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Finally, You!

CONTENTS

Finally, You! 66
Ralph W. Klein
The Lazarus Lesson 69
Paul Bauermeister
Lessons for Westerners from Setiloane's Christology 71
Edward H. Schroeder
I Am An African 78
Gabriele Setiloane
The Church and National Security Policy 81
Lt. James K. Greutzner
Two Perspectives (Amos 5:1-17) 89
Donald W. Wicke
Let's not Miss the Theology of the Creation Accounts 97
Roger E. Timm
Beating the Wedding-Semon Blues: A New Look at Intimacy 106
Margaret Gary
The Divine Activity of the Poet 108
Elizabeth-Anne Vanek
Letter to the Editor 111
Robert Drewes
The Cloud and I 112
Robert Drewes
A Book Worth Discussing: *After Virtue* 113
Ted Peters
Book Reviews 116
Briefly Noted 124
Implementing Global Inclusiveness ..... inside back cover
William E. Lesher
Drawings by Dawn Hoy

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Finally, You!

Each of us has a Bible passage or two that will not leave us alone. Mine is Psalm 139:18. The Psalmist has already run through the joys of God's omnipresence and the marvelous divine knowledge of our bodies when he adds: How deep I find your thoughts, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I were to enumerate them, they would be more in number than the sand. Yet, at the end of the enumeration, there would still be ... you (translation: RWK).

You! When the theologians and philosophers have tooted up all of God's attributes, and when each of us has recited the many instances of forgiveness and help we have experienced from on high, there would still be that inexhaustible and unfathomable being, capable of doing or thinking or loving in some fresh, hitherto unknown way. In short, there would still be ... you. Only such a God would—could!—send his only son.

Paul Bauermeister asks, "With what shall we arm ourselves in the face of death?" His answer: with tears and with faith. Throughout his poetic sermon, he discounts one by one the alternatives. Finally, he knows, too, that even at Easter there is only ... you.

What kind of Christ-picture stands at the center of your working theology? Is Jesus only a divine revealer, not qualitatively different from Moses or John the Baptist? Is our image of him imprisoned in the glory of western civilization? **Edward H. Schroeder** repairs these common deficits as he exegetes a poem by Gabriel Setiloane. This African theologian shows that the best encounters with God impose no new obligations, but they liberate from the consequences of a grace-that-obligates. For all of us this side of Easter, we never meet the divine you apart from Jesus.

James K. Gruetzner is an avid reader of Currents—and a navy man. Not surprisingly, he has not agreed with everything written on the subject of peace and war on these pages the last thirteen years.

Now it's his turn to urge deeper study of the issues, without name-calling and without hyperbole. From his military perspective he explores the limits of deterrence and our failure to use the decades deterrence has bought to reduce the causes of conflict. He hopes for balanced commissions on social policy in the new church, that will push for consensus instead of majority control.

With what shall we arm ourselves to read Amos? Shall we approach this book as if we were historians, or as if we were literateurs? A historian assumes the goal is to get behind the text to see how it developed and assumed its present form. What the historian finds to be a haphazard accumulation of prophetic sayings strikes the literateur as a work of art by a skillful author. Who is right? Who is more helpful? The wholistic approach described in this article by **Donald W. Wicke** represents a strong tide in current biblical studies.

Just when we thought the old battle between creation and evolution was a relic of the past, it fills our newspapers, courtrooms and PTA's with no little heat. Despite the legitimate concerns of today's "creationists," they run the risk of missing the rich emphases of the biblical creation accounts themselves. **Roger E. Timm** describes what results when we compare the Bible with its ancient Near Eastern parallels, or when we explore the ecological implications of the image of God.

Margaret Gary discovered something new in Ephesians: the writer encourages Christian marriage partners to become intimate with each other by entering into and experiencing the gender-assigned characteristics of their spouse. **Elizabeth-Anne Vanek** hails the calling of the poet, particularly the Christian poet, the dangerous disturber of the status quo. **Robert Drewes** shares with us a Christian poem, and a challenging letter from his life on the Alaskan mission frontier.

At Compline we pray for the Lord to support us all the day long of this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. The Lord who will in his mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last is the one we call Jesus the Christ. Or, as the Psalmist would have it, finally, there will still be ... you.

Yours,

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

The Lazarus Lesson

Paul Bauermeister

Christ Seminary-Seminex Professor of Ministry (Pastoral Care and Counseling). The following is a sermon on John 11 preached in the chapel of Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, October 24, 1985.

With what shall we arm ourselves
in the face of death? Will it be with lies?
A frozen stiffness that mutters unbelieved
aphorisms through barely parted lips?
Seeking to keep death at a distance,
from ourselves at least?

Those around us thus arm themselves.
It is our most modern model.
But we know it leaves them broken and
alone, staggering for want of hope.

With what shall we arm ourselves
against this Timeless One? Who creeps
within our own tender flesh,
leaving his sure messages of mortality.

"Ah! Let it be with trumpets!
Trumpets to blast in his face!
Let us arm ourselves with trumpets,
as angels do!"

Trumpets arm angels, born of the breath
of God alone, neither man sired nor
woman born as we.
Angels, who neither age or die.
Leave trumpets to angels.

How to be armed then? For we are
indeed pursued. And it is no slow pace
or idle chase.
We feel the chilly breath upon our neck,
hear the soft footfalls
just behind our own.
Pursued!
And always finally terminal, caught,
terminated, brought to naught.

All this fine machinery reduced
to wind-driven dust.

"If trumpets are for angels,
let shouts be for us!
Arm yourselves, you whimpering fools,
with shouts!
Use the strength you have to press the air
from your lungs,
across the tight singing strings,
and out!
Shout defiance!
Let us see you face it boldly,
bravely,
with good courage,
with shouts!"

"Oh, please, old friend,
be my model thus, that I may
cling and imitate,
shout and pass the defiant torch
along."
But shouting turns to eternal silence
when all the breath is gone.

Then how be armed?
Each strategy offers only passing aid.
A lie is only a lie.
Trumpets are for angels who never die.
Shouting ends when we can no
longer sigh.
Is there *no* way to arm ourselves?
No weapon for us?

In Bethany we find two,
or One,

Arm yourselves!

but whether two or one, the
weapons we need, to be amaz-
ingly armed.
Armed beyond any forethought,
Armed by God.
God's gift.

Ask once more the question!
How shall we arm ourselves
to face death?
We arm ourselves with tears.

Surprised?
That this strange, human splashing
of our feelings, this facial fountain,
bubbling remnant of childhood,
is weapon against the final enemy?

Tears,
simple human drippings,
the saltiness of sadness, of relief,
of compassion;
blurring vision, dampening
cheeks.

Tears for ourselves, our loss, our pain.
Tears for others, their loss, their strain.
Tears for those who can no longer
shout or even sigh.
Tears as sign of bonds newly broken,
to be relinquished.
Tears as sacrament of old bonds
being made stronger by those very tears.
Tears,
Arm yourself with tears.
He did.
And with one thing more:

Faith.

"Lazarus, come forth!;" he shouts,
for each of us.
We have not breath enough,
nor faith for such a shout.
A little later his own shouting is stilled,
on a cross.
His final shout:
"Father, into your hands,
my spirit, my breath,
all my shouting."
He faced death armed with faith,
in a Father
his own,
and in a resurrection,
his own.
We face death better armed with faith
in a Father, having seen his Son,
and in a resurrection,
having witnessed one.
His.

How shall we arm ourselves to face
death? Not with lies
nor trumpets,
nor shouts.
But with tears
And with faith.

Or if you prefer it said more simply,
with Christ.



Lessons for Westerners from Setiloane's Christology

Edward H. Schroeder
Co-director, The Crossings Community, St. Louis, Missouri

Why Jesus? Why is Jesus necessary? Necessary for what? The answer to these questions is what Christians call "gospel," the Good News. Those two simple words, Good and News, give the basic answer to the question: Why Jesus? From the days of the New Testament onwards the answer, in all its variations, claims that in Jesus something "new" and something "good," yes, "very good," occurs in our world.

Gabriel Setiloane offers a distinctively African answer to the question: Why Jesus? in his theological poem, "I am an African." (Printed at the end of this article). This paper seeks to read his work for the Christological benefit it offers to western Christians.

When I use the term "western Christians," I have in mind the students I teach in the USA in seminary and university contexts. I also have in mind the preaching I hear in Christian congregations in my country. All too often the Christ-picture at the center of the working theology of pastors and theology students is poor. I say "poor" because the Christ being proposed does not constitute Good News. The Christ-picture is insufficiently "good" and insufficiently "new" vis-a-vis the daily lived experience of the people. "The merits and benefits of Christ," as Melanchthon once said, "are being under-used" and in the worst cases "wasted."

For this paper I wish to isolate two of those chronic deficits. The first is a "revelationist Jesus." By that term I wish to signal a Christology that presents Jesus as divine revealer, to be sure, but one who is not qualitatively different from other revealers—Moses, Isaiah, or John the Baptist. He is different quantitatively. He does supremely and perfectly what other revealers do less successfully. Had the predecessors done their job (of communicating) and had their audiences done their job (of comprehending), Jesus would not really have been necessary. But because of past human failure in both the giving and receiving, the divine-human Jesus is necessary to get revelation all the way through to humans, and to make it stick. At center there is actually nothing new in this Jesus.

A second chronic deficit in working Christologies in the West is a Jesus image that reflects our culture's image about our own Western selves. The glory of western civilization parallels a "theology of glory" Christ image. Admittedly this image is a complex composition, rooted not least in the Old Adam/Old Eve still plaguing Christians. But its persistence is inescapable; it even surfaces when Christ's crucifixion is portrayed and the proponents think they are reflecting a theology of the cross. For these two maladies, Setiloane can help us.

He frames his poem as an Afican's answer to two questions posed by an obviously Western Christian. The black-white tension is not insignificant in the poem's structure and its substance. It sets the stage for something new and good to

Why is Jesus necessary?

come back to the superior, if not even supercilious, white questioner from the black respondent. The posture imposed on the respondent is that of the underdog. Yet it is just this voice from the underside of history that has resources the questioner lacks for answering his own question. The African proclaims to the intgerrogator an image of Christ according to the theology of the cross.

The Western questioner (not even sure the African has any faith at all; perhaps he lives "like the beasts of the field") begins:

> "What of God, the Creator
> Revealed to mankind through the Jews of old,
> the YAHWEH: I AM
> Who has been and ever shall be?
> Do you acknowledge Him?"

The African does not hesitate to say yes.

> "My fathers and theirs many generations before, knew Him.
> They bowed the knee to Him
> By many names they knew Him..."

Then he recites some of these names, UVELINGQAKI, UNKULUNKULU, MODIMO, MODIRI, LESA, each one descriptive of a quality also ascribed to the Yahweh of the Hebrew scriptures. Despite these varied names, the deity they were encountering and worshipping was "He the One and only God."

And then comes the African's "But..." which signals that this history of revelation was flawed and—for all its patent goodness—it brought fateful and fatal consequences. "This God of old shone with a brightness so bright it blinded them." And even though "pity flowed in His heart," Uvelingqaki had not traffic with the living; "none should reach His presence ... unless they die." The ancestors by dying become "little gods." They alone "come into His presence ... bearing the prayers and supplications of their children to the GREAT GOD."

Although these revelations were indeed encounters with the God of the Old Testament, the primal soteriological needs of the people were not met thereby. If anything, they deteriorated as they were "blinded" and left deserted "unless they die." Even the grace-accents signaled in the descriptive terms MODIRI (Creator) and LESA (Life-giver) do not improve the situation. In fact, as we see toward the end of the poem, past graces received from God constitute the "reason," the grounds, why cleansing, peace-making, and forgiving still need to be done after all these past revelations.

The experience of Setiloane's people corroborates the biblical axiom that to whom much is given, much is required. The more grace one receives in these daily revelations of God, the more human obligation increases. The fact that the benefactor's grace is freely bestowed does not reduce the beneficiary's subsequent obligations—apart from Christ, that is.



Each additional encounter with the "One and only God" under whatever name short of the name Jesus increases human indebtedness.

Setiloane does not make this as explicit as I have above in his answer to the interrogator's first question, but in his answer to the second question ("What of Jesus, the Christ?") it is patent. And to that we must now turn. But first an observation about the African encounters with Yahweh in the poem so far.

What Setiloane's people missed in their encounter with the "One and only God" is the one element that made some, but not all, of Israel's God-encounters qualitatively different from the others. That was the encounter scholars now designate as Yahweh's unilateral promissory covenant. Not by a long shot were all of Israel's God-encounters episodes of promise. Even when the revelation could clearly be designated "grace" (Exodus and Sinai, for example), those grace-revelations expanded Israel's obligations without expanding the people's resources for meeting them.

The promissory revelations (David, Noah, Abraham, the Suffering Servant) are different, qualitatively so. They are "new" in the context of Israel's other God-encounters. And they are also eminently "good" vis-a-vis the unhappy consequences of those other revelation events. God's transactions with David, Noah, Abraham, and the Suffering Servant do not impose new obligations for grace received. In these promissory events Yahweh unilaterally binds himself to partners already over their head in debt with past obligations for past graces. These promissory encounters not only impose no new obligations, they liberate (preeminently in the Suffering Servant poems) from the consequences of past grace-that-obligates.

It is such promissory covenanting with Israel on particular occasions which makes Yahweh qualitatively different from Marduk in Babylon and Modiri in Botswana. In promissory revelations all the obligations fall to the promisor—even the consequences of unfulfilled obligations on the part of the promise-receivers.

This is precisely the direction in which Setiloane moves as he proceeds from the history of his people's Yahweh-encounters (grace, yes, but no biblical promise), to their Jesus-encounter. Again the question comes with the tone of a grand inquisitor:

> "Tell us further you African:
> What of Jesus, the Christ,
> Born in Bethlehem:
> Son of Man and Son of God
> Do you believe in Him?"

"For ages He eluded us," is the first response. In early Christian history "this Jesus" went "first to Asia and to Europe, and the western sphere." Although the northern coast of Africa saw "His

Why is Jesus Necessary?

messengers of old," they never penetrated south into Africa. "They were cut off by the desert and the great mountains of Ethiopia!" Occasionally "wanderers from behind those mountains ... told strange tales about Jesus to our fathers," but "the theme of His truths is now lost."

The second journey to Africa by Jesus was in the modern mission movement. But that second coming was also elusive.

> "Later on He came, this Son of Man;
> Like a child delayed He came to us.
> The White Man brought Him.
> He was pale, and not the Sunburnt Son of the Desert.
> As a child He came....
> "Ah, if only He had been like little Moses lying
> Sun-scorched on the banks of the River of God
> We would have recognized Him.
> He eludes us still this Jesus, Son of Man."

Nevertheless, this elusive Jesus behind the white curtain of the messengers who brought him is not imprisoned behind that curtain. The curtain is not impenetrable. Even with culturally alien features, this Jesus' life story shines through as an African's story. Setiloane says:

> "And yet for us it is when He is on the cross,
> This Jesus of Nazareth,
> with holed hands and open side,
> like a beast at a sacrifice:
> When He is stripped naked like us,
> Browned and sweating water and blood in the heat of the sun,
> Yet silent,
> That we cannot resist Him.
>
> "How like us He is,
> this Jesus of Nazareth,
> Beaten, tortured, imprisoned, spat upon, truncheoned,
> Denied by His own, and chased like a thief in the night.
> Despised, and rejected like a dog that has fleas,
> for NO REASON."

"How like us," "stripped naked like us," beaten, tortured, denied, chased, despised, rejected. The suffering servant and the word of the cross—not the color of the skin ("brown" here—neither white nor black)—this lived experience of Jesus is so "African" "that we cannot resist Him."

As "good" as it is to have an African Jesus, the Jesus so far portrayed is not "new" to African experience. In fact, the more African He is in this regard, the more oppressed, the less *good news* there is to Him. Especially if all the tribulation and rejection he endures "like us" is for "NO REASON."

But those last two words are finally not the whole truth. They *are* true, but not the whole truth. Listen as Setiloane pur-



sues the "reason" for the cross in the concluding stanzas:

"No reason, but that He was Son
of his Father,
OR ... Was there a reason?
There was indeed ...
As in that sheep or goat
we offer in sacrifice,
Quiet and uncomplaining.
Its blood falling to the ground
to cleanse it, as us:
And making peace between us and
our fathers long passed away.
He is that LAMB!
His blood cleanses,
not only us,
not only the clan,
not only the tribe,
But all, all MANKIND:
Black and White
and Brown and Red,
All Mankind!

"HO!...Jesus, Lord, Son of Man
and Son of God,
Make peace with your blood and
sweat and suffering,
With God, UVELINGQAKI,
UNKULUNKULU,
For the sins of Mankind,
our fathers and us,
That standing in the same Sonship
with all mankind and you,
Together with you,
we can pray to Him above:
FATHER FORGIVE."

There is a reason, a necessitating ground, for the suffering servant's way of the cross. It is necessary in order for there to be cleansing, peace-making, and forgiving—Setiloane's three verbs for the Christian good news. Without question, all of the three are *good*. And the new item is that these good things exist where previously their "bad" contrary existed. Previously "cleansing" (of tabu violations, of interpersonal shame) was a never-ending assignment. No sooner was one episode concluded than another one soon arose. The same was true of the ancestors: "Making peace between us and our fathers long passed away" was also an ever-recurring obligation.

And if the very ground is cleansed by the blood of "that LAMB!" and the ancestral agendas are pacified, these are only consequences of an even more cosmic pacification, "peace...with God, UVELINGQAKI, UNKULUNKULU." By virtue of that peace achieved "with your blood and sweat and suffering," Setiloane addresses "Jesus, Lord, Son of Man and Son of God," confident that he, African, stands in "the same Sonship" that Jesus enjoys, and that "together with you, we can pray to Him above: FATHER FORGIVE."

Note the brand new posture here. While still alive, and not through the dead ancestors, *we* can pray to him above. That's one element. The second is that we can pray for *forgiveness* without making sacrifices, confident that we are entitled by that sonship to be bold. The

Why is Jesus necessary?

old way was to multiply one's own sacrifices. The new way is to appropriate "that LAMB's" sacrifice and claim it as one's own. Not only is that *new,* that is unmitigatedly *good.* That is Good News.

To the question: Why Jesus? Setiloane's answer is: God-encounters apart from Jesus, even when these are encounters with Yahweh (under whatever name), never suffice to break the pendulum swing of shame/cleanness, enmity/peace, sin/sacrifice/forgiveness, that otherwise dominates human daily life. *Good* is that the pendulum has been replaced with an alternate Lord, "HO! ... Jesus." *New* is that in order to bring this to pass God did what the deity had never done before: He put the divine majesty into the pendulum system. In Jesus God's own self lived *under* the shame, the animosity, the sin and sacrifice. Like UVELINGQAKI, "He died himself." But UVELINGQAKI died so "that none should reach His presence unless they die." Jesus died so that *all* should reach God's presence without themselves having to die. That is what is NEW in Jesus, and it is incomparably GOOD.

We return in conclusion to our opening theme of lessons for Westerners.

The penchant for a "revelationist Jesus" in Western church life—both its theology and praxis—can be corrected by Setiloane's sympathetic review of the God-experience of his African people's pre-Christian religious experience, that still pinpoints the unfulfilled salvation needs left by revelationism. Needed is not more or better data and information about God for the benefit of sinners. Needed is a "new deal" from God for sinners, call it a "new testament." Setiloane shows how cosmically new the new testament in Jesus is.

To the second issue of the penchant for "theology of glory" in the Christ image among Western Christians, Setiloane's poem is a powerful antidote. First his African does not argue with the self-assumed superior tone of his western questioner. He takes the opening question at face value and then leads his interrogator, as our Lord predicted for Peter, "where he did not wish to go," namely, to the inadequacy of revelationist theology. (We do not know if the questioner heard this answer. Yet if *we* have, then *he* has.)

For the questioner's second probe, the Christological one, the African sidesteps the expected affirmation of the Nicene dogma of the full humanity and deity of Jesus. What the questioner gets instead is, of course, what we Westerners need. Especially when we are testing Christians in the southern hemisphere for their orthodoxy according to our statements, what we need is to hear them preach the Good News to us by showing how the word of the Cross addresses them as both New and Good.

With this gift from our brother Gabriel, and a growing number in the same genre coming from other African (and Asian) Christians, we can be jolted

from crossless glory to the glory of the cross. We need fresh formulations of the theology of the cross to perforate our Western cultural curtains. The crucified Jesus is not "like us," given most of the self-images we cherish and trust. But only when our self-image is crucified together with Christ so that we can say, "How like us he is,"—only then will the other word also be true for us: "We cannot resist Him." Then finally, "together with you, Gabriel, can we Westerners pray to God above: FATHER FORGIVE."



I Am An African

Gabriel M. Setiloane

What appeals most in the life and witness of Jesus Christ to an African today? "It is when He is on the cross ... stripped naked like us ... sweating water and blood in the heat of the sun ... that we cannot resist Him. How like us He is, this Jesus of Nazareth." South African theologian and poet, Gabriel M. Setiloane, at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland in Gaborone, Botswana, is a vice president of the World Methodist Council and was formerly youth secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches. "I am an African" is reprinted from *Risk* for 1973 (IX/3) with permission of the World Council of Churches.

They call me African:
African indeed am I:
Rugged son of the soil of Africa,
Black as my father, and his before him;
As my mother and sisters and brothers,
  living and gone from this world.

They ask me what I believe...my faith.
Some even think I have none
But live like the beasts of the field.

"What of God, the Creator
Revealed to mankind
  through the Jews of old,
the YAHWEH: I AM
Who has been and ever shall be?
Do you acknowledge Him?"

My fathers and theirs,
  many generations before, knew Him.
They bowed the knee to Him
By many names they knew Him,
And yet 'tis He the One and only God
They called Him:
UVELINGQAKI:
  The First One
  Who came ere ever anything
    appeared:
UNKULUNKULU:
  The BIG BIG ONE,
  so big indeed that no space
    could ever contain Him.
MODIMO:
  Because His abode is far up in the sky.
They also knew His as MODIRI:
  For He has made all;
and LESA:
  The spirit without which
    the breath of man cannot be.

But, my fathers, from the mouths of
  their fathers, say
That this God of old shone
With a brightness so bright
It blinded them...Therefore...
He died himself, UVELINGQAKI,
That none should reach His presence...
Unless they die
  (for pity flowed in His heart).
Only the fathers who are dead come into
  His presence.

Little gods bearing up the prayers
  and supplications
Of their children to the GREAT GOD...
"Tell us further you African:
  What of Jesus, the Christ,
Born in Bethlehem:
  Son of Man and Son of God
Do you believe in Him?"



For ages He eluded us, this Jesus
of Bethlehem, Son of Man:
Going first to Asia and to Europe,
and the western sphere,
Some say He tried to come to us,
Sending His messengers of old... But...
They were cut off by the desert
and the great mountains of Ethiopia!

Wanderers from behind
those mountains have told
Strange tales to our fathers,
And they in turn to others.

Tales of the Man of Bethlehem
Who went about doing good!
The theme of His truths is now lost
in the mouths of women
As they sissed their little children
and themselves to sleep.

Later on, He came, this Son of Man:
Like a child delayed He came to us.
The White Man brought Him.
He was pale, and not the Sunburnt
Son of the Desert.
As a child He came.

A wee little babe
wrapped in swaddling clothes.
Ah, if only He had been like
little Moses lying
Sun scorched on the banks
of the River of God
We would have recognized Him.
He eludes us still this Jesus, Son of Man.
His words. Ah, they taste so good
As sweet and refreshing
as the sap of the palm
raised and nourished on African soil
The Truths of His words are for all men,
for all time.

And yet for us it is when
He is on the cross,
This Jesus of Nazareth, with holed hands
and open side, like a beast
at a sacrifice:
When He is stripped naked like us,
Browned and sweating water and blood
in the heat of the sun,
Yet silent,
That we cannot resist Him.

How like us He is, this Jesus of Nazareth,
Beaten, tortured, imprisoned,
spat upon, truncheoned,
Denied by His own,
and chased like a thief in the night.
Despised, and rejected like a dog
that has fleas,
for NO REASON.

No reason, but that He
was Son of his Father,
OR...Was there a reason?
There was indeed...
As in that sheep or goat we
offer in sacrifice,
Quiet and uncomplaining.
Its blood falling to the ground
to cleanse it, as us:

He is that Lamb!

And making peace between us and
our fathers long passed away.
He is that LAMB!
His blood cleanses,
not only us,
not only the clan,
not only the tribe,
But all, all MANKIND:
Black and White and Brown and Red,
All Mankind!

HO!...Jesus, Lord, Son of Man
and Son of God,
Make peace with your blood
and sweat and suffering,
With God, UVELINGQAKI,
UNKULUNKULU,
For the sins of Mankind,
our fathers and us,
That standing in the same Sonship
with all mankind and you,
Together with you,
we can pray to Him above:
FATHER FORGIVE.



The Church and National Security Policy

Lt. James K. Gruetzner, USN
Monterey, CA

Currents has been an open forum for discussions of how our Christianity relates to national security affairs, especially the questions of nuclear weaponry. In a recent open letter from Joseph Sittler,[1] he pointed out the extreme difficulty in this age of being "absolutely required to make an absolute moral decision between absolute options ... within absolute indeterminacy." He then invited our attention to how the parables of Jesus are useful in moral reflection on these decisions in the tangled web of contemporary life. Although then not using the parables, he felt pertinent to the field of national security policy—the policy of peace and politics—and pointed out the need to go beyond this first effort.

This article started out as a quick point-by-point response to Sittler's letter. I later became persuaded that there's a need to go beyond that. A dialogue, not a debate, is required. I hope to continue the moral discussion central to the problems of peace and politics in this forum.

You who are reading this, I imagine, are mainly pastors, theologians, seminarians, or educated laity not primarily involved in the day to day aspects of national security affairs or the military. Were I speaking to my military colleagues, my words would be addressed to the problems they face, and I'd present some of the ideas of previous *Currents* articles. However, it is to you that my thoughts are directed, not to them. I am speaking as one trying to bridge the gap between the two groups, as a military officer among the *Currents'* readership.[2] I will try to present some insights from my background and experience in this area, and share some of my concerns about the trend of the discussion. You may feel uncomfortable, you will probably find it unfamiliar, you may even get angry, but you should also find it thought provoking. At the least, I hope to stimulate your own moral reflection on the issue of peace and politics.

Lowering the Barriers

Barriers to communications are being continuously erected. Increasing stridency—driven perhaps by a perception of increased urgency—continue to infect our relationships. Many in the mainline churches or in the academic world characterize those in the military as evil demonic beings, slaves to the powers that be, scheming to unleash war and pillage on a defenseless and peaceful world. (I was told recently that, in some Lutheran congregations in the San Francisco area, anti-military prejudice is as rampant, ironic, and reasoned as anti-communist feelings in the John Birch Society.) On the other hand, many in-

[1] Joseph Sittler, "An Open Letter," *CurTM* 11 (1984), p. 269.

[2] The opinions expressed in this article are my own and are not to be construed as official or reflecting the views of the Department of the Navy.

More productive dialogue is called for.

dividuals involved in the affairs of national security see many in the mainline church hierarchy and academy as crazies, with little ability to follow cause and effect not to relate to the world outside their ivory tower. The result is much noise with little light.

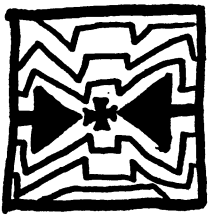
More productive dialogue and less noise is called for. This is not a simple thing: it is hard work. More is needed than just a willingness to dialogue—more even than a willingness to listen. Walking a mile or so in the other's moccasins is only a start. Here are some suggestions, however, for beginning such a journey.

First, get more familiar with the issues of national security affairs. An analogy may help explain my concern. Suppose a professor of Old Testament theology is engaged in a discussion on the multiple authorship of Isaiah. One man opposes her position. He points out that the Bible only has one book of Isaiah, and that it mentions only one author. Therefore, there can only be one author. Now, this man is quite well educated: he has a masters degree in engineering and is project design manager for his firm. He even attends church regularly and attended Sunday School as a child. The dialogue is ended by his accusing the professor of being a "Bible-doubter." Now tell me, in the absence of any other information, to whose opinion would you give more weight?

The engineer is not stupid, but he lacks the background and education in the field in question to begin effective dialogue with the professor. From his own presuppositions, the engineer's conclusions are logical and even "correct." In a shouting match at a congregational meeting, his views might even prevail. But validity would still be lacking.

In a similar way, I see opinions on the subject of peace and politics that are as simplistic and divisive as the engineer's presented in many articles in *Currents* and similar journals. Mistakes of fact are made, and seldom corrected. One recurring error, for example, equates nuclear power plants with nuclear weaponry, as if a power plant could explode in an atomic detonation. The validity of such an article would be viewed by those with knowledge of the subject with about the same amount of respect as most of you would view an article on the Bible by the above-posited engineer. Any error in technical fact calls into question the validity of other statements. Know of what you speak.

Second, cut out the name-calling. I'm sure the engineer's denunciation of the "Bible-doubter" was sincere, but it was wrongly applied. Similarly, the characterization of people in the military or defense areas as demonic is wrong. One peace group recently had as part of their recruiting slogan that something needed to be done "while the generals plot war." Such stereotypes do no one good. In my experience, most military officers in command make a valid effort to do what's right and ethical. Name



calling and stereotypes, whether about dumb blonds, lazy blacks, evil generals, or naive pastors, are easy ways to denigrate others.

Third, reduce the hyperbole. For example, several writers have attacked the existence of nuclear weaponry on the ground that it's idolatrous, as if people were actually worshipping nuclear weapons or placing their full hope, confidence, and trust in them. Similarly, placing one's confidence in a nuclear arms freeze, arms talks, or any of various peace initiatives can become idolatrous. Anything which displaces Jesus Christ as our Lord and God is idolatry and needs to be guarded against. But we should not use strawman characterizations of others' actions in order to justify our own political persuasion.

Deterrence— Role, History, Problems

The theory of deterrence has emerged as a growing subdivision of the policy sciences. Deterrence is basically "persuading an opponent not to initiate a specific action because the perceived benefits do not justify the estimated costs and risks."[3] Academics often distinguish between deterrence based on "punishment" (destroying large portions of an opponent's population and industry) and deterrence based on "denial" (preventing an opponent from attaining his goals on the battlefield).[4] In the strategic case, this is often described as simply threatening overwhelming punishment: the destruction of the homeland. (In fact, the United States ceased deliberate targeting of Soviet civilians some time ago because we believe, in Defense Secretary Weinberger's words, "...threatening civilian populations is neither a prudent nor moral means of achieving deterrence, nor, in light of Soviet views, is it effective."[5])

Most of the writing in *Currents* and similar journals focuses solely on strategic deterrence by punishment using nuclear weapons. We should keep in mind that strategic deterrence is only one part of peace and politics, and relatively simple compared to conventional deterrence. Nuclear weapons have not eliminated conventional conflict nor the need for conventional deterrence, as was once thought. Conventional deterrence demands more attention than has been given it so far, and I hope someone addresses it here in the future. However, strategic deterrence is sufficiently complex to be bereft of simple answers and to warrant our sole attention here.

Deterrence as a means claims nothing more than the prevention of armed conflict: it does not promise a reduction in

[3] John J. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1983), pp. 14-15.

[4] Glen H. Snyder, "Deterrence by Denial and Punishment," *Research Monograph No. 1* (Princeton, NJ: The University Press, 1959).

[5] Caspar W. Weinberger, *The Annual Report to the Congress, Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary of Defense, Fiscal Year 1984* (U. S. Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 55.

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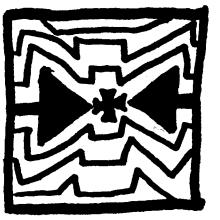
armaments; it does not promise to prevent other forms of conflict; it does not promise harmony among nations; and most importantly, it does not promise to make enemies into friends. Its sole claim is to prevent war *now,* buying time to eliminate or reduce the sources of conflict.

When war has been averted, deterrence policy has succeeded. That military armaments world-wide have not been made obsolete, or that strategic warfare would—despite the best efforts to avoid residential areas and to minimize the collateral effects of U.S. retaliation—result in killing millions of innocent Soviet citizens is not a reflection on deterrence policies *per se.* Such killing is a reflection of the existence of a conflict: a conflict of cultures and ideals. The conflict exists between the relatively free, individualistic, and rather disorganized lifestyle and culture of the West, and the more totalitarian (or authoritarian), organized, structured societies of the East. Those radical differences between political philosophies are the key sources of conflict, and no amount of pontificating or dreaming about the abolition of weapons is going to change that. These core differences have not as of yet been eliminated or reconciled during the time bought by strategic deterrence. Eliminate the conflict, and the matters of weaponry tend to take care of themselves. Eliminate the weapons and the conflict remains.

Limiting the discussion of deterrence to the strategic case, consider the development of U.S. deterrence policy. In the 1950s, the United States used the threat "to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of (the United States') own choosing"[6] to deter. Since, as is often noted, the United States is mainly a *status quo* power, it worked: neither the United States nor the Soviet Union started a war. The threat of nuclear war against communist China was a key item in bringing a negotiated end to the fighting on the Korean peninsula. Nuclear weapons were a cheap solution for the United States. When faced with the growing Soviet threat manifested in the Czechoslovakian coup (1948), the Berlin blockade and the Korean war, the United States—and our NATO allies—were unwilling to pay the price in terms of resources and manpower to meet that threat solely on a conventional level.

With the development by the Soviet Union of a capability to bring the continental United States under nuclear attack, massive retaliation was replaced by flexible response, the key idea of which is a guaranteed second-strike capability: given any type of Soviet attack, the United States could retaliate effectively, and, in a general nuclear war, could destory the Soviet Union as a modern, functioning nation-state. In other words, there is no incentive for the Soviets to go

[6] John Foster Dulles, Speech Given Before the Council on Foreign Relations, January 12, 1954.



to war. For our part, the United States government has long recognized that there is no such thing as a "winnable nuclear war." Thus both sides could only lose. Even so, I have some problems with present day deterrence policy.

(1) I am not convinced that it was the best moral decision for my government to place the people of the United States in a hostage situation. The idea of defense—of protecting—was abandoned. As it now stands, if anyone lobs a nuclear missile at the United States, *nothing* can be done to stop it. That doesn't seem very good.

(2) The concept of nuclear deterrence depends upon both sides accepting that their own destruction would be assured, or more precisely, that the damage would be unacceptable. There is some doubt that such is the belief in the Soviet Union, at least not on as large a scale as it is here. The Soviet strategy for many years has embodied the idea of surviving a strategic nuclear exchange, despite the horrors of a post-nuclear war world and, potentially, even a nuclear winter.[7] Western analysts have traditionally divided warfare into "conventional" and "nuclear" varieties. Soviet thinkers have traditionally analyzed warfare in terms of purpose and scope: strategic, tactical. A tendency in the West has been to equate strategic nuclear warfare, any use of nuclear weapons, with the total destruction of humanity. This mind-set has at times led to an ostrich-like approach to the problem of ensuring a credible deterrence, and is only now being addressed in the United States.

(3) In my view, the present concept of strategic deterrence by punishment breaks down when there are a multiplicity of actors. As more and more nations develop nuclear weapons, the mathematics of deterrence becomes more and more difficult.

There are some efforts taking place now in this country to move strategic doctrine away from the assured destruction concept. The best known is the Strategic Defense Initiative. The main idea is to erect a system which is totally defensive (i.e., it cannot be used to attack the enemy homeland) which would reduce the effectiveness of ballistic missiles of all ranges. This would encourage a reduction in the nuclear missile stockpile, since the relative worth of each would have decreased (i.e., it costs significantly less to shoot one down than to produce and use one). This becomes especially important as the number of nations which are capable of nuclear attack increases. With the President's recent announcement that he would invite the Soviet Union to take part in the use of space based strategic defensive systems, a step may have been taken in shifting to a strategy of mutual assured security as envisioned in the re-

[7] See Turco et al., "The Climatic Effects of Nuclear War," *Scientific American* (1984), pp. 33ff, for a presentation of the hypothesis. But be wary: the hypothesis is not based on either the U.S. or Soviet philosophy for the use of nuclear weapons and is considered by many to be therefore fatally flawed.

More productive dialogue is called for.

cent Lutheran Church in America social statement on Peace and Politics.[8] Some oppose this new program on the grounds that it would "thus infect with our evil the unoffending stars."[9] Nice poetry, maybe, but it bothers me. There seems to be something basically wrong with judging it better to have a nuclear weapon explode in Chicago rather than destroying it where it won't kill people or harm the environment.

Peace, Love, and Justice

It seems obvious to me that we have not used the past few decades, which deterrence has bought on the strategic level, to reduce the causes of conflict. None of the two to five (depending on who's counting) unilateral arms reduction actions of the United States in the last 40 years has been reciprocated by the Soviet Union. In fact, an increase in Soviet military strength has occurred: a distinct consistency from Stalin to Gorbachev.

Part of this may be due to the different concepts of peace as used in the English and the Russian languages. The English concept of peace in international relations embodies a relative equilibrium and the absence of war. The Russian word usually translated "peace"—*mir*—has as its primary meaning "the world and its inhabitants." In Leninist thought, as practiced in the Soviet Union, this has come to embody a continuous struggle to acheive a worldwide, Marxist, classless society.[10] This is what is meant when a Soviet spokesman talks about peace.

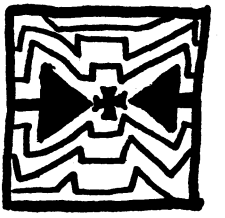
As we strive with our national security policy for both freedom from war and the freedom of people, we ought also strive to spread the peace of God which surpasses our human understanding. The former is a governmental responsibility; the latter, God's. And that means us. God has commissioned us as his agents to spread his peace. God gives us the responsibility for our government. As such, we must use our concepts of peace, love, and justice to influence governmental programs.

How can we use the time bought by deterrence to move the Soviet Union toward a non-expansionistic foreign policy? What should be the tie-in of our national security policy with a policy to increase political and economic freedom both within the Soviet bloc and elsewhere in the world? Are there better methods of deterrence to buy more time—by punishment or by denial—than those in use or contemplated? Deterrence works best when

[8] "Peace and Politics," a Social Statement of the Lutheran Church in America, adopted by the Twelfth Biennial Convention, Toronto, June 28-July 5, 1984. Interestingly enough, the Soviet Union has maintained both a strong ballistic missile defense program as well as a strong civil defense program while the U.S. basically abandoned both following the ABM treaty.

[9] Sittler, p. 272.

[10] Paul H. Nitze, "Living With the Soviets," *Foreign Affairs* (Winter, 1984/1985), for a fuller development of this difference.



there are only two or three "sides." As more nations develop nuclear weapons, what structures and methods are required to reduce the risk of a general war? This last question is especially vital considering a possible increased North-South polarization of the world.

I've talked above about national security affairs. One other issue which seems particularly in need of further discussion within the church is that of material need. It is easy for us in the wealthy West—where even our poorest are better off than many people in some parts of this planet—to ignore the material impoverishment endemic in some parts of the world. Discussions in the areas of population control, conservation, resource recycling, as well as the development of new resources and energy supplies demand our attention. It is popular to point out that technology has brought a host of new problems not foreseen. Many of those same decriers neglect the hope for a better life which technology also affords. The use of God's gifts of technology in protecting the environment and enhancing human life is oft forgotten.

Continuous Composting

Sittler proposed the creation of an ongoing "Commission of Theology and Ethics" in the new Lutheran Church.[11] This would be an excellent forum for the church to get involved in the ethical issues facing us today. I know of nothing like it now existing in this country. I share the hope for such a structure and, to that end, voice the following concerns and recommendations to assist such a commission in encouraging true communication and concern about ethical issues.

First, the commission must be inclusive. It must not be loaded nor stacked. If its members are already agreed as to the results of any discussion, if all share the same basic prior viewpoint, nothing is gained but propaganda. God is often used as a political power chip. The Moral Majority identifies with many hard-line conservative issues, be it abortion or defense spending. Note also that many of the more mainline church pronouncements have a rather left-wing orientation. (Although I disagree with some of its particulars, the above mentioned statement on Peace and Politics appears to be a nice exception.) The recent declaration by one Christian group that the United States was the major threat to world peace was so ludicrous as to beg a second look. Each side claims to have God on its own side to the exclusion of others. In an era of indeterminacy, ought there not be room in the fellowship for differing opinions?

Secondly, steps should be taken to ensure that some of the intelligent, concerned, and spiritually endowed people on the commission are knowledgeable of the field in question. Any discussions on national security affairs—peace and

[11] Sittler, p. 272.

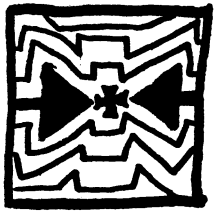
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politics—should include people from the military and defense establishments. Especially important would be strategic planners and area specialists from the diplomatic service. Discussion on economic and resource allocation should include people from the business community that creates jobs and produces material, as well as specialists in world trade, agriculture, and other pertinent areas.

Thirdly, the commission should take its discussions into the secular arena. The discussion on peace and politics should be presented not only within the church, but in the national security and foreign policy fora. This is where the church can regain some of its lost credibility. Only with an adequate and specialized knowledge of the fields involved will anyone really listen to the church's voice. As the saying goes, "Everyone is entitled to his own opinions; no one is entitled to his own facts."

Finally, the commission should seldom take a position as a body on the issues where a significant difference of opinions exists. A church which takes an absolute position in an area of absolute indeterminacy alienates those who disagree—with little assurance of being able to justify the alienation. When a church convention declares that capital punishment is not appropriate, it excludes those who disagree—at least those who would take the church seriously.

The suggestion of a continuing community of moral reflection to form a compost heap of reflection is a good one. With care, this compost heap can become a source of nourishment for the church and for the world. But a compost heap must be properly used. Elsewise, the only result is the smell.



Two Perspectives (Amos 5:1-17)

Donald W. Wicke
Grace Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA

A lawyer in the courtroom desires a number of witnesses in order to get a variety of perspectives on what happened. From their testimonies one is better capable of piecing together the past event. In football circles there is discussion of the feasibility of using cameras during the game in order to aid the officials in making their calls. The intent is to view a play from a variety of angles in order to eliminate errors of judgment.

In biblical studies today there are a variety of perspectives from which one can view the text. Not long ago the biblical scholar was an historian. Today (s)he may be, in addition, a literateur or a sociologist. I believe that these additional perspectives greatly help us in understanding the biblical text. They need not be mutually exclusive, vying with one another for supremacy. On the contrary, they can be mutually supportive, even though at times they are mutually corrective.

We will view Amos 5:1-17 from two perspectives. In part I, we will listen to the testimony of the historian, drawing heavily from the commentaries of Hans Walter Wolff and James Luther Mays.[1] Their historical method will be distinct from the literary method used in part II. It will become evident that one's perspective determines what one looks for and what one sees.

-I-

According to the judgment of the historian, Amos 5 is not a work of art. An editor apparently brought a number of Amos fragments together in a haphazard manner. Such a negative judgment may be traced back as far as Jerome, who concluded that the prophet was a peasant who was "unskilled in speech."[2] Wolff reflects a similar estimation when he asserts that "from v. 1 through v. 17 the utterances are so curiously linked with one another on the one hand, and so difficult to understand in their mutuality on the other...."[3]

The historian attempts to get behind the text in order to better understand it. He assumes that if one becomes aware of how the passage developed and assumed its present form he is better capable of understanding it. According to Wolff's reconstruction there is a core of five authentic oracles from Amos of Tekoa. These were spoken in Bethel and/or Samaria during the reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, about 760 B.C. His message is characterized by its harshness. "A stench of death permeates all the original oracles of Amos in this section."[4]

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[1] Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977). James Luther Mays, *Amos* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969).

[2] *Commentariorum in Amos* (PL, v25 [Parish, 1884], 990).

[3] Wolff, p. 231

[4] Wolff, p. 251.

One's perspective determines what one looks for and what one hears.

These oracles were first collected and expanded by Amos' disciples a generation later, about the time of the Syro-Ephramite War (734 B.C.). The disciples toned down Amos' harsh words of judgment and utilized the prophet's authority in order to urge their contemporaries to repentance in order to avoid Yahweh's righteous anger. Whereas Amos proclaimed Yahweh's anger and punishment as a certainty, his disciples proclaimed it as a possibility. Their primary goal was to avert the judgment. Yahweh's support and favor was a possibility if only the nation would be faithful.[5]

It is generally agreed by historians that there was further supplementation to the text more than a century later during Josiah's reform in Judah (about 620 B.C.). The intent was to apply the tradition of Amos to the southern kingdom. The message of Amos regarding Yahweh's righteous anger and the message of his disciples urging to repentance in order to avoid destruction was *apropos* once again. But once again the words did not accomplish the hoped-for results. Judah was destroyed and exiled in 587 B.C.

The first authentic word of Amos in chapter 5 is his lament (v. 2) with its explanation (v. 3). The prophet mourns Israel's death as if it had already happened. The audience would have been aghast. Imagine attending your own funeral!

"Fallen, no more to rise,
is the virgin Israel;
forsaken on her land,
with none to raise her up."

The reason for the prophet's lament is a one-sided military defeat. Ninety percent of the soldiers were killed in battle (v. 3). It was certainly a disturbing message for his contemporaries.

The second word of Amos (vv. 4-5) is called a "speech of admonition."

"Seek me and live;
but do not seek Bethel,
and do not enter into Gilgal
or cross over to Beer-sheba;
for Gilgal shall surely go into exile,
and Bethel shall come to naught."

Historians have concluded that such admonition was not a part of Amos' repertoire, but they seem to credit the prophet with this saying anyway. Wolff admits that this speech is unique among the oracles of Amos and then proceeds to explain that his admonition is overshadowed by his announcements of judgment. Mays concedes that "Exhortation is a marginal feature of Amos' prophecy."[6] It can be attributed to the prophet because of its radical nature. Amos urges the people not to seek Yahweh in the sanctuaries. In fact, life is not found there. According to Wolff, the prophet

[5] Amos' authority must have been greatly enhanced when the Assyrians destroyed Israel in 722 B.C. His harsh message of judgment, rejected by his contemporaries and toned down by his disciples, proved to be on target.

[6] Mays, p. 89.



is urging them not to seek the word of Yahweh from the priests, but to receive it from him, Yahweh's prophet. It is no wonder that king and priest conspired to silence the word of the prophet (7:10-17).

Wolff and Mays agree that v. 6 is a later addition. Wolff believes that it was inserted at the time of Josiah.

The third authentic word is a "woe oracle" (vv. 7, 10).

"Oh you who turn justice to wormwood,
and cast down righteousness
to the earth!
They hate him who reproves in the gate,
and they abhor him who speaks
the truth."

Wolff changes the text to read "Woe to you who turn justice to wormwood." Mays states that the plural participle has the effect of a woe pronouncement. It is a statement of Israel's guilt and an announcement that the curses of the covenant are operative.

The "woe oracle" was disturbed by the insertion of the "hymn" (vv. 8-9). Mays notes that this and other hymn fragments in the book of Amos (4:13 and 9:5-6) "stand distinct from their immediate context in style and subject."[7] Wolff offers an hypothesis suggesting how the woe pronouncement was disturbed. He suggests that vv. 8-9, along with v. 6, were originally written in the margin "from whence it could easily have been inserted into the body of the text at different places during the course of the next copying."[8]

The fourth word of Amos is a "judgment speech" (v. 11).[9] It puts forward the evidence ("you trample upon the poor and take from him exactions of wheat") and the consequences ("you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine"). The latter are futility curses which are found elsewhere in the Old Testament in covenant contexts. They are Yahweh's punishment for unfaithfulness to his covenant demands.

The final prophetic speech is an "oracle of judgment" which consists of an accusation (v. 12) and the announcement of coming punishment (vv. 16-17). This follows the pattern for such forms elsewhere in the prophets.

Verse 13 could not have come from the mouth of Amos. "That it does not derive from Amos, nor even from the first collection of 'the words of Amos from Tekoa,' follows from the fact that Amos was not permitted to belong to the prudent keepers of silence (3:8), and that the verse, together with vv. 14-15, interrupts the connection of 5:12, 16-17."[10] Vv. 14-15 are also an addition which derive from the prophet's disciples. The harsh message of the prophet is altered. The people are urged to change their ways, "it may be that the

[7] Mays, p. 83.
[8] Wolff, p. 233.
[9] Mays, p. 90, on the other hand, understands v. 11 as part of the woe pronouncement (vv. 7, 10).
[10] Wolff, p. 233.

One's perspective determines what one looks for and what one hears.

Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph."

What we have, then, is a haphazard accumulation of authentic sayings of Amos, which were expanded. The development and growth of the text was accidental and uncontrolled. This explains the untidy format of this section of the book of Amos.

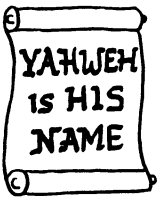
-II-

Now we intend to examine this text from another perspective. The literateur asks different questions of the text. The focus is more on the text as we have it. (S)he is not so much interested in historical questions. If the text did have a pre-history (that is, if it developed and grew over a period of time), it is beyond finding out. And besides, it is questionable whether knowing it would aid in our understanding.

A close examination of this text will reveal that it is not haphazardly put together. On the contrary, it is a work of art by a skillful author. And due to its artistic form we will examine it from the inside out. We will begin with the hymn (vv. 8-9) and work simultaneously backward to the beginning and forward to the end. It is similar to dropping a pebble into a pond and watching the ripples flow outward.[11]

A Lament of the Prophet (vv. 1-3)
B Priestly Torah (vv. 4-6)
C Injustice in the gate (v. 7)
D Hymn (v. 8 a-c)
E The Name (v. 8d)
D1 Thanksgiving (v. 9)
C1 Injustice in the gate (vv. 10-13)
B1 Priestly Torah (vv. 14-15)
A1 Lament of the Nation (vv. 16-17)

[11] For the basic outline see Jan De Waard and William A. Smalley, A *Translator's Handbook of the Book of Amos* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1979).



The hymn (vv. 8-9). At the heart of the hymn is the phrase "Yahweh is his name!" For the Israelites it is a phrase which was filled with power and which brought comfort to the soul.[12] Each time they entered the sanctuary the name was heard often. The descendants of Aaron gave the benediction:

> "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace. 'So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.' " (Numbers 6-24-27)

The name here in Amos occurs in the context of a hymn which was undoubtedly heard in the sanctuary. The first part (vv. 8a-c) is more properly called the hymn. It celebrates Yahweh as creator of the universe. The focus is on nature: the luminaries, the cycle of day and night, rain. Because of Yahweh's creative power, there is order and stability in the universe. This results in blessing for all: the rain falls on the just and on the unjust alike.

The second part (v. 9) is thanksgiving. The focus is no longer cosmic, but history. Yahweh is the one who controls the events of history,

> "who makes destruction flash forth against the strong, so that destruction comes upon the fortress."

Amos' audience probably understood this word in a positive sense. After all, Yahweh had promised to defend Israel against all her enemies. But Amos, we know, is moving in another direction. In fact, the meaning for Israel is ambiguous. Is it possible that Israel could be "the strong" against whom Yahweh's power will be unleashed? We know that is Amos' intent from his oracles against the nations (1:3-2:16). He mentions Israel's neighbors in turn, enumerating their sins and announcing Yahweh's judgment against them. But, surprisingly, his hidden agenda comes sharply into focus only in the final oracle, which is directed against Israel!

The ambiguity is subtle. When his audience heard these words, they, assuming that the prophet was enforcing their expectations of Yahweh's support, would respond with praise. But Amos is leading them to realize that the proper response is not praise, but lamentation.[13]

Injustice in the gate (vv. 7, 10-13). The focus shifts from the temple to the city gate[14] where legal proceedings were conducted by the elders. The historan wants to make v. 7 a woe pronouncement, but it could be a general accusation made by a prosecutor. Elsewhere

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[12] Elsewhere Amos reinterprets the presence/name of Yahweh as threatening so that no one wishes to utter the name (6:10).

[13] C. Westermann, *Elements of Old Testament Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), p. 199, states that "Blessing is such an indisputable part of worship that the prophets never attacked blessing or priestly bestowal of blessing in their cult critique." In light of the above, this must now be re-evaluated.

[14] The phrase "in the gate" occurs in vv. 10, 12, 15.

One's perspective determines what one looks for and what one hears.

Amos accuses his contemporaries of perverting justice. Then vv. 10-13 might be the evidence, or the specifics, of his accusation.

The specifics of the accusation are encased by subtle personal referents to the prophet himself. Vv. 10 and 13 are in the third person, but in spite of that, I think Amos is referring to himself. He is not speaking personally, but as Israel's prosecutor. "They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth." (v. 10) In fact, the prophet is the one who is hated and abhored. The prophet and his message are rejected. "He who is prudent will keep silent in such a time; for it is an evil time." (v. 13) There is both humor and irony here. Even as Amos stands before them speaking his words of accusation, he offers a word of wisdom. But he does not take his own advice. He is a fool! He must speak in spite of negative repercussions. "The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?" (3:8)

In vv. 11-12 the focus is not on the victim, but on the perpetrators. They may very well be the *ipsissima verba* of an accuser. The word in v. 10 is *môkîah*. Wolff suggests that "he was the one in the circle of the elders who determined which party was in the right."[15] I believe he was not a nameless elder, but the prophet, Amos himself. And he speaks the truth: Israel is in the wrong.

Priestly torah (vv. 4-6, 14-15). The movement is from the temple (vv. 8-9) to the city gate (vv. 7, 10-13) and back to the temple again. In these verses the prophet is mimicking the priests. These words are reminiscent of priestly torah or instruction. Taken at face value they seem to offer hope for Israel, a way to avert the judgment of Yahweh. And that was most certainly the priests' intent. But one wonders whether the prophet is only using their words to emphasize his own message. In addition, one wonders whether the prophet is being a bit facetious. In v. 15 does he really think that Yahweh might "be gracious to the remnant of Joseph?" Or is he teasing his audience as he did on another occasion: "As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who dwell in Samaria be rescued..." (3:12).

It is noteworthy that those sections in which the prophet quotes the priests, in the hymn and the priestly torah, are generally considered to be not authentic or problematical. Now we see why they appear to be out of character. They seem of offer hope, but in reality Amos is undermining the message of the priests and underlining his own by utilizing their own words and forms.

The lament (vv. 1-3, 16-17). Finally we come to the end ... or to the beginning! The first lament (vv. 1-3) is a saying of the prophet. Technically, Amos is not responding to a catastrophe, but to Yahweh's word (v. 3). Yahweh has spoken and it will come to pass. The pro-

[15] Wolff, p. 246.



phet is the one who is in on Yahweh's intentions; he is the one who has heard his revelation. And he shudders at what he hears.

The second section (vv. 16-17) is a divine saying. It is a simple statement of fact: there will be weeping and mourning throughout Israel. There are two points made. First, the weeping is very thorough. The open area at the city gate is filled with mourners. In fact, the area cannot contain them. The crowd spills over into the narrow streets twining through the city, and even into the countryside. The second stunning point which is made is that the weeping is due to Yahweh's presence among his people (" 'for I will pass through the midst of you,' says the Lord"). The prophet's punch line is indeed shocking! The people were confident and reassured because Yahweh had promised, "I will be with you." But the prophet announces that his presence is the basis for lamentation.

The unit as a whole (5:1-17) appears to be a well-constructed piece with a unified theme and goal. Forms from different areas of life are used to drive toward the main point. The prophet's goal was, first of all, to undermine the people's false confidence in cliches which were promulgated in the temple, and also to open their eyes to the reality of their own unfaithfulness and Yahweh's pending judgment.

-III-

From a reading of church history one notices that methodology in biblical interpretation is a variable. A variety of methods have been utilized in supporting the church's task of proclamation. For some two hundred years we have searched the scriptures from an historical perspective. The results have been diverse, but the method has been the same.

During our generation a variety of methods have developed, and that has allowed us to have a panoramic view. We have the advantage of a number of witnesses, which ought to improve our vision.

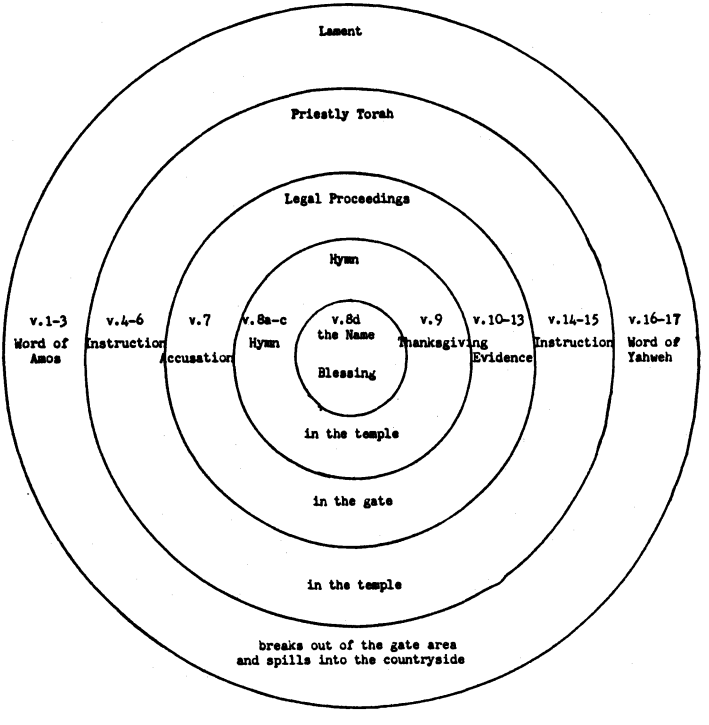
The historical method is analytical and diachronic; the literary method is synthetic and synchronic. The approaches might be compared to the difference between a movie picture and a photograph. The historian attempts to reconstruct a piece of the past, in our example the origin and development of a word of Amos. He is actually looking behind the text. The literateur, on the other hand, attempts to appreciate the depth in the photo.[16] His focus is on the text itself.

[16] Martin Buber was not comfortable with the historical method. In his article, "Abraham the Seer", he states "Here I shall speak not of what is behind the biblical story of Abraham, but of what is in it." Nahum Glatzer, ed., *On the Bible* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982), p. 22.

One's perspective determines what one looks for and what one hears.

The literary method, and a canonical method which has much in common with it, has developed out of a dissatisfaction with the historical method. It was a natural development on account of the spirit of our times. During our generation we have witnessed a reaction against overspecialization. This is especially evident in the field of medicine which has developed a wholistic approach to health. That development from specialization to a wholistic approach can be seen in the movement in biblical studies from form criticism, which focuses on small units, to rhetorical criticism, which focuses on larger units, to canon criticism, which focuses on the whole. The catchphrase now is "the whole is more than a sum of its parts."

Some will be driven to ask "But who is right?" I would prefer to ask "Which is more helpful?" I believe we must evaluate a method on the basis of its value in supporting the church's proclamation. And I suspect that preachers will find it easier to move from text to sermon on the basis of the literary method.



Let's Not Miss the Theology of the Creation Accounts

Roger E. Timm
Assistant Professor of Religion, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA

The Current Creationist Controversy

The Scopes "monkey trial" settled the issue once and for all—or so we thought until five or ten years ago. The 1925 trial of John Thomas Scopes for violating the Tennessee state law prohibiting the teaching of evolution in public schools is remembered in our American consciousness as the classic confrontation between Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan, in which a belief in the literal truth of the creation account in Genesis 1 was held up to be untenable for thinking people. It turns out that this little segment of our American mythology is not true. On the one hand, the trial was not in fact a victory for the supporters of the teaching of evolution, since Scopes was found guilty, and the law under which he was convicted was not declared unconstitutional until 1968. On the other hand, belief in the literal truth of the creation account continues to be held widely and firmly in our country.

Commitment to the literal truth of the Genesis creation account—a position typically referred to as creationism—has been demonstrated in the past few years by a number of political moves taken in an attempt to ensure that the creationist point of view receives a hearing in the public school system. Although laws prohibiting the teaching of evolution, as well as laws requiring the teaching of the biblical view of creation, have been declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court, contemporary creationists have employed several other tactics to achieve their goal.[1] They have argued, for example, that the theory of evolution is a tenet of secular humanism and as such is a part of a religious system. The exclusive teaching of the evolutionary theory of the origins of the universe in the public school system is, from this point of view, the establishment of a particular religion. Or, conversely, this situation constitutes a limitation of the free exercise of the religion of those public school students who are creationists. In other words, the teaching of the theory of evolution in public schools is a violation of the freedom of religion guaranteed in the First Amendment to our United States Constitution. Such was the case made by Kelly Segraves in California. In March of 1981 a state judge in California ruled that the religious rights of Kelly Segraves' child were not violated, but the judge did order the California Board of Education to instruct teachers in California public schools not to be dogmatic in their presentation of the evolutionary theory of human origins. In a sense both sides won a partial victory in this case: The schools may continue to teach the theory of evolution, but the children of creationists are protected from dogmatic

[1] Gerald Skoog, "The Textbook Battle Over Creationism," *The Christian Century*, 97 (10/15/80), 974f.

presentations of that theory.[2]

A second tactic employed by creationists has been to attempt to enact state legislation requiring the balanced treatment of evolution and "scientific creationism" in public schools. Creationists recognize that it is unconstitutional to require the teaching of the biblical view of creation in public schools. They believe, however, that a creationist viewpoint can be extracted from the biblical context and taught free of any religious trappings. This view is called "scientfic creationism" or "creation science." Although the understanding of scientific creationism varies from author to author, in general creation science entails belief in (1) the creation of humans and the universe out of nothing, (2) the insufficiency of mutation and natural selection to explain the process of evolution, (3) the stability of originally created kinds and the impossibility of evolution from one such kind to another, (4) a distinct ancestry for humans and apes, (5) the explanation of certain geological phenomena by catastrophism (e.g., by a worldwide flood), and (6) the relatively recent formation of the earth (i.e., six to ten thousand years ago).[3]

Although attempts have been made in a number of states to pass legislation requiring the balanced treatment of scientific creationism and evolution, creationists have been successful only in Arkansas and Louisiana. In March of 1981 the Arkansas state legislature passed Public Act 590 requiring the "balanced treatment of creation-science and evolution-science in public schools" via lectures, textbooks, library materials or educational programs that "deal in any way with the subject of the origin of man, life, the earth, or the universe."[4] The American Civil Liberties Union, supported by a broad coalition of religious leaders and scientists, filed a federal lawsuit against this act, and on January 5, 1982, United States District Court Judge William Overton declared the law unconstitutional since it violated the constitutional safeguards against the establishment of religion. In effect Judge Overton ruled that "scientific creationism" is as religious as "biblical creationism" and that creationism—at least as presented in the Arkansas case—cannot be presented in a way that removes it from its foundation in the biblical view of creation. "Scientific creationism" is in its essence, the judge argued, a religious position, not a scientific one.[5]

About the same time Judge Overton was ruling the Arkansas law unconstitutional, the Louisiana state legislature was passing a similar law. Later in 1982, a federal judge ruled that the Louisiana state constitution did not allow the legislature to set such curricular standards, but later still the state supreme court disagreed. This case is now under appeal and at this time a decision has not been reached.[6]

A third tactic used by creationists has been to attempt to influence the materials included in science textbooks. The Texas Board of Education, for example, had adopted a rule requiring that

[2]William J. Broad, "Creationists Limit Scope of Evolution Case," *Science,* 211 (3/20/81), 1331-1332; and Kenneth M. Pierce, et. al., "Putting Darwin Back in the Dock," *Time,* vol. 117, no. 11 (3/16/81), p. 80-82.

[3]William R. Overton, "Creationism in Schools: The Decision in McLean versus the Arkansas Board of Education," *Science,* 215 (2/19/82), 937; also Skoog, p. 975.

[4]Madelynne Reuter, "ACLU Challenges Arkansas Act on 'Creationism' in Schools," *Publisher's Weekly,* vol. 219, no. 24 (6/12/81), p. 16.

[5]Overton, p. 934-943.

[6]Randy Frame, "Once Again, Creationism Goes on Trial," *Christianity Today,* vol. 27, no. 18 (11/25/83), 34; Roger Lewin, "ACLU 2, Creationists 0," *Science,* 218 (12/10/82), 1099; and the New York *Times,* 11/4/82, p. 16, and 11/23/82, p. 23.

science textbooks describe the theory of evolution as only one of several theories of origin. Since all textbooks used in public schools in Texas must meet the criteria of the state's Board of Education, this rule had a tremendous effect on textbook publishers, for not only is the state of Texas a huge market itself, but also, due to the prohibitive cost of publishing separate editions, publishers produce textbooks for the entire country that meet the Texas standards. Therefore in the past several years the amount of space given to the discussion of evolution in science textbooks has decreased. This situation has changed, however, for in March of 1984 Texas Attorney-General Jim Mattox ruled that the anti-evolution textbooks standards of the state Board of Education were unconstitutional, and therefore in June 1984 the Board of Education finally and officially repealed them, insisting though that textbooks must be clear about what statements are factual and which ones are theoretical.[7]

With the possible exception of the Louisiana case, then, the recent efforts of creationists to introduce creationism into the science curricula of our nation's public schools have not been successful. Nevertheless, the debate between supporters of scientific creationism and evolution does raise some important issues. On the one hand, I believe that the creationists have some valid, or at least understandable, concerns. On the other hand, I think that they simply miss the point of the biblical creation accounts.

Creationists' Valid Concerns

Creationists often refer to evolution as "only a theory," attempting to denigrate evolution but also displaying an ignorance of the meaning and role of theories in science. On the other side of the issue, some scientists tend to characterize the creationist-evolution debate as a controversy between fact and faith, a view that is likewise not accurate.[8] The theory of evolution is indeed a theory, not a fact. A theory is a proposal for explaining or interpreting a set of observations. Theories by their nature, then, involve human interpretation and the placing of observational evidence in an explanatory framework. Yet theories are more certain than mere hypotheses; a proposal merits the name "theory" only after substantial confirmation and corroboration by empirical data.[9] The theory of evolution happens to be a theory that has been confirmed

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[7]For thorough background on the creationist conflict and its effect on textbooks see Dorothy Nelkin, *The Creation Controversy: Science or Scripture in the Schools* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1982). For other comments on the textbook issue see Frederick Edwords, "Textbook Censorship," *The Humanist,* vol. 43, no. 4 (July-August 1983), p. 35; Wayne A. Moyer, "Young Earth Creationism and Biology Textbooks," *BioScience,* vol. 33, no. 2 (February 1983), p. 113f.; and Pierce, et. al., p. 80f. For the recent repealing of the Texas textbook criteria see Judith Wortman, "Texas Changes Evolution Rule," *BioScience,* vol. 23, no. 7 (July-August 1984), p. 414; and the New York *Times,* 4/14/84, Section I, p. 10; 4/15/84, Section I, p. 1; and 6/3/84, Section I, p. 36.

[8]See Isaac Asimov, "The 'Threat' of Creationism," *The New York Times Magazine,* 6/14/81, p. 92; Isaac Asimov and Duane Gish, "The Genesis War," *Science Digest,* 89 (October 1981), 87; Langdon Gilkey, "Creationism: The Roots of the Conflict," in *Is God a Creationist?: The Religious Case Against Creation-Science,* Roland Mushat Frye, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983), p. 56-67; Philip Kitcher, *Abusing Science: The Case Against Creationism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1982), p. 30-32; Nelkin, p. 192-194; and Ronald L. Numbers, "Creationism in 20th Century America," *Science,* 218 (11/5/82), 539.

[9]National Academy of Sciences, *Science and Creationism: A View From the National Academy of Sciences* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1984), p. 8-11. See also Ian G. Barbour, *Issues in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 138-148; and *Myths, Models, and Paradigms* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 30-38.

by an overwhelming body of data and that plays a fundamental role in all of science, especially the biological sciences.[10] But a theory it remains, and the nature of science being what it is, theories are always open to amendment or rejection if there is sufficient data to warrant it. It is misleading, therefore, to refer to the theory of evolution as "only a theory," for it can be nothing else but what it is—a theory—but it also happens to be a theory that has been substantially corroborated and that enjoys a high degree of confidence in the scientific community. Yet it is also misleading to suggest that it is fact as opposed to faith. It is not fact; it is an interpretation and explanation of facts—one that perhaps seems to be quite reliable but one, nonetheless, that remains open to modification, should the evidence suggest it.

Another valid, or at least understandable, concern that has prompted much of the intensity behind the creationist campaign is a fear on the part of many evangelical Christians that the theory of evolution is undermining belief in the Bible, human dignity, and standards of morality.[11] Creationists tend to hold the view that the bible is inerrant and literally true; if the theory of evolution is true, the Bible must be false. Furthermore, if humans are descended from apes, creationists believe that humans would not have the special dignity given to them in the Bible. If life is simply an evolutionary struggle of the fittest to survive, then basic principles of ethics seem to be undermined. I do not believe that these fears are well-grounded, but it is easy to understand that if someone holds the beliefs that many creationists do, then they would indeed see the theory of evolution as a fearsome enemy.

Finally, in spite of the California court's decision in the Segraves' case, I wonder if there are not indeed serious questions of the religious rights of creationists involved here.[12] I agree that it is unconstitutional for the teaching of creation science to be mandated along with the teaching of evolution. Yet may it not be the case that the right of the children of creationists to believe in a literal interpretation of the Genesis 1 creation account is being jeopardized by the teaching of evolution? Do they have a right to an education that does not challenge the truth of one of their firmly and sincerely held religious beliefs? Shall we allow released time for creationists to offer creation science courses? A more serious suggestion is to provide for teaching about religion in the social science curricula of public schools. There a variety of religious views of the origins of the universe could be discussed, including those of the creationists.

Huston Smith writes in a similar vein in his article, "Evolution and Evolutionism." There he agrees with using the term "evolution" in a descriptive sense to refer to a variety of already-observed data, but he warns against overextending the use of the theory of evolution as an explanation of the meaning of life, especially if it means adopting an entirely naturalistic understanding of life. This view he calls "evolutionism" and argues that evolutionism is not properly taught in the public schools.[13]

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[10]See Kitcher, p. 50-54.

[11]Kitcher, p. 186-202; Nelkin, p. 165-179 and 192f; Edwin A. Olson, "Hidden Agenda Behind the Evolutionist/Creationist Debate," *Christianity Today*, vol. 26, no. 8 (4/23/82), p. 30 (also included in Frye, p. 40f); and Huston Smith, "Evolution and Evolutionism," *The Christian Century*, vol. 99, no. 23 (7/7-14/82), p. 755.

[12]Huston Smith shares a similar concern. See Smith, p. 755f.

[13]*Ibid.*

The Theology of the Creation Accounts

The creationist position, then, does raise some valid or legitimate concerns, but my main interest is in discussing how I believe it misses the main points of the biblical creation accounts: by focussing on the issue of their supposed literal truth, the creationists tend to overlook the theological message of the creation accounts.

I have found that the theological message of the biblical creation accounts becomes clearer when it is compared with other creation accounts from neighboring cultures. In ancient Mesopotamia, for example, the epic *Enuma Elish* describes the origin of the gods as the result of sexual generation that began with the first gods, Apsu and Tiamat. The Earth was formed when there was warfare among the gods, and the god Marduk killed the goddess Tiamat, cut her in pieces, and formed the earth from pieces of the slain goddess. Sometime later humans were created to provide the gods with slave labor to relieve them from their work and give them leisure. A similar scenario is portrayed in the Greek myths. In Hesiod's *Theogony* the gods are created by sexual generation, and a succession of gods maintain power over the other gods by violent means. The god Kronos gains power over his father Ouranos by castrating him. Zeus finally becomes king of the gods by tricking and overpowering his father, Kronos. In Hesiod's *Works and Days* Pandora, the first woman, is created by the gods to trick and deceive man in order to punish Prometheus for tricking the gods and stealing fire from them.[14]

The rather sharp differences between these two creation narratives and the Genesis accounts seem clearly to suggest that some of the main theological points of the bible are to emphasize that (1) God is one and separate from nature—rather than a system of many gods often identified with some aspect of nature, that (2) the Earth was created good by a loving and gracious God—rather than formed out of bloody and violent conflict among the gods, and that (3) humans were created as the crown of creation and intended to live in relationship with God—rather than being created out of spite or to serve as slaves for the gods.[15]

This comparison of other creation accounts with those of Genesis suggests in outline form the theological message to be found in the biblical view of creation. In the following paragraphs I want to unpack this message in greater detail. While creationists tend to view Genesis 1 and 2 as two parts of the same creation story, most biblical scholars see them as two separate and parallel accounts of creation, each with its own distinctive theological emphasis. If this latter position is true, viewing Genesis 1 and 2 as one account risks missing some of the real theological meat of these chapters.

Of course, both chapters do share some quite important views—that God is one, that the creation is good, that

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[14]The edition of these myths that I have used is Joan O'Brien and Wilfred Major, *In the Beginning: Creation Myths From Ancient Mesopotamia, Israel and Greece* (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1982). The Mesopotamian and Greek creation narratives, as well as those from Genesis, are printed on p. 9-121.

[15]See Bernhard W. Anderson, "The Earth is the Lord's: An Essay on the Biblical Doctrine of Creation," in Frye, p. 176-196; Conrad Hyers, "Biblical Literalism: Constricting the Cosmic Dance," *The Christian Century*, vol. 99, no. 25 (8/4-11/82), p. 823-827 (also included in Frye, p. 95-104); Claus Westerman, *Creation*, trans. John J. Scullion (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974); and Norman Young, *Creator, Creation and Faith* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976).

humans were created for relationship with God and each other. It is in Genesis 1, however, that humans are said to be created in the image of God and where they are told to subdue the earth and have dominion over every living thing. What it means to be created "in the image of God" has been the subject of much speculation and debate for centuries. I think the most helpful way of interpreting the image of God is to understand it as referring to humans as God's representatives in the world.[16] Humans stand in the place of God—are the image of God—in the world God has given us to subdue and have dominion over. Being created in the image of God gives us both privileges and responsibilities in the world God has created.

"Subdue the earth and have dominion over it." These have been troublesome words. In 1967, UCLA medieval historian Lynn White argued in his classic essay, "The Historical Roots of the Ecologic Crisis," that these words, in Western Christianity at least, have been used to sanction the exploitation of the Earth and its resources for human purposes with little regard for the consequences for the environment.[17] The details of White's argument have been subjected to some well-deserved criticism,[18] but it is surely true that these words from Genesis have on occasion been used to justify abuses of both our living and non-living environment. The Hebrew word that is translated by "have dominion" does not imply a rule that exploits and abuses. Rather it is used to describe the kind of rule that a responsible and caring king exercises over his people.[19] Genesis 1, then, does not sanction abuse of the environment but calls us to responsible and caring stewardship of the Earth and its resources.

This view of our human relationship with the Earth is expressed more clearly and graphically in the creation account in Genesis 2. Adam and Eve are placed in the Garden of Eden to till it and to keep it. The human relationship with the Earth is described by analogy with the gardener or farmer who carefully tends the earth so that it thrives and flourishes. Farmers who abuse their land or livestock will not long be successful farmers; farmers recognize that their livelihood depends on their treating their land and animals with care and respect. Such is the relationship with the rest of the created world envisioned in Genesis 2.

By focusing their attention on the literal truth of Genesis 1 and 2, creationists miss the rich creation theology scattered throughout the Bible. Psalm 104, for example, describes the creative activity of God in poetry and uses a piece of Ancient Near Eastern mythology to do it: in the Near East the act of creation was often depicted as the slaying of a primordial sea monster (as in the case of Tiamat, who was pictured as a monster); in Psalm 104 God is described as having tamed—not killed—Leviathan, the sea monster, and as having placed it in the sea as a kind of domesticated reptilian pet. The dramatic poetry of Job 38 to 41 uses creation imagery to emphasize the transcendent power, majesty, and

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[16]Anderson, "The Earth is the Lord's," p. 191; N.W. Porteous, "Image of God," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* George A. Buttrick, ed. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), vol. 2, p. 682-685; and Westermann, p. 55-60.

[17]Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science,* 155 (3/10/67), 1203-1207.

[18]See, for example, Wendell Berry, "The Gift of Good Land," *Sierra,* 64 (November-December 1979), 20-26; Thomas Sieger Derr, "Religion's Responsibility for the Ecological Crisis: An Argument Run Amok," *Worldview,* 18 (January 1975), 39-45; and James Limburg, "What Does it Mean to 'Have Dominion Over the Earth'?" *Dialog,* 10 (1971), 221-223.

[19]Limburg, p. 222f.

wisdom of God—a power and wisdom beyond the full comprehension of humans. Bernhard Anderson has argued that there are at least four levels of creation theology in the Hebrew Scriptures, each reflecting different historical and theological circumstances among the people of Israel: the pre-monarchic (creation as creation of human community in the Exodus—Exodus 15), the monarchic (creation as creation of social order—Genesis 2), Wisdom (creation as expression of God's Wisdom—Psalm 104, Job 38-41), and the Priestly (creation as the origination of a series of covenants—Genesis 1).[20]

So far I have dealt with biblical passages focusing on God's creative activity in the beginning of time. I also want to consider one passage that looks to the present and future and that connects God's creative activity with God's redeeming and liberating activity.

> "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God ... because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as children, the redemption of our bodies." (Romans 8:19-23)

Notice how Paul ties all of creation into God's liberating activity—not just humans, not just the spiritual dimension, but all of creation. We cannot be sure just how metaphorically Paul is writing here, but he may well be countering two views that were and still are quite common among Christians: one so emphasizes the spiritual dimension of Christian faith that it downplays or even denigrates the physical, and a second sees God's salvation as basically an otherworldly affair that will come with apocalyptic fireworks at the end of time. In opposition to these views Paul seems to be arguing that God's salvation includes the physical and the fleshly, not just the spiritual, and that we are bound up with all of creation in God's saving process right here and now. Full salvation may lie off in the future, but we are joined together with all of the rest of creation now in the present in anticipation of God's liberation. These words from Paul stress the importance of physical and bodily reality in the Christian scheme of salvation, and they also undercut any view of God's redemption that would separate humans from the rest of God's creation.[21]

What seems almost tragic to me is that many creationists miss the theological messages of these rich biblical creation materials. When the creation accounts were written, one of the main points was to assert the oneness and transcendent power of God of Israel over against the polytheistic religious systems of Israel's neighbors. That message is perhaps of less relevance for us than it was then, although we may need to be reminded of it as we worship at the various shrines of the gods of success, money, and upward mobility. The biblical creation accounts also portray God as essentially a good and caring God—with, of course, demanding expectations of his human creatures—over against the view of God as arbitrary, vindictive, and violent in

[20]Berhard W. Anderson, "Mytho-Poeic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith," an essay presented at the 1983 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion.
[21]For a helpful and thorough treatment of this passage see Walther Bindemann, *Die Hoffnung der Schöpfung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1983).

other contemporaneous creation accounts. This message too is less relevant for us, although there are people for whom God continues to be a harsh and vindictive force who need to hear this message of creation.

Genesis 1 especially emphasizes the message of the goodness of God's creation. True, the story of the fall into sin that follows the second Genesis creation account must balance this view, but nonetheless Genesis 1 portrays God as pronouncing the creation as good and thus counters all those who would reject this physical world as essentially evil. Perhaps this likewise seems to be an ancient point, but there remain many today who believe that the bible requires the rejection of some aspect of God's creation, whether drinking or dancing or music, whether the human intellect or sexuality.

Of special importance to us today is what the creation materials of the Bible have to say to us about the status and responsibilities of humans. Clearly both Genesis 1 and 2 give humans special status—Genesis 1 by describing humans as created in the image of God, and Genesis 2 by giving Adam and Eve control over the garden and the animals. It needs to be said today, however, that this special relationship humans have with God does not give humans *carte blanche* to do what they please with the Earth. The creation account in Genesis 2 puts limits on what Adam and Eve can do, and, if what I said above is correct, the description of humans as created in the image of God in Genesis 1 places upon humans the responsiblity of representing God and God's values on the earth, not treating earth solely according to human purposes. The creation accounts, therefore, clearly imply that humans have the responsibility of carefully and respectfully tending the earth and seeing that it thrives and flourishes. Moreover, implicit in the Genesis accounts and explicit in the passage from Romans is the belief that humans are not separate from the rest of creation but were created in a relationship of interdependence with the rest of God's created order. Humans are *in continuity with* the rest of creation, even as they have *responsibility for* it.

This perspective has definite applications to our present situation. The biblical creation accounts do not sanction the exploitation of the Earth for any and all human purposes; rather they remind us that we are to treasure the earth's resources that have been entrusted to us. Our over-consumption and our depletion of natural resources, our pollution of earth, air, and water are all violations of this responsiblity to care for the earth. It would be easy to multiply examples of current issues to which this biblical concern applies; let me suggest just a few.

We continue to build housing developments and office complexes, taking more farmland out of production. Is this the best way to care for the earth? The farms that remain use increasing amounts of chemical fertilizers, whose residue can threaten the potability of nearby water sources. Is this a necessary by-product of modern agriculture, or is there a more responsible way to care for the earth? Acid rain and its effects are an international problem; are the causes of this problem due to a failure to take responsibility for the earth seriously? A German theologian, Gerhard Liedtke, has argued that nuclear energy violates the biblical perspectives on caring for the environment.[22] This issue is controversial, of course, but it does concern me that in the United States we have developed no comprehensive plan for handling the nuclear waste from these

[22]See Gerhard Liedtke, *Im Bauch des Fisches* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1979).

power plants. I was also quite surprised recently when I was told by an employee of a power company that nuclear power plants have a usable life of about 25 years or so, after which they must be abandoned because they may no longer be safe for operation. What shall we do with these abandoned radioactive hulks of power plants that soon shall begin to dot our horizon?

The biblical creation materials suggest that all of creation, living and non-living, participates in God's eternal plan and therefore merits appropriate care and attention from the humans who are commissioned to tend them, while all of God's creation, human and non-human alike, is bound up in solidarity, awaiting the fulfillment of God's promise of final liberation. This perspective clearly challenges the traditional dichotomy that has been drawn between the human and the non-human by theologians, philosophers, and scientists alike. The continuity of all life forms that is implied by the theory of evolution is ironically supported here by this biblical creation perspective. What does this suggest about animal rights? May we legitimately and morally experiment on animals? The benefits of such research for both humans and animals probably weigh in favor of such experimentation, but clearly creation theology mandates a use of animals that is as gentle and respectful and humane as possible. Finally, do animals or even trees have legal standing?[23] I don't know if they have legal standing, but they do have theological standing and a theological right to expect humans to care for and preserve them. In other words, the biblical creation accounts suggest an ethic for environmental and ecological issues that is based on the intrinsic value and the rights given by God to all of creation, human and non-human alike, rather than an ethic that values the non-human solely because of its value or usefulness to humans for their science, health, leisure, or aesthetic delight.

I confess to being a creationist, for I confess my faith in God as Creator. I confess to being an "evolutionary creationist," for I see no good reason to deny and many good reasons to accept the theory of evolution as the most plausible explanation for our observations of the natural world—and therefore also as a description of the manner by which God has chosen to create the world. And I confess to believing that supporters of evolution and creationism alike have much of value to learn from a careful exploration of the theological messages of the biblical creation accounts.

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[23]For what has become the classical discussion of this question, see Christopher D. Stone, *Should Trees Have Standing?: Toward Legal Rights For Natural Objects* (Los Altos, California: William Kaufmann, Inc., 1974).



Beating the Wedding-Sermon Blues: A New Look at Intimacy

Margaret Gary
Pastor, Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Missouri

from Webster's Third New International Dictionary:
an·drog·y·nous:
having the characteristics of both sexes; being at once both male and female...

I had managed to avoid using the traditional Ephesians text captioned in my Jerusalem Bible "the morals of the home" as the basis for wedding sermons until Janet and Mike came along. "Use it!" they said. "Why?" I demanded. "You both wear pony tails and blue jeans. Why do you want to hear about how women and men are different?" "Use it!" they replied.

After working with the text, I was astonished at what it said about intimacy between men and women in Christian marriage. I had always heard the text preached in such a way as to encourage marriage partners to be successful in marriage by sticking to their assigned roles and behaviors—patterns assigned according to gender and different for each. In fact, the writer of Ephesians encourages Christian marriage partners to do just the opposite: to become intimate with each other and to strengthen the marriage by sharing in each other's approach to life, to bond by entering into and experiencing the gender-assigned characteristics of their spouse.

The passage is framed by verses 21 and 33, each of which says the same thing in different ways. Verse 21 states the theme of intimacy between Christian spouses: "give way to one another in obedience to Christ;" verse 33 explains that the giving way is, for men, the experience of love and relationship as the main focus of life whereas for women, the giving way is the experience of teamwork and allegiance in the acceptance of hierarchical authority patterns as the framework of life together. Verses 23 and 24 describe how women are to accomplish this; and verses 25 through 32, how men can do so.

Psychotherapist Anne Wilson Schaef (*Women's Reality*, Winston Press, 1981) describes such gender typing in our culture in simple and genuine terms. Males, she says, tend to think of relationships, for instance, as hierarchical whereas females think of them as between peers; males tend to have their life focus on their work whereas females tend to hold relationships as their focus; males tend to experience friendship as teamwork whereas females define it as intimacy; males lead by leading whereas females lead by facilitating. When marriage partners are encouraged to confine themselves to such gender-bound characteristics, "two half-people relate to each other in a symbiotic fashion. Neither can survive without the other; neither is his or her own person ... (whereas) whole persons ... prefer marriages in which tasks are shared and who does what is determined more by individual competence and preference than by rigid role definition. Whole persons require relationships in which they are allowed to grow and take risks while nurturing and supporting their

partners." (pp. 58 & 62)

The writer of Ephesians is pointing to Christian marriage as a relationship between whole persons, of persons who move beyond gender typing by sharing in the virtues of the gender-typical characteristics of their spouses. A woman is encouraged to appreciate the virtue of a hierarchical authority system whose goal is the common good; a man is encouraged to center his life on his primary love relationship rather than on a work goal and to be other-centered rather than self-centered. Christian marriage partners are called to be fulfilled persons and not what Schaef calls "half-persons." The intimacy of marriage in Christ is anchored in and fed by the mutuality of mind and heart.

The model for such personal maturity is our Lord himself, in whom gender-type characteristics of both male and female are perfectly united:

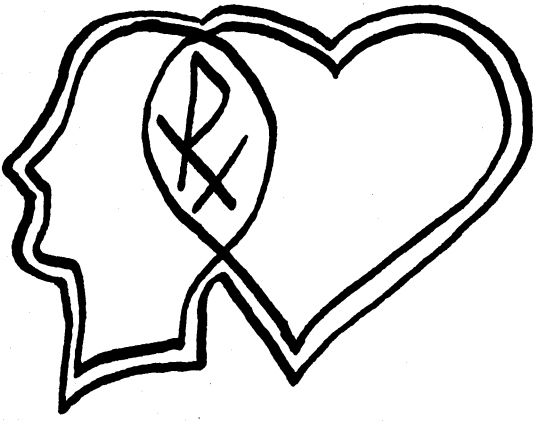
—the Christ, whose relationship with us and with all of creation is utterly hierarchical (verse 24), but all for the sake of making us his peers in God's sight (v. 25);

—the Christ, whose entire life focus was on his work goal, but all for the sake of establishing an intimate relationship with us (verse 30);

—the Christ, whose definition of friendship was teamwork with God the Creator in the plan of salvation no matter what the cost, but all for the sake of bonding with us (verse 31);

—the Christ, who exercised leadership by leading where no one else had the authority to lead (verses 23 and 32), but all for the sake of facilitating our own personal growth and our ability to lead others in the same way.

On Janet and Mike's wedding day, I told them about Jesus' own fulfilled personality, his androgynous union of all that is best in the hearts of men and women. I told them that maybe they were on to something with their matching pony tails and jeans. "We know," they said.



The Divine Activity of the Poet

Elizabeth-Anne Vanek
Chicago, IL

In biblical times, there was nothing extraordinary about the break-through of spiritual reality into the physical world: both Testaments record dreams, visions and prophecies, voices from heaven, miraculous events, and even direct encounters with God; the world was visited by angels and demons, populated by sorcerers, soothsayers and the "spiritually gifted." Those who accepted noumena were neither saints nor lunatics but ordinary men, women and children who were attentive to every sign, whisper and stirring. Very often, they turned to prophets or to others with divine authority to interpret manifestations of "otherness," to be their intermediaries, to speak God's word.

Today, we trust to reason only; we distrust the paranormal because it seems abnormal. We no longer recognize our prophets, if, indeed, we still have any. And while we may verbally acknowledge our spiritual nature, we live lives firmly rooted in the physical. Ours is a narcissistic generation—one of struggles, yes, but also of self-gratification. All the clichés of "getting ahead," "keeping up with the Joneses," grasping "the American Dream," and "doing one's own thing" truly define our priorities and self-imposed limitations.

Moreover, the cult of materialistic distraction has cost us some of our faculties: the ability to see below the surface of things, to hear the almost inaudible, to feel the nearly impalpable. We can no longer remember or imagine, interpret or understand. We are like automatons living out programmed lives in total isolation from those around us; like automatons, we have no sense of "belonging" to the cosmos. Because we fail to recognize the inter-connectedness of all living things, unlike the early Christians, we do not consider it our responsibility to help bring the work of creation to completion.

If there is any voice crying out in the wilderness, it is that of the poet. If there is anyone who still dreams dreams, has visions and babbles in inspired tongues, it is the poet. If there is anyone who challenges others to be fully human, it is the poet. The Greek word for poet — *poietes* — means a maker, a creator: it is the poet's task to create and re-create, to bring the reader into the realm of the possible and the impossible, the probable and the improbable. In this way, poetry is very much a divine activity, with God—maker of all things—as the poet par excellence.

It is no coincidence that God's word to us, Scripture, is filled with poetry—the Psalms, the Song of Solomon, Isaiah, parts of Jeremiah, ballads, canticles, blessings. Nor is it a co-incidence that nearly everything Jesus is recorded as saying is, besides being emotionally charged, rich in paradox, images and other poetic devices. Consciously or unconsciously, the serious poet is therefore working within biblical tradition; and without necessarily espousing any particular beliefs, the poet must have a

religious perspective to be involved in this kind of activity. In Plato's *Phaedrus,* Socrates states that skill alone will not make a good poet but "heaven-sent madness," "the madness of the Muses."

Above all else, the poet is a visionary—one who sees the bone beneath the skin, garlic and sapphires in the mud, the oneness of agony and ecstasy, the hollowness at the core. The poet sees and feels and experiences all: there is no escape. A sense of cosmic grief obliges him/her to live through the ravages of war, natural catastrophes and famine, to suffer often, die often; to endure the flicker of flame on flesh, the incision of the surgeon's knife, the cruel cut of words into the human heart. Without losing the sense of personal identity, the poet can experience life as man, woman, child or beast, professional or laborer, black or white. Like Tiresias in Eliot's *The Waste Land,* he/she is a natural chameleon—an "old man with wrinkled dugs," one who has "For-suffered all/enacted on this same divan or bed," has "sat by Thebes below the wall/and walked among the lowest of the dead."

But what the poet imagines has its basis in truth; though always after mystery, the poet is a realist, an observer at all times, dissecting the tangible world into its minutest parts. Not a detail is too small or insignificant: fractured glass on the sidewalk, a myriad of colors in the oil slick in the harbor, gray mice flitting like litter across blackened railway tracks.

A vision that is directed internally as well as externally enables the poet to see different levels of reality in a given situation, to become—and compulsively so—a revealer of reality, a profound philosopher. In defining poetry as "the blossom and fragrance of all human knowledge, human thought, human passion, emotion and language," Coleridge firmly placed poetry in the philosopher's territory. Matthew Arnold saw poetry as a substitute for religion because it can "interpret life for us ... console us ... sustain us." And George Eliot saw literature as a means of "enlarging men's sympathies"—in other words, as a force capable of evoking compassion and understanding from the most hardened of hearts.

The poetic burden, then, is a heavy one. Not only a crafter of words, striving to communicate the most effectively in the most artistic manner, the poet is also a priest, prophet and sage rolled into one. Accordingly, writing poetry is very much the occupation a lifetime, not just a passing interest or something one can do for a few hours a day, then put aside. To be a poet involves all the hardships of being a counter-culture figure: it means taking stands, saying the unspeakable, standing outside the safety of the social circle. And while few poets in the free world are likely to suffer the indignities faced by Old Testament prophets—being flogged, for example, or thrown down a cistern, put in the stocks or in a den of lions—poets elsewhere endure exile, imprisonment and worse because they are *dangerous to the nation.*

Poets are dangerous precisely because they reveal *what is as it is;* they are disturbers of the status quo. Little wonder that in some places, being a poet is almost synonymous with being a dissident.

In writing about the divine activity of the poet, I have made no distinction between the Christian poet and the non-Christian poet: both exist to live authentically so as to reveal reality to an increasingly unreal world. The Christian poet, however, has additional tasks to accomplish. Whether or not the Christian poet chooses to write explicitly religious verse, whatever he/she writes will be filtered through a unique Christian

perspective, a perspective to which the poet must be faithful at all times. In the name of this perspective, the poet must be willing to be everything to the church that he/she is to the secular world—critic, radical, priest, prophet and sage. When bureaucracy stifles growth, the poet must sing songs of creation; when ritual becomes dry and uninspiring, the poet must breathe life into the assembly; when words lose their impact, the poet must discover new ways of describing lived experiences; when the church's primary symbols are reduced to stereotypes and when God's Word is trivialized, the poet must cry out in anguish for all to hear ....

There are few rewards in being a poet—neither wealth, nor fame, nor ease, nor popularity; only the satisfaction of being able to verbalize what moves one the most. Christ, the itinerant poet, was considered a radical and ended up accordingly. Jeremiah, a poet of sorts, laments:

> The word of Yahweh has meant for me insult, derision, all day long. (Jer. 20:9)

But those who have been called to bear the burden of the word have no choice but to carry it: it is almost as though they have been pre-destined by insight, sensitivity and talent to undertake the poet's task—or else choke on their own unspoken words. Jeremiah's pitiful lament could well be called "the poet's lament."



Letter to the Editor

November 21, 1985

Ralph W. Klein, Editor
Currents in Theology and Mission
1100 East 55th Street
Chicago, IL 60615

Dear Brother:

Thanks for including my *Knowing* poem in the December, 1985, issue of *Currents*. Though you didn't ask, I have enclosed another!

Please spread the word that the state abbreviation, AK., denotes the 49th state, *ALASKA*. The word means "Great Land" which truly it is, but we have an image problem. There is much misunderstanding about our state—and not just what the abbreviation is.

Alaska is twice as big as Texas. Overlaid on a map of the lower 48, the map of Alaska would cover much of the Upper Mid-west, with the Aleutians in California and South East (where I live) at the Atlantic. I grew up in the State of Minnesota, where we rejoiced with 10,000 lakes; I have read that there are 3 MILLION lakes in Alaska.

These "bragging statistics" are presented mostly because I, being a newcomer to the state, have a hard time believing them myself; the repeating helps me grasp the vastness of my home. But there is a story here you might find worth including in a future issue.

In the New Lutheran Church, Alaska is now suggested as its own synod: less than 30 congregations! But 'mission' here is varied and romantic. From the expanding residential areas of Juneau and Anchorage (where church extension is simlar to that around any large city) to an island like this, where my total population is 2,500, the church is in mission, and has been for a long, long time. The Russians brought missionaries, and the Orthodox influence is still here in places. Our town was founded in 1834—three years before yours.

There is a 'holy tenacity' to the church here, just what one would expect from the required make-up of people who persevere here. Romance, pain, frustrations, but also humor, art, cooperation and sacrifice mark the church as well as all other endeavors here. This is "mission" in the highest sense of the term. It could make a tremendous story for *Currents*.

Let me know what you think.

Have a preparing Advent Season!

Sincerely,
Robert Drewes,
Box 1711,
Wrangell, Alaska 99929

The Cloud and I

Robert Drewes
Wrangell, Alaska

Nestled in the elbow of my neighbor island,
The wooley cloud awakens to the same dawn rays as I;
Begins its day with silvery curls, though,
Far more carefully coiffeurred than mine.

The ravine in which it slept last night
Was kinder far to it than my pillow was to me!
Through the glass of my window it made me smile;
My mirror's glass—too honest—made me scowl.

Day has come. The cloud and I both stir.
Responding to the wind, that mist escapes its cove,
As I, my bed. We both move out to find
The path God spreads for us this day.

That cloud has little choice, yes, none.
But I—what honor, what transport to undeserved heights
Is mine, that I can use this time from dawn to dusk
To honor or profane its Giver's name.

When evening comes I'll wonder where the cloud
Has dropped its rain, or cooled some place with shade,
And hope that also I refreshed the piece of earth
I walked this day.

A Book Worth Discussing: After Virtue*

Ted Peters

Pacific Lutheran Seminary and Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California

We moderns live in a moral Tower of Babel. There is no common language in which "good" and "bad" or "right" and "wrong" can find consensus. Such values are left to individual preference. The result is a fragmented moral community.

The chief sympton of the fragmentation wrought by modern individualism is our inability to settle moral arguments. When moral debate breaks out over an issue, each side in the debate typically begins with different premises and pursues its arguments with different logic. Hence, the debating parties talk past one another. In *After Virtue,* Alasdair MacIntyre cites as examples the debates over war and peace, abortion, and the right to medical service. In the case of abortion on demand, for example, proponents assume that the rights of a woman to govern her body take precedence. Opponents begin with different assumptions. Some argue on the basis of rights, saying that I cannot deny the right to life to an unborn child if I claim that right for myself. Others argue that murder of innocent people is wrong and that abortion is a form of murder. MacIntyre is not trying to discern the best position here. His point is to make the observation that the rival arguments are conceptually incommensurable. They begin with rival premises which means there is no way of weighing the claims one has against the other. Even though in the public arena they purport to be impersonal rational arguments, a closer examination reveals that they are based upon a "disquieting private arbitrariness."

How did we get into this mess? MacIntyre answers that we lost Aristotle's sense of teleology and the theory of virtue based on it. Our problem is that we live in a time "after virtue," and the only remedy is for us to go "after virtue" once again.

The essence of the modern apprehension of value and moral behavior can be summed up in the term 'emotivisim'. "Emotivism is the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and, more specifically, all moral judgments are nothing but expressions or preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character." (p. 11) Whether it be the utilitarian ethics of J.S. Mill or the ethics of duty and rules of Immanuel Kant, modern moral theories are illusions which simply hide the fact that in our time rational moral argumentation is impossible. As long as all moral evaluation can be reduced to individual preference, we will have lost the ability to make shared rational judgments regarding what is right and wrong.

What can we do? MacIntyre suggests that we should retrieve the ancient Aristotelian ethic of virtue. As a tradition which stretches backward to Homer

**By Alasdair MacIntyre. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1981. 252 pages. Cloth. $15.95; Paper. $7.95.*

and forward through Christendom to Thomas Aquinas, this "Aristotelian tradition can be restated in a way that restores intelligibility and rationality to our moral and social attitudes and commitments." (p. 241) The heart of the Aristotelian theory is the teleological understanding of *the good.* Human beings are intentional. Human action is motivated and directed by the aims and goals and purposes toward which we are moving, and such intentional movement constitutes the draw of the good. The good is that toward which we humans aim. It is not something we create by our preferences. We may not know exactly what the good is ahead of time, but we are drawn by its power and know that it is that toward which we direct our lives.

The virtues are those qualities of human character which will enable us to stay on track toward the good. In saying this, however, we do not want to reduce the virtues to mere means toward a further end. They already embody the good toward which we are aiming, and in this way actually help us to understand more clearly just what the good life is. The exercise of the four cardinal virtues—prudence, temperance, justice, and courage (fortitude)—constitute the good life while at the same time serving as the means for securing the good life.

Virtues are not actions. They are rather dispositions for action. They are qualities belonging to the person who acts. Virtues as dispositions or qualities or character dispose us toward taking right action, toward acting morally, toward pursuing what is objectively and demonstrably good. We do what is virtuous because it is virtuous, not because we happen to like doing it. Furthermore, according to Aristotle, the virtues are not private. They are public. Their domain is the *polis,* the city, and have to do with our role in the wider human community. It is the objective and communal character of the virtues that make them rational, intelligible, and hence subject to reasonable moral debate.

The distinctively Christian contribution to the Aristotelian moral theory is the addition of the theological virtues and a shift in the *telos.* The ancient Greek tradition, which did not live with the benefit of the revelation in Jesus Christ, could not comprehend, let alone approve, of such things as humility or forgiveness. Prior to the New Testament, there was no way of dealing in Greek with such things as sin, repentance, magnanimity, or charity. "Aristotle would certainly not have admired Jesus Christ and he would have been horrified by St. Paul." (p. 172) Consequently, using 1 Corinthians 13:13, Christian thinkers added the specifically theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. These are human virtues which proceed directly from the purposes of God apprehended in the word of Christ.

MacIntyre believes the Christian conception of virtue remained teleological, but the nature of the *telos* changed in two ways. First, Christian virtue could be internalized in such a way that external circumstances could not undo it. For Aristotle the possibility of achieving the human good could be frustrated by misfortune in this life. Even though virtue can aid us in coping with adversity, a great misfortune can undo us completely. But in the Christian view God's purpose, and our incorporation into that purpose, will find fulfillment even if death should intervene. Second, whereas Aristotle's understanding of virtue was limited to his particular context, namely, that of the Greek *polis,* the Christians could think historically. What virtue means changes from context to context, age to age, and it can be apprehended in its developing meaning over time. The

theological perspective involves a conception of history and a continuous discovery and rediscovery of what the good is.

It is my own judgment that the MacIntyre proposal represents an example of sophisticated nostalgia and in itself cannot help us out of our modern predicament. His desire to return to a premodern worldview fails to accept the fact that modern subjectivism has cut too deeply to make this possible. We have passed the point of no return. How do we know this? Just ask: on what grounds could we accept MacIntyre's proposal to go after virtue? Should we decide to follow MacIntyre, we would do so on the basis of our personal preference. We are free to either like virtue or not. If we happen not to prefer virtue, MacIntyre can appeal to no rational ground to convince us that we ought to. Virtue is just one option among many. In our modern world we are simply stuck with freedom and moral arbitrariness.

However, MacIntyre makes an important point to which we must remain attentive, namely, virtue is inescapably communal in character. For Plato, the virtues of the individual contributed to the justice of the whole *Republic.* For Aristotle, a person's virtue had to do with the role he or she played in the *polis,* in the city. The problem with modernity is that we have lost the sense of a moral community. By subjectivizing and individualizing moral values, morality itself evaporates and we are left with a vacuous political arena made up of earning self-interest groups. The vital need in our time, then, is the return of a moral community. But what could that community be?

Stanley Hauerwas follows MacIntyre's argument and proposes that we think of the Christian church as that moral community. In his *A Community of Character* (Notre Dame Press, 1981) he puts the church where Aristotle would have put the *polis.* In doing so, Hauerwas must draw a rather sharp line between the church and the world. The result is that social ethics for Christians does not consist primarily in trying to make a more just society or a better world. It consists rather in being the church, in maintaining the narrative continuity of church identity through living virtuously. What we end up with is a parochial concept of virtue relevant for one community within the wider human society.

This will not meet the problems posed by modern moral issues. The reason is that so much of what confronts us is inter-communal, inter-national, multi-ethic, and even global in scope. If we take the items constituting the crisis which the Club of Rome has aptly named the "world *problematique*," for example, we simply must think globally about such problems as overpopulation, dwindling, non-renewable natural resources, pollution, the split between rich and poor, malnutrition, and starvation, not to mention the cloud of nuclear destruction which hangs over every sector of the world. Moral issues of this nature are themselves pressing the modern mind to reconsider the subjectivization of the inter-connection and coherence between all the things and all people that make up our world. For ethicists at this juncture to seek to ground moral theory in just one human community apart from the world situation is to continue the modern dilemma. It simply establishes one more self-interest group—in this case a moral self-interest group—among the rest.

I believe we need to push on toward a post-modern moral theory, a theory which exploits the part-whole dialectic. According to the part-whole dialectic,

the context of the whole determines the respective value of the parts while the character of the parts determines the character of the whole. What we can learn from MacIntyre is the way this works in terms of a virtue-community dialectic. But rather than the church I suggest we think of the world as the relevant community to which personal virtue is to be correlated.

Book Reviews



THE PSALMS: PRAYERS FOR THE UPS, DOWNS AND IN-BETWEENS OF LIFE. By John Craghan. Wilmington, Delaware: Glazier, 1985. 200 pages. Paper. $7.95.

Craghan offers us a very solid commentary on a number of selected Psalms and new Testament passages. Each chapter considers a specific genre of Psalms, selects Psalms for individual discussion, and provides general conclusions about the entire genre. The commentary emphasizes the literary content and theological meaning of each Psalm in what the author calls a "literary-experiential approach."

Craghan follows the direction of Walter Brueggemann in classifying Psalms. (Brueggemann's commentary on Psalms appeared recently in the Augsburg Old Testament Studies series.) This new creative approach discusses Psalms under the categories of Orientation, Disorientation, and Reorientation. Craghan, however, marries traditional Psalmic classifications with Brueggemann's three proposed categories. Under Psalms of Orientation he discusses those texts which praise God or rely upon the created order upheld by divine grace. This includes: 1) Psalms of Descriptive Praise (Pss. 8, 19, 29, 65, 113, John 1:1-18), 2) Psalms of Confidence or Trust (Pss. 11, 23, 62, 91, 121, Matthew 6:25-30), 3) Wisdom Psalms (Pss. 1, 34, 37, 112, 128, Luke 6:20-21), and 4) Royal Psalms (Pss. 2, 45, 72, 101, 132, Mark 1:14, 8:27-33). Under Psalms of Disorientation he considers individual and communal laments (Pss. 3, 22, 39, 42-43, 44, 58, 69, 85, 89, 90, Mark 15:21-39, 2 Corinthians 11:30-12:10). Under Psalms of Reorientation the author reviews the Psalms of Declarative Praise, a response for specific acts of God recently experienced (Pss. 30, 40, 73, 118, 124, Matthew 21:33-43, Luke 15:11-32).

The introduction of New Testament passages into the discussion (and the three basic categories) is refreshing and helps to clarify the broader meaning and purpose of specific Psalm types. Some Psalms are considered in categories not usually assigned to them. For instance, Psalm 73, usually viewed as a wisdom psalm, is discussed as a Psalm of Declarative Praise. In this way the author highlights nuances perhaps overlooked otherwise by tradtional classifications. The strength of the book is its understanding and discussion of lament Psalms.

Robert Gnuse
Loyola University
New Orleans, LA

READING THE OLD TESTAMENT: AN INTRODUCTION. By Lawrence Boadt. New York: Paulist, 1984. Paper. $6.95.

Lawrence Boadt has provided classroom teachers with an excellent Old Testament introductory text which is both thorough and inexpensive. This work covers the material in twenty-six well balanced chapters with review questions at the end of each chapter. The chapters divide the material into the usual divisions provided by most introductions, but additional chapters on archaeology, critical methodologies, Canaanite religion, daily

life, Israelite worship, and Old Testament theology are provided. Throughout the text the author has placed numerous charts, diagrams, maps, and pictures which function excellently as pedagogical devices—these include frequent summary outlines of various biblical books or narrative accounts, critical comparisons of various texts, and pertinent ancient Near Eastern texts. A few specific examples of such diagrams and charts include: 1) an outline of how the Pentateuchal sources developed, 2) a listing of comparable legal texts in the Book of the Covenant and Deuteronomy, 3) a classification and outline of various forms of speech in Second Isaiah, 4) a listing of the Priestly Editors' texts, 5) a classification of Psalm types, 6) an outline of how the Chronicler's narrative developed, and 7) an outline of the Talmud. The text covers a wide range of material and presents it in manageable form for students. Attention is paid to biblical materials, such as the post-exilic novels, which too often receive only brief mention in other introductions.

Writing an introduction to the Old Testament is a bold task these days. Authors need to consider such problems as the nature of the Pentateuchal sources (i.e., whether the Yahwist dates to the United Monarchy or the exile), the historicity of the patriarchal and conquest narratives, and the dates for early wisdom literature (i.e., whether it belongs to the Solomonic era or the post-exilic period). Boadt carefully steers a middle course on many issues. He omits separate discussions for the Yahwist and Elohist traditions, and he avoids assigning dates to the Joseph narrative, Proverbs 10-31, and other debated literary segments. Instead, the literary and theological content of the literature is discussed in terms basically acceptable to a diverse range of scholarly opinions. In this regard the volume should maintain enduring value even as new scholarly consensus arises on various issues. Because of the range of material covered, the excellent pedagogical quality, the judicious treatment of various issues, and the inexpensive price, this text should rank as a preferred introduction for Old Testment courses.

Robert Gnuse

THE SUPPER OF THE LORD. By John Reumann. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. xiv and 225 pages. Paper. $13.95.

John Reumann, a professor of New Testament studies at Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia, traces the ecumenical successes (and a few failures) of the past thirty years, showing how study and dialogue have led to an amazing Christian convergence on Eucharist. But what makes this book most helpful is that Reumann begins the book with a look at the biblical bases of the Sacrament (chapter 1) and then an historical overview from the apostolic period to the twentieth century (chapter 2). Thus, he not only shows us the current convergence as part of a larger historical picture, but he also prepares us to evaluate it in light of biblical scholarship. Chapter Three traces the story of ecumenical convergence on Eucharist, while a short, fourth chapter holds Reumann's own conclusions about his study.

Biblical studies, to a great extent, plowed the soil in which the ecumenical discussions were planted and have grown. The use of historical criticism freed churches of varying confessions to speak a common language and to be in a position to evaluate their own and each others' perspectives. (It is tempting to note that those most ill-at-ease with historical criticism seem to remain on the periphery of the ecumenical action.) Biblical studies have demonstrated that the development of the Supper in the early church is far more complex than earlier generations of Christians understood. Roots of this meal include not only the meal in the upper room, but also Jewish communal meals, Jesus' meal fellowship with disciples and outcasts, agape meals in the early church, and perhaps even hellenistic eating practices. Reumann emphasises four motifs as keys to the ecumenical convergence: eschatology ("foretaste of the feast to come"), proclamation of the death of Jesus (with *anamnesis* the key word here), convenant (which perhaps holds some keys to further convergence), and participation/fellowship.

In his ecumenical chapter, Reumann tightly weaves the story of the development of world ecumenism. An excellent

two-page chart traces the story from the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh to the latest World Council of Churches gatherings. Then he turns his attention to bilateral dialogues, with another excellent seven-page chart and a closer study of four separate bilateral discussions. Finally, he traces the development of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. This section includes another excellent addition: a "redaction critical" exegesis of the document itself, showing how changes in the text reflect the evolution of the dialogues.

Some final comments: It's fun to see how the ninth century debate between Radbertus and Ratramnus, two Benedictine monks from the monestary at Corbie, anticipates later reformation-age disagreements over the eucharistic presence of Christ. Reumann contends, at several places, that the oft-quoted "weekly celebration of the Eucharist in the early church" cannot be documented with historical evidence from the New Testament period. He thus relativises some of the current debate over frequency. An editing quirk: "Eucharist" is always captitalized but "baptism" is not. Why? And Reumann's decision to forgo footnotes leads to a needlessly muddled first and second chapter, with brackets within parentheses within paragraphs that make reading unnecessarily complicated; hang in there, friends—it gets easier later on!

Thanks and congratulations to Dr. Reumann and Fortress for giving us a highly useful and insightful work!

Ronald W. Roschke
Peace Lutheran Church
Manhattan, Kansas

PAUL, APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES. STUDIES IN CHRONOLOGY. By Gerd Luedemann. Trans. by F. Stanley Jones. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984. xxii and 312 pages. Cloth. $29.95.

John Knox says in his foreword that the significance of this book lies in its being the first full-length, full-bodied, and fully documented study of Paul's apostolic career which is based solely on the letters. This is, of course, in line with Knox's own proposal to disregard the Acts scheme of the missionary journeys.

Luedemann carries out this program rigorously. He presents arguments against the conventional view of Paul's life based substantially on Acts. Luke employed the journeys as a stylistic device; he wanted to illustrate the politically inoffensive nature of Christianity. This does not mean that Luke's chronology is nonhistorical, but it does forbid any chronology of Paul to use even one of these references without support from the primary source, the letters of Paul.

A reconstruction of Pauline chronology has to start with an exegesis of Gal. 1:6-2:14. Paul's ministry is in general presented in the historical order except that the incident in Antioch (2:11-14) must have happened before the Apostolic Council and probably was the direct occasion for Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and "those from James" to travel to Jerusalem. Luedemann's argument for this is quite involved and not entirely convincing. According to Luedemann, it may be assumed as certain that Paul conducted a mission to the Gentiles before the conference and that he did not require his new Christians to be circumcised; the division of labor in 2:9 is made from an ethnographical perspective; the arrangement is a restriction and revocation of the realization of the unity of the people of God. It seems to me, however, that it was actually intended to preserve the unity of the church.

In Chapter 3, Luedemann attempts to integrate the traditions of Acts into the framework attained solely on the basis of Paul's letters. He reaches interesting conclusions: Acts 11:27ff; 15:1ff; and 18:22 are a tripling of Paul's second visit to Jerusalem, and Acts 18:22 represents its original historical location; the traditions in Acts 18 reflect various visits of Paul to Corinth; the edict of Claudius was issued in 41 C.E. so that Priscilla and Aquila were subject to expulsion and arrived in Corinth shortly after 41. This is the time when Paul's founding visit to Corinth took place. The visit at the time of Gallio (51/52 C.E.) was either the intervening visit or the last stay. At the time Romans was written, the couple was back in Rome. (Rom. 16:3 belongs to Rome, not to Ephesus) Thus, the individual traditions reworked by Luke

possess a high degree of historical reliabililty.

Chap. 4 presents a brief summary of chapters 1 to 3 which is very helpful.

Chap. 5 deals with the eschatological statements in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 and 1 Cor. 15:51-52. A text which presupposes that Christians do not have to die before the arrival of the eschaton (1 Thess.) could have arisen only in a very early period, i.e., not long after 27/30 C.E.; a text that limits the number of those who will not die (1 Cor.) should be considered as belonging to the end of the first generation, i.e., 47-57. A very detailed exegesis of 1 Thess. 4:13-18 attempts to establish this hypothesis.

Luedemannn argues well that Paul said nothing about the resurrection of Christians in his initial proclamation in Thessalonica, and the reader has to grant at least the probability that such a phenomenon is best explained in a very early period of Christian preaching.

Luedemann believes it necessary to assume two possible dates for the death of Jesus (27 or 30 C.E.) so that the whole chronology could be shifted by three years. The revolutionary proposals are the following:

From ca. 36(39) — Paul's independent mission in Europe: Philippi, Thessalonica.

41 — Edict of Claudius

Before or after the mission in Greece — Founding of the Galatian congregations. Incident in Antioch which perhaps caused the

47(50) — Second visit to Jerusalem for the Conference

The book is well argued and very technical. Some insights cannot be refuted, other are somewhat difficult to accept. In a postscript, written for the English edition, Luedemann replies to some favorable and unfavorable reviews. Useful indexes are provided.

Wilhelm C. Linss
Lutheran School of Theology
Chicago, Illinois

PASTORS IN MINISTRY: GUIDELINES FOR SEVEN CRITICAL ISSUES. By William E. Hulme, Milo L. Brekke, William C. Behrens. Augsburg, 1985. 190 pages. Paper. $8.95.

Hulme (Luther-Northwestern Seminary) wondered if the negative impressions of pastoral ministry that he was getting from former students were correct. He determined to find out. With the help of Behrens of the ALC's Office of Support to Ministries and Milo Brekke, a specialist in statistical research, he devised a questionnaire that was administered over a period of 30 months and resulted in 1220 usable returns. The pastoral population was mostly from the American Lutheran Church, with some representation from the Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The questionnaire was also administered to Lutheran pastors in Australia as a cross-cultural check.

The first chapter states that pastors feel most positive about the functions of preaching, leading worship, teaching adults, visiting the sick, ministering with the aged and counseling—in that order. They feel most negative about (in the order of most to least negative) youth work, evangelism, community responsibility, administration, prophetic witness, confirmation instruction and specialized group work. Hulme theorizes that, since the positive list corresponds to the way in which seminaries structure their curriculum, their training itself may lead to competence and satisfaction. However, it may also be that pastors like to have control in what they do, and the latter list includes functions in which there is little control.

Most pastors are dissatisfied with their spiritual and devotional lives, as documented in the second chapter. The most frequently stated reason is lack of motivation. Hulme says that lack of motivation may be linked to a problem of pastoral identity and anxiety over the priestly role in contrast to the socially expected role of pastoral director. Life stage seems to be a factor with older pastors more centered in their lives and more content with a ministry of presence rather than a ministry of doing.

A piece of good news is that clergy marriages are very healthy compared to other professions and the general population. Male clergy and their spouses share most perceptions of ministry, but the spouses are more perceptive about tensions in the areas of income, mobility and loneliness. Suggestions for improving clergy marriage and family life are given in three areas: preserving privacy, preserving freedom and overcoming loneliness.

The fourth chapter deals with learning to live with limits. A significant minority (17%) of clergy are really hurting. Most are male clergy, but female clergy also report stress, especially role and family stress. Pastors, Hulme contends, must come to grips with the fallenness of self, congregations and church officials and not let idealism make them cynical. Pastors should set priorities and let other things go. They should affirm rather than blame the laity. On the other hand, congregations should affirm their pastors as well.

The fifth chapter tries to deal with the prophetic role and pastoral conflict with the congregation. The authors would have done better to separate the two. Most pastors are satisfied with the relation to their congregation, and those that are dissatisfied are in conflict with their congregations for reasons other than prophetic ministry, at least as this reviewer reads the data. Pastors critical of their congregations blame the apathy of the laity and find themselves in an adversarial role. For conflict situations, Hulme suggests the use of third-party mediators supplied by the church. He also suggests that all pastors strive for a balance between priestly and prophetic roles and overcome their extreme reluctance to be prophetic at all.

There are three items that pastors suggest for improvement of their ministries; opportunities for continuing education for themselves and their spouses, clergy-family retreats and workshops, and higher salaries. Hulme speaks of the need for all sorts of supportive endeavors: retreats, workshops, support groups, continuing education and counseling. He is dubious that higher salaries improve satisfaction with ministry since the Australian pay scale, in which everyone receives the same pay (with increases only for family size) regardless of where they serve, proves that pastors can be satisfied without salary increases.

The concluding chapter does not deal with a seventh issue (the sub-title of the book is misleading) but with three areas related to the health of the parish pastor: 1) the need for clergy self-care; 2) the need for more effective structuring of relationships with the congregation; and 3) the need for more lay participation in ministry.

This volume shows that pastoral ministry is in better shape than it might first appear. Things are not as bad as Hulme was first led to believe. The book gives the pastors' side of the coin, whereas a volume like *Ten Faces of Ministry* (Augsburg, 1979) presents the laity's side. *Pastors in Ministry* is worth study by pastors, church officials and seminary faculties. It challenges them all.

Robert Conrad
Christ Seminary-Seminex
Professor of Educational Ministry at
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

LUKE: ARTIST AND THEOLOGIAN. LUKE'S PASSION ACCOUNT AS LITERATURE. By Robert J. Karris, O.F.M. New York: Paulist Press, 1985. viii and 130 pages. Paper. $7.95.

Both the title of this interesting contribution to Lukan studies and its subtitle are somewhat misleading. It is rather a study of the themes or motifs (used interchangeably) of the faithful God, of justice, and of food. While the motifs of justice and of food are given a full chapter in the book, there is no chapter with the title the faithful God. Not much is said about Luke as artist, except in the way in which these themes are handled and related to the passion account. Only Chapter Five deals with the passion account itself, and that only with chapter 23 of the Gospel. These critical remarks, however, should not discourage anyone from reading the book.

Karris takes his departure from J. Navone, *Themes of St. Luke* (Rome: Gregorian Univ. Press, 1970) and his thematic studies. The basic thesis of his book is that "Jesus got himself crucified

because his table fellowship with outcasts bodied forth an alien God and because his justice way of life was an intolerable challenge to the life-style of the religious leaders. The Gospel of Luke is meant to preach to the reader in narrative form and to elicit from the reader an act of Christian faith." It is fascinating to see how the themes which are here discussed are woven throughout the whole Gospel. (Karris deliberately omits the book of Acts although he considers it the second volume of Luke's work.)

On the theme of justice, a little more clarity in the definition would be desirable. The theme oscillates from God's righteousness to almsgiving. It is so rich and so manifold, but it needs to be sorted out a little more. However, I like Karris's interpretation of Luke 23:47: Jesus is the innocently suffering righteous one, which is a good combination of the two possible translations of *dikaios* in this verse.

The theme of food is perhaps sometimes drawn a little too far because Karris includes passages in which nothing is said about food. His sense of humor is readily apparent in several references.

Chapter Five shows very well how all these themes come together in the passion account and how Luke portrays Jesus as the innocently suffering righteous one. Luke's soteriology does not speak of Jesus' expiatory death, but rather God shows in the resurrection of Jesus that he, God, is righteous king; God reigns over sin and death; God saves. God's saving action must be accepted by "seeing" with faith.

Karris is reading Luke with sympathetic understanding and brings out well these motifs of the Gospel. He is well versed in the literature to which frequent references are made. Unfortunately, the notes are printed at the end of each chapter so that they are difficult to locate and contain a few misprints. I recommend the book especially for preachers who want to understand Luke's account of the passion in preparation for the Lenten season in the year of Luke.

Wilhelm C. Linss
Lutheran School of Theology
Chicago, Illinois

I CORINTHIANS. By Jerome Murphy-O'Connor. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1979. 162 pages. Paper. $5.95.

ST. PAUL'S CORINGTH: TEXTS AND ARCHAEOLOGY. By Jerome Murphy-O'Connor. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983. 192 pages. Paper. $8.95.

Even before the publication of these two volumes the author was well known as an expert on 1 Corinthians because of a series of learned articles published in the last decade. He has been Professor of New Testament at the famed *Ecole Biblique* in Jerusalem since 1967 and has shared his knowledge of Jerusalem and the holy land in his archaeological *vade mecum* simply entitled *The Holy Land* (1980), a volume which has won high praise.

His *I Corinthians* is part of the series "New Testament Message," which bears the subtitle "A Biblical-Theological Commentary." Murphy-O'Connor has lived up to the editors' billing by producing not a verse-by-verse commentary but essay-like reflections on Paul's thought section by section, by writing clearly and forcefully for a wide audience, and by focusing on theological issues.

The work is free of pedantry, denominationalism and other forms of blarney. It is an excellent commentary, and lay people and pastors will be much helped by it.

More unusual is the second of his two books listed above. In fact it has no exact parallel and is therefore all the more intriguing. Murphy-O'Connor brought his exegetical and archaeological skills to bear on the physical remains of the ancient city of Corinth, studied those remains and the detailed reports of excavators, read every ancient work that mentioned the city of Corinth, and contemplated Paul's letters to Corinth in the light of everything he could discover about the ancient city.

His book has three sections. The first and longest (128 pages) consists of translations of ancient Greek and Latin texts of the first century B.C.E. to the second century C.E., with illuminating comments and diagrams.

Part 2 (24 pages) re-examines questions of chronology, concluding that certain Jews were expelled from Rome by an Edict of Claudius in C.E. 41 (not 49 as often reported), that Gallio was proconsul

of Achaea with headquarters in Corinth in 51-52, and that Paul arrived in Corinth in the autumn of 50 and appeared before Gallio in the summer of 51.

Part 3 (20 pages) discusses in particular three matters: 1) the size and shape of private homes in ancient Corinth and elsewhere and implications for the house church organization and style of Christian gathering, 2) the temple of Asclepius, its physical layout and votive offerings in the form of miniature body parts (arm or leg, for example) found at the temple and possible connections with Paul's notion of the church as the body of Christ, 3) the location and size of workshops in Corinth and their contribution to an understanding of Paul's labors as a leather-worker and evangelist.

Anyone reading this volume must emerge with a far more accurate and vivid portrait of life in ancient Corinth, and therefore with information vital for a clear grasp of Paul's correspondence with the Christian congregation there.

Both volumes are highly recommended.

Robert H. Smith
Christ Seminary-Seminex
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

HARPER'S BIBLE DICTIONARY. Edited by Paul J. Achtemeier. San Francisco: Harper, 1985. xxii and 1178 pages, with eighteen full-color maps. Cloth. $27.50; thumb-indexed $29.95.

180 scholars from the Society of Biblical Literature have combined their expertise to produce this authoritative one-volume reference tool. Every church library should order it immediately—both pastors and lay people can use it with great profit. While it does not have the depth of the five volume *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* or the seven volume *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (now in preparation), it makes up for this in clarity, in its up-to-date information, and in the excellent collection of specialists, both Jewish and Christian, who authored its 3,700 articles.

The team of scholars was ably assisted by a team provided by the publisher, whose results are seen in the snappy layout and crisply edited text. In addition to the full-color maps mentioned above, there are 16 pages of color photographs, 400 black and white photographs, 75 black and white maps, and many drawings, charts, and tables. Especially useful are drawings of dress and shoes in the biblical period, a chart outlining the history of the English Bible, and sketches of plants referred to in the Bible. Longer articles are provided for Jesus Christ (13 pages), Paul (6 pages), Moses (5 pages), and the Bible and Western Art (11 pages).

There are the usual entries for each biblical book (two pages for Genesis and six for Isaiah), each person and place, key theological terms, and major archeological sites. To compensate for the brevity of the Genesis entry, the reader can turn to articles on creation, the flood, each of the patriarchs and matriarchs, sources of the Pentateuch, etc. The advance of scholarship is shown in entries on such current disciplines as sociology of Old and New Testament (no entry for structuralism) and in conclusions that would be surprising even a decade ago: "[The Pentateuch] is to be read as a continous whole." A balanced article on Ebla reports that the initial enthusiasm about the light the tablets would shed on biblical culture was exaggerated and that references to Palestine are insignificant and uncertain.

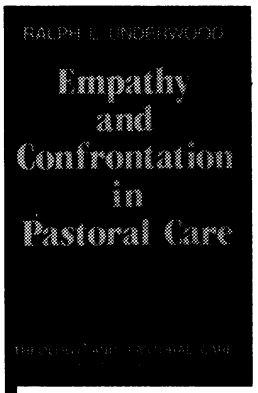
There are a few boners. We are told, for example, that the Psalms in the Septuagint are "rather scrambled" (whatever that might mean) and that the Samaritan Pentateuch arose out of a conflict in the 5th century (its present shape should probably be tied to 100 B.C.E.). The article on Isaiah refers to a number of scholars by name but provides no bibliography (Hessler's work is completely unknown to me. In general, the bibliographies are brief and completely in English—both appropriate features for such a one volume work). It would have been good to recommend one or two commentaries for each biblical book although this is only rarely done.

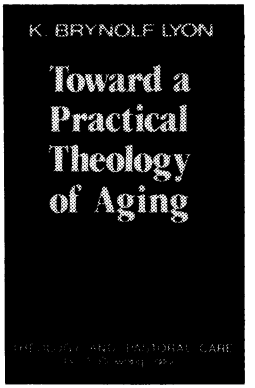
This review needs to end positively. Here is a book to read, mark, browse through, and inwardly digest. Buy it!

Ralph W. Klein
Christ Seminary-Seminex
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Briefly Noted

The latest volume in **A Good News Commentary** is **Acts** by David John Williams (Harper & Row, $12.95). It is a good conservative, evangelical guide to the book. Williams, Anglican vice-principal of Ridley College in Australia, holds that the book was written by Luke about A.D. 75 to provide guidance for Christians in their attitude toward non-believing Jews, toward the Roman state, and toward themselves and their task. Williams leans strongly on Hengel and Maddox in his evaluation of the book. The commentary proper argues that Galatians 2 and Acts 15 report the same incident (contrary to much British opinion), stresses the historical reliability of the book, and yet recognizes that the speeches are not transcripts of what was actually said (though their historical reliability is not less than that of the speeches in Thucydides! [sic]). Like the other volumes in the series, it shows that Evangelical Christianity is entering the main stream of biblical scholarship. And that is welcome indeed! All in all, a useful work for lay people and many pastors. (Edgar Krentz)

The NIV Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament. Volume 4. Isaiah-Malachi. Edited by John R. Kohlenberger III. (Zondervan, $24.95). The Hebrew/Aramaic text of this final volume of a new interlinear Old Testament is that of *Biblia Hebraica,* without the text critical apparatus, and the interlinear translation is that of the editor. In choice of vocabulary he follows the NIV, the full text of which is also printed out in full on the right hand side of the page. A judicious use of hyphens helps to link the left-to-right English with the Semitic languages which run in the opposite direction. This volume contains Lamentations and Daniel although they are actually part of the Writings in the Hebrew canon. Those with a modest knowledge of Hebrew who want to study the Old Testament text in the original will find in the four volume set a very good friend.

Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms. By Richard A. Muller. (Baker, $14.95). Those interested in the scholastic/orthodox period of the Lutheran and Reformed traditions will find here an authoritative guide to its often arcane terminology. This is not a lexicon to help one translate Chemnitz or Baier, but a vocabulary to help students read English-language works (e.g. Schmid, Pieper) that use Latin and Greek terms. The listing is alphabetical and intersperses Latin with (transliterated) Greek.

The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History. Harvard Semitic Monographs 33. By Steven L. McKenzie. (Scholar's Press, $16.50). In this Harvard dissertation the author explores the relationship between 1 and 2 Chronicles and the test of Samuel-Kings. While he makes many valuable contributions of a text critical sort and offers a clear evaluation of the history of research, a number of his conclusions seem dubious. S. argues, for example, that the Chronicler knew only the first, pre-exilic edition of Samuel-Kings even though the

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text type in the book of Kings that he used is proto-Rabbinic (that is, late). He also maintains the theory that the Chronicler did not much revise the text of the Deuteronomistic History by alleging that he had access to another independent source in those cases when he seems to have in fact extensively revised it (as in 2 Chr. 1).

Gospel Perspectives. The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels. Edited by David Wenham. Volume 5. (JSOT Press, $13.50). These fourteen essays attempt to isolate quotations of or allusions to the Jesus tradition in other canonical works (e.g. 1 Corinthians, 1 Peter), in the apocryphal gospels, and in other early Christian and non-Christian works (Thallus, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny).

Saga, Legend, Tale, Novella, Fable. Edited by George W. Coats. (JSOT Supplements 35; $8.95). Here are 10 essays on the five narrative genres listed in the title; a first essay defines the genre while a second demonstrates the value of the definition for exegesis of a particular text. The genres in this collection tell a story so that the telling itself will capture the attention of the audience and facilitate communication of the story-tellers point. Thus, the accuracy and historicity of the story are not the key element in evaluating them.

Church Roots. Edited by Charles P. Lutz. (Augsburg, $9.95). Nine essays detail aspects of the 19th century history of ethnic groups (Danish, German, and Norwegian) that now comprise The American Lutheran Church. The questions they faced (Who has authority in the church? How can the church be planted in an alien culture? Can cross-cultural mission be achieved) are very much still with us as we head toward the (Evangelical) Lutheran Church in the U.S.A.

Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry. Edited by Ann Kort and Scott Morschauser (Eisenbrauns, $25.00). The 29 essays of this volume pay tribute to a renowned professor at the Johns Hopkins University and the Baltimore Hebrew college. The Jubilarian's contributions have been primarily in Qumran studies and in the "tough words and difficult texts" from the Hebrew Bible. Regrettably, this outstanding Festschrift does not provide a bibliography of S.'s works.

An Inclusive-Language Lectionary: Readings for Year C. (John Knox, $9.95). With this volume the National Council of Churches has finished its first attempt to remove the exclusively patriarchal references from the three year lectionary. As in the past, the substitutions in regard to humans will cause little stir and for the most part are long overdue. More problematic are the divine references: Sovereign for Lord; The Human One for Son of Man; Realm of God for Kingdom; God the Father (and Mother) for God the Father. Even many who share the NCC's goal detect a bit of overkill, and the attempt to avoid masculine pronouns does little to enhance the esthetic value of the text. Try this from John 1:18: "The only Child, who is in the bosom of (God) the (Mother and) Father, that one has made God known." For overkill in human references see Exod 3:15: "The God of Jacob (and Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah) has sent me to you."

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Ralph W. Klein, Editor

IMPLEMENTING GLOBAL INCLUSIVENESS

William E. Lesher, President

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The communication and the living out of the Gospel is based on "meeting"—people meeting one another. In the explanation to the Third Article of the Creed, the Catechism states that the Holy Spirit calls, *gathers* and enlightens the whole Christian Church on earth.

Even in this media age, the Church remains and relies on people meeting people. Transmission of the Word in print, by air wave or T.V. tube has a place, to be sure, but only a partial place. The Church is meeting; it is community; it is people gathered, confessing, forgiving, praising, learning, praying, serving, and reaching out together. One critic of the T.V. church craze put it this way, "If Rex Humbard is your pastor, who's going to officiate at your funeral?" The Church is "meeting"; it is people caring about people — inside and outside the community. It is people gathered in "the name," where the Spirit has promised to be in their midst.

I am writing to suggest that this essential element in the Christian life — the meeting of people — become a part of our commitment to the global inclusiveness of our New Lutheran Church.

The purpose statement for the New Lutheran Church (see CNLC Progress Report #6) states:

> The Church is a people created by God in Christ, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming and sanctifying activity in the world. To participate in God's mission, this church shall: . . . carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ *and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent* with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier of all.

This is a tall order.

Like so many idealistic visions that find their way into the rhetoric of purpose statements, this can be window dressing for the New Lutheran Church — or it can be one of the salient ways in which the next Lutheran Church is really new.

How in the world will congregations throughout the New Lutheran Church "do all their ministry with a global awareness"? Well, it means we will have to become more global in our worship, the central place where the Church meets. The hymns, the homily, and especially the petitions in the prayers of the Church can reach out to the corners of the earth in their content and concern. Study, discussion, literature, promotion of world mission, etc., are all ways that need to be re-evaluated and enhanced if this purpose statement vision is going to be fulfilled.

To these more conventional methods of achieving global awareness, I would like to add the possibility of "meeting". I propose that in the New Lutheran Church, perhaps through the Division for Global Mission, methods be developed for putting congregations in

the NLC in touch with Lutheran brothers and sisters in Christ in other parts of the world. Perhaps each synod could have contact with a Lutheran Church body in Asia, Africa and Latin America, or perhaps districts could relate to synods or congregations in other parts of the world. The purpose would be "meeting" — to work out ways for people to cross the gulf that separates us, to go from here to there and there to here, and to build a global awareness into the ministry of every local congregation.

It has worked before. Many white Lutheran congregations have been made racially aware only when they actually have "met" with black or Hispanic or Asian Lutheran members, and have shared with them perceptions, frustrations, and visions of life and ministry. Several years ago, a group of laity and clergy from the Illinois Synod (LCA) were sent by the synod to South Africa on a fact finding, people-to-people journey. Upon their return, they reported to the synod and brought their message to many local congregations. The people involved were changed, and the entire synod has been made more globally aware by their "meeting" with South African Christians.

It will cost money and take commitment. The added funds will probably need to come from US congregations by and large, but it's my hunch that this could be the easiest money to raise. The plan would be two-way. It would focus on building intimate relations between congregational members in the NLC and congregational members in other lands. It would demonstrate the social, economic, political, and conceptual diversity in our global church and, at the same time, make clear the power of our unity in Christ. It would, it seems to me, be a means to make the vision of "global awareness" more than rhetoric; it would help ground it in congregational exposure, experience, and commitment.

I would like to hear from the readers of *Currents* on this suggestion. Please share your reaction and ideas with me.

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