresses the goal of the lamp-lighting rite at the beginning of Evening Prayer. The chant amid the shadows, "Jesus Christ is the Light of the World," serves to remind us that Christ does not fail when the darkness of each day comes.

Members of **Lutherans Concerned** respond to your editor's recent evaluation of their call for the church to dialogue on issues of homosexuality. Theirs is a witness on which we have no unanimity within the Christian community; theirs is a question that often generates more heat than light. One person's light here often seems darkness to another. We invite readers to share their light-bearing witness in response to this exchange by sending in letters for possible publication.

The rest of this issue is our annual Advent-Christmas-Epiphany Surprise Package, a collection of essays, poems, and songs authored by *Currents'* subscribers. This year's contributors include: **Johanna Beicke, James Drury, Enno Klammer, Paul Manz, Colleen R. Nelson, José David Rodríguez, David C. Schroeder,** and **William J. Urbrock.**

When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us (Titus 3:4-5). Hail that light! Go tell it!

Light-heartedly,

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

A Message to our Readers

Because the overwhelming majority of our subscribers read both *Currents in Theology and Mission* and *Preaching Helps,* and because radical increases in postage make it unwise to continue unnecessary mailings, we have decided to combine all our publication efforts within the covers of *Currents.* That means that each issue of *Currents* in the future will number 80 pages (instead of 64) so that we can provide a full complement of essays, reviews, and homiletical aids at the best possible price.

This new and expanded version of *Currents* will begin with the February, 1987, issue. Hence the November, 1986, number of *Preaching Helps* that you have already received will be the last issue for that journal as a *separate publication.* I hope it is clear that we will continue to provide the same quality and quantity of homiletical studies as before, except that now they will be bound within the covers of *Currents* and will not be mailed to you separately.

Those who now subscribe for both journals or only for *Currents* will receive the expanded *Currents* at no additional charge. Those who only subscribe for *Preaching Helps* will have their subscription pro rated according to a generous formula that will be explained to you shortly by letter.

We thank you for your cooperation and hope for your continued support. This minor change places our publication in an even stronger position than before, and we expect to supply you with high quality materials at modest prices into the indefinite future. All this is made possible by economies effected by combining our publications.

The Christ Mass: Back Through Headlong Time

Walter Wangerin, Jr.
Evansville, Indiana: Christ Seminary-Seminex Adjunct Professor of Theology and Literature

1. Strophe

How did they kill the coyote?
They hardly knew.

They chased him, they raced him in exhaustless
Belly-treaded snowmobiles,
Snaring space on the open fields,
Stitching his tracks, exhausting him.

Wind in their beards, laughter cracking their teeth,
The sun a silver bugling on the snows,
They sliced the sound, they rode the brightness
Like tears on mirrors, exhausting him.

He squirt forward between their flanking,
Snapped tail to corner from a looping pincer,
Squeezed speed from his ribs—ran, ran,
His tongue blown backward at the ear.

How did they kill the coyote?
They never knew

That when they rode their mechanical rattlers
To the horizon, the coyote cracked,
Plunged through the nooning crust
Of old spring snow—five feet in a white pit.

Exhausted, he could not leap nor dig long
Nor wait a better day or nourishment
But lay down in lather, dying,
Till the foam was frozen on his shoulder.

How did they kill the coyote?
Like a roach in a teacup.

Antistrophe

Jesus was born with hair
  With needle teeth
  A milk-blue breath
Four paws walking and aware:
A natal song we sing for thee;
In terra canunt angeli.

Mary his mother licked
  All lovingly
  His rheumy eye
With a doting tongue and quick:
And lullabies we croon to thee;
In terra canunt angeli.

Flesh of the flesh of beasts
  Creation's ward
  Who was its Lord
Born to host, to meat our feasts:
Astonished hymns and litanies
In terra canunt angeli.

Cub of creation, go
  Break from thy den
  Run among men
Cross our Colorado snows—
And prove what sort of beasts we be.
In terra canunt angeli,
Et lamentantur archangeli.

2. Strophe

  And the wolf—
How did they kill the wolf?
Slit a salt-lick
Grind a deep groove
Etch a sheath: slip
The blade within
This sheath edge-up
And pack the crack.

  But the wolf—
How did they kill the wolf?
He ran his tongue
Like a muslin
Of flesh across
The salt: drool from
Joints in his jaw
Numbed the tongue-cuts.

How did they kill the wolf?
His drooling dropped
Blood: blood he lapped
Blood he hungered
Lord so fiercely
His stomach seized
At warm rich blood.

The wolf? The wolf—
Bled forth his food
Swallowed gulped and
Did not know he
Was his prey: he
Praised God that all
He wished he had.

Oh you blesséd
Block of Sweetblood!—
The wolf: he drained
And drank his life
By the self-same
Lacerated
Howling organ. . . .

Speak to me speak
To me speak to
Me how did they
Kill the wolf? *Did*
They kill the wolf?
Did he know he
Craved his own blood?

Antistrophe

Mary delivered Jesus on her knees,
Pushed him head-downward to the scalloped earth
Bare between her knees, pressed for all her worth
With both hands folded on her belly, squeezed
Her lids and lips, her teeth, her being (*Please*)
To drive him down, to bring him to his birth;
Mary *(God! God! Father of this hard hurt,*
Please! Let your baby come!) begged on her knees—

And this is how God solved her maidenhood:
She tore.
In a rush the flesh burst like a breached door,
Blood poured,
Before and with and on the infant. Blood:
His first milk, air, his swaddling—and all his mother's good.

3. Strophe

But even the cow was aided in her birthing.
"Y'hear that woofing?" Edward said. "She's choked
At the wrong end. Wear my boots." And we went.

Since she'd been laboring, lowing all night long,
To bring her calf breech-wise into the world,
Edward tied a cord around the soft hooves
That stuck out beneath her tail like tails,

And tugged. Her sides heaved. He put a foot
To her hip to help himself and tugged
Till they sweat together, the calf between.
"Let go let go let go"—But who was holding?

The sun breached the horizon. Fog crawled the fields
Burning. Me, I took her blameless gaze.

As though the calf suddenly gave up haven
It plunged out and Edward sat backward
With a slick busybody bumping for footing,
Immediately, on his impossible pants.

But what I recall with dazzled gratitude
Seeing, was the balloon of fluid that followed
This calf into the world, a globe no one had promised.
Morning sunlight fused in it and set it glowing,
Till Edward took his thick farmer's finger
And stabbed the bladder, collapsing it—and
Its heavy water washed the earth. Amen.

Antistrophe

There came a moment when
Resting on her pallet
  Mary sat upright
As though remembering,
As though she'd say, "I know—
  I know it now."

But she held her peace, did Mary.
A smile like blotted water
  Darkened her mouth,
Like a new rain freshet,
Spilled on the ledges below
  Her eyes: *I know*—

She bowed her head sideways
As though she were listening
  To a word at her vulva.
Does melting make a sound?
Her hair spilled all on her
  Left breast: *I know—*

Then she touched the man beside her
Lightly, to leave the moment
  Undisturbed,
And whispered like a spray
Of roses, roses: "Joseph,
  My water broke."

4. Strophe

Who teaches developing girls to tread
The ground mincingly, with faint steps, as though
Hobbled by dread or by great sympathy?
When do they learn the earth is their sister? . . .

Did you, the old man peered, *swaller that seed?*
His grandchild paused, her face lost in a smile
Of watermelon rind, frowning because
She trusted his decrees as trust a priest.

Swaller a seed, he said, *your tummy swells*
And soon you have a baby, Fi-fo-fum!
—A young girl, greatly burdened, went to walk
The cornfields, to pray God about a seed.

Illinois soil is black as blankets. She
Sat in a corn crib. Grandpa, his hands tucked
Under the bib of his overalls, gross
Contentment, came and gazed away from her.

Illinois evening skies are amethyst;
Corduroy cornfields float below from here
To the horizon, irrigated with
A running darkness down the rows. Black blood.

You worried? Grandpa wondered of the west—
Northwest. His grandchild did not nod, but frowned.
'Cause eatin' seeds, he said, *naw—'tain't no bane.*
Earth ate a load o' seed, an' look at her.

Look at her swell—green an' so pretty, child,
I wanta cry. She's pregnant, don't you know.
I hear this earth o' mine, hear the black dirt
Low, like a mama moanin' nursery rhymes.

Illinois cornfields form a church of pews;
Grandpa, slouching in the corn crib as priests
Slouch twice the Verba, had an acolyte
Beside him, lighting candles in her eyes.

All them seedlings is her litter, he said,
Her babies, curled and yearnin' to the birth.
Listen: can't you hear the blood rush, and deep
Roots suckin' nourishment? She heard. She learned—

That she stood on the holy woman, Earth,
Stood on a great womb fat to teeming young.
In that night she learned to walk as women
Do: soft, so cautious, barely brushing ground.

Come fall, Fi-fo-fum, grandpa winked, *come fall,*
He said, *we'll grind her corn to make our bread.*
—That night engendered in a girlchild love
And a dear dread both, for Earth and for her
Self, forever.

Antistrophe

Jesus was strong, strong as the storm;
He churned the waters ere he was born.

Jesus was merry, imp of the sun,
Causing the waters to giggle and run.

He raised a wave that slapped the shore
Not after birth—a month before!

O mother of our infant king,
How *did* he such a marvelous thing?

(And Mary remembers the full-some days
With shining eyes and quiet praise)

While I bathed naked in the lake
He kicked, for all creation's sake.

My belly punched out willfully:
'Twas him in a hurry, none but he.

Oh, mine was a monstrous pod to bear,
Lord of the seas, the land and air;

But while he lingered in his daughter
I was the weather that dashed the water;

I was a planet, God's low girl,
A green, complete, and turning world.

O earth! Sweet earth!
With love we burst!

5. Strophe

In the zygote seed
All we need.

Parts die:
Male and female
In travail;
Natures human and divine
Still perishing
Till IS is one one satisfies
And all is me
But none am I
Since AM is pure divinity.

The zygote cell:
Emmanuel,
Being indivisible.

Tell me why,
In the first spring rain,
Do they cry
And the fields hiss pain?
It's we, sweet Jesus, we—
The grain deceased in thee.

Antistrophe

When Gabriel departed and all glory,
And water bubbled, and I remembered the coals
I'd blown before the angel stood before me;

When I knelt down with tongs to spread those coals—
My left hand on my thigh, my right hand reaching—
Hardly recalling bright news for clay bowls;

When someone sang "Mary?" from the courtyard, each thing
Common in my lot, equable as sand,
Then, just then, I felt—I call it a "stitching"

In my right side, low down and deep. *Stand! Stand*
Up, Mary, I thought; but I could not move.
This ache in my pelvis, this light larval spasm—

I, who had never known motion in the caves of
My womanhood, cried: "The egg—drops! Oh, my love!"

Reprise

Christmas and his Incarnation,
Time sucked backward through itself, and
We return through its forward going:
We, by mercy, pass its latter sadness first; we
Meet its middle as our own, most penitential;
We arrive then at its first, the simplex,
Our last home and holing.

This is the marvel of our celebration
And the grace of God:
To take us back
Through headlong time,
To make us small
And tuck us home
Again.

O baby, rest your nappy head;
Your eyes be rollin', you half dead;
Your mama loves you, wide and deep—
O baby, baby, get some sleep:
  Your story's done
    Begun.

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Holy Family: An Advent Exercise

Paul Bauermeister

Christ Seminary-Seminex Professor of Ministry, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Come softly, for your heart will be made tender by this holy season of waiting. Come softly and follow a few of my remembrances with a few of your own, and, quite painlessly, we will prepare for the coming of Another. Such remembrances as we will share are treasured for their remembering and for their sharing, and you and I can easily do that, or if you can add a partner or a friend or two to your sharing, all the richer for you!

The crèche at the house where I grew up was called a "manger scene" and belonged to mother, that much was abundantly clear from the fact that she alone knew all about it. Also it was she who quickly moved in to tell us that, "Yes, you can look; no, you may not touch." That instruction took place the very first morning of its appearance on the built-in buffet in the parsonage dining room.

One morning it would suddenly be there, the cotton for snow, the mirror for a frozen lake, the slightly dated toy cars, the tidy bungalows with more snow on the roof. And in the center of it all the holy family, with a little dry grass for straw, one young shepherd with a lamb, one adult shepherd, three wise men, one camel and one cow and one sheep.

It was magical in its sudden appearance, and in my inability to convince mother, try as I might, to allow me to play with it, to touch the little people and the animals, to *feel* them, to gain some kind of understanding of them other than the distant visual one I was allowed. Mother would usually give in to my pleading and my promises. But not this time. This was something special. Where did it come from? Where was it the rest of the year? Probably upstairs in that trunk, with the stuff from my birth and baptism.

Even though it was obviously cotton and a mirror, the snow and ice were wonderful to a California kid who never saw snow and ice, because when it was there you could get mother to talk about snow and ice and she really knew all about it.

I was troubled by the fact that things were not all the same scale. Baby Jesus would never fit in the back seat of that sedan, and the young shepherd would never make it thru the front door of either bungalow. They were giants. Mother seemed untroubled by this so I did not mention it.

And the chronological mixture was troubling too. Why did the wise men travel on a camel if there was an auto like that one just around the corner from the stable? No doubt a theological problem and therefore quite beyond my understanding.

Take the time now to gather your own reflections on your earliest recollections of the holy family, and, if you can, share them with a partner in this Advent exercise. Where did you first encounter a "manger scene?"

Younger sister inherited the family crèche, and she probably still puts it out

The Bible is full of the imagery of family faithfulness.

---

each Christmas. At my house we had a series of them, the plastic ones the children got at Sunday School, the more aesthetically pleasing one we parents bought in a gift shop while on vacation. An important one was made by a child, big figures all of red clay, kneeling with a straight line from shoulder to knee, lovingly formed, Jesus, Mary, Joseph and two shepherds. The artist ran out of red clay or artistic patience before we got any wise men, sheep or camels.

Take the time now to recall later manger scenes in your life.

The Bible is full of the imagery of family faithfulness as a symbol of God with people, and great stuff it is for those of us who live day by day surrounded by such relationships, because it means that we can get some theological education every time we turn around and encounter a family member. And it really does not matter if the family relationships go well or poorly, the lessons about faithfulness, its importance, its price, its preciousness and the pain that its failure evokes are there for us either way.

My wife comes from a family in which birthdays are very important. The whole family gathers and everybody gives the birthday person a present. *And* attached to each and every present is a card. Presents are important, but cards are even more important. I come from a family where on your birthday you get one present, something you had been begging for over the past three months. And cards are considered a waste of time and money.

For years, my wife's birthday would come and I would somehow manage to get some kind of present scraped together at the last moment, and expect to be praised for my efforts only to find myself getting icy stares because THERE WAS NO CARD! Old meanings and old customs change slowly for me.

Well, it had happened again, December 6, Minneapolis, no card, followed by her tears and my guilt and then as usual some sharp words. I fled from the house. I was going to walk the three blocks to the store and GET HER A CARD! That it was December and Minneapolis lets you know the magnitude and righteousness of my wrath and my determination.

By the time I got to the store I had cooled off a bit, and was feeling a little foolish about all my dramatics. I studied the cards and managed a few grins, then one caught my eye and I let out a whoop and a howl, bought it and hurried home with it, signed it and presented it to her with a flourish.

The card! It had a Hill Billy on the front of it with bib overalls and a pointed hat (my wife is from Missouri). He said, "This ain't much of a birthday card ..." And then on the inside the verse continued, "...but it is better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick."

All the rancor and righteous indignation, both hers and mine dissolved in a giggle as forgiveness wrapped us in each other's arms, while we both learned



something important about grace.

Can you remember a time when you learned about God in the context of a family relationship? Spouses teach such lessons, so do parents and especially children and even grandchildren. What can you recall?

If you have been following my remembering with some remembering of your own, this poem may help pull it all together for you, so that you can get on to whatever comes next in your life feeling refreshed by our Advent exercise.

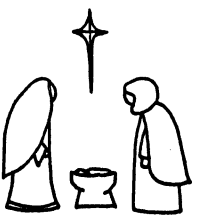
Holy Family

Christmas cards get old pictures,
touched up in gold or silver ink.
Old pictures of an old scene,
you know the one.
Embossed, reflecting light from the enameled page.
Or in dark silhouette laid over our living room
with presents and colored lights in a tree.
An old scene, in the foreground a manger,
strangely glowing from inside,
brightening the straw around its edges.
Reflecting this light, the madonna
of the youthful face
and slender gracefulness,
arching the manger with tenderness.
In the shadows, a man,
too old,
needing a nap,
alert with duty,
behind a calm face,
hiding paternal worry.
Farther in the shadows, sheep, cattle,
rude timbers,
chilly darkness.
Old scene, but beautiful to us.
Beloved!
Holy!
Deeply etched in these hearts!
Old scene, with surprising power
to stir us
with the very mystery
of the Incarnation
of God.
The momentary power, as at the Midnight Mass,
to blind us to distractions
and bind us to the God who comes among us, thus.
Old scene, familiar scene, enters
yet another way.
Playfully placing beneath the tree,
old figures of clay or wood.
Handled by children,
paint gets chipped,
tiny heads and hands get lost
in cotton snow
and dry cedar greens.
"This is Mary!"
"I got Jesus! Don't push!"
"Here's a sheep!"
"Where's Joseph?"
Those small folks of plaster or wood
gather preciousness,
linking family to family,
childhood to childhood,

**Holy Family, within whose circle God's best,
most tender Word is given.**

---

generation to generation,
faith to faith,
Linking that holy family,
to this family,
this
holy
family.
Holy Family!
That one in Christmas cards.
That one beneath the tree.
The one I live in,
the one you live in.
Holy Family.
Holy Family.
Holy in ways failing notice, failing
honor,
because love is there
for us,
when we are unlovely,
when we least expect it,
but need it most.
Love wrapping our wrath
in patience,
forever.
Love is there.
Holy family,
in whose cradle we found care,
in whose nursery we learned
commitment,
in whose kitchen we studied
compassion,
in whose garden we were taught
justice,
at whose praying we discovered need,
at whose singing we first
phrased praise,
at whose blessing we knew peace.
Holy Family.
Holy Family,
in whose bonds we felt faithfulness,
no detachment here!
Felt the price of faithfulness,
the prize of faithfulness,
the full pain of its passing,
the awful peril of its preciousness.
Felt faithfulness,
and knew ourselves to be
born of your faithfulness,
born by your faithfulness.
Amazingly instructed, even by those
so newly born to us.
Holy Family,
within whose circle God's best,
most tender
Word
is given.
Holy, Family,
a proper cradle for a Christ Child,
not my heart alone,
but these hearts,
mine blessedly among them.
Holy Family.
Holy Family.



Holy Baptism in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*

S. Anita Stauffer

Worship Editor and Consultant for the Lutheran Church in America, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

"To restore to Holy Baptism the liturgical rank and dignity implied by Lutheran theology": this was a principal goal in the preparation of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW).[1] The baptismal rite provided in LBW took a giant step toward the accomplishment of this goal (even through parish practice often fails to do it justice). Five hallmarks characterize the LBW liturgy for Holy Baptism: paschal essence, pneumatic nature, corporate understanding, eucharistic context, and ritual character. In each regard the LBW rite is consonant with ancient as well as contemporary ecumenical understandings and praxis of baptism, and it enacts a richer baptismal theology than did the rite in the *Service Book and Hymnal.*

Paschal Essence

Holy Baptism is a sacrament of the paschal mystery; that is, baptism is our participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. While there are many metaphors for baptism—such as new birth/regeneration, cleansing/purification, initiation/incorporation, enlightenment/illumination—death-and-resurrection is the principal metaphor. In the waters of the font we are buried and raised with Christ (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12); baptism is our passage with Christ from death to life, our intimate participation in Good Friday and Easter. This has been a central understanding of baptism since the fourth century, evidenced by the writings (among others) of Ambrose of Milan[2] and Cyril of Jerusalem,[3] and it was also Luther's principal understanding: "The sinner does not so much need to be washed as he needs to die, in order to be wholly renewed and made another creature, and to be conformed to the death and resurrection of Christ, with whom he dies and rises again through baptism."[4] LBW hymn 189 highlights this reality well:

> We share by water in his saving death,
> Reborn, we share with him an Easter life ...

The LBW baptismal liturgy begins, in the presiding minister's opening address, with the paschal keynote: "In Holy Baptism our gracious heavenly Father liberates us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paschal references pervade the rite—in the thanksgiving over the water, the Creed, the prayer for the Holy Spirit (section 13), and the text at the signation (section 14), as well as in

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1 "Introduction" to the *Lutheran Book of Worship,* 8. For commentary on the LBW baptismal rite, see Eugene L. Brand and S. Anita Stauffer, *By Water and the Spirit* (Philadelphia: Parish Life Press, 1979).

2 *De Sacramentis* II-III.

3 *Mystagogic Catecheses* 2:4-5.

4 *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), in *Luther's Works,* ed. Abdel Ross Wentz, vol. 36 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959) 68. See also *The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism* (1519), in *Luther's Works,* ed. E. Theodore Bachman, vol. 35 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960).

Baptism and the Easter Vigil are about the same things.

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the proper Prayer of the Day and the proper Verse.

The paschal essence of baptism is apparent, however, not only in texts, but also in the suggestion that the Easter Vigil is a fitting time for baptism, and in the use of the paschal candle at each baptism. The Vigil of Easter is the context *par excellence* for the baptismal celebration.[5] Baptism and the Easter Vigil are about the same things—passage from death to life—and the Vigil enfolds baptism with powerful words and symbols which proclaim the radical nature of this sacrament.

LBW suggests that the paschal candle be placed near the font (except during the season of Easter) and lighted for each baptism, and that small baptismal candles be lighted from the paschal candle for presentation to the newly baptized (or sponsor). A symbol of Christ's resurrection, the paschal candle helps make clear the integral connection between Easter and baptism. The hand candle "serves as a portable extension of the paschal candle."[6]

Pneumatic Nature

Baptism is by water and the Holy Spirit (John 3:5), as the opening address of the presiding minister indicates. The Spirit's role is apparent in the LBW rite. There are two epicletic prayers invoking the Spirit. The first is in the prayer of thanksgiving over the water (section 9), in which the Father, whose Spirit moved over the waters in creation and anointed Jesus in his baptism, is asked to send the Spirit now, that new life may be given to the baptized. The act of baptizing with water is thus an act filled with the Holy Spirit.

A second epiclesis for the Spirit (section 13) is prayed during the laying on of hands. The baptized is given not only new life in Christ, but also the seven gifts of the Spirit.

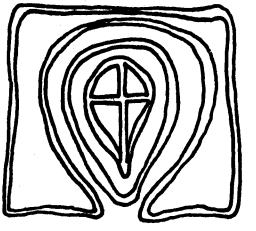
Immediately after the imposition of hands is the sign of the cross, which may be made by anointing with oil. Here again there is reference to the Spirit, and here it is in a past tense: "... you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit ..." (section 14). There are many layers of meaning to this signation and anointing (including the christological), and its history is very complex, but it is at least a mark of the gift of the Holy Spirit received in baptism, making us God's own (see 2 Corinthians 1:21-22). We are "branded" as belonging to God.

Are these separate comings of the Spirit, one in the water and a second in the hand-laying? Are the imposition of hands, signation, and anointing simply liturgical "extras"? The answer to both is

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5 LBW also suggests The Day of Pentecost, All Saints' Day, and The Baptism of Our Lord as appropriate days for Baptism, but the Easter Vigil is an unequalled baptismal context.

6 Eugene L. Brand, *Baptism: A Pastoral Perspective* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975), 110.



"no." We are baptized by water and the Spirit, and the core of the baptismal rite cannot be reduced to the water bath alone. The Holy Spirit comes in baptism, the several parts of which—water bath, laying on of hands, and anointing—constitute a single indivisible action of God. Water baptism and Spirit baptism cannot be separated; The Spirit is involved throughout. LBW hymn 195 suggests the interconnections:

This is the Spirit's entry now:
The water and the Word,
The cross of Jesus on your brow,
The seal both felt and heard.

We are baptized *into* Christ *by* water and the Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism (that is, its pneumatic nature) is inherently tied to baptism's paschal essence, as *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* recognizes: "In God's work of salvation, the paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection is inseparably linked with the pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, participation in Christ's death and resurrection is inseparably linked with the receiving of the Spirit. Baptism in its full meaning signifies and effects both." (Baptism, IV.B.14.) Just as Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost constitute a unity, the baptismal rite is also unified: by water *and* the Spirit.

It should be noted that the inclusion of the hand-laying, signation, and anointing—the "confirmation elements"—in the LBW baptismal rite is a significant return to the early Christian unified sense of baptism, before confirmation degenerated in the Middle Ages into a delayed separate rite for the gift of the Spirit. Of course, the return of these pneumatic elements to the baptismal rite also raises serious questions about the meaning of the separate and later so-called confirmation rite to which Lutherans are accustomed.

Corporate Understanding

Baptism is always simultaneously both personal and corporate. Thus LBW rubrics indicate that baptism should be celebrated within corporate worship. When one is being incorporated or initiated into the family of God, that family should be present! So-called private baptism is a contradiction in terms.

Another reminder of the corporate nature of baptism is LBW's use of plural language to refer to the candidates, suggesting the preference for baptizing several persons at a given service. Such a practice helps avoid privatistic connotations in the sacrament.

The corporate understanding of baptism also means that the congregation is involved in the baptismal rite, and the LBW rite provides for that participation in prayers, the Creed, the welcome (section 18), and the exchange of Peace. Further, a lay assisting minister leads the intercessions (section 8); and a representative of the congregation presents the baptismal candle and white garment, and leads in the welcome.

Baptism is the entrance into the community which feasts at the Lord's Table.

Members of the congregation, or Christians from other congregations, serve as sponsors, sharing responsibility for spiritual nurture of the baptized. Such involvement is a further indication that baptism, like the Christian faith itself, is essentially a corporate matter.

Eucharistic Context

Baptism and Eucharist are closely related. "The gift of Communion is the birthright of the baptized."[7] Even when a young child is baptized but not yet admitted to the Lord's table, the Eucharist is the culmination of baptism. The connections between the two sacraments are several. There is, first, an ecclesial connection: baptism creates the church, and the Eucharist nourishes and sustains the church; the corporate nature of the Christian faith is apparent and enacted in both sacraments. Second, there is a soteriological connection: baptism brings, and Holy Communion renews, the gift of forgiveness. Third, there is a paschal connection: in baptism we are joined to Christ's burial and resurrection, and in the Eucharist we remember *(anamnesis)* those events and "we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."[8] Because of all of these connections, LBW expects baptism to be celebrated within the context of the eucharistic liturgy (which is, of course, the case in the Easter Vigil).

Rubric 12, which indicates that the minister and baptismal group move from the font to the altar for the laying on of hands and signation, is symbolic of the connection between the two sacraments: baptism is entrance into the community which feasts at the Lord's Table. (This reality is not negated by the practice of reserving the meal for a later age; it is still baptism which is the precondition for admission to the Eucharist.)

Ritual Character

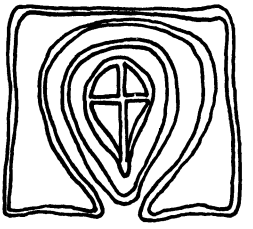
The baptismal liturgy in LBW is more than words. Its rich use of actions and signs is one of the features which distinguishes it sharply from the SBH rite. Since baptism involves the whole person, and indeed the whole church, its rite cannot be merely an intellectual or verbal exercise. In baptism, actions and words and symbols belong together. Baptism involves the senses of touch, sight, smell, and hearing, and the LBW rite begins to recover the rich involvement of the senses which marked baptismal practice in the early church.

Water is the principal element in baptism. In Scripture, water is a powerful image: an element of creation and a symbol of primeval chaos, an enabler of life and an agent of death. Water is both friend and enemy. It sustains cellular life, cleanses and refreshes, but it can

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[7] *LBW Ministers Edition,* 31.

[8] LBW Eucharistic Prayers I and II, incorporating 1 Corinthians 11:26.



also destroy and drown. These multivalent meanings of water are all present in baptism, and they contribute to how we perceive and understand baptism. Many of the meanings of water are expressed in the prayer of thanksgiving over the water (section 9), which in part echoes Luther's Flood Prayer, and which recalls rich biblical imagery about water—creation, flood, crossing the Red Sea, Baptism of Christ.

Baptism, because of its paschal nature, is a radical event, and its radicality can be visible and tangible through the abundant use of water. The point is not that a large amount of water is necessary for baptism to be efficacious, but that the water helps people comprehend the meaning of baptism as both drowning/burial and cleansing bath. LBW rubrics permit either immersion or pouring (affusion), but clearly immersion is a more complete sign. As Luther wrote, "It would be more fitting to immerse in the water than to pour with it, for the sake of the completeness and perfection of the sign."[9] Why? In another treatise, Luther wrote that baptism "signifies that the old man and the sinful birth of flesh and blood are to be wholly drowned by the grace of God. We should therefore do justice to its meaning and make baptism a true and complete sign of the thing it signifies."[10]

Water requires a container, and LBW suggests "a font of ample proportions" which is to be located in a place which suggests entrance into the community of faith and which allows ample space for people to gather around it.[11] This rubric not only reinforces the importance of the sign value of water, but also of congregational participation. The baptismal liturgy is a rite in which the congregation is closely present and actively involved, not a text to which it merely listens.

There is a further preference in LBW for a font which has running water. If that is not possible, the water is to be poured into the font from a large ewer just before the thanksgiving. The congregation should be able to hear the water as well as to see it. Because of the design of fonts in many church buildings, this is often the most difficult of LBW's counsel to follow. In too many places the font is not as large as a birdbath, and the water containers in some places are only the size of a teacup! Such symbolic minimalism is unable to speak the meaning of baptism, and the sacrament is trivialized by architecture which precludes ritual fullness. Given the centrality of baptism for the life of the Church, congregations with inadequate fonts should give urgent consideration to

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9 *The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods* (1519), in *LW*, vol. 35, 50. See also *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, in vol. 36, 67-68.

10 *The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism*, in *LW*, vol. 35, 29.

11 *LBW Ministers Edition*, 30.

The sign of the cross is God's mark of ownership of the baptized.

replacements.[12] It is important that the font be large enough and deep enough that the images of bathing and drowning (that is, burial with Christ) are apparent.

Baptism involves actions as well as words and water. The laying on of hands, sign of the cross, and anointing have already been mentioned in relation to the Holy Spirit. But there are other layers of meaning in each of these actions which deserve at least a mention. The laying on of hands is an ancient gesture for conferring power and blessing; it is also a very human act of physically touching another person. Oil, used in anointing, also has many meanings and biblical references, including healing, consecration, and peace. On the human level, oil is an ancient and modern after-bath emollient—and baptism is, after all, a bath. Oil is absorbed easily into the skin, making it particularly appropriate as a sign of the Spirit dwelling within the baptized. The sign of the cross is God's mark of ownership of the baptized. Baptism unites us with the crucified Christ and starts us on life's journey in the way of the cross.

LBW provides two other actions: presentations of the baptismal garment (at section 15)[13] and the baptismal candle (section 16). The garment is a christological symbol: "Baptized into union with him, you have put on Christ as a garment" (Galatians 3:27, NEB). As the text for the presentation makes clear, we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ—hence the color white for the garment. There are also eschatological references to the white garment (for example, see Revelation 7:9), and thus the white funeral pall is a visual echo of the baptismal garment. The garment is an ancient baptismal custom, and it is unfortunate that the text for presenting it is relegated to the "Notes on the Liturgy" of the *LBW Ministers Edition.*

The baptismal candle, as already noted, is an extension of the Paschal candle and is a further sign of the inherent connection between baptism and Easter. Baptism is our Easter passage from the darkness of death and sin to the light of eternal life in Christ. In addition, there are ethical implications: the baptized is called to live and serve in such a way that the light of Christ will be beamed into the world.

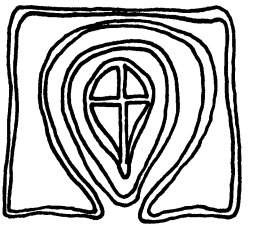
Both the garment and the candle can enrich the meaning of baptism, but they should not overshadow the central actions: water bath, laying on of hands, anointing, and sign of the cross. "Any danger of overshadowing will be lessened, of course, if the water is used in a more obvious and dramatic way than is often the case. A lighted taper *could* outshine the damp finger on the brow!"[14]

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[12] See S. Anita Stauffer, "A Place for Burial, Birth, and Bath: The Font as Symbol," in *Liturgy,* 5:4 (1986) 51-57. Please note that the final sentence (p. 56) should not include the word "only."

[13] As provided in the "Notes on the Liturgy," *LBW Ministers Edition,* 31, section 15.

[14] Brand, 110.



The baptismal liturgy in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* is an excellent, though not perfect, rite. (It is hard to find perfect rites anywhere in Christian history!) The LBW has largely achieved its goal of making the baptismal rite as rich as the Lutheran theology of baptism. The challenge now is to education, parish practice, and architecture. Twentieth-century Lutherans could learn much from the baptismal catecheses and homilies of such fourth-century pastors as Ambrose and Cyril.[15] So rich an understanding of baptism is bound to lead to practice which makes clear the awe-inspiring nature of this wonderful sacrament!

[15] Conveniently compiled by Edward Yarnold, in *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation* (Slough, England: St. Paul Publications, 1971).

Too Good Not to be True

David C. Schroeder
Chaplain and Executive Director of Ministry to the Aged, Inc.
Boise, Idaho

He came not to take but to give. That was very Good News way back when.

He comes not to take but to give. That is very Good News here and now.

Gospel roots—this incredible reality—too good not to be true.

His advent coming keeps on giving because his love gift keeps on coming in person *each* year. His advent coming keeps on giving because his love gift keeps on coming in person *this* year.

Christmas begins with this love gift. Christmas continues because of this love gift.

He the Giver of every good and perfect Gift from above. We the recipients of every good and perfect Gift here below.

We paupers become by his grace philanthropists with the high and holy privilege of sharing hilariously what we have received from him.

And the very heart of God leaps and sings for joy, for nothing delights the Creator more than seeing his children share selflessly what he first gave them.

Toward Liturgical Hermeneutics: Some Byzantine Examples

Paul Rorem

Associate Professor of Ancient Church History, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Although "hermeneutics" is all the rage in exegesis and systematics, the liturgical interpretation which occurs in parishes every Sunday suffers from neglect. Pastors and other theologians regularly take the history of biblical exegesis seriously, but they seem unaware that the history of liturgical interpretation is crucial to our understanding of worship. In any case, the long and complex history of liturgical commentaries in Byzantium and the Latin West remains largely forgotten. A brief survey of some of the Greek Orthodox sources could enrich our own liturgical self-understanding and sound some warnings about current liturgical emphases as well.[1]

Cyril of Jerusalem: Liturgical Exegesis

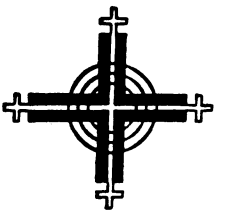
The first major exposition of the liturgy was part of a series of catechetical lectures, the *Mystagogical Catecheses,* by Cyril of Jerusalem in the late fourth century.[2] Observing Holy Week on the original sites, Christians in Jerusalem sometimes re-enacted the passion events as part of their worship. Yet Cyril concerned himself not with the actions of the communion rite, but only with the words. His fifth chapter interprets for new converts the liturgical texts they were newly privileged to hear: the Peace, the Preface and Sanctus (but not the silent eucharistic prayer), the Epiclesis, some prayers and commemorations, the Lord's Prayer (expounded at length), the invitation, and communion itself. Except for a reference to the washing of hands and the closing comments on how to hold one's hands in receiving communion, the entire presentation concerns the liturgical *texts.*

Cyril's approach we could label liturgical exegesis, that is, the interpretation of texts without reference to gestures, movements, or any ritual objects. The non-verbal parts of the service—the ceremonial actions and the sacred objects—were largely ignored. Exactly the opposite emphasis characterized three later authors: Theodore of Mopsuestia, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, and Maximus the Confessor. They all concentrated on the gestures, the movements, the actions of the rite, and not its texts.

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[1] This material is based upon a larger, forthcoming study of the Byzantine and Latin liturgical commentaries, entitled, *The Medieval Growth of Liturgical Symbolism,* Grove Liturgical Studies 47 (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1986). On the Byzantine materials, see the authoritative works of René Bornert, *Les Commentaires byzantins de la Divine Liturgie du VIIe au XVe siécle* (Paris, 1966), and of Hans-Joachim Schulz, *The Byzantine Liturgy: Symbolic Structure and Faith Expression* (New York, 1986).

[2] St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Lectures on the Christian Sacraments,* ed. F.L. Cross (London, 1951), reprinted, (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977).



Theodore of Mopsuestia: Historical Typology

Bishop of Mopsuestia from 392 until his death in 428, Theodore wrote numerous biblical commentaries and a liturgical commentary as well. Firmly convinced of the Antiochene emphasis on the historical and literal meanings of the scriptures, he steadfastly opposed the allegorical interpretations so common to the Alexandrian school. The only symbolism Theodore would grant was the Bible's own typology, or correlation, of events from one epoch to another. This methodology he also applied to the rites of the church, especially the communion liturgy:

> In contemplating with our eyes, through faith, the facts that are now being re-enacted—that he is again dying, rising, and ascending into heaven—we shall be led to the vision of the things that had taken place beforehand on our behalf.[3]

To Theodore the entrance and procession of the bread and wine were symbolic of both Christ's walk to Calvary and also of Christ's body being carried to the tomb:

> When they bring out (the eucharistic bread) they place it on the holy altar, for the complete representation of the Passion, so that we may think of him on the altar, as if he were placed in the sepulchre, after having received his passion. This is the reason why those deacons who spread linens on the altar represent the figure of the linen cloths of the burial (p. 86).

While this imagery was officially rejected much later, it became immensely popular, along with several auxiliary symbols. Thus the deacons waved fans just as the angels honored the sacred body with their wings. (A century earlier, however, the *Apostolic Constitutions* gave a more mundane reason: the fans kept flies off the elements.) All present are silent, just as the Apostles spent that Saturday in great silence and immense fear.

In Theodore's view, the Epiclesis (the "calling-down" of the Holy Spirit) is first of all the conversion of the bread and wine into body and blood, "by the coming of the Holy Spirit" (p. 118f.). It is also loosely symbolic of the Spirit's resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Thus the corpse placed on the altar/tomb is visited by the vivifying Spirit and given an immortal nature in the resurrection (pp. 103-104). "He rose from the tomb of the holy communion table as from the dead, according to the symbol that has been

[3] Translated by A. Mingana, *Woodbrooke Studies VI* (Cambridge, 1933) 83. The other quotations of Theodore are also taken from this translation, but see *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation*, and its translations, by E. Yarnold (Slough, 1971).

Some correlation is foundational in the relationship of the Lord's Supper to the Last Supper.

performed" (p. 112). This limited use of symbolism was often disregarded by those who pressed such typology further than Theodore himself. In the later homilies of Narsai (c. 500), for example, the sanctuary is the garden, the altar in the sanctuary is the tomb in the garden, the bread and wine are the embalmed and buried body, the removal of the veil is the rolling away of the stone, and the priest's three bows over the sacrifice mark the three days of Christ's burial.

This type of liturgical interpretation we could call historical typology, for it correlates events of the rite with past events in the passion of Christ. Here are the origins of "re-presentatio," the idea that ritual re-presents the passion of Christ, making it contemporary. Some correlation is foundational in the overall relationship of the Lord's Supper to the Last Supper. But it can easily be carried too far, and was in fact sharply corrected by later Byzantine theology.

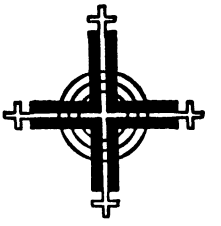
Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite: Timeless Allegory

A second way of interpreting the actions and gestures of the liturgy appeared around A.D. 500 and was written by a mystery man of Syrian background and Neoplatonic schooling in Athens: Dionysius the (Pseudo-) Areopagite. In contrast to Theodore's historical typology, the liturgical interpretation advanced in *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* is timeless allegory. For Pseudo-Dionysius, the rite's actions have *spiritual* meanings utterly unrelated to any *historical* events.

Dionysian liturgical interpretation proposes an overall ascent or return of the soul through the lower realm of perceptible symbols to the higher sphere of their conceptual meanings, and finally beyond all concepts to union with the ineffable Godhead. This is part of the larger Neoplatonic motif of the Deity's procession down into the human realm and its return upward, drawing all to itself. It is precisely this procession and return which Dionysius sees symbolized in the bishop's opening procession through the church with the incense and in his return to the altar:

> We must turn a reverent glance to the double movement of the hierarch when he goes first from the divine altar to the far edges of the sacred place, spreading the fragrance and then returns to the altar. For the blessed Divinity, which transcends all being, while proceeding gradually outward because of goodness to commune with those who partake of him, never actually departs from his essential stability and immobility.[4]

[4] Translations of *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* are taken from the forthcoming edition by Paulist Press (*Classics of Western Spirituality*), with translation by Colm Luibheid and notes by Paul Rorem. References are to the Migne text (*PG* 3), in this case 428D-429A. See also my monograph, *Biblical and Liturgical Symbols within the Pseudo-Dionysian Synthesis* (Toronto, 1984).



While this ritual gesture symbolizes God's own being and activities, many of the Dionysian interpretations concern the rites as images of the soul's condition or progress toward God. Thus the kiss of peace indicates the union of believers which precedes their union with God, and the memorial reading of the saints' names precisely when the bread and wine are placed on the altar indicates the closeness of these departed ones to Christ. Yet whether a ceremonial action symbolizes God or the soul, the interpretation given is always an eternal truth unrelated to any temporal event, either in Christ's earthly ministry or in the eschaton.

This emphasis fits the author's Neoplatonic orientation, which has no place for salvation history or any other temporal concerns. Such timeless allegory even found architectural expression in the West, where this same Dionysius was thought to be the patron saint of the Abbey of St. Denis in Paris. Built to express Dionysian aesthetics, the Abbey Church of the mid-twelfth century was the first structure in the "uplifting" style later called Gothic. Yet the influence of Dionysius in Byzantine liturgical theory was sharply limited by his interpreter and transmitter, Maximus the Confessor.

Maximus the Confessor: Eschatological Typology

Maximus (580-662) represents yet another way of interpreting the sacramental activities. His *Mystagogia* contains scant exegesis of the texts and employs very little of the christological typology discussed above. Only the first entrance of the priest indicates Christ's incarnate entrance into the world. When the priest concludes this entrance by going up into the sanctuary to sit down upon the priestly throne, he symbolizes Christ's ascension into heaven and return to his throne. The life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and thus, the historical typology of Theodore, receive not another word from Maximus in this treatise. Instead, every interpretation is grounded in eschatology, correlating liturgical actions with the final future and the consummation of history. The kiss of peace "prefigures and portrays the concord, unanimity, and identity of views which we shall all have" at the end of time; the closing of the doors is the transition from this world of the physical senses to the future realm of the spiritual bridal chamber of Christ; and the Creed "signifies the mystical thanksgiving to perdure through all eternity."[5] The entrance of the eucharistic gifts has none of the christological associations seen by others, but is simply the preface and beginning of the heavenly revelation.

[5] *The Church's Mystagogy* in *Maximus Confessor, Selected Writings,* translated by George C. Berthold *(Classics of Western Spirituality;* New York, 1985), 202. See also the translation by Dom Julian Stead in *The Church, the Liturgy and the Soul of Man* (Still River, Mass., 1982).

The grounding of the liturgy in the events of the passion was crucial in the battle against iconoclasm.

The "Sanctus" and "Our Father" indicate our future praise and final adoption as children of God.

The concluding chapters of Maximus' *Mystagogia* append a "Dionysian" treatment of the liturgy as a timeless allegory of the soul's journey to God, as well as other themes. Yet not Maximus but another Byzantine theologian, Germanus I of Constantinople, achieved the final integration of the strands of liturgical hermeneutics mentioned so far: Cyril's textual exegesis, Theodore's historical typology, Dionysius' timeless allegory, and Maximus' eschatological typology.

Germanus I of Constantinople: A Synthesis

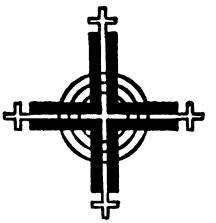
Germanus' *Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation* ruled the field of Byzantine liturgical commentaries from the eighth century until the fourteenth, when it was displaced by the work of Nicholas Cabasilas. Its very title provides a clue to its meaning and its central place in the history of liturgical hermeneutics.[6] Germanus honored the then-reigning view of liturgical interpretation as a spiritual "contemplation" (theoria) of the inner or higher meanings of the rites, as inherited from Maximus the Confessor and Dionysius. But he also recovered the older method of seeking an historical typology in the ritual actions, namely the christological correlations sampled above in Theodore. True to the title of the work, Germanus could present two, or more, meanings of the same act: a spiritual "contemplation" and an echo of the "history" of Christ's passion.

Germanus recovered historical typology without naming Theodore as his source, perhaps because Theodore's works had been condemned as christological heresy. The grounding of the liturgy in the events of the passion history was crucial to Germanus, for his own christological reasons, in the battle against iconoclasm. Germanus fervently defended icons as appropriate depictions of Christ's earthly, historical existence. He naturally found historical typology a congenial method of liturgical interpretation.

Actually, Germanus's commentary wove together all four of these strands of liturgical theory: exegesis of the texts (Cyril), historical or christological typology (Theodore), timeless allegory where rites symbolize spiritual truths without any temporal reference (Dionysius), and an eschatological or celestial typology in which ritual actions prefigure the future events of the eschaton (Maximus). Germanus' brief and multi-layered essay influenced Byzantine liturgical theory for centuries.

Yet the historical typology recovered by Germanus could easily get out of hand, and did. Nicholas of Andyda

[6] St. Germanus of Constantinople, *On the Divine Liturgy*, tr. by Paul Meyendorff (Crestwood, N.Y., 1984).



wrote his *Protheoria* around A.D. 1060 to help educate his clergy.[7] The work presses christological typology to the extreme conclusion that every detail of the liturgy must represent something of Christ's life. For example, the initial entrance of the clergy represents Christ's appearance at the river Jordan; the epistle lesson echoes the calling of the twelve; the Gospel lesson is the first public preaching of the gospel. The Great Entrance with the eucharistic gifts is Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and the subsequent closing of the doors is the falling of darkness on the night of Jesus' betrayal.

The *Protheoria* can be even more imaginative than this, far beyond the scriptural revelation. The private preparation of the elements before the service represents the concealed gestation of Jesus in Mary's womb and his private life before appearing at the Jordan. At this point the addition of yeast to the bread, so disputed between East and West, was deemed christologically essential since the soul leavens or enlivens the body. As a final example, the addition of warm water to the chalice just before communion was the application of water to Jesus' head during the crucifixion. Nicholas apparently assumed that the liturgy reveals details about Christ's life which the scriptures left out. These flights of fancy—that sacristy preparation symbolizes Mary's pregnancy—were brought down to earth by a liturgical commentator still dominant today, Nicholas Cabasilas.

Nicholas Cabasilas: A Corrective

The famous *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* by Cabasilas (1320-1390) has remained the standard in Eastern Orthodoxy. It replaced Germanus' work because of its theological rigor and irenical style. Cabasilas insisted on a theological interpretation of the liturgical texts and thereby challenged many previous understandings of the ritual acts. Cabasilas' commentary is devotional "exegesis," to use his own word, and detailed doctrinal exegesis at that. It has endured for six hundred years as edification for the neophyte and devout alike, partly because the liturgical texts themselves remain largely unchanged in the Eastern rite and partly because Nicholas avoided the polemics of his time. Even the chapters on the Western "Worlds of Institution" versus the Eastern Epiclesis or invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine seek a peaceful conclusion: "In the Latin Church the consecration is performed in the same way as by us."[8]

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[7] See Bornert, *Les Commentaires*, 181-206.

[8] Translated by J.M. Hussey and P.A. McNulty (London, 1960). The page numbers refer to this edition, in this case, p. 76. See also the scholarly editions by S. Salaville and successors in *Sources Chrétiennes*, 4 and 4bis (Paris, 1943 and 1967).

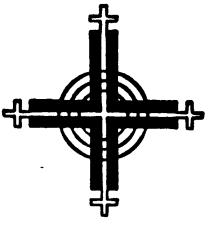
The texts present the liturgy as an actual event.

In this irenic spirit, Cabasilas did not directly attack the popular view of the sacramental rite as a visual presentation to be understood symbolically. But his insistence upon understanding the *text* of the liturgy recovered the patristic methodology exemplified by Cyril of Jerusalem. His work displaced the standard liturgical commentary by Germanus, and has dominated the subject ever since. The texts, wrote Cabasilas, present the liturgy as an actual event, the consecration or sacrifice of Christ, "not a mere figure or symbol, but a true sacrifice" (p. 81).

Cabasilas acknowledged a symbolic function in the liturgy as a whole and in some of its major sub-divisions, but only as a dimension secondary to the sacramental realism indicated in the text itself. Furthermore, unlike most predecessors, he acknowledged only the general outlines of this symbolism and not its specific details:

> Thus, those who are present at these ceremonies have before their eyes all these divine things. The consecration of the elements—the sacrifice itself—commemorates the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Savior, since it transforms these precious gifts into the very Body of the Lord, that Body which was the central figure in all these mysteries, which was crucified, which rose from the dead, which ascended into heaven. The ceremonies which precede the act of sacrifice symbolize the events which occurred before the death of Christ: his coming on earth, his first appearance and his perfect manifestation. Those which follow the act of sacrifice recall "the promise of the Father" (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4) as the Savior himself called it: that is, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, the conversion of the nations which they brought about, and their divine society (p. 26f.).

Generally, Cabasilas omitted and, by implication, opposed his predecessors' detailed identification of almost every liturgical action with some specific christological event or divine truth. In one case his opposition was more explicit. When it came to the "Great Entrance"—the elaborate procession bearing the bread and wine to the altar—Cabasilas first points out the practical function, that the offerings simply need to be brought to the altar in some fashion. He then allows a secondary symbolism of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. But he disregards entirely the powerful popular tradition, dating back almost a thousand years to Theodore of Mopsuestia, which viewed the procession as Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus bearing Christ's crucified corpse to his tomb, the altar, and "burying" him there. Not only does Cabasilas omit this viewpoint, he corrects it as well: "If anyone ... adores



[the offerings] as if they were the Body and Blood of Christ, and prays to them as such, he is led into error," for "the gifts are not yet consecrated for the sacrifice" (p. 65f.).

In this, our survey has come full circle. Cabasilas, the late Byzantine and even modern authority, echoes Cyril of Jerusalem, the earliest example, by concentrating upon a theological understanding of the texts themselves. In between, the non-verbal components of the rite were subjected to multiple and conflicting interpretations, each with a danger when pressed too far, and none with adequate accountability to the text. The situation became ever more complicated, as the popular understandings of ritual actions began to influence the text itself.

Conclusion

Of all the ideas here briefly surveyed, only a few have filtered down through the centuries into our own Western views of the liturgy. The historical typology of Theodore and Germanus dominated the influential Mass commentaries in Latin by Amalar of Metz (775-850) and his successors down to Durandus of Mende (1230-1295). It was responsible, in fact, for the rebirth of drama in the medieval passion plays. Amalar claimed utter originality and was condemned for it, since novelty was heresy. But his long visit in Constantinople makes complete creativity unlikely.

Through Amalar, a liturgical hermeneutic of christological typology has lingered in the West for centuries among Roman Catholics and Protestants alike. Zwingli, for example, insisted on wooden plates, the better to imitate the Last Supper. These who today make much ado of a ceremonial fraction of the bread stand in this tradition consciously or not. Pseudo-Dionysian allegory, on the other hand, is today largely confined to occasional interpretations of vestments or sanctuary lamps, and of course the Neo-Gothic revival still uplifting the soul out of its earth-bound captivity. Maximus' eschatological typology has been partially reclaimed in our own *Lutheran Book of Worship,* not in ceremonial actions, but in the texts which rightly point us to the future.

It is precisely the liturgical texts, as Cyril and Cabasilas insisted, and not the gestures or motions, which form the accurate basis for interpreting the liturgy. The non-verbal components are simply too susceptible to arbitrary and misleading interpretations, usually marked by a ritual romanticism. In the three examples cited, Theodore looked backward to the past, Dionysius looked "upward" to heaven, and Maximus looked forward to the end of time. Each tendency seeks to transcend the here and now, unable to believe that God meets us in our own time and place. A strong dose of the real presence and the living Word, here and now, can counter such romanticism and enable us to formulate a healthier liturgical hermeneutics.

Phos Hilaron: Joyous Song of the Light

Timothy J. Keyl with Frank C. Senn

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Phos Hilaron ("Joyous Light") is included in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* both within the order of Evening Prayer (Vespers) and as a hymn in the hymnal (#279). The Order of Vespers is made especially distinctive by its Service of Light, called a Lucernarium. This Lucernarium was first developed for use at daily Vespers on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, in an ecumenical prayer service sponsored by graduate students in the Program of Liturgical Studies under the direction of Professor William G. Storey. It soon made its way to Valparaiso University, where it was used at Institutes of Liturgical Studies and then regularly in the University Chapel. The Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship incorporated this Service of Light in its provisional Order of Vespers, *Contemporary Worship-9: Daily Prayer of the Church,* and it was subsequently included in the LBW.

The format of the Lucernarium is a set of three versicles with responses, the prose hymn "Joyous Light of Glory," and the thanksgiving for light. All this accompanies and explicates the bringing in of a candle and the lighting of other candles. Joined together in this action and these texts are the symbolic act of providing artificial illumination at the end of the day when the sun has set (or is setting) and the proclamation that "Jesus Christ is the light of the world." At the center of this lamp-lighting ceremony is the ancient hymn, known in Greek as Phos Hilaron. Where does this hymn come from? How does it illumine the lamp-lighting rite, and the whole of Vespers? How might it be used in various situations today?

Hymns in the Prayer Offices

Phos Hilaron has its recognizable origins in the office of Vespers in the Eastern Church. The office, known also as the Liturgy of the Hours, is rooted in Jewish worship, where morning and evening are the most notable times to pray, and where the kindling of lights has an important role. The church office sets aside the time to give thanks to the God who has saved us in Jesus Christ, so that we might live a new life. Egon Wellesz identifies four essential elements of the prayer offices: (1) Psalms; (2) extracts from the Scriptures; (3) Prayers; and (4) Songs.[1]

The prayer office sets aside time to give thanks to God. Such prayer is most aware of the time of this world, experienced in the rhythms of daily life, as opposed to the eschatological emphasis of the Eucharist. Later in its development, however, the liturgy of the hours did point to the future consummation and even anticipated the Sunday Eucharist. Since the prayer office emphasizes a sanctification of time, it is only natural that the symbol of light plays a pivotal role in the office of Vespers.

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[1] Egon Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (London: Oxford and the Clarendon Press, 1949), 11.

Phos Hilaron as Theological Proclamation

The reality of living in a world of both light and darkness has played an important role in the history of religions. The sun as a symbol of salvation and comfort was especially prominent in the Mediterranean world. The Christian community quickly transferred the qualities of salvation and comfort, associated with pagan sun deities, to Christ (cf. John 1:4-9; 8:1-12; 12:45-46; Col 1:12-13; Eph 5; 1 John 2:8-11; Rev 21:22-26). Those followers of Christ who were baptized were called "the enlightened ones," and baptism itself was sometimes called "enlightenment." Almost inevitably the customary lamplighting at the onset of darkness, always laden with religious significance, was transformed by Christians to proclaim Christ as the light of the world. This not only added to a practical necessity a profound religious significance, but it provided a soteriological proclamation. Christ is the light which does not fail when darkness comes, just as the artificial lamp saves people from living in darkness when the sun sets. This theme is picked up in the thanksgiving for light in the lucernarium in *The Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus of Rome (ca. 215).

The sense of mystery regarding light spanned pagan, Jewish, and Christian understandings. The Christian lucernarium is probably a sacralized pagan rite,[2] although some favor a Jewish origin (as in Hanukkah and Sabbath eve services). But it was the *daily* lamplighting ritual which pagans and Christians held in common. Ussher states it this way:

> Just as the Greeks (according to Varro) were accustomed to say "Goodly Light" when a light was brought in, so the Christian used to recite (or sing) their "Joyful Light of the Holy Glory" in praise of him who is "the reflection of the glory" [Hebrews 1:3] of God and of the Father.

The Christian emphasis on Christ as light and as the reflection of the Father not only represented a way of doing the pagan rite differently, but it also showed a growing doctrinal emphasis. The trinitarian dogma is hinted at with the Son's relationship to the Father. The earliest mention of a service of light is found in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus in conjunction with the agape meal, but "by the last quarter of the fourth century in Cappadocia, this ritual [Lucernarium] has been incorporated into cathedral vespers."

Origin of the Hymn

The Phos Hilaron represents one of the earliest hymns of the church and forms a constitutive part of the Lucernarium section of the evening prayer office. It is used as a song of thanksgiving for the light, still maintained in the first part of the Eastern Orthodox Vespers, and has recently become an integral part of Western liturgies. The following literal translation brings out its power.

> Joyous light of the holy glory
> of the immortal Father,
> heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ;
> Having come to the sun's setting
> (and) beholding the evening light,
> we praise God,
> Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
> It is fitting at all times
> that you should be praised
> with auspicous voices,

[2] Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1986), 37.

> Son of God, Giver of Life:
> Wherefore the world glorifies You.

Two authors have been commonly credited with the hymn. One manuscript (ca. 1010) reads "By the holy Sophronios of Jerusalem," who was the Patriarch of Jerusalem 634-638. Other scholars have claimed that the hymn was composed by the Martyr Athenogenes, bishop of Sebastia (d. ca. 290 by Eastern tradition; d. ca. 196 by Western tradition). The lengthiest references to the hymn are by Basil the Great, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, his sister Macrina, and his brother Gregory of Nyssa (late fourth century). Basil acknowledges that Phos Hilaron is an ancient hymn:

> It seemed fitting to our fathers not to receive the gift of the evening light in silence, but to give thanks immediately upon its appearance. We cannot say who was the father of the words of the thanksgiving for the light. But the people utter the ancient formula, and those that say "We praise you Father, Son and Holy Spirit of God" were never thought impious by anyone.

Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 380) refers to the hymn as he describes the life of his sister Macrina:

> And ... when evening had arrived and the lamp had been brought in she opened her eyes suddenly and looked at the light. It was quite clear that she wished to say the Lamplighting Hymn of Thanksgiving, but since her voice failed her, she fulfilled the offering with her heart and with the movement of her hands, while her lips moved in harmony with the pressure from within.

The hymn may actually have been composed by the latter part of second century or the early part of the third century.

The hymn surfaced in the Western church in the nineteenth century. John Mason Neale (1818-1866) quotes it and translates it, and it is found in subsequent hymnals of both Eastern and Western traditions. A versification by Robert Bridges (1844-1930), "O gladsome light," was included in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (#101) and the *Service Book and Hymnal* (#220), set to a tune by Louis Bourgeois (c. 1510-1561). Only within the last twenty years, however, has Phos Hilaron been utilized by the West in Vespers as the Eastern Orthodox do. William Storey attributes this to its use by the monks at Taize.[3] Storey himself provided a fresh translation in his *Morning Praise and Evensong*.[4] *Lutheran Book of Worship* uses it in its Lucernarium.

Use of the Lucernarium

Even in an electrically-powered society, candlelight retains an attraction and a fascination. The Lucernarium of Vespers commends itself to various settings, ranging from domestic to public, as was the case in Christian antiquity. The Lucernarium can be included in family devotions at dinner time. The versicles, beginning "Jesus Christ is the light of the world," are said as candles are lighted on the table. Then the family joins in singing "Joyous Light of Glory." The simple tune in the LBW lends itself to acapella rendition. Mother or father could offer the thanksgiving for light and conclude

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[3] William Storey, "Parish Worship: The Liturgy of the Hours," *Worship* 49 (1980) 9.

[4] William Storey, Frank Quinn, and David Wright, *Morning Praise and Evensong* (Notre Dame, IN: Fides, 1973).

that with the thanksgiving for the food of the meal.

The larger spacial setting in a church building, when Vespers is prayed by the congregation, requires a larger ceremonial, but not a grandiose one. Ministers enter the worship space holding a large candle. The three sets of versicles in Vespers are sung by the minister and the people during a procession to the candle stand. This can be done in three stations, as is done in the Easter Vigil (whose entrance rite is really a large lucernarium). When the candle is placed in its stand, the congregation joins in singing "Joyous Light of Glory" while other candles are lighted from the Vespers-candle. Then the minister, standing next to the candle, offers the thanksgiving for light. It should be noted that optional seasonal versicles for the entrance and other thanksgivings for light (from the *Apostolic Constitutions* and *The Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus, respectively) are provided in the *LBW Ministers Edition,* pp. 92-95.

Something in the Air Tonight

James Drury
Converse, Texas

Phil Collins sings
I can feel it coming in the air tonight
oh Lord
Well I've been waiting for this moment for all my life
oh Lord

Tuned to the night-gentled music of bedded flock
a shepherd sings
I can feel it coming in the air tonight

(Shepherds don't live with their heads to the ground ALL the time!
Cloudless nights and stars' shine
raise hearts, eyes,
AND expectations.)

Their hold on a wandering faith has been challenged
hoped for
settled with when all else failed
kept worn out
ages-old
but kept
so when this night feels different from other nights they feel it
compressed
heaven waiting to enter into time meaning
where none is expected
for which all have hoped

Finally
when the music comes
he knows beyond all doubt
something is in the air tonight.

Someone comes
someone he's waited for all his life.
and rejoicing
he rises and joins the chorus

I can feel it coming in the air tonight

Come, thou long expected.

Response to: Dialogue with Gay and Lesbian Lutherans*

Lutherans Concerned

A Christian Ministry for Lesbian and Gay Understanding, Chicago, Illinois

Lutherans Concerned appreciates Dr. Klein's response to *A Call for Dialogue* and his invitation to us to respond to the issues he raised in his article. We found his article to be a thoughtful, discerning reading of *A Call for Dialogue* and therefore enthusiastically take up the challenge to continue the discussion.

Dr. Klein focused on two paragraphs from *A Call for Dialogue* as presenting the crux of the issue. These two alternative, incompatible views are what make the discussion of homosexuality so extremely difficult:

> One point of view argues that there is one normative, heterosexual, orientation operative in human beings—a prescientific view which prevails in biblical and church historical literature. Heterosexuality alone is divinely willed, thus any variation from it, such as the homosexual orientation, is a reflection of the flawed, broken nature of the world after the Fall.
>
> The other point of view regards the creation as more mysteriously diverse in matters of sexual orientation—a reality which contemporary scientific research is continuing to elucidate. Orientations such as bisexual and homosexual have a causality totally part from the willful disobedience of the human family (the Fall) or the choice of any individual, and are to be understood as still another facet of the complexity of God's created order.

Dr. Klein suggested that we should be clear about the sufficient reasons—biblical, theological, psychological—that would lead us to choose one paragraph over the other. He then goes on to raise a number of very pertinent questions that he says must be faced if the church were to adopt the second paragraph.

The first of these questions is "What legitimates genital sexual expression?" Dr. Klein states that merely saying love is the criterion does not go far enough from a Christian perspective. The promise of a life-long commitment in a relationship of marriage is the proper context of sexual expression.

We heartily agree. In fact, we have never asked for a sexual standard different from that which applies to Christian heterosexuals. We have simply asked that the church recognize that the same standard of love within a life-long committed relationship applies to gays and lesbians. The church instead has simply condemned *all* sexual expression between homosexuals regardless of the quality of relationship or the promise of

**Currents* published a response by Ralph W. Klein to Lutherans Concerned and their call for dialogue in the October issue, 304-306.

life-long faithfulness. With such unqualified condemnation, the church has not seemed to think that Christian homosexuals could enjoy a Christian "marriage" as do heterosexuals (different only in that it would not have the legal sanction of the state). In fact, many relationships do exist. We have no argument with the Christian model of covenantal relationships as the proper context of sexual expression. We only ask that the church recognize that model as the calling for all Christians who propose to enter into relationships, including homosexuals.

Having said that, we do not need to point out the difficulties that many gay people have in being able to form and sustain life-long commitments. We experience all the same pulls and pressures that tear apart relationships that heterosexual people experience (and let us remember that in the heterosexual world, "permanent" relationships are "life-long" only about 50% of the time now). But in addition to these, there are difficulties unique to gay people. We cannot date openly. Often we cannot count on the support of friends and family as we try to build relationships. We do not have the support of the church community to encourage us and offer us help as we encounter difficulties and problems within our "marriages." Often our relationships must be kept secret from our fellow workers as we fear job loss. Including our "spouse" in social events may be impossible in certain business, church and family situations. And often because of the same pressures we cannot live together even after we have promised life-long fidelity and love. In some parts of our country even being suspected of being gay can lead to physical harm. We point out these unique difficulties only to show that while we affirm Christian "marriage" as the ideal model for our relationships, many powerful factors work against that in our day-to-day lives.

Dr. Klein brings up the issue of promiscuity among gays. With all due respect, that is not simply a "gay" problem. It is a major problem that for some time now has plagued *all* of our society. Dr. Klein acknowledges such when he says "there is no need to be hypocritical about the actualities of heterosexual practice." Gay people, like all Christians, have difficulty living, as St. Paul says, in a way "worthy of our calling." We are subject, as everyone else, to the pressures in our society that stress immediate gratification. There is a way though in which gay people have a unique temptation to promiscuity. Often there is less chance that fleeting sexual encounters will be discovered by friends, family or co-workers than a committed relationship would be. Promiscuity, in a deadly ironic way, is "safer" than a long-term relationship. Problems with family, work and church can be avoided by avoiding committed relationships. We do not bring this up to defend or rationalize promiscuity among gays. The church is right in condemning promiscuity wherever it is found. We point this out only to show the tragic social reality and the social pressures in which many gay people live.

We wish to respond to two other issues which Dr. Klein raises. First, he points out that Christian moral judgments are informed not only by the Bible, but also by a sense of what is naturally right according to nature. He asks, "How do we respond to fellow Lutherans who perceive homosexual genital expression as immoral and contrary to nature?"

Our answer must take the form of a counter-question. Since when has nature been set up as the arbiter of our moral decisions? We see nowhere in scripture

an appeal to "nature" as the basis for moral action (as we have argued, this is not Paul's intention in Romans 1:26). Beyond that, to what idea of nature are we appealing—a static, pre-scientific nature in which "orders of creation" might make some sense, or the evolving, ever-changing, non-determinant nature of modern science in which it would be quite difficult to pinpoint what is and is not in fact "according to nature?" We believe an appeal to "nature" is fraught with ethical and philosophical ambiguity in regard to moral issues. Anyway such an appeal could also be used to legitimate "survival of the fittest" social agendas, many-partner sexual activity and other things that are clearly at odds with the heart of biblical ethics. Scripture, in fact, and Jesus' teaching in particular, could be read as a supreme protest against an ethics based on "nature" (see Gerd Theissen, *Biblical Faith: An Evolutionary Approach* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985], 112-119).

The second issue Dr. Klein mentioned was the use of tradition in informing ethical opinions. He said that while the Bible itself may be ambiguous or silent, the church in its tradition has often drawn the conclusion that homesexual genital expression is wrong. We recognize the role of tradition in ethical questions. However, with the issue of homosexuality the church's tradition has not been monolithic. Yale historian John Boswell has done a careful investigation of the church's attitudes toward homosexuality up to the thirteenth century when various social forces hardened European views against various minorities, including gay people. Until that time, Boswell shows there was no univocal, overwhelming condemnation of homosexuality. There were times and places it was openly accepted in the church. Our point is that tradition is not of one voice on this issue. The fact that our present century is one of the most homophobic in western history means our perceptions must be filtered through our prejudices in order to see what tradition has actually said.

It is interesting to note, too, how the New Testament presents early Christians as dealing with the continued validity of inherited tradition. The gospel often meant that inherited notions of what and who were acceptable had to be re-evaluated and often discarded. Traditions had to be subjected to the measure of Christ. One case in point was Peter's vision (Acts 10) in which he was commanded to kill and eat unclean animals. Peter refused to do it as it went against strongly held traditions. After three commands, he still refused to break the tradition (notice, even at the command of the Lord). He understood the next day the meaning of the vision when he was told to go into the house of the Gentile, Cornelius. A Jew associating with Gentiles was also against strongly held traditions, but Peter now said God had shown him he should not call any human common or unclean. Next, when the Gentiles were given the Holy Spirit as Peter was speaking, Peter marveled that the Holy Spirit was given "even to Gentiles." We simply point out that sometimes the Spirit must lead the church to leave behind even strongly held traditions so it can enter more fully into the truth.

Our *A Call for Dialogue* is really a call for the church to reflect on the indisputable fact that the Holy Spirit has been given "even to homosexuals." We are your brothers and sisters in Christ. We suggest that may call for some hard wrestling with the tradition.

Hanumas? Christmakah? No! ...

William J. Urbrock

Professor of Religious Studies/Associate Dean of Humanities, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

This year the second day of Christmas (December 26, St. Stephen's Day) will be drawing to a close when Jews begin their annual celebration of Hanukkah at sundown. Since Hanukkah is a moveable feast, tied to the lunar calendar (somewhat like Easter in that respect), it may fall just about anytime in December or, rarely, even late November. But this year, as again in 1989 and 1992, at least part of the eight-day observance will coincide with some of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

In the recent past, especially in the United States, there has been considerable confusion about these festivals. Some Christians saw Hanukkah as a sort of Jewish version of Christmas or reaction to Christmas. Some Jews, not wanting their children to feel left out of the general merry-making of the Holiday Season that reaches near-frenzy by mid-December, put up Christmas trees in their homes under the guise of "Hanukkah bushes." In some towns and cities, civic officials and public school leaders have added their support to the syncretizing mood by erecting both Christian manger scenes and Jewish menorahs (multi-branched candlesticks) in public places or by including both Hanukkah and Christmas songs and skits in school holiday programs. Evidently, a next step might be to simply combine the observances into a sort of all-American Hanumas or Christmakah!

But there are good reasons for saying "No!" to such a move. And both Christians and Jews, increasingly, are saying so. The two festivals, after all, are not historically related.

Hanukkah, or "Dedication," is the earlier of the two. It was being observed by Jews for over a century and a half before the birth of Jesus. According to John's Gospel, Jesus himself was in Jerusalem during Hanukkah festivities on at least one occasion (John 10:22-23).

The events that gave rise to this festival are chronicled and elaborated upon in First and Second Maccabees. Now reckoned by Lutherans among the so-called Apocryphal books, they circulated among the sacred writings of the Jews at Jesus' time. Eventually, the rabbis declined to accord them canonical status, but the early Christian churches received them as Scripture. Canonical arguments aside, the books of the historical period and colorful antagonists they describe have fired Jewish and Christian imaginations ever since. Even George Frederich Handel could not resist composing an oratorio about the heroic "Judas Maccabeus."

In the second century B.C.E. most of the Mediterranean world, Palestine included, had become heavily influenced by Greek, or "Hellenistic," culture. Ever since the conquests of Alexander the Great around 325 B.C.E., Greek language and culture had spread to Egypt, the Middle East, and even the western reaches of India. Greek cities, heavily laced with Greek colonists and traders, sprang up everywhere in the wake of Alexander's victorious armies.

After Alexander's death, Palestine

came under the political control of a line of Greek rulers whose capital was the new Greek city of Alexandria in Egypt. This Greek dynasty had been founded by Ptolemy I Lagi, surnamed Soter ("Savior"), one of Alexander's generals.

But Palestine was not destined to remain under Ptolemaic rule. To the north, in Syria, another Greek dynasty had been founded by another of Alexander's generals. This was Seleucus I, surnamed Nicator ("Conqueror"), whose capital was yet another Greek city, Antioch. In 199 B.C.E. one of Seleucus' successors, Antiochus III The Great, captured all the fortified cities in Palestine, expelled the Egyptian Ptolemies, and won control of the entire land.

In the decades that followed, Jewish loyalties were divided, especially among the upper class in Jerusalem. Pro-Ptolemaic factions clashed with pro-Seleucid factions. The most coveted office among the Jews, the office of High Priest at the Temple in Jerusalem, became a political football. Pro-Greek and anti-Greek factions began to jockey for control of Jewish life and institutions.

Matters came to a head during the reign of Antiochus IV Theos Epiphanes ("God Manifest"). Epiphanes was a vigorous ruler who aimed at greater centralization of the Seleucid Empire, partly to meet the growing menace of Rome. His policy was to encourage more thoroughgoing Hellenization of local governments and community life. In response to this official program, it appears that about 175 B.C.E. a group of leading persons in Jerusalem attempted to reorganize their city along the lines of a Greek "polis," or city-state.

The conservative reaction to the converting of Jerusalem into a Greek-style religio-political center is well-illustrated by the scorching criticism voiced by the author of Second Maccabees, a pious recreation of the period written up to a century afterwards. Scornfully, he notes how the lawful institutions were abrogated and new customs established contrary to Jewish sacred teachings. He complains that "the craze for Hellenism and foreign customs reached such a pitch ... that the priests no longer cared about the service of the altar" in the Temple. They were too busy throwing discus and taking part in "unlawful exercises on the athletic field" (see 2 Macc 4:10-15)!

Turmoil, perhaps civil war, broke out in Jerusalem and in the whole province of Judea between liberals and conservatives, pro-Greeks and anti-Greeks. Antiochus Epiphanes reacted with a firm hand. In late 167 B.C.E. he published what pious Jews ever since have called the "Gezerot," the decrees of persecution.

The decrees forbade distinctive Jewish religious observances like the Sabbath and circumcision. The Temple was rededicated for worship in honor of Zeus Olympios. The Jews were to be compelled to participate in processions honoring the Greek god Dionysus. Whoever resisted and continued to observe the old Jewish ways was to be severely punished.

Second Maccabees describes how in one city "two women who were arrested for having circumcised their children were publicly paraded around the city with their babies hanging on their breasts and then thrown down from the top of the city wall" (2 Macc 6:10). Others, caught observing the Sabbath, were burned to death (2 Macc 6:11). One mother watched seven of her sons tortured and executed before she herself was subjected to the same treatment for refusing to eat pork that was being forced upon them contrary to Jewish religious tradition (2 Macc 7).

Jews in the countryside began to rally forces around a priest named Mattathias, who had fled from Jerusalem, and his

five sons. One of them, Judas Maccabeus ("The Hammer"), eventually organized an army and engaged the Seleucid forces in battle on several occasions. Amazingly, the outnumbered Jewish forces soon got the upper hand and finally marched on Jerusalem itself to "liberate" the Temple.

First Maccabees, a more soberly historical account written much closer to the events than Second Maccabees, describes the ensuing scenes: "They found the sanctuary desolate, the altar desecrated, the gates burnt, weeds growing in the court ... and the priests' chambers demolished" (1 Macc 4:38). Priests were found who had taken no part in the Greek "reforms," and they and their Jewish compatriots set about purifying and restoring the Temple precincts, building a new altar of sacrifice, and preparing new vessels, lampstands, and incense burners (1 Macc 4:52-58).

A popular story was soon circulating to the effect that there had been only enough consecrated oil on hand to keep the festival lamps lit for a short while. Miraculously, however, the lamps kept burning on that tiny amount of oil throughout the entire eight-day celebration. It is this tradition that gave Hanukkah its popular designation as the festival of "Lights."

That tradition is commemorated by the custom still current among Jewish celebrants of lighting first one, then two, then three candles, and so on for each successive day of the festival until the eighth and final day. Thus the eight-branched menorah (candlestick) remains the major symbol of the holiday.

Christmas, which marks the birth of Jesus almost two centuries after the events of the Maccabean revolt and Temple Dedication, does not, of course, coincide with the actual birthdate of Jesus. The month and day are unknown and even the year is debated—a good case can be made for sometime around 4 to 7 B.C.E. Perhaps, when Christmas began to be celebrated some centuries after the time of Jesus, it was placed near the winter solstice to preempt certain pagan festivities honoring the rebirth of the sun. The sun would pale before Jesus, already honored in Christian tradition as the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal 3:20-4:2) and the "Light of the World" (John 8:12).

In our Christmas celebrations, bright lights, sparkling tinsel, and light-reflecting ornaments still predominate as symbols of the Son of Mary at his birth. The coming of Jesus was hailed by Zechariah as "The Day dawning upon us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:78-79), while, as an infant, he was blessed by Simeon as "a Light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to God's people Israel" (Luke 2:32).

The shared symbols of light may constitute the one genuine point of meeting between Christmas and Hanukkah. For, whatever their independent origins as historical commemorations and whatever their subsequent independent developments into many-faceted religious celebrations, they both speak of a trust in the God of Israel who delivers his people and who brings new light into dark times for all who are faithful to him.

As Jews and Christians learn to appreciate the integrity and unique characteristics of those two mid-December celebrations, they may also discover a deeper fellowship in their mutual turning to One whose prophet declared that "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has light shined" (Isa 9:1-2).

... CHRISTMAS? HANUKKAH? YES!

Advent Four

Johanna Beicke
Wimberly, Texas

There are no more
Four candles burning
Brightly beckoning

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel."

I.

Immanuel—God with us—a baby
They named him Jesus
You know why?
He will save his people from their sins

Immanuel—God's gift
God gave Mary and Joseph a son
The Gift of a child
Their joy
Their delight

A baby—God in human form

For God so loved the world that he gave his only son....

To US!
To be WITH us!

But oh—the child cries
He skinned his knee
Oh, little Jesus
We skin our knees, too
Oh, little Jesus
It hurts
Oh, little Lord Jesus
You're with us in skinned knees.

Immanuel—Dying on a cross

Mother Mary crying,
"Love
and hope
and life
are what you meant to me"
"You're dying, my son.
Why?
You were a good boy—God's gift."

God with us—dying on a cross

"My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?"

.
.
.

"Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

"And you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Immanuel—The dawn breaks

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

He is risen, Alleluia!
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Weep not Mother Mary. The time has come to sing again.

II.

Immanuel—a baby
But now another baby
One with blonde hair and blue eyes
Or black hair and brown eyes
His name is David
or Karen
or Stephen
This, now, another baby
This one crying, too
The water is cool
"I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

God with us—in a baby
God with us—a gift of water and words
Someday this baby will understand
But now—
God is with him
When he skins *his* knees
When her son dies
When he dies
When God takes her with him

Immanuel—some grapes and wheat
Now cool, rich wine in a silver chalice
Now crusty bread in a basket
"Take, eat, this is my body
Take, drink this is my blood"
The bread is good
The wine is sweet

"Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace."

God with us
We eat bread for life
We drink wine to celebrate
God with us
The "stuff" of life in bread and wine

"Lord, now you let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled."

Immanuel—
You gather us into one body—
fragmented bit of grace-filled lives

"Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou has given me; that they may be one as we are one."

God with us
A gift in a Baby in Bethlehem
A gift in a baby in water
A gift for your children in the bread and wine
A gift in the love we share

III.

Maranatha—Come, Lord Jesus

Come in our skinned knees
Come when our children die
Come when we die

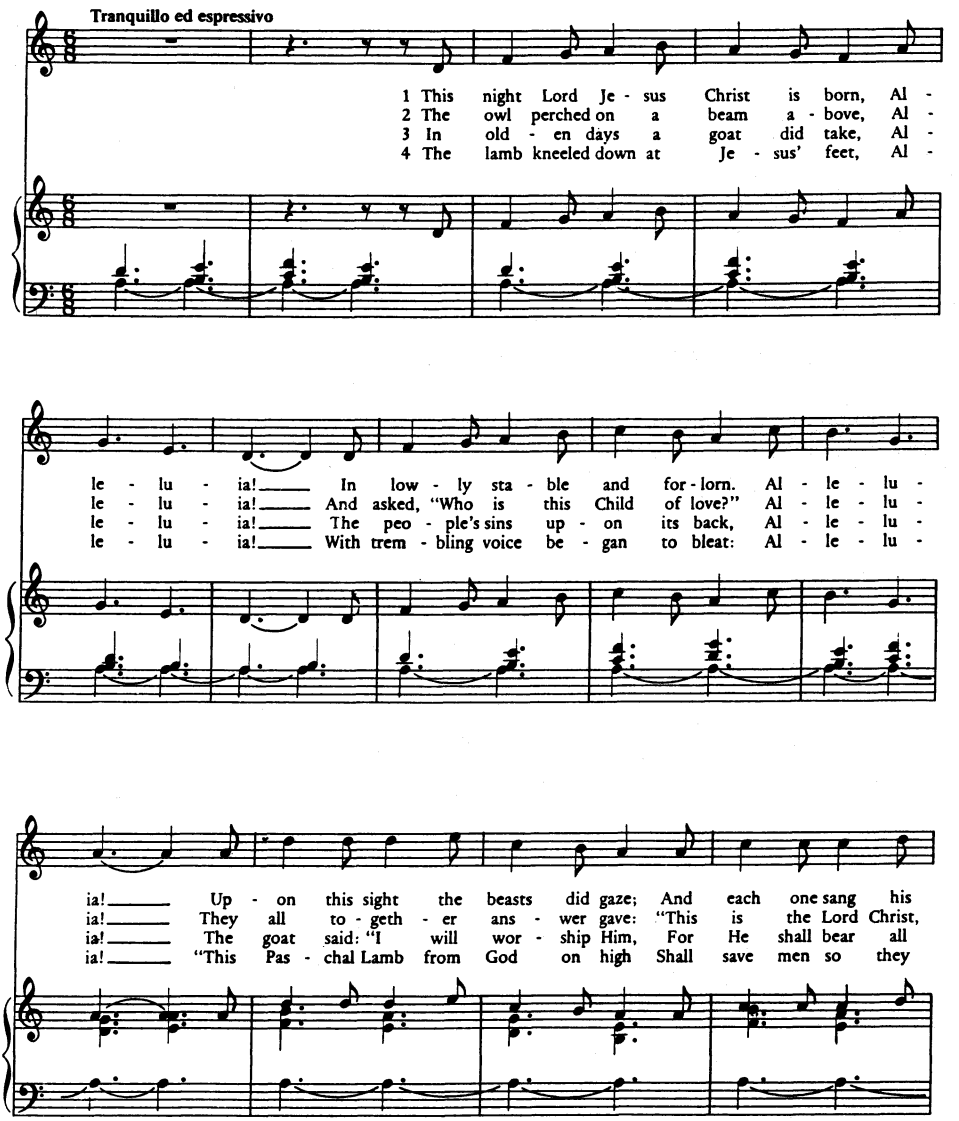
"Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with thee there."

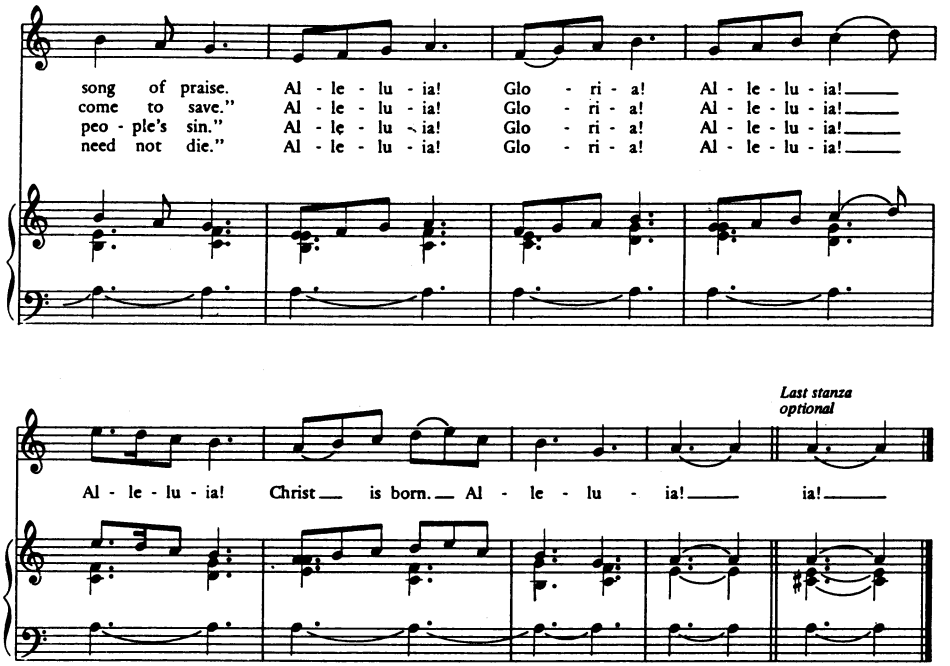
Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel.

Maranatha—Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

The Carol of the Animals

ENNO KLAMMER PAUL MANZ





5 The lowly donkey could but bray, Alleluia!
"I served His mother well today." Alleluia!
"I carried her to David's town;
From Nazareth I brought her down."
Alleluia! Gloria! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Christ is born! Alleluia!

6 The cow did slowly move her head, Alleluia!
"I gave my manger for His bed." Alleluia!
"I'll let Him lie upon my hay;
I'll seek my food some other way."
Alleluia! Gloria! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Christ is born! Alleluia!

7 And we, too, bring our gift of joy, Alleluia!
For God has blessed us with this Boy. Alleluia!
We sing with angel choirs who say,
"Lord Jesus Christ is born today."
Alleluia! Gloria! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Christ is born! Alleluia!

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The Virgin of Guadalupe

José David Rodríguez, Jr., assisted by Colleen R. Nelson
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In 1528 Mexico received its first bishop, Juan de Zumárraga. He decided to make his dwelling in a palace on an island called Tenochtitlan. The palace was constructed out of the remains of the destroyed Aztec pyramids. Unconsciously, Zumárraga assumed the tradition of the former rulers of the region, the Aztecs, who dominated the surrounding Indian tribes. He simply exchanged Christian symbols for the Aztec symbols. This is the context of the story of the Virgin of Guadalupe, which dates from the arrival in Mexico of this first Spanish bishop.

According to legend, Juan Diego, a humble Indian, was on his way to mass. As he came near the hill of Tepeyac (near the present day Mexico City), he had a vision of a radiant lady. She told him that she was the Virgin Mary and that it was her wish that a church should be built upon this hill. Juan Diego hastened to tell Bishop Zumárraga, who insisted on more proof for the vision. Three days later, on December 12, 1531, Juan Diego again saw the vision of the lady, who told him to go to Tepeyac and to pick the roses he would find there and to bring them to the bishop. He did as he was told and carried the flowers to the bishop in his cloak. Upon opening the cloak in the presence of the bishop, all were amazed to see a figure of the Virgin upon the cloak.

To this day the Virgin of Guadalupe is an important symbol for Mexican people. Hardly a Mexican home can be found that does not have her picture. It was her image that was on the banner carried by Padre Miguel Hidalgo in 1810 to lead the Mexican Revolution. It is her image that leads every action of the farm workers and other Mexican groups today.

This story presents us with a dialogue between two persons, an Indian and a bishop, separated by their place of origin. The Indian came from Tepeyac, a poor barrio at the outskirts of the city, and from a people twice dominated, first by the Aztec empire and then by the Spanish conquerors. The bishop lived on Tenochtitlan, in a palace built with the same material as the Aztec pyramids, the symbol of domination. The authority of the bishop extended to the barrio of Tepeyac where the Indian dwelt.

It was from this perspective, that the Spaniards began their work of evangelism. Their role as evanglists was that of teaching the Indians how to do things right. The Spaniards were those who knew, and the Indians were the poor ignorant masses, the objects of evangelism. As can be readily seen, behind the Spaniard's view of evangelism there was an important issue of power at stake. There was no give and take in the evangelism process; there was complete domination by the conquerors. The Spaniards' intent, whether conscious or unconscious, was to perpetuate their rule.

What makes the story of the Virgin of Guadalupe so special is the fact that in his dealings with the bishop, Juan

Diego, the poor and apparently ignorant Indian, is the one who ends up being the evangelist. It is the bishop who gets converted by none other than a poor Indian. It is a story of evangelism in reverse. The poor Indian challenged the bishop, in the name of the Virgin, to make a significant change. The bishop was asked to leave Tenochtitlan, the place of the oppressor, and to begin a journey to Tepeyac at the outskirts of the city, the dwelling place of the poor, the place where the Virgin wanted to establish her residence.

The true intent of the story is not to bring people to venerate an image of the Virgin. The purpose of the story is to challenge people then as well as today to join in an ancient biblical tradition, a very important and popular tradition, that the early Christian community attributed to the virgin Mary. It is the tradition that is so eloquently presented in the Magnificat. It is the tradition that has a pre-history in the Scriptures with the song of Miriam in Exodus 15, the song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2, and the song of Deborah in Judges 5. It is a tradition of a God who loves all human beings. But for this love to be actualized, God "scatters the proud, puts down the mighty from their thrones and exalts those of low degree" (Luke 1:51-52).

God's liberation of the poor and oppressed also calls for the liberation of the rich and the mighty. The oppressed are not called to take vengeance on the powerful but to liberate them from their own violence. The humble are not raised to dominate over others but to get rid of all forms of domination. Slaves are not liberated to put others in bondage but to rid the world of slavery. God became human in the son of Mary to transform us from arrogant and selfish beings to true "humanized" beings.

The incident of the Virgin of Guadalupe caused a great number of converts in Mexico. The conversions that formerly were so difficult now began to develop very rapidly. Six years after the appearance of the Virgin, there were nine million Indians converted to Christianity.

In his book on the Latin American episcopal hierarchy from 1504-1620, Enrique Dussel provides an interesting account of the work of the bishops and their position in regards to the liberation of the poor people who were their subjects. It is important to note that among the famous bishops who were known for their commitment to the protection of Native Americans, Dussel names Juan de Zumárraga, the bishop of the story. He writes, "For Zumárraga, neither personal danger nor the loss of wealth or fame made him relinquish his function as protector of the Indians."

The story of the Virgin of Guadalupe is part of a broader story of the great saving acts of God in history. The good news for us is that we are invited to be a part of that wonderful and meaningful story.

Book Reviews



ALL THESE LUTHERANS: THREE PATHS TOWARD A NEW LUTHERAN CHURCH. By Todd W. Nichol. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986. 126 pages. Paper. $6.95.

All the many strands of Lutheranism in America flow together as the ALC, AELC, and LCA form a new church. In *All These Lutherans* Todd W. Nichol tells the stories of the uniting churches, their roots, their distinctive qualities, and the gifts they offer each other.

Nichol is a good storyteller, who picks and chooses from the details of history to sketch for us a word-portrait of the members of the Lutheran family. Here is a lucidly readable resource for uniting Lutherans to get acquainted as their separate stories blend into the story of tomorrow.

Nichol claims that his book is story, not history. It is the kind of book that ordinary Lutherans can read with joy. It makes it easy to understand why Lutherans are the way they are in view of the past from which they have come. It offers nuances that help explain the differences among Lutherans. It provides one of the few available accounts of the formation of the AELC.

While it is good story, *All These Lutherans* is also a work of substance. Nichol has his facts straight, and they back up his efforts at interpreting the Lutheran story. He makes the point that Lutheran history in America is the story of the struggle with Lutheran identity. What does it mean to be Lutheran? A new church will have to grapple with the question again.

John H. Tietjen
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Chicago, Illinois

THE AMISH. By John A. Hostetler. Scottsdale, PA: The Herald Press, 1982. 39 pages. Paper. $2.50.

Since the Amish write little about themselves, even small books like this one by a trained sociologist who comes from their community are useful in understanding the people and dispelling myths about them.

It is commonly thought that the Amish are antiquarians dedicated to the pursuit of a nostalgic past. This is untrue. The Amish know very well the culture in which they live. They choose to create a reality and a culture which is opposed to the "norm" of American society; each generation must make that choice, which is ratified by baptism and marriage into the community of faith and life. Each community must decide how it will use the technology of the surrounding culture; some Amish use iron-wheeled tractors, others rubber-tired, others horse and plow. There is never a point at which vigilance may be relaxed; no easy decisions present themselves for the Amish. Their Christian consciousness tells them there is a borderline beyond which they will lose the heart of their community. This book helps you understand that border and appreciate a people whom all who bear the name Christian must take into consideration as a model.

All Christians are seeking for models of intercourse between church and culture in this age. Most will not take the Amish option, but there are lessons here which can be useful.

Jay C. Rochelle
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

THE NEW TESTAMENT IN ITS SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT. By John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch. Library of Early Christianity 2. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986. 194 pages with 16 maps. Cloth. $18.95.

New Testament scholarship recently "rediscovered" the value of knowing all aspects of Hellenistic-Roman life and culture for New Testament interpretation. Wayne Meeks, Professor of New Testament at Yale, is in the forefront of that development; now he is editing a nine volume series that promises to make the results available to a wider audience.

Stambaugh and Balch describe many of the physical, social, religious and cultural givens in the Mediterranean world. In their first chapter they review political history from Alexander to Shimon bar-Kosiba (sic), i.e. from ca 330 B.C.E. to 135 C.E. They also describe the provincial administrative procedures of the Roman Empire, city government, Roman and local law, and the police system. "Mobility and Mission" (pp. 37-62) describes communications and travel, the migration of religions (and something of their character), and the implications for nascent missionary Christianity. The chapter on "The Ancient Economy" discusses private and public economy and the significance for social class and structure. "Society in Palestine" (pp. 82-106) discusses demography, languages, patterns of social status, and the ecology of early Christianity; the discussion is much less original. Chapter 5, "City Life" (pp. 107-137), on the other hand, is fascinating. The physical arrangement of a city with its public spaces and houses is briefly described. Social structure, work and leisure, education and family, associations and cults all get their (brief) due. The final chapter, "Christianity in the Cities of the Roman Empire" (pp. 138-167) first notes the Christian "adaptation" of urban social structure, then describes the key cities that figure into the New Testament: Antioch on the Orontes, Ephesus (and other Asia Minor cities), Philippi and Thessalonica, Corinth and Rome. In each case a summary of known early Christian presence in these cities is given.

It is a good book, clearly written, and filled with useful information. Its audience is clearly the seminary student, pastor, or interested Christian reader of the Bible, not the classicist or NT specialist. Documentation for New Testament references is regularly given. Documentation for the Greco-Roman world is less extensive; bibliographic resources for items that might interest the specialist are not given.

I have two more serious reserations. (1) Although the authors discuss many "realia" from the ancient world, no illustrations are given. There is danger of a kind of historical abstractionism. City plans would illuminate the chapter on city life and stimulate a brief discussion of ancient city planning. Plans of a peristyle house or two from Delos with photographs of the mosaic floors, a house plan from Capernaum, and another from Pompei would rapidly make clear the variation in housing style in different parts of the NT world. A picture of an Ostia "apartment house," with the stores and work places indicated, would also help. Chapter two needs a map of the Roman road system. City plans and selected archaeological finds would clarify the urban centers discussed in the last chapter, e.g. a picture of Eutychides's Tyche of Antioch, a plan of the central area of Corinth, etc. Religion would become enfleshed by plans and illustrations of a sacred precinct, altars, sculpture showing a Roman suovetaurilia, Ephesian Artemis and the god Aion, a lararium, ruler cult material, etc. An atlas of plans and illustrations in color to complement the nine volumes proposed would be a boon to the teacher.

(2) The maps are a disaster. Westminster Press simply reprinted sixteen maps from the Wright-Filson atlas; they are in many respects dated. For example, Herodian Jerusalem is not well represented on Map XVI. The authors refer the reader to John Wilkinson's *The Jerusalem Jesus Knew,* an excellent volume with good line plans (Nelson, 1983). At best only four of the sixteen maps are relevant to the book. A good book is ill served by such maps.

Finally, the press designed a cover that illustrates the problems cited above. An artist drew three columns resting on a stylobate and capped by an architrave in which almost every detail is impossibly

wrong. The stylobate, which never carried sculptured decoration, is given a non-existent Greek molding, a kind of "slated dentil" that is repeated on an impossible architrave. Given the capital, it should be Doric. The three columns have a bastardized (but non-existent) Athenian Ionic base. They have Ionic fluting that leads to a presumably Doric capital. The combination is impossible in antiquity. No ancient column had the kind of extruded banding shown, and the Doric abacus is drawn round (when it should be square). Granted that the design is pleasing and at least reminds one of antiquity, the dust jacket offends historical architecture. For a book on social setting it is a major blunder. Fortunately, one can throw it away!

These last paragraphs should not undercut the positive evaluation of the text. Stambaugh and Balch probably had no voice in such editorial decisions; they have written a clear, instructive, useful book that will orient students well into aspects of the New Testament world. Supplement it with good maps and well selected slides to illustrate the text and students will learn to think more like ancient people—a major gain. It will be required reading in seminary courses I and many others teach. If the other nine volumes in the series are as good as this one, they will be welcome indeed.

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EZRA, NEHEMIAH. By H.G.M. Williamson. Word Biblical Commentary 16. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985. lii and 517 pages. Cloth. $22.95.

Williamson, a lecturer at Cambridge, here continues his excellent record of publications on the literature of the "Chronicler" (1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah). In this commentary, as well as in numerous earlier publications, however, he insists that Ezra and Nehemiah are quite independent from the books of Chronicles and that the notion of a Chronicler's History of Israel extending from 1 Chronicles 1 through Nehemiah is a mistaken hypothesis.

In his view, an editor about the year 400 B.C.E. put together an Ezra Memoir (Ezra 7-10; Neh 8) and Nehemiah Memoir (Neh 1-7; 12:27-43; 13:4-31), creating a climactic moment in Neh 8-10. This was later prefaced by the addition of Ezra 1-6 about the year 300 B.C.E. The books of Chronicles were composed midway through the intervening century. This is a somewhat simplified presentation of his views, which become extremely complex in the latter half of the book of Nehemiah. Everywhere the author displays an in-depth and first hand acquaintance with modern secondary literature and presents his own opinions clearly and convincingly. The literary and historical problems in these books are as difficult as any in biblical studies, and a commentator must make difficult and controversial proposals (e.g. Neh 8 once was located between Ezra 8 and 9; an earlier version of Neh 9:1-5 once appeared between Ezra 10:15 and 10:16). Williamson holds to the traditional order of Ezra in 458 and Nehemiah in 445.

This is clearly the best commentary now available on Ezra and Nehemiah. For each pericope he provides a bibliography, a fresh translation, extensive textual notes, an analysis of form/structure/setting (often devoted to the identification of the source from which the passage was taken, historical reliability, editorial glossing and the like), and a section called comment (word by word exposition). One of the freshest parts of the volume is a section on each pericope called Explanation, in which he offers Christian theological applications of his previous descriptive findings. At times, because of the nature of the content of these biblical books, such an attempt teeters on the edge of moralisms or of moving from an inferior Old Testament to a superior New Testament message, but by and large I found his comments most useful for ministry today and clearly aware of the center of the Christian faith. His opinion that passive disobedience to tyranny is favored in the Bible over the use of force to defeat tyranny (p. 87) would be questioned, of course, by Liberation theologians and others.

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JESUS AND THE POLITICS OF HIS DAY. Edited by Ernest Bammel and C.F.C. Moule. Cambridge Paperback Library. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985 (=1984). xi and 511 pages. Paper. $17.95.

This book is made up of twenty six essays that all relate to the question, Was Jesus's activity as a zealot who participated in armed insurrection against Rome the cause of his execution by the Romans? The precipitating cause for their writing was the theory put forward by (though not originated by) S.G.F. Brandon's, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (1951) and *Jesus and the Zealots* (1967). His work found a positive reaction among some theologians who support violent revolution in the Third World. The scholars who contributed to this symposium do not try to justify or attack an appeal to the historical Jesus in this liberation theology, but try to answer a historical question about Jesus of Nazareth.

The essays take up almost every question that impinges on Brandon's theory: Did Jesus do revolutionary acts? Did the writers of the NT books intentionally distort the record for apologetic reasons? Was the cleansing of the Temple a zealotic act? Did the poor (understood to mean the sociologically poor in Galilee) support and become involved in the Zealotic movement? What was Jesus's attitude toward the Roman authorities (temple tax, tribute question)? What were the early Christian attitudes to the destruction of Jerusalem, to Rome (Romans 13)? Are the Jewish and Roman trial stories historical? They conclude that Jesus was not a zealot, though that is an understatement of the depth of research in the essays.

The writers include Ernst Bammel, F.F. Bruce, Bo Reicke, G.W.H. Lampe, William Horbury, Matthew Black, Walter Grundmann, John A.T. Robinson, C.F.D. Moule, etc., all scholars of the first water. The essays are meticulously reasoned, extensively documented, and cleary written. Though written in the early 1970's, publication in hard cover was not possible till 1984. This paperback edition appeared only one year later.

Edgar Krentz

THE VISUAL ARTS AND CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA: THE COLONIAL PERIOD THROUGH THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By John Dillenberger. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984. 225 pages and 120 plates. Paper. $19.95.

John Dillenberger has devoted decades of study to the arts, especially painting, in their historical relationship to Christian faith in the United States. John may not be mentioned, however, without Jane. They are, so to speak, the Will and Ariel Durant of Religion and Art in North America. Thus, though this book bears John's name as author, Jane is present on each page.

What we quickly learn from this book is the chasm which existed between the Puritan distrust and downplaying of visual arts in New England during the first three centuries of immigrant life in America, on one hand, and the opulent, colorful, and lavish arts in service to Catholicism in the Southwest and California, on the other. The battle here is between Word and sacrament, with Word being more moralistically, less mysteriously, conceived: clarity, not mystery, was the aim. Art obscured this for English puritanism, which was the dominant culture of the Eastern New World. Thus art was downplayed, and literature dominates. This denigration of art was mollified by—are you surprised?—Dutch Calvinists and some, but by no means all, Anglicans. At the other end of the North American landmass, Spanish Catholics painted brilliant reredos, the most common folk art in the churches. Dillenberger sees the Pennsylvania Moravians as an Eastern counterpart to this tradition. The 19th century saw a marked increase in the learned appreciation of art among Protestant clergy, albeit as tool or adjunct to discussions of faith. Catholic divines of the same period refined their understanding of art as handmaid of religion. Much of the resurgence of art in the 20th century, because of the dominant Protestant-Puritan mentality, was thus forced to go on alongside or outside the church.

Jay C. Rochelle

MATURE CHRISTIANITY: THE RECOGNITION AND REPUDIATION OF THE ANTI-JEWISH POLEMIC OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Norman A. Beck. Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania: Susquehanna University Press, 1985. 327 pages. Cloth. $19.95.

This book is somewhat of a sleeper. It looks like another academic tome, destined for the usual obscurity; but the proposal it presents is revolutionary, and if taken seriously could cause quite some consternation in the churches.

Beck, a Princeton Ph.D. who teaches religion at Texas Lutheran College, is concerned with the effects that the harsh polemic against the Jews and Judaism in the New Testament has had and may continue to have in fostering prejudice and hatred against Jews. The Gospel of Matthew, with its denunciations of "scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites," and the Fourth Gospel ("You are of your father, the Devil") have generally been considered the most offensive in this respect, though Beck maintains that the book of Acts, when read closely, turns out to be the most anti-Jewish book of all. He attributes this whole tendency to the fact that a religion, in what he calls its "adolescence"—the period when it is growing rapidly, and at the same time struggling to establish its own identity *vis-a-vis* the parent faith—inevitably exaggerates its critique and rejection of the parent. But we should be ready to move beyond this now; hence the author's call for a "mature Christianity," which does not depend for its own self-affirmation upon a denigration of others.

This is a laudable objective, but what can be done about it, since the New Testament text is what it is? At this point, where others stop, Beck advances his bold plan to engage in what would amount to nothing less than new redaction of the New Testament designed to eliminate, tone down, or reinterpret the anti-Judaic texts. In part, this affects such innocuous things as who shall be taken as the antecedent of the pronoun "they" in some part of the Passion Narrative; maybe it was the Romans rather than the Jews who were meant. Elsewhere, Beck suggests paraphrases, circumlocutions, or functional equivalents for phrases that tend to drive home anti-Jewish stereotypes. Thus the Pharisees would become "some of the religious leaders"; Paul would speak of "people of my own background" instead of "the Jews" (as if he were not one himself).

In yet other places, Beck would demote some material to footnote status, just as has been done in the RSV and other modern translations for verses deemed to have poor manuscript evidence. His reasons for doing so would be theological, historical, and ethical rather than textual, however. He maintains that in so doing we would be getting back closer to the historical Jesus, since much of this material was added later in the context of the church/synagogue struggle.

The author's purpose is commendable, but it is highly unlikely, to say the least, that such revisions would be accepted *if presented as a translation* of the New Testament. Beck's work can still be of great value, however, if those charged with preaching and teaching on Biblical texts would use it as a guide to the *interpretation* of texts containing hostile references to the Jews (and there are many of them among the stated pericopes). I would seriously recommend, therefore, the purchase of this book so as to have it at hand for this purpose. The thorough index makes its use in this manner quite feasible. Furthermore, Beck's proposed renderings are often quite attractive just on stylistic grounds; he has a fine sense of contemporary English.

Franklin Sherman
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CHRIST IN SACRED SPEECH. By Gail Ramshaw Schmidt. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986. xi + 130 pages. Paper. $9.95.

Gail Ramshaw Schmidt is a careful writer who expresses in quite precise phrases whatever subject she tackles. Consequently, the brevity of this book may be initially mistaken as a sign that it is of lesser importance. Quite the contrary! This book is an able and subtle piece of investigation and imagination. What we have here is a skillful exploration of the language of liturgy as the means by which the experience of Christ is mediated to a community of faith, and by means of which that community of faith renders its praise, prayer and thanksgiving to God through Christ.

Liturgy weaves a texture of images. We go from metaphor to metaphor, through the forest of symbols and pictures, until we become inwardly convinced of the Beyond which is mysteriously within the common, the ordinary. Ramshaw Schmidt could have expounded more on the ordinariness of Christian symbol, to show its contrast to the fabulous and fantastic aspects of the Greek religion which afforded imagistic grounding to thinkers of the third and fourth generations of the faith. But no mind: her book well shows the texture of images and metaphors woven upon the loom of Christian worship. In sacred speech about place, about time, about things, and about assembly, we learn to identify the presence of the Holy in the midst of the ordinary.

We find many reasons to praise this book. First, the way the author juxtaposes images works on the mind even as she wishes the whole of liturgy to work in the lives of the faithful. Connections are drawn; insights are received; deepening occurs. One learns to re-member the faith in mind, spirit and body.

Second, the book is ecumenically oriented for those who are of catholic temperament and who are in churches which embrace the catholic tradition: weekly eucharist, preaching which has one eye on the liturgy, lectionary series and saints' days, rootage in the baptismal covenant, historic canticles and acclamations. Lutherans, Roman and other catholics, Episcopalians will be at home with her words.

Third, there is no book on the market which is like this one. In this time of almost profligate publishing, that is not an easy statement to make. The book is scholarly without being overly technical or bogged down with footnotes to throw off the ordinary reader. I suspect that if Fortress Press could figure out how to market it for a lay audience it would sell well.

While this book's thesis is, on the surface, quite simple, the way in which the author juxtaposes various bits and pieces of liturgical speech is not only clever (although it is that) but it also serves to deepen one's consciousness and awareness of the underlying interconnections that weave a tapestry of images into a whole cloth with which the faithful may wrap themselves. For example, in the chapter, "Names for God," the biblical witness is interwoven with a discussion of three liturgical texts: the prayer of thanksgiving, the Gloria in excelsis, and the epiclesis. As we speak or sing these texts in common or through the parson in our worship, we rehearse and name our historical and personal experience of God the Holy Trinity, who is the conclusion to the chapter in the discussion of the Aaronic Blessing. In the following chapter, "Metaphors for God," the author again discusses the first person, this time using the morning psalm 95, the second person, using the Agnus Dei, and the third person using the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus.*

Underlying all of this discussion of particular texts is a concept of liturgical speech as metaphoric rhetoric; by rhetoric is meant the communal speech of formal eloquence, by metaphor is meant those forms of creative speech which, by leaping into the abyss of meaning to link previously unlinked images, brings new meaning into being. Metaphor is, thus, the primary unit of creative thinking. In brief and concise but explicit sentences, we are brought up-to-date in terms of the meaning and respectability with which metaphor is held by contemporary linguistic thinkers. Far from the mere "ornament" theory of Aristotle that metaphor is a pleasant decoration to speech but wholly unnecessary for the development of meaning in discursive thought, most

thinkers in the area of language today regard metaphor as basic to language and some go so far as to declare all words to be faded metaphors. This movement among such scholars, of course, opens the doors wide for liturgical language.

At the same time, we recognize upon reflection that language cannot ever "name" the Holy in the sense of containing its meaning. Ramshaw Schmidt refers to this breakage of the symbol as the Yes-No-Yes movement in liturgy. First we affirm the meaning the metaphor initiates: God as Rock is firm, steadfast, implacable, and a good place to hide. But then we think, no, of course God is not Rock: rocks are hard and unyielding, rocks crumble and have no mobility. All of the negations for the metaphor come to mind. So the no is spoken; the spell of metaphor is broken. But finally, our feeling and our faith lead us beyond the no-saying to a renewed Yes, "a belief in God and a faith in the resurrection that recasts their old categories, leaps over their doubts, and assembles them into the body of believers around bread and wine" (p. 26).

All of the problems which spring to mind regarding liturgical language are dealt with in the course of this book; the concern for masculine language often engages the author's attention, as does the seeming absurdity of naming God in any specific way at all. But as the author points out, even those who are mystically oriented within the church eventually must say something to the community about their experience, and when they do they are reduced to the language that we all share, and in fact they will bear no light if they seek a new language that none can understand.

The final chapter deals with immersion into the realm of sacred speech. The question is, how will people be able to grow up in the language in such a way that they will eventually be able to read Ramshaw Schmidt's book, toss it into a corner, and say, "Of course; I knew all that already." And not only knew it, but—this is far more important for the author—*live* it as a text for their own self-understanding and common future? There are hints for preachers on the liturgical homily and there is encouragement for the task, for the final chapter is more evocative than educational. The epilogue leads us into Christian silent contemplation, the awe after the Word has been spoken.

In testimony to the goodness and rightness of this book for this time, the introductory courses in worship at LSTC will use *Christ in Sacred Speech* as the first required text of the term.

Jay C. Rochelle

EXODUS, THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE. By Ernst H. Wendland. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1984; 2nd printing 1985. 289 pages. Paper. $6.95.

The People's Bible is a small paperback commentary series published by Northwestern Publishing House, the official press of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. This volume on Exodus reprints the text of the Holy Bible, New International Version, with paragraph by paragraph comments by Prof. Wendland of the WELS seminary at Mequon, Wisconsin.

This volume reflects the theological position of the Wisconsin Synod with its emphasis on a very conservative, literal interpretation of the Bible. Because the Bible is inerrant, there can be no contradictions or historical inaccuracies in it. Because the Bible is the Word of God, its validity and authority take precedence over all secular literature and over any claim of the scientific world.

If therefore there are differences between the Bible and science, the scientific claim must give way to the Biblical position. For example, according to the Bible the exodus from Egypt must be dated around 1450 B.C. under Pharaoh Thutmose III. That date, however, is at variance with archaeological evidence and other data that suggest the exodus took place around 1250 B.C. under Pharaoh Rameses II. Nevertheless in this author's view the preference must go to the Biblical date rather than the archaeological date.

When there are differing references to places like Horeb and Sinai, or to people like Jethro and Reuel, these may not be ascribed to two different traditions, as

most scholars agree they should. Rather the differences must be harmonized in some way. Horeb, for instance, must be understood as an extensive mountain range of which Sinai is an individual peak. Again Reuel must be the proper name of the father-in-law of Moses, while Jethro merely indicates the rank or position which he held in the tribe.

In assessing the Song of the Sea in Exodus 15 Wendland states, "Biblical critics are of the opinion that poetry of this quality must have been written at a much later time in history." As a matter of fact, critical scholars regard this poem as a very ancient piece. In this volume the name Jehovah continues to be used for God, even though Yahweh is now recognized as the historical pronunciation. On the basis of Genesis 4:26 the author maintains that the name Yahweh must have been known as far back as the time of Seth's birth, even though Exodus 6:3 affirms very specifically that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not know the name Yahweh.

Moses continues to be regarded as the author of Exodus as well as the entire Pentateuch because "Jesus definitely pointed to Moses as the author." It cannot be granted or admitted by Wendland that Jesus used the name Moses, as he also used the names of David, Daniel and Isaiah, not to indicate that these men wrote the books named after them, but rather as titles or headings or labels of these books in the Old Testament.

This method of interpreting the Bible may be called harmonizing or concordizing or analogizing. Its aim is to make everything "fit together." It argues that God prophesied long ago that such and such a thing would take place; it did take place as it was foretold; therefore the Bible must be inerrant. According to this technique there is really no difference between the 430 years and the 480 years which the Israelites spent in Egypt, because Paul "made use of an understatement."

In another connection this volume suggests that "the women who served at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting" may have been engaging in a sort of monastic life of chastity, fasting and praying. As a matter of history these women were "Kedeshas" or sacred prostitutes whose illicit trade was part of the contemporary worship service. When this author holds a different view than that of a more critical writer, he writes the other off with the words, "This argument of the critics is nothing but foolishness." One can indeed cover a multitude of erroneous conclusions by arguing, "The simplest meaning is no doubt the best."

The author of this review was born in and raised by the Wisconsin Synod. He is grateful for the liberal arts education which that synod made possible for him. He appreciates the linguistic training which he received at the WELS college and seminary. But he must admit that if he had continued his professional life in such a conservative church body, he might still be sharing the fundamentalist position taken by this Exodus author. He feels, however, that the Lord led him to a more mature understanding of the Bible. A key to that maturation process was a gift to finally let go of the obsession with inerrancy. It was a blessing indeed no longer to insist on making everything "fit together" like a biblical puzzle.

Alfred von Rohr Sauer
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DANIEL. By John C. Jeske. The People's Bible. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1985. 229 pages. Paper. $6.50.

Attractive pictures of books on Exodus and Daniel graced the cover of the "1986 Spring and Summer Gift Ideas" from Northwestern Publishing House of Milwaukee. Earlier I have reviewed the book on Exodus. Here I would like to express my reaction to the book on Daniel.

As the author comments, "The book of Daniel has much to say that makes one wince," so this reviewer must begin by commenting, "Author Jeske has much to say that makes one wince." Jeske regards Daniel as a book of prophecy that goes back to the Babylonian Captivity in the Sixth Century B.C.E., even though its true character as a book of Apocalyptic Literature dating from the Second Century B.C.E. is being recognized more and

more by interpreters of the Bible.

Of Daniel 7 the author claims that "such detailed prophecy is significant evidence of the inerrancy of the Scripture." Does that not sound like a grossly simplistic and mechanical theory about the truthfulness of the Bible? Of Daniel 9 the author notes that "not one of the six items prophesied by Gabriel was left undone." Can it be that simple that all prophecies just fit together so perfectly in their fulfillment? Of Daniel 11 Jeske says that it is "the most detailed prediction in the Scripture." But is it really prediction? Or is it not more likely the historical record in which an eye witness puts down very accurately what he has seen?

Fifteen of the verses in chap. 11 have to do with Antiochus Epiphanes, the persecutor of the Jews in the Second Century B.C.E., but such a lengthy description can be explained readily, if the author of this chapter is contemporary with Antiochus Epiphanes rather than living some 300 or more years before him. Daniel 11 would then not be prophecy at all, but rather the history of Antiochus's twelve year reign.

But what about the last ten verses of Daniel 11? Jeske finds them referring not to the arrogant king Antiochus Epiphanes, but to the so-called Antichrist of 2 Thessalonians 2:4. And that Antichrist is none other than the Roman Catholic Papacy! The conclusion of Daniel 11 states that this great figure will undergo a series of misfortunes. Among the major setbacks which the Papacy will suffer, according to Jeske, are such later post-biblical events as the rise of Islam, the separation of the Orthodox Eastern Church from Rome in 1054 and the Lutheran Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. What a far cry such an anti-Roman tirade is from the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue of the 1980s!

Author Jeske rightfully describes the keynote of Daniel 12 as being joy. But he does not add that the second verse of this chapter is one of the earliest references to the resurrection of the dead in the Old Testament. This text states that many people, but not necessarily all people, will finally rise from the dead. This striking promise confirms the fact that the resurrection of the dead was revealed to God's people on a gradual scale and rather late in their history. At Jesus' time, in John 5, it was revealed that "all who are in the graves" will come forth. On the other hand, Daniel 12:2 is also the first explicit reference in the Bible to the concept of eternal damnation. Resurrection and damnation are thus the specific teachings of the apocalyptic movement. The first reference to each is in the Second Century B.C.E. rather than in the Sixth Century or even earlier.

The author of this book on Daniel is the head of the Old Testament department at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin. Books like Daniel and Exodus in the People's Bible indicate how far the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is from the mainstream of Lutheranism in the area of Biblical interpretation.

Alfred von Rohr Sauer

IN WORD AND DEED: EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. Edited by Bruce J. Nichols. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1986. 238 pages. Paper. $10.95.

In Word and Deed is a collection of essays from the Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility, which met in June, 1982, at Grand Rapids, Michigan. While some of the contributors in this work are not well-known outside of Evangelical circles (Ron Sider may be at least one definite exception), all of them are representative of the more progressive (and perhaps the most promising) movement in their tradition which takes social responsibility seriously. It reflects the growing concern of Evangelicals, since the Lausanne Covenant of 1974, to stress the importance of social responsibility without denying the (more conservative focus on) "primacy of evangelism."

While the essayists rely on several sources within their tradition, they are unabashed in their scholastic capabilities to entertain the thinking of notables like Barth, Pannenberg, Moltmann, and Miguez-Bonino. They address such issues as eschatology and the Kingdom of God, soteriology, and ecclesiology from the breadth of biblical (cf. chs. 4, 5 and 8),

historical (cf. chs. 1 and 2), and constructive (cf. chs. 3, 6, 7, and 9) theological analysis. Almost all of the essays are followed by a summary of the critical responses that were offered at the Consultation. Furthermore, one may also be impressed by their willingness to expose and address the failures and weaknesses of their tradition (as in, e.g., millennialism and individualism) *vis-a-vis* social responsibility.

At the very least, this book may provide some insight for those curious about the cutting-edge issues for Evangelicals. More profoundly, however, one may find that the issues with which these writers are struggling cross denominational lines and address the types of concern we all share, though perhaps under different categories: the relationship between justification and sanctification, between personal redemption and socio-political liberation.

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OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY IN A CANONICAL CONTEXT. By Brevard S. Childs. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. xvi and 255 pages. Cloth. $16.95.

Childs, who has already written introductions to the Old and New Testaments in their canonical form, sets forth in this relatively short book a series of probes into what a canonical context might mean for the theological task. He believes that the divine revelation of the Old Testament cannot be abstracted or removed from the form of the witness which the community of Israel gave it. To give theological autonomy, for example, to the message of the Yahwist, a reconstructed source from the tenth century, would contradict his thesis. While he admits that Isaiah 1-11 is a mixture of earlier and later elements, he holds that the dynamic tension between these elements—their intertextuality—produces the authoritative canonical message.

His wholistic reading of the text often produces fresh and convincing results. Genesis 22 is not to be mined for evidence on how Israel "outgrew" child sacrifice, but, in its canonical context, it presents a test of Abraham's relation to the promise in which God's command to sacrifice his son seems to be pitted against the divine promise itself. Abraham's purchase of land in Genesis 23 shows his faith in the promise: this piece of land is a foretaste indicating that all the land would one day be his. The editorial positioning of Psalm 1 at the beginning of the Psalter affects its function. The prayers which follow are the medium through which Israel responds to the divine word. The "happy ending" on the book of Amos, even if secondary from a literary critical perspective, suggests that God continues to deal with his people in spite of the execution of divine judgment.

It is not surprising to hear from him a sharp critique of Norman Gottwald, whose sociological investigations of early Israel have located the revelatory moment in events like a reconstructed peasants' revolt or in an alleged egalitarian principle in Israel rather than in the realia of the biblical text. Childs joins his theological criticism of Gottwald to a persuasive attack on the latter's historical reconstruction.

Unfortunately, the brevity of the book and the absence of footnotes often produce a cryptic message. His criticism of Westermann's views of creation and nature (To suggest that no act of faith was involved, but only an assumption without an alternative) left me very confused. His discussion of true and false prophets led me to scratch in the margin: "I don't get it." His proposal that impoverishment of families led to selling of children into slavery (Exod 21:7) begs for further development. His rejection of homosexuality (p. 79) and pacifism (p. 185) is without a significant nuance or care for the complexity of the situation. Too often the word "man" is used where more inclusive language is required.

Still, Childs continues to pay dividends to the church and to academia with an approach to exegesis announced in 1970 with his *Biblical Theology in Crisis.* Despite the flaws in this book, it deserves to be read both for its specific contributions on details of exegesis and for its suggestions about the ultimate purpose of interpretation.

Ralph W. Klein

DŌGEN STUDIES. Edited by William R. LaFleur. Studies in East Asian Buddhism of the Juroda Institute 2. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985. 168 pages. Paper. $19.00.

Though most of our readers will not be advanced enough in Buddhist-Christian dialogue to completely comprehend the essays in this volume, they are commended to your attention. The essays are all of high quality, with the ones by Francis Cook, Masao Abe, and Hee-Jin Kim striking this reviewer as especially excellent, even luminous in parts.

Dōgen (1200-1253) was one of the most prolific of Japanese Zenmasters, and is commonly understood as the one who imported to Japan the Soto school of Zen, which emphasizes silent practice in meditation as the experience of Buddha-nature; this school is usually contrasted with Rinzai, which is more familiar to Western readers since it was the basis for the writings of D.T. Suzuki, the "Apostle of Zen to the West." Dōgen is only now becoming appreciated in the West.

The volume is difficult to summarize, since it contains essays by eight authors, but there are some common threads. Dōgen is presented as compatible with 20th century thought, with its emphasis on direct experience and concern with language (phenomenology, existentialism, linguistic analysis). Authors agree that the *Shōbōgenzō,* Dōgen's best-known work, is an analysis of personal experience from the inside so that we receive not only Dōgen's thought about the Dharma, but Dōgen himself in words. Thomas P. Kasulis brilliantly maintains that Dōgen's thought and his own become intertwined so completely in the interchange that they become each other, with neither one right nor wrong, but both become exposed in the process. Dōgen offers us a rational spirituality; language can offer us the way to truth, it can be truly an expression of the Dharma, so that we come to authentic selfhood, which automatically involves us in participation in the suffering of the world at large through wisdom and compassion. Dōgen offers us a total, deep spirituality.

Jay C. Rochelle

REFORMATION OF CHURCH AND DOGMA (1300-1700). The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Volume 4. By Jaroslav Pelikan. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984. li and 424 pages. Cloth. $27.50.

Pelikan contributes another substantial volume to his survey of the history of Christian dogma. As in vols. 1-3, he assembles heavy documentation, which he controls completely. A composite picture of doctrine emerges, in which Pelikan shows major themes in high relief, but within the themes he discusses significant individuals. Pelikan argues that in this period the tension between Augustine's doctrines of church and grace broke down the medieval synthesis because we assign a much longer background period to the Reformation than we're used to, Pelikan is enabled to offer a concise description of how the holy, apostolic church fractured into confessions. His book neatly complements John Bossy's anthropological and sociological account of the transformation of western Christendom.

Pelikan sticks ruthlessly to a discussion of doctrine. Consequently (and necessarily), his treatment is thin on context. His tendency to deal with self-conscious adherents of some version of Christianity reduces the problem of establishing real connections between thinkers. But this approach may make doctrine seem atemporal, because it emphasizes the religious over the historical setting. It may seem churlish to fault Pelikan for missing anything, given how much he *has* read, but a large gap in his secondary sources underlines this methodological problem. He overlooks the work of Giuseppe Alberigo and his students at Bologna as well as much of Brian Tierney's and Francis Oakley's recent output. For example, through a subtle insistence on reading words the way contemporaries did, Alberigo's *Chiese conciliare* (1981) portrays conciliarist ecclesiology much differently than Pelikan does. Similarly, some insensitivity to the complexity of late medieval and early modern constitutional thinking which Tierney and Oakley detail leads Pelikan to fault his subjects for fail-

ing to resolve problems they could not have seen.

This criticism points to a central difficulty of such a work. Even though Pelikan bends over backward to include competing voices, he cannot help but focus primarily on the winners—who by definition contribute most of the formation of dogma—but he thereby removes the contingency of history. Pelikan's account of the appearance of a Catholic confession at Trent is a miracle of compression, but his emphasis on results makes it impossible to understand just *how* "particular" Catholicism became after the council defeated moderate "Catholic" alternatives of thirty years' standing, as well as those fostered by the Renaissance. Here again, Alberigo's work might have helped.

Perhaps these are specialist quibbles which should have no place in any discussion of so far-reaching a work as Pelikan's. They are certainly not meant to detract from his achievement nor to charge him with writing the wrong book. Nevertheless, the story Pelikan recounts could have had other endings, and failure to admit that contributes to the same kind of retroactive history writing of which many Counter-Reformation figures were guilty. In an age when George Will can congratulate John Paul II on his campaign for doctrinal rigidity, another orthodoxy is not a primary requisite.

Thomas F. Mayer
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DREAMS, ILLUSION AND OTHER REALITIES. By Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984. vi and 366 pages. Paper. $13.95.

The cover of Wendy O'Flaherty's book says it all: A snake bites its own tail, forming a loop. A twist in the half-loop creates the symbol for infinity. The mid-section of the snake's body turns into a rope. The shadow of the rope is a snake; the shadow of the snake is a rope. To many of us, dreams partake of the unreality of that vision. They are the place where our firm notions melt away. But it is also true that dreams give expression to truth. Sigmund Freud understood that. So does a great body of Indian religious and philosophical literature. Wendy O'Flaherty, professor of history of religions and Indian studies at the University of Chicago, has produced a wonderful and wondrous volume to help Western readers enter into this amazing world of Eastern thought and belief.

Many Westerners believe, perhaps naively, that dreams are part of the soft, unreal world; and that wakefulness places one on the *terra firma* of bedrock reality. Both Easterners and Westerners have recognized that within the dream-world, it is often impossible to tell whether or not one is dreaming; I can even run a "test" in my dream to see if I am dreaming and have it fail. There is only one sure proof of dreaming, namely, waking up. But whereas the West naively thinks that one has arrived at reality upon awakening, the East knows that you can wake from a dream only to find, later on, that you were still asleep. This process of awakening from dreams is enlightenment, and it suggests that reality may be more a matter of nested dreams than a two-room Western universe of unreal-unconsciousness and real-consciousness.

O'Flaherty's method in this book is simple: In each chapter she surveys a portion of Indian religious literature, focusing on myths and stories and principally upon the Yogavasistha, a Sanskrit text from Kashmir dating from the ninth to twelfth centuries C.E. By entering the thought-world of each story, she constructs a coherent web of interrelationships which helps the reader enter that world and see it from the inside. Often a chapter ends with parallels and contrasts from Western texts.

Does this really have anything to do with, say, the dynamics of parish ministry in Kansas? Yes. First, O'Flaherty's book is the best introduction to Eastern thought which I have yet encountered, perhaps because it allows us to enter that thought-world through something we experience almost every night. Heirs of the Protestant Reformation will see interesting parallels between Eastern and Christian thought in the debate between the Cat School and the Monkey School. The Cat School says one does nothing for salvation; it is like a kitten who is carried by the scruff of the

neck by its mother. The Monkey School says salvation requires effort, like the young monkey who gets a free ride on Mother's back but has to hang on for dear life.

Second, dreams play a significant role in biblical literature as means of revelation. Jacob, Joseph, the Wise Men, Ananias, and many of the prophets can start our list of dreamers. Is the biblical understanding of dreams closer to our Western notions or does it share the Eastern thought-world?

Finally, Christian theology is concerned with repentance (= *metanoia* = "new mind"). How is repentance like waking from a dream? Perhaps the soft world of dreaming has something to teach us about the Kingdom of God!

Ron Roschke
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MINISTRY OF THE LAITY. By James D. Anderson and Ezra Earl Jones. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986. xxvi and 152 pages. Cloth. $14.95.

This book by an Episcopalian/Methodist team focuses on "the outward, active (community) life of baptized Christians." It repeats the oft stated diagnosis that current American church energy is largely self-serving: "Local congregations quickly take on the character of private membership associations." But the authors are convinced that the churches (and synagogues) "could be the best institution in society as a whole" to facilitate and plant wellness into the family and neighborhood fabrics of our culture.

They use little theological jargon or church language but they frame their discussion in the Wholeness Intentions of the Creator. The core of their material employs contemporary social and organizational theory to challenge church members to build a Good Society by developing Total Family Systems in morally responsible neighborhoods.

This is their strategy for dealing with the failure of major institutions (Schools, Media, Government, Corporations/Unions, etc.) to provide sufficiently for the Well-being of society.

Recent literature on lay ministry has focused on the potential influence of (individual) lay persons working in or around such institutions or businesses. This book challenges local parishes to help folks develop a vocabulary for Moral Neighborhoods, and then to "reward members for community activity as well as church activity."

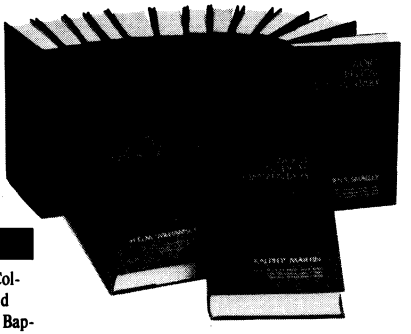
I recommend the book to church leaders and lay groups who are ready to address the wholeness needs of their communities instead of or alongside the success or survival needs of their parish.

Paul J. Schulze
Pacific Lutheran Seminary
Berkeley, California

All books reviewed in *Currents* can be obtained through Fortress Church Supply Stores — LSTC. 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60615; (312) 752-1766.

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Briefly Noted

A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane. Edited by James D. Martin and Philip R. Davies (JSOT Press, $15.95 paper; $30.00 cloth). The eleven contributors to this Festschrift for M's 65th birthday have written on Israelite religion, the children of Cain, Isa 19:25; Lam 1:3; Daniel 4; 1 and 2 Chronicles; Ben Sira; apocalyptic; the Septuagint; the Targum of Ruth, and the Samaritan Pentateuch. The jubilarian has published major commentaries on Proverbs and Jeremiah 1-25.

The Cult of Molek. By George C. Heider (JSOT Press, $13.50 paper; $28.50 cloth). In this Yale dissertation H. argues that Molek was a diety to whom children were sacrificed and that this practice was licit in Israel until the time of Josiah. Unanswered is the question of the purpose of this cult although there are some connections with necromancy and fertility rites. Among other things, the author presents a balanced and comprehensive survey of the evidence for child sacrifice in the ancient Near East.

The Song of Fourteen Songs. By Michael D. Goulder (JSOT Press, $7.50 paper; $18.00 cloth). The purpose of the Song of Solomon, in this reading, was to win acceptance for foreign marriages—here signified by the heroine's darkness, curly hair and Arabian extraction. Its implied theological message: God gave love as the basis for marriage, not birth or color. Stemming from the 4th or 3rd century, the song is an attempt to counter the exclusivism of Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Deuteronomistic Historian. It achieved favor and canonical status thanks to its message, its beauty, its eroticism (G. joins a long line of modern interpreters in finding some really sizzling lines in places like 6:12; 7:10; and 8:2, but you'll need his translation and commentary to get the full effect!), and its false ascription to Solomon.

Kingship and the Psalms. By John H. Eaton (JSOT Press, $9.95). In this second edition, E. considers nearly one third of the Psalter to be royal utterances and reconstructs from them an autumn festival in which the king passed through a lively drama of humilitation and glorification. This positive appreciation of the royal office is in contrast with many modern studies which pit the prophets against the kings to the decided disadvantage of the latter.

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