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# CURRENTS in theology and mission

Mother Church

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# CURRENTS in theology and mission

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# Mother Church

I'm not smart enough to know who first compared the church to a mother, but I do know that the church has experienced more or less equal shares of criticism and love from me and has not flinched from my presence or refused to offer me safe and warm passage. At times she has scolded me (whether fairly or unfairly, God only finally knows). So she must be a mother, not of a nuclear family, to be sure, though her brood is all too fissionable.

Trouble is, she is an institution, too, for better and for worse. **Hans Walter Wolff** deals with a parellel situation in his discussion of Old Testament prophets and institutions. The prophets were of several sorts—ecstatics, cult or court related, and also those we call the writing prophets. The latter frequently and furiously criticized government and cult, though when the prophets delivered words of promise during and after the exile, they also called for renewal of all the institutions. Prophets in the church try to link the will of God to the here and now, and to secular and political events—they are by definition in dialogue with institutions. Prophets are validated only by their relationship to the gospel, no matter how peripheral their family status. We ought never forget that a number of those we name canonical were once considered crazy by their contemporaries.

One of the great and insufficiently-honored parts of mother church is the deaconess movement, which recently celebrated its centennial in the United States. **Sister Elizabeth Steele** recalls for us some of their pathfinders, from the women at the foot of the cross to the heroines of diaconal service in the 19th century. Because the role of women in society and in the church is changing, she calls for a structure-altering diaconate, with emancipation as its goal. A hundred years from now, what these pathfinding women and their forebears have accomplished ought to be told in memory of them.

**Lawrence H. Henning** perceives a crisis in pastoral care characterized by a silence about cross-centered theology. He outlines a

*theologia crucis* that hails Jesus as the risen crucified one and that sees the crucifixion as a trinitarian event, with the resulting models for ecclesiastical and political structures stressing community rather than monarchy. On this Moltmannian base he builds principles for pastoral care: the cross and resurrection form its central content; every act of helping is sharing of the brother's or sister's suffering, not a condescension to them; acceptance and empathy are not enough to convey the love of God. The event of the cross calls us to share one another's pain in community, but also to struggle to see the light of the crucified one who stands in our midst sharing our pain and providing hope.

A recent survey of inactive Lutherans asked them to identify what would be important if they ever came home to the church. Their first two choices: good preaching and help in time of bereavement. **Mark P. Bangert** reminds us that death is the passage rite by which God escorts us into the divine presence. The music associated with burial expresses our loss, sin, and loneliness, but also light, life, and hope, so transforming our death into an instrument of adoration. He suggests appropriate psalms, anthems, and hymns for various parts of the burial service. The musician's task is to educate for death since a celebration of life with death, musically and liturgically, brings us well-prepared to the burial liturgy.

**Michael Hoy** joins the discussion of the role of Lutherans in liberation theology. He denies that liberationists are Pelagians and criticizes a recent *Currents'* article for setting up a Lutheran "domino theory." By contast, he builds a bridge between Segundo and Luther. Since we are cooperators with God, soteriology and human action are not to be wedged apart. Justifying faith, in fact, makes our social-political movements eligible to be called God's movements. The Kingdom comes, therefore, in the concrete, historical, human liberating events of our times and places.

Rounding out this issue are a poem on death by **Mary Ellen Hansburg** and a meditation on Psalm 51 by **Timothy Weber.**

I recently spent a few days with evangelism leaders from the uniting Lutheran churches. They were planning joint activities in five Midwestern states for before and after 1988, and getting to know and work with brothers and sisters previously separated by Lutheran walls. As I drove a carload of them to O'Hare, one of them remarked, "This is the first time I caught the excitement of the new church." He had seen the richness, diversity, and gifts of the Spirit that unity is fostering. I think he also had gained new respect for his Mother.

**Ralph W. Klein**

**Editor**

# Prophets and Institutions in the Old Testament

**Hans Walter Wolff**
*Heidelberg*

Translated by Thomas Trapp, Concordia College, St. Paul, MN. The German text, containing extensive footnotes and references to scholarly discussions appeared as "Prophet und Institution im Alten Testament" in *Charisma und Institution,* edited by Trutz Rendtorff (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn), 87-101.

## The Prophets are Crazy

1. No prejudice about the prophets is as widespread as this one: They are "Crazy". This viewpoint is attested by its use among various groups in widely scattered centuries.

1.1 Before the end of the 9th century B.C.E., a biblical narrator describes how Elisha sent one of the sons of the prophets to the commanders of Israel. He summoned Jehu ben Nimshi from their midst and, functioning as Yahweh's spokesman, secretly anointed him to be the king of Israel. When the prophetic messenger disappeared, Jehu returned to his comrades, and they immediately asked him: "Why did this madman come to you?" Jehu tried to dodge the question: "You know the man and his babbling!" Both the question and the answer show that prophets are not taken very seriously. The ecstasies of the prophets made them appear deranged. (2 Kgs 9:1-11)

And yet, this supposed madman was an irresistible messenger of Yahweh, a messenger announcing a turning point in history, one who would have an acute affect upon the political scene. It took Jehu himself no time at all to stop what he was doing and charge off like a madman to overthrow King Joram and the entire Omride dynasty.

1.2 It was not only army leaders who took the prophets at first glance to be mentally disturbed. A hundred years later Hosea heard this insult hurled at himself during the great harvest festival: "The prophet is a fool. The man of the spirit is crazy." (9:7)

"Crazy," one would say, above all else because of the peculiar show he put on with his wife and children. How could anyone name his sons "Jezreel" and "Not-My-People" and his daughter "Without-Mercy"! What could anyone be getting at with this provocative and insulting talk about a "whore"? The very crassness of his message shows that this silly fool has stepped outside the bounds of time-honored traditions. The slandered prophet responds with no more than: "May Yahweh remember your guilt." (9:9)

1.3 A third time a prophet is called "Crazy" is plainly documented in official priestly correspondence. At the beginning of the 6th century Shemaiah, from among those in exile in Babylon, directs a letter to the Jerusalem priest Zephaniah. He charges him with dereliction of duty, because he has neglected to keep control, as mandated, over "every madman and prophet" by not taking action in the matter of Jeremiah of Anathoth (Jer. 29:25-28) Why is Jeremiah called "crazy"? Because he

**As outsiders, prophets fit best on the periphery.**

wrote the exiles that they should get ready for a long stay in Babylon. Shemaiah's letter assumes that every prophet who makes a statement in the area around the temple in Jerusalem is under the implicit control of the chief priest. Zephaniah would not only have the right and responsibility to control and to reprimand, but would also have complete authority to execute any sentence of punishment. And yet, instead of punishing Jeremiah, Zephaniah reads him the letter. In response, Jeremiah was audacious enough to write to Shemaiah that Yahweh would carry out a sentence of punishment against him.

Here the tension between prophet and institution is highlighted in a formal way. As that priest saw it, the prophet ought to act completely within the confines of the official cult. The prophet, however, considers himself to be responsible to no human institution because of the word which God had mandated him to proclaim. Already foreshadowed at this early time is the fact that the prophets who were judged "crazy" would in the final analysis be canonized. Let us pursue in a very general way the question about the relationship between prophets and institutions.

First, to what extent do they themselves work *in* and *with* institutions?

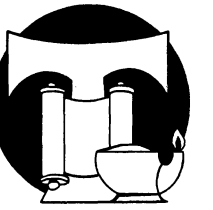
Second, to what extent do they do battle *against* institutions? And finally, to what extent do they work *for* institutions?

## Types of Prophets

**2.** The great variety which is offered to us as we read about prophets in the Old Testament suggests at the very outset that we do not have one unified, orderly institution called prophecy. At the very least, there are three types which must be distinguished: ecstatics, cultic prophets, and court prophets.

**2.1** Contact with a group of ecstatics associated with Elisha seemed strange and disturbing to those close to Jehu. These ecstatics were a loosely-knit group, banding together only once in a while, not tied to any one place, yet led by their master Elisha. They used music and dancing to bring them to ecstatic frenzy. Their real goal was to be seized, to be brought into direct contact with the deity, who changes a person. Speaking oracles can be seen only as a subphenomenon of ecstasy. And yet, the tradition became more interested in their words.

**2.2** A type of prophecy appears in Jerusalem which is connected with the temple and subordinate to the priesthood. We speak of cult prophecy. The king came into contact with the cult prophets mostly through the priests. (2 Kgs 19:2; 22:11-14) Their chief functions were in making intercessions and in giving favorable oracles. They are the specialists in prayer and God's answer. Their medium is exclusively the spoken word. It seems relatively certain that



cultic prophecy was part of the temple institution.

**2.3** On the other hand, direct contact between prophets and the royal court concerning the main activities of the political administration would have been more occasional. A court prophet like Nathan, with significant influence on King David, would have been much more the exception. One can find priests among lists of royal officials in Jerusalem but never prophets. Prophets never did actually have uniform official positions by which they could earn a livelihood, but were only very loosely connected in different ways with cultic and government institutions.

**2.4** I Kings 22 is a good example of the tension between the institutionalized royal prophets and the autonomous individual prophet. Four hundred prophets announce a sure victory, just as the king wanted and just as was their custom. At first, one of the prophets off to the side, Micaiah ben Imlah, does the same. (vv. 8-9, 13-15) But afterwards he does not keep secret the vision of the coming defeat. The vision will prove to be true even if the prophet relating it is beaten and imprisoned. But one notes that the plethora of promises of victory also come from Yahweh, as a supplement to Micaiah's report of his vision explicitly states. (vv. 19-23) The lying spirit must also play his role in Yahweh's plan for a defeat. This is how contradictory prophecy could be. The suffering prophet, standing alone, unmasks the governmentally manipulated speakers of oracles. His insight and full authority at once clarify and demolish this institutionalized court prophecy.

**2.5** Next to these loosely connected groups of prophets stand Elijah, Elisha and Micaiah ben Imlah, and still later come the great individual personalities from whom the great prophetic books get their names. This minority known as the so-called writing prophets far surpasses all the others because of the power of their messages. When we speak theologically about things prophetic, it is to these that we turn. Their personal names are more important to the redactors than a prophetic title. They come from both secular and priestly circles, and their office is never hereditary. Nor can an organized line of succession be demonstrated. Just because they are solitary figures, they connect their work to special call experiences and mandated tasks. They come forward where the institutions are decaying.

As outsiders, they usually fit best sociologically on the periphery rather than as members of any central groups. Even Isaiah, who is associated closely with the court, sees himself hindered from "walking in the way of this people." (8:11) Amos is a foreigner in Bethel and comes to represent the problems of the poorest people in Israel. Hosea learns his prophetic lessons in his family life. Micah comes up from the little rural town of Moresheth to go against

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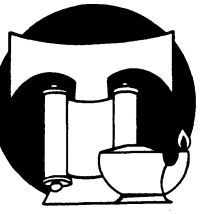
the powers-that-be in the capital city. Jeremiah lives a lonely existence and is even persecuted by his relatives. One can easily characterize the history of classical prophecy as a history of martyrs.

The appearance of the great prophets must be described as a strictly occasional activity. It is set in motion neither by the festal calendar nor by any other institutional rules and regulations. Julius Wellhausen compared the priests to a constantly flowing spring, but the prophets are more like an intermittent spring, which, when it does break forth, flows with all the greater force. The occasions for their appearance could be eruptions in the natural or historical world, particularly in times of emergency. But the prophets themselves considered the spontaneous reception of a word from Yahweh as the real stimulus to speak. If God did not speak, the prophet had nothing to say. Classical prophecy is both determined and limited by the fact that it is an occasional, charismatic experience of the word from God. This opens the prophetic eyes to grievances in their own day, stimulates very clear recollection of previous incidents, and sharpens the arguments for theological formulations. These great individual prophets cannot as easily be lumped together as members of a unified, single, institutionalized grouping, as is possible with other prophetic groups. And yet, again and again, the lively word of Yahweh assails the institutions of their world, both political and cultic ones.

## Prophetic Criticism of Government

**3.1** Hosea is the most radical opponent of kingship in Israel. He not only brings accusations against the present administration, (7:3-7) and against the hundred-year-long dynasty of Jehu (1:4) but he also places the initial rebellion against Yahweh way back into the time when kingship itself first came into existence at the time of Saul. (13:10) Concerning his own day, he chiefly laments the battles over succession to the throne. They are characterized by lying and cheating, hot-headed passions, and not least of all by the shedding of blood. The basic fault is that they do not consult Yahweh when choosing kings and officials. That is the same as disavowing Yahweh by going to worship idols. The key word Hosea uses to describe all this evil is "whoring away from Yahweh." (1:2) That was enough to bring about the end of kingship in Israel. (1:4; 3:4; 7:7). After the people had constantly pestered God for a king, that they might be like all the nations (I Sam. 8:5), Hosea completely discards the very institution of kingship. Repeatedly and in many various ways, he kept coming back to his central argument that Yahweh himself had been rejected as Savior of Israel. So Hosea had to suffer along with his God, each deeply disappointed in his love affair.

**3.2** The prophet Isaiah attacks the institution of kingship by taking direct aim



at its official leaders: King Ahaz himself, well-known royal officials, the judges of Jerusalem, diplomatic ambassadors. He sets his sights far beyond the boundaries of Judah; upon the Northern Kingdom and the Arameans; upon the Philistines; onto the world empire of the Assyrians; towards Egypts and Ethiopia. The prophet confronts all of them with Yahweh's "decrees, which have been set for the whole earth", with his "hand, which is stretched out over all peoples." "Yahweh alone" can provide a protecting refuge for Israel. Since they make plans and act "without him", without the One who is "Not a Man", "Not a Human", that is enough to bring about the ruinous downfall of the organized state. They reject his gripping word: "Turn back and take rest; be still and trust." (7:4-9; 30:15) Even when Isaiah recalls ancient traditions, the essence of what is prophetic stays unchanged: he connects the past world of Yahweh with decisions about to be made and thereby claims Yahweh's proper place in the arena of world politics.

3.3 More than a hundred years later, Jeremiah experienced a completely different word from Yahweh. The salvation of Zion, in which Isaiah demanded belief to no avail, would now give way to the yoke which Yahweh would lay upon them. For Jeremiah, the long-standing theology which promised deliverance for Jerusalem became a most powerful lie. It was not a prophetic truth which could receive institutional status and be counted on forever. The prophetic word of one moment cannot become generalized as a teaching which would remain valid for ever after. Jeremiah proclaims the judgment of God upon those who "steal his words from one another." (29:30) They hand out some old prophetic words as their own, up-to-date, applicable prophecy. However, each prophet was questioned closely about his current commissioning.

## Prophetic Criticism of the Cult

4.1 According to Amos 7:10-17, Amaziah, the leading official in charge of the cult at the Bethel sanctuary, stepped forward to oppose the prophet Amos from Judah. According to his own admission, Amaziah's highest overlord was the king of Israel. As the responsible official in charge, he banishes Amos from the country. Amos, for his part, comes right back at the priest Amaziah. But instead of appealing to some human institution, he makes reference to his own being seized and called by Yahweh. This call experience cannot be verified. And yet, Amos sees himself girded for battle with an authority which has no equal. The king and his priest are also subject to the highest overlord of Amos. The accuser Amaziah thus becomes the accused. The one who drove Amos from the land would himself be driven out. The Bethel cult would go under; the prophetic word would keep right on working.

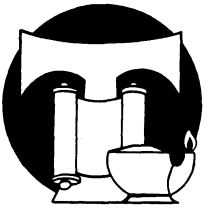
**As outsiders, prophets fit best on the periphery.**

Those sayings of Amos which expose how selfishness and cultic institutions had been woven together show this even more clearly. He parodies the instructions for the pilgrimage: "Come to Bethel and *practice committing crime!* . . . for *you* so love to do!" (4:4-5) Pious, self-satisfying customs link up very nicely with mistreatment of other humans. They plug up the springs from which justice and righteousness ought to gush forth. (5:21-24) Israel's God had no need for being given such worship service performances. "I hate, I repudiate your festivals." (5:21) God wants the helpless to be helped. Amos brings his listeners right into the presence of Yahweh as he takes away from them the festival services. He directly attacks those who consider it proper worship of God when they feel satisfied inside. "Seek me and live; but do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal.(5:4) God's indignation (Unwillen) is opposed to your self-will (Eigenwillen).

**4.2** Micah also pleads for "justice" in opposing institutions which have become empty shells. He pleads for it specifically on behalf of his own exploited people. (3:3, 5, 10-11) The leading officials "abhor justice . . . build up Zion by means of bloodshed and Jersualem by means of injustice." They (along with priests and prophets) piously seem to respond right away to Micah's threats with: "Is not Yahweh in our midst? No calamity will come upon us." But while they too appeal to the presence of Yahweh, their deeds contradict it. For they do not seek to know the will of Yahweh.

Micah goes into great detail about those institutionalized prophets, who stand at the side of the priests in worship services with intercessory prayers and answers from God. These prophets serve their "customers" according to their ability to pay. (3:11) The allure of money speaks louder than God. Micah announces to these spiritually decrepit prophets that they experience only darkness and "will no longer receive any answers from God." (3:6-7) Prophecy which has become nothing more than a manipulated institution will be consigned to hearing nothing but silence. Those who refuse to listen to the voice of Yahweh because money is making better music will soon not hear his voice at all.

**4.3** The proclamation of the pre-exilic prophets shows an extraordinary variety of nuances in opposing political regulations and cultic rituals, but they are united in one thing: They do not call for reforms. More than anything else, they issue bills which list all the debts of guilt which each institutional representative has personally amassed. Wherever Yahweh's saving presence and his gift of righteousness have gone unrecognized and rejected, the prophets announce the downfall of Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem when he comes to bring his judgment upon them. True prophets haul present guilt out into the harsh light, into the



presence of the One who comes. This is how God brings the lords of world politics into service against his own people. Such prophecy is a destabilizing influence both politically and religiously.

## The Prophets and Institutional Renewal

**5.1** After the destruction of Jerusalem, the exile of the people, and the collapse of their political and cultic institutions, one can truly wonder whether Israel could have survived as a historical entity, had it not been for the prophetic proclamation during the time of the exile. In any case, it was not institutions but rather the great prophetic charismatics of the 6th century who bridged the gap with hope for a new age. But they also take up the word *for* a renewal of the institutions.

**5.2** This turning point is most beautifully seen in *Ezekiel.* Up to 587, he persistently threatened the destruction of Jerusalem and its sanctuary. But then his mouth was opened to speak something new. In the 14th year after the fall of Jerusalem, he was confronted with the great vision of the new temple (40-48), Ezekiel and his disciples portray it as a glowing promise. The vision's high point comes with the reentry of the glory of Yahweh into the temple structure. (43:1-5) It is important for our theme to note that the kingly palace with its connected buildings, which had stood right next to the sanctuary of Yahweh since the days of Solomon, now completely disappears. Yahweh alone would take up residence in the midst of his people. The political and cultic aberrations now fade away in this vision of the completely new, eschatological worship of God. Yahweh's presence, which the prophets proclaimed as having been ignored when they uttered their prophetic condemnations of institutions, now becomes the center of the new life. Water to heal and to make the land fruitful gushes forth from the sanctuary. (47:1-12)

**5.3** It did not just stop with the prophetic visions. After several large groups returned home from captivity, the prophet *Haggai* set himself energetically to the task of getting the temple rebuilt so it would become the focal point for all of Jerusalem's institutions. He himself was no priest and even had to consult with priests in cultic matters. (2:11-13)

He challenged Zerubbabel, the persian governor of Judah, and Joshua, the High Priest, to rebuild the temple. In true prophetic fashion, Haggai brought both political and cultic interests together at the place where Yahweh was present. The people said: "Since our return home, after our crops failed, we have been weighed down with the worries of providing food and shelter." (1:2-6) Haggai retorted: "Your selfishness has brought on this trouble. You are doing nothing about the Glory of Yahweh. Build the temple! Then your cares will vanish." That's how Haggai aroused his hearers. When the huge piles

**As outsiders, prophets fit best on the periphery.**

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of rubble sapped their courage, he reinforced his admonition with magnificent promises: "Yahweh will shake the cosmos; he will shake the nations. Then they will all bring their treasures to the temple." According to the oracle of Yahweh: "At this place I will establish complete peace." (2:6-9) Thus, in true prophetic fashion, the earthly presence of Yahweh and the downfall of the nations are brought together at the same place. Similarly, in the final prophetic saying of the book, Zerubbabel is chosen to be "Yahweh's signet ring," even as power is being taken away from all the mighty of the world, including warriors of every type. Thus, Haggai not only unites the tedious work on the temple with the daily needs of the Jews, but also with the final majesty of the worldwide rule of Yahweh.

## Prophets in the Church Today

**6.1** The prophetic expectations of Ezekiel and Haggai go beyond all limits of political and cultic institutions. Paul says that Jesus Christ is the Yes to everything which God has promised. (2 Cor. 1:20) And yet, even Paul sees that prophecy as a charisma takes on a new function in the Christian community. He mentions it as the first of all the gifts of the Spirit after that of apostleship and before that of teacher, evangelist, shepherd. (1 Cor 12:28; 14:1)

**6.2** The concrete meaning of prophecy for the New Testament period can also be elucidated by asking how prophecy functioned in the Old Testament. We may conclude that:

1. Prophecy connects God's will with the *Here and Now,* with the peculiar circumstances of the community and each individual; prophecy is strongly tied to the affairs of the present.

2. Prophecy draws both *worldly events* and *secular life* into the knowledge of the will of God, tests the "signs of the times," and asks what is ready for action and what is to be left undone.

3. As a free gift of the Spirit for our assurance, prophecy can come from *all* levels of society, from *every* generation, and from *either* sex, not least of all from the periphery of society, at cross purposes with its institutions. Paul knew that it could thus easily be dismissed and repudiated. He admonishes: "Do not despise prophetic utterances." (1 Thess 5:20) As a criterion for assessing its validity, Paul mentions that prophecy follows "in agreement with faith" grounded in Jesus Christ. (Rom 12:6) Paul warns not to scorn such prophecy. It can also lead the institutions of the church through times of drought into a new life. We must not forget: Those who were canonized were mocked earlier by their contemporaries as being "Crazy."

# The Role of Women in the Church

**Sister Elizabeth Steele**
*Youngstown, Ohio*

*An address given at the Assembly of the Deaconess Community of the Lutheran Church in America, June, 1984, marking a century of Deaconess work in the United States.*

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Gail Sheely begins her book, *The Pathfinders,* with these words from Robert Frost:

> I shall be telling this with a sigh
> somewhere ages and ages hence
> Two roads diverged in a wood,
> and I—
> I took the one less traveled by.
> And that has made all the
> difference.

The women who have preceded us in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the women whose lives we celebrate in this anniversary year, these women who are our heritage, were pathfinders. They took the road less traveled. They confronted a crossroads, chose a path, and emerged renewed and strengthened. We remember and celebrate these pathfinders.

In "Women Leaders in the New Testament," one of a collection of pieces published in the book, *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration,* J. Massyngberde Ford writes, "On the whole the prominent women in the Bible are ones who use their own initiative and authority to fulfill God's will." There are many of them but for now let's look at several examples of these prominent women.

In the final chapters of the Gospel of Mark, we find the discipleship exemplified by the twelve turning into betrayal and denial in the Passion narrative. Judas betrays Jesus; Peter denies him; and all the male disciples abandon him and flee into hiding. By contrast, the women disciples are found under the cross risking their own lives and safety. No doubt they were well aware of the danger of being arrested and executed as followers of a political insurrectionist crucified by the Romans.

Just as Mark presents four leading male disciples who hear Jesus' call to discipleship—Peter, Andrew, James and John—so at the end (15:40) four leading women disciples are presented and mentioned by name. These four women—Mary of Magdala; Mary, the mother of James; Mary, the mother of Joses; and Salome—are leaders among the women disciples who have followed Jesus to the cross.

In her book, *In Memory of Her,* Elisabeth Schuessler Fiorenza discusses the three verbs Mark uses to characterize the discipleship of the women under the cross. They *followed* him in Galilee, they *ministered* to him, and they *came up with* him to Jerusalem. The first verb "follow" characterizes the call and decison for discipleship. It is, for example, the same verb used in the first chapter at the call of Simon and Andrew where we read, "And immediately they left their nets and followed him." But it is more than leaving the nets and traveling along with. Jesus insists in 8:34 and

**We remember and celebrate these pathfinders.**

later in chapter 10 that following him meant denying oneself, taking up the cross and risking persecution. The women are thus characterized as true disciples of Jesus who have left everything and have followed him on his way, even to that bitter end on the cross.

The second verb "diakonein" emphasizes that the women disciples have practiced the true leadership demanded of the followers of Jesus. Diakonein cannot be restricted to table service only, since *diakonia* summarizes the whole ministry of Jesus, the suffering servant who liberates. "For the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (10: 45)

The last verb refers not only to the four leading women disciples but to all the women disciples who had followed him from Galilee to Jerusalem. Interestingly enough, this verb is found elsewhere only in Acts 13:31 where it refers to those who had encountered the resurrected Lord and become his witnesses.

> And for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people.

Whereas Acts presents the twelve as the foremost apostolic witnesses, Mark characterizes the women disciples under the cross as such.

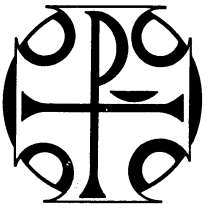
These women are presented as the apostolic eye-witnesses of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection in other places in Mark's Passion narrative. We also remember the woman who recognizes Jesus' suffering messiahship and, in a prophetic-sign action, anoints Jesus for his burial while some of the disciples reprimand her. It is from that incident, recorded in Mark 14: 9, that Fiorenza has taken the title for her book.

> Wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.

We remember, too, the servant woman who challenges Peter to act on his promise not to betray Jesus. And finally, two women, Mary of Magdala and Mary, the mother of Joses, witness the place where Jesus was buried and three women receive the news of his resurrection.

To quote from Fiorenza: "The writers of Mark and John have made it impossible for the Christian church to forget the invitation of Jesus to follow him on the way to the cross. Therefore, wherever the gospel is preached and heard, promulgated and read, what the women have done is not totally forgotten because the gospel story remembers . . ." We remember and celebrate these pathfinders.

When we move on to the earliest days of the church, we find that women were involved in the Christian missionary movement at every stage of its expansion. Dorcas of Joppa represents the first



stage of this expansion, and Lydia is the first convert of Europe. According to Acts 16:15, the church at Philippi began with the conversion of this business woman from Thyatira who offered her home to the Christian mission. The house church was the beginning of the church in a city or district. It provided space for the preaching of the word, for worship, as well as for social and eucharistic table sharing. Women played an important role in the founding, sustaining, and promoting of these house churches.

Women were also among the prophetic leaders of the communities. Luke characterizes Mary and Elizabeth, as well as Anna, as prophets. He mentions the four prophetic daughters of Philip (Acts 21: 9) whose fame, according to Eusebius, was so great that the provinces of Asia derive their apostolic origin from them. Asia Minor continued to recognize women prophets even into the second and third centuries.

## Founders of the Deaconess Movement

We cannot possibly catalog all of the women disciples through the centuries in the time we have here this evening, so with your permission—and hopefully with theirs—we will jump to Prussia and the 19th century. Much has been written of Theodore Fliedner and, without downplaying for one second his enormous accomplishments, we know that there would have been no deaconess movement had it not been for the women who committed themselves, leaving their homes and families, to serve in this ministry he envisioned. First there was his sister, Catherine, who taught in the school and assisted in the ministry. Then there was his wife, Friederike Munster, who was the moving spirit behind the Magdalene Homes. It was she who helped find women helpers as the work expanded and it was she who helped open the hospital and who undertook to care for the patients until specially trained help could be found.

That specially trained help came in the person of Gertrude Reichardt. Gertrude was the daughter of a physician in a town fifteen miles down the Rhine. She was now 48 years old and thoroughly experienced in caring for the sick. Fliedner's friends persuaded her to pay a visit to Kaiserswerth and thus she confronted a crossroads, and chose a new path which took her away from the community in which she had lived, where she had friends and family. This pathfinder became the first Lutheran deaconess on October 20, 1836.

We all know so well the story that follows. First came the four deaconesses who left their native land to respond to the need expressed by William Passavant. Then in 1884 the seven deaconesses who chose an unknown path and had the courage to move to Philadelphia and found what is now known as the Lankenau Hospital. Sister Marie Krueger

**We remember and celebrate these pathfinders.**

and the others must have been remarkable women. When they arrived, there were 27 patients being cared for in a hospital that was still under construction, but by the end of that first year, the hospital had cared for 890 patients and some 5,000 persons had visited the dispensary. As a result of the courage, fortitude, vision, energy and faithful discipleship of these women we are gathered together in community to celebrate 100 years of ministry in North America.

## The Female Pope

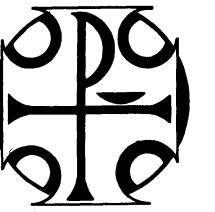
There is another story—not so familiar to us—of a remarkable woman. Picture a small farm in Ebersberg, Bavaria, a rural village of fewer than two thousand people, situated some 25 miles southeast of Munich. It is August 25, 1894 and a daughter has been born to Maria and George Lehnert—she would be one of twelve children. She was christened Josefine and she was the family's darling. She was, according to her biographer, an irrepressible child, bright and full of energy. At 7 Josefine suggested that she be allowed to help out in the fields. "It will be such fun for me!" Her brothers and sisters were astonished. It was women's work to help out in the home—cooking and sewing and cleaning and washing—but never in the fields. Her mother was even more horrified. It would be the first of many times in which she would ask, "Is it wrong for me to want to do different things?"

As Josefine grew to womanhood she had far less patience with the difficulties and privations of farm life. She tried to hide her deepening resentment of her destiny there.

On the surface there was nothing about Josefine during her midteens to suggest that she would ever become a nun. No one, not even her mother with whom she was close, could imagine the willful, headstrong teen-ager living a life of humility in a strict religious order. Yet deep within, far deeper than her rebellious nature, there was building a determination to succeed in a world of her own choosing.

When she made her decision at 14, she was afraid to face her family with her plans and finally when courage came, they refused to understand and forbade her leaving. And so it was, with practically nothing to her name, Josefine left home at 15, without a single good-bye, knowing that once she left, she would never be allowed to return. Sponsored by her pastor, whom she had known since childhood, she was accepted into the order of the Teaching Sisters of the Holy Cross. Following the years of training, she assumed the name Pascalina and it was as Sister Pascalina that the world would open to her and take her far from the peasant farm in Ebersburg.

Her first assignment was to the Stella Maris retreat house in the Swiss Alps. Into this Swiss retreat house there came one day in 1917, a cold and rather uncom-



municative Italian named Eugenio Pacelli. All the nuns held Pacelli in awe. He was a great power within the Vatican's inner circle and a close friend of the Pope. This clergyman was so well respected in Rome, that, at 41, he was already an archbishop and though not yet secretary of state, he was the official in charge of the Vatican's foreign office. After several months, his health restored, Pacelli returned to his duties. Then several months later a message came from the Pope to the retreat house authorizing Pascalina's transfer to Pacelli's residence in Munich. By nightfall, Pascalina was packed and on her way.

Perhaps you have guessed the outcome of the story. Eugenio Pacelli would become known throughout the world as Pope Pius XII and Pascalina traveled that road with him until his death on October 9, 1958. Paul Murphy titles his biography of her *La Popessa*—the female pope. It is a fascinating story. He writes of her:

> Many who admire Pascaline—even those who have detested her—agree that were she a man, the nun probably would have been elected as Pius XII's successor. Even some of her diehard enemies within the Vatican concede that had she a male's Roman collar, she might well have become the most influential Pope of any century.

I tell this story of Sister Pascalina, a woman of great intellect, impassioned conviction and devotion to her Lord and his church because she too took the road less traveled and it made all the difference, but also because she stands at a turning point in the role of women in the church. Her life symbolizes the bridge between the old and the new. It is a new age for women both in the church and in society, and those of us who are living at this time of birthing know that it is sometimes difficult and occasionally painful. But we have this wonderful inheritance from the women who have preceded us that can support and sustain us in the present and from which we can draw courage and vision for the future.

## Changing Roles of Women

What is our present? What can it tell us about our future? There has been much written recently on the changing role of women in society, and we have all read at least some of the studies that have emerged. A short, concise study, *American Women: Three Decades of Change,* was issued by the United States Department of Commerce. It begins by stating the obvious: "Women have been at the vortex of sweeping changes in demographic, social, and economic patterns" in these decades. Let's take a moment to review some of these patterns.

- The participation of women in the labor force has increased from about one third of all adult women

**We remember and celebrate these pathfinders.**

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in 1950 to more than half in 1980. But their earnings continue to average about 60% of men's and that ratio has not shown a sustained change.

— The proportion of women working fill time and year round has increased, particularly among women under 35.

— The percentage of married women in the labor force with children under 6 years of age has climbed from 19% in 1960 to 45% in 1980. And 62% of mothers of school age children were in the labor force in 1980.

Obviously this means that the demand and need for child care has grown substantially. With what we now know of the early learning potential of children—and some of you who are working in education may want to speak of this—it seems that the church will miss a great opportunity if it does not look seriously at pre-school education.

We have also seen a great deal written recently about latch-key children and a number of communities have started quite innovative enrichment programs for these children. Again, I think we will miss a real opportunity if we don't look seriously at the possibilities of afterschool programs. The church should begin to develop creative, innovative programming and resources for use in congregations.

Studies of time spent doing housework and taking care of children continue to show that working women do the major share of household tasks at the expense of leisure and sleep time and we need to add, volunteer time. This pool of women with time for volunteer work will continue to dwindle, and they have been the group on which congregations have been most dependent in the past. Our retired people, whose numbers are increasing, would seem to be the natural place to look for new volunteer pools.

Another aspect which we need to remember is that the more highly educated a woman is, the more likely she is to be employed. The figures for 1980 look like this—

- Almost half of the bachelor and master's degrees were awarded to women.
- 30% of doctoral degrees were earned by women.
- Over 20% of all law degrees were earned by women, as well as almost 20% of the medical degrees.

Since many of our congregations are in communities where women are most likely to have opportunities for higher education, we must face the reality that these women will have little time for volunteer activities and that they will be

looking for enriching programs for their children.

But there is another piece of this picture that is really alarming and one that many of us from our own experience can substantiate. According to a Korn-Ferry study made of top women executives—a study which could not even have been conducted only 5 years ago since so few women fell into the category—60% of these women said that religion had little or no importance in their lives. In contrast, 60% of the men executives queried in a similar study said that it was important to them. Why these discrepancies? Why are so many well educated professional women no longer a part of the church?

From our own personal experience and from what some of these women have shared with us, we get at least part of the answer—

- The church is viewed as oppressive to women, both in its structure and in its teaching.
- They see the church as an institution in society which is male dominated and undergirded by a patriarchal value system.
- It no longer speaks to these women in a way that is relevant to life experience.
- That their role as women is trivialized.

Perhaps from your experience you can add to that list. Whether we agree with all of this criticism of the church or not, we must take it seriously. We must take it seriously because we are a community of well-educated, well-trained women in the church. We must take it seriously or we will contribute by neglect to the loss to the church of these talented women.

## Women and a Changing Church

And the story we have to tell to these women—to all women—is that these are changing times in the role of women in the church as well. Joan Turner Beifuss writes in the April 13, 1984 issue of *National Catholic Reporter* that, "During the past 20 years, women have begun to do theology in significance and numbers unparalleled in any other time in Christian history. Many feminist theologians, in a great churning of ideas and approaches to God and church, are doing ground-breaking work." Janet Kalven from Grail, an international women's movement for Christian renewal, is quoted as saying, "Feminist theology is not a matter of add women and stir. Rather, feminist theology involves a profound rethinking of theology, its sources, methods and themes." We need to be a part of this great churning of ideas and sharing it in dialogue with other women.

As deaconesses in the Lutheran church, we may have an additional challenge in this changing time for women in the church. Do we have an image problem?

**We remember and celebrate these pathfinders.**

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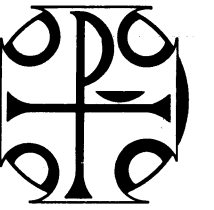
Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, the German theologian, thinks deaconesses do and challenges the diaconate in her book, *Liberty, Equality, Sisterhood.* She writes that the church deaconess—a new symbol of devotion since the middle of the 19th century—was the German contribution to the question of women's rights at the time. When the first women's colleges opened in the United States, our first deaconess houses were established. But ideas of woman's service, commitment, and sacrifice have repeatedly suffocated, or at least limited, all woman's autonomous endeavors. To be sure, these ideas did produce a broad spectrum of woman's church work, stretching from the deaconess house, through the Diaconate organization and parish aides, to the German Evangelical Women's League. But this work was always encouraged by men and always served to heal the wounds to society rather than to change society; it never had emancipation as a goal. But, she says, diaconate and emancipation need not be opposites. She sees the need for a "structure-altering diaconate." Women's diaconate is not an obsolete phase but in this expanded understanding, a challenge to the woman come-of-age.

The Deaconess Community of the Lutheran Church in America is an emancipated community and many of you in this room played a vital role in that process. In many ways, this 100th anniversary celebration is in honor of you and what you accomplished. Without your courage and commitment we would not be here this evening. We affirm that the women's diaconate is not an obsolete phase. But is it a challenge to the woman come-of-age? I think it can be.

As we look to our future, I firmly believe that we have a unique role to play in the Lutheran church in North America, in whatever form it finally emerges. I hope we will not spend these next years worrying about and struggling with how we will fit into the structure. I am not suggesting that we turn our backs on it but that we do not let it be all consuming, draining our energy. We can see that beginning to happen in other places in the church.

What is our unique role? I suggest that we have a special calling to ministry with and to women and their children. In this time of changing roles for women, we as professional women in the church have that responsibility. A responsibility to lift up those faithful women disciples of yesterday so that what they have done will be told in memory of them. Our way has been made easier by the pathfinders who went before us. Together with all of our sisters in the faith who journey with us today, we remember and celebrate. With God's help, we will be pathfinders for tomorrow.

In closing I want to share with you a piece by Elisabeth Schuessler Fiorenza—really a psalm—titled "A Song of Praise."



**Song of Praise**

A wandering Aramean was my mother.
In Egypt she bore slaves.
Then she called to the God of our mothers
Sarah, Hagar, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah.
Praise God Who Hears, Forever.

A warrior, judge, and harlot was my mother.
God called her from time to time to save and liberate her people
Miriam, Jael, Deborah, Judith, Tamar.
Praise God Who Saves, Forever.

A Galilean Jew was my mother.
She bore a wonderful child to be persecuted, hated and executed.
Mary, mother of sorrows, mother of us all.
Praise God Who Gives Strength, Forever.

A witness to Christ's resurrection was my mother.
The apostle to the apostles
Rejected, forgotten, proclaimed a whore
Mary of Magdala, foundation of women-church
Praise God Who Lives, Forever.

An apostle, prophet, founder, and teacher was my mother
called to the discipleship of equals
Empowered by the Sophia-God of Jesus
Junia, Priscilla, Myrta, Nympha, Thecla
Praise God Who Calls, Forever.

A faithful Christian woman was my mother.
A mystic, witch, martyr, heretic, saint, uppity woman
A black slave, a poor immigrant, an old hag, a wise woman
May we, with her, in every generation
Praise God Who Images Us All.

# The Cross and Pastoral Care

**Lawrence H. Henning**
*Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa*

The crisis in pastoral care has been well attested to in the past decade. Oden, for example, charged that pastoral counselors readily accommodate themselves to psychological trends while losing their spiritual foundation.[1] He stated further that pastoral counselors have learned to do quite well without Christ and the Apostles. Noyce has asked, "Has ministry's nerve been cut by the Pastoral Counseling Movement?"[2] Pastoral care, and particularly the "Pastoral Counseling Movement", often seemed more interested in securing effective psychological models and techniques than it was in developing its theological base. As a result, it lost its theological moorings and became adrift within the world of psychology. Why? What led to this identity crisis?

First, modern pastoral care largely developed out of disillusionment with the traditional intrusive, "Bible-thumping", easy answer approach that ministers were known to offer people in pain and suffering.[3] Perhaps the "Gospel" was proclaimed, but it wasn't heard, and neither were the feelings of the one in pain. In response to this sad state of affairs, pioneers in pastoral care learned to stop preaching and to start listening. In this effort they wholeheartedly adopted ideas espoused by Carl Rogers in his *Client-Centered Therapy*, especially the need to genuinely and empathically listen to the world of the other person. But did the pendulum swing too far? Is there a way to listen to each other *and* listen to the Gospel?

A second factor creating the tilt toward psychology and away from theology was the desire for professional esteem. When working with other professionals there is a natural desire to appear competent and to be professionally valued. However, from my observations as a former psychologist, the respect ministers receive from mental health professionals is often positively correlated with "psychological mindedness" and inversely correlated with "religiousness". Thus Pruyser noted, "The theologians sat at the feet of the psychiatric Gamaliels and seemed to like it."[4] Peterson stated the problem most bluntly, "Pastors have been herded into the temple shrines of psychiatry . . . (and) return to their parishes thoroughly convinced of their inferiority."[5] Often, the outcome of this desire for esteem was a devaluation of one's pastoral calling and a determined effort to build one's psychological credentials.

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[1]Thomas Oden, "Recovering Lost Identity," *Journal of Pastoral Care* 34 (1980): 13, 17.

[2]Gaylord Noyce, "Has Ministry's Nerve Been Cut by the Pastoral Counseling Movement?" *The Christian Century* (Feb. 1-8, 1978): 103-106, 114.

[3]Noyce, 103.

[4]Paul Pruyser, *The Minister as Diagnostician* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 23.

[5]Eugene Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), 111-112.



It is true that pastoral care never stopped talking about theology altogether. But it often did so by using abstracted principles which were easily accommodated to psychological theory, on one hand, but disconnected to the historical center of Christian faith, on the other. In fact, it is not hard to see parallels with nineteenth century European liberal theology. Illustrative of this abstracted theology was Clinebell's popular 1966 textbook, *Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling,* which was representative of the dominant thought in pastoral care. Clinebell acknowledged that "all healing and growth are of God" but never discussed the relevance of Christ's life, death, and resurrection for pastoral care.[6]

The crux of the problem with pastoral care is not that it needs a little more theology or a little more Bible. There are too many examples of efforts to integrate psychology that involve a wholesale adoption of a psychological model while taking an apologetic theological stance. Rather, pastoral care needs to find its center. What is at the center of its unique role? What is its hope? The apparently naive (but perhaps not so naive!) question arises at this point: Does the cross stand in the center of modern pastoral care? Or perhaps rather at its periphery? Hunter states, "If pastoral care is to find its true identity, it must find its true God, the God of the cross and the resurrection, and conduct its ministry in the situation of the Crucified God in the power of the Spirit."[7] Jürgen Moltmann is well known for advocating Christian involvement in the world, but also states that to be truly relevant Christianity must not lose its identity, an identity grounded in the cross.[8]

## Moltmann's Theology of the Cross

Moltmann has provided a compelling rearticulation of the theology of the cross and has drawn implications from it for Christian faith, life, ethics, and practice.[9] His ideas are useful in an attempt to put the cross at the center of pastoral care. Hunter in dialogue with Moltmann found his ideas relevant to pastoral care and saw them as a powerful critique of modern principles of pastoral care.[10] This article is an attempt to extend Hunter's effort, and especially to

[6]Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 48.

[7]Rodney Hunter, "Moltmann's Theology of the Cross and the Dilemma of Contemporary Pastoral Care" in *Hope for the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 89.

[8]Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 7-28.

[9]For a broad introduction to Moltmann's thought we recommend three books: *The Crucified God; Theology of Hope* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967); and *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981). Jüngel's thought moves in a similar direction, and he sometimes provides more depth in dealing with the theological issues involved; see *God as the Mystery of the World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

[10]Hunter, 75-92.

**The cross means that Jesus stands in solidarity with those who suffer.**

develop positively stated principles of pastoral care derived from Moltmann's *theologia crucis.*

First, I will present a brief review of Moltmann's trinitarian theology of the cross and, secondly, outline principles of pastoral care consistent with it.

Jesus died as an outsider, outside the city gates, despised and abandoned. It is especially clear in Mark's passion account that Jesus experienced abandonment not only by his disciples but by God the Father. Jesus' Godforsakenness is evident by the Father's silence to Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me" (Mk 14:35) and by Jesus' cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34).

What does it mean that Jesus died lowly, despised, and Godforsaken? Moltmann delineates several consequences. First, it informs the meaning of the resurrection.

> The new and scandalous element in the Christian message of Easter was not that some man or other was raised before anyone else, but that the one who was raised was this condemned, executed and forsaken man.[11]

That *this* one (who was made a *curse* for us) was raised means that God does not abandon the abandoned, those "outside the gate." Easter does not erase the word of the cross. Rather, Jesus was raised *as* the Crucified One.

Secondly, Jesus' Godforsakenness means that the cross was a trinitarian event within the deity. God the Son was forsaken by God the Father, and so there was a conflict "between God and God." It is not only the pain of Jesus that exists in the cross, but also the "Father who abandons him and delivers him up suffers the death of the Son in the infinite grief of love." However, in spite of the depth of the separation on the cross, the Father and the Son are still bound to one another in the love of the Spirit. They are separated but the bond is not broken; death does not have the last word. An important aspect of the cross as trinitarian event is that Jesus' forsakenness and death become part of the history of God. Jesus's death becomes an event *in* God; God takes on suffering and death. It is this event of the cross and resurrection, the taking of death into God, that demonstrates the essence of God which "contradicts all possible metaphysical and historical ideas of God: 'God is love'."

As alluded to above, we must not forget that the one raised is the Crucified One. Jesus does not forget the forsaken, sinners, and the dying after Easter. But we must also remember that the Crucified One is *raised.* "Christianity stands or falls with the reality of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God." This resurrection becomes the grounds for

[11] *The Crucified God,* 175.



eschatological hope, the hope in the universal future of Christ. For Moltmann, the resurrection started an "eschatologically determined process of history, whose goal is the annihilation of death." This eschatological hope in the future is not in a vague experience but in the concrete hope in the coming Kingdom of God.

Before we discuss principles of pastoral care that flow from Moltmann's *theologia crucis,* we must examine more closely his trinitarian emphasis. Moltmann does not view the doctrine of the Trinity as philosophical speculation but argues that it "is nothing other than a shorter version of the passion narrative of Christ."[12] The cross is the ultimate revelation of the economic as well as the immanent trinitarian life of God. Conversely, the doctrine of the Trinity keeps open the meaning of the cross as an event between Father and Son and Spirit. If a trinitarian emphasis is not made, there is a danger of the cross becoming merely a modalistic expression.

Moltmann see radical montheism as a much greater danger than tritheism and states that we must start with the trinity and then seek to establish the unity of God rather than the usual approach of starting from God's unity and then moving toward a doctrine of the Trinity.[13] Starting from the Trinity, Moltmann views God's unity as being essentially that of community, a community open to humankind.

All this he sees as having important practical (including, not surprisingly, political) consequences. Strict monotheism leads to a monarchical view of God that results in authoritarian (patriarchal) political and ecclesiastical structures on earth. The *one* ruler on earth corresponds to the *one* monarchical God in heaven. Vertical, hierarchical structures on earth mirror our vertical, hierarchical relationship to the One, Almighty, Monarchical God. On the other hand, if God is seen essentially as the "community" of the Trinity, then two consequences evolve: 1) the trinitarian community is opened up for our participation in it 2) the corresponding model for earthly ecclesiastical and political structures becomes not monarchy but community as well.

## The Cross and Pastoral Care

After this brief review of Moltmann's ideas we are now ready to examine principles of pastoral care that are consistent with Moltmann's *theologia crucis.*

*The cross and resurrection form the central content of Christian pastoral care.* By this we mean to say more than that the cross is a useful metaphor in counseling, but that the word of the cross is indeed "the truth that sets people free." Specifically, the cross means that we are not alone in our suffering, pain, and Godforsakenness. People in pain can feel

[12] *The Crucified God,* 246.

[13] *The Trinity and the Kingdom,* 158-161.

**The cross means that Jesus stands in solidarity with those who suffer.**

abandoned and cursed by God. But the cross means that Jesus stands in solidarity with those who suffer. It means that, through Jesus, God takes our suffering into God's very being and "there is no 'outside the gate' with God if God himself is the one who died outside the gate on Golgotha for those outside."[14] There is no pain, sin, suffering, or death that can separate us from the love of God we encounter in the cross.

On the other hand, the resurrection of Jesus means that pain, sin, suffering, and death are not the last word, but that there is hope for the future. But this word of hope must not be divorced from the cross. The resurrection is the light which shows that sin and death were conquered on the cross. God does not abandon us in our suffering by the resurrection (which is an implication of *theologia gloriae).* Cross *and* resurrection form the central content of pastoral care. The messages that God shares our suffering *and* that God provides hope for the future cannot be separated.

By "central content" we want to say quite explicitly that it is the central mission of pastoral care to communicate to those in pain the message of the cross and resurrection of Christ (i.e. to proclaim the Gospel). The methods used to communicate this content may differ (see below), and sometimes involve long exploration of emotional "blocks" to hearing the message. But if the cross and resurrection are not the central content of pastoral care then the "care" ceases to be Christian pastoral care.

*The cross as trinitarian event is the central guide that informs the process of pastoral care.* How is the word of the cross to be communicated in pastoral care? Aren't we opening the dangers of the old "Bible-thumping" approach? No, not if the cross is maintained as a trinitarian event. For then we "helpers" do not stand in an hierarchical, vertical line: God—us—helpee. Rather, we stand in the community of the Trinity with our brother Christ and with our brothers and sisters in Christ. As Moltmann states it, "Every act of helping is preceeded by our fellowship in common, and every act of caring has its origin in Christian fellowship. Before you can be *for* others you must live *with* others."[15] The message that Jesus suffers with *his* brother or sister cannot be divorced from *our* suffering with our brother or sister in Christ. If it is, the message is not heard. Thus, we share the darkness, not as a condescending "monarch" but as a brother or sister in community. Here the Rogerian principles of genuineness, empathy, and positive regard were never more applicable.

However, sharing the darkness is not the last step. There is also the struggle to experience the light. In this regard we argue that part of pastoral care involves

[14] *The Crucified God,* p. 248.

[15] Moltmann, "The Diaconal Church in the Context of the Kingdom of God" in *Hope for the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 25.



"the proclamation of the Gospel", making explicit the word of the cross. We do agree that love and acceptance do communicate something and that a "proclamation of the Gospel" in the context of personally communicated judgement and indifference can be confusing if not destructive. Thus Jüngel is right when he states:

> Since God is present in every event of true love, since therefore in every event of human love the *Absolutely Reliable* is present, there is in this world a well-founded *fundamental trust* which would not be possible without the experience of love. In this sense the *identity* of God and love is the basis of *trust* as a whole.

However, he goes on to state, "The *revelation* of the identity of God and love is the basis of *faith* as *true trust in God.*"[16]

The assumption operating in much of pastoral care is that the acceptance and empathy of the counselor are enough to implicitly convey the love of God and the hope that provides. However, my experience, as a former psychologist to whom many people talked in disappointed terms about their pastors, suggests something much different. For them the message conveyed was, "Yes, my pastor cared about me, but she or he also communicated that when push comes to shove, words about Jesus and therefore Jesus himself don't matter."

Part of the problem has been misconceptions about "non-directive" therapy. We will make two brief comments that may add some clarity. First, Carl Rogers did not call his counseling theory "non-directive" (it was called client-centered) and in fact he openly acknowledged its "directive" and "controlling" elements.[17] Secondly, there is no such thing as non-directive interpersonal behavior. Such terminolgy simply ignores the interactive influences in social intercourse. The powerful (and even manipulative) influences of such subtle behaviors as head nodding and 'hmmm's" are empirically validated beyond question.

In sum, we believe that the trinitarian event of the cross calls us to share one another's pain in community, but also to struggle to see the light of the Crucified One who stands in our midst sharing our pain and providing hope. This dual focus that should guide the process of pastoral care is beautifully expressed by Henri Nouwen:

> The minister is the one who can make this search for authenticity possible, not by standing on the side of a neutral screen of an impartial observer, but as an articulate

[16]Eberhard Jüngel as quoted in Hans Küng, *Does God Exist?,* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 771.

[17]Carl Rogers and B.F. Skinner, "Some Issues Concerning the Control of Human Behavior: A Symposium" *Science* 124 (1956): 1057-1066.

**The cross means that Jesus stands in solidarity with those who suffer.**

witness of Christ, who puts his own search at the disposal of others. This hospitality requires that the minister know where he stands and whom he stands for, but it also requires that he allow others to enter his life, come close to him and ask him how their lives connect with his.[18]

*The cross as trinitarian event informs our identity as pastors or pastoral counselors.* In a strict monotheistic model we stand in a direct, vertical relationship with the One, Almighty God about us and the "helpee" becomes the *object* of our care below us. Given this model—in spite of our most benign intentions—our professional development becomes elitist "professionalism", and even the language of servanthood thinly veils a kind of monarchical (often patriarchal) condescension.

In a trinitarian model of community, however, people in pain are not *objects* of care, but fellow *subjects* of the Kingdom, fellow brothers and sisters. This becomes clear in Jesus' amazing identification with the sick, poor, jailed and naked (Mt 25). This is not to devalue "skill development" but to articulate the need for continual repentance in coming to terms with our true identity in the midst of the community of Christ.

The trinitarian emphasis on the community of brothers and sisters in Christ also indicates the importance of congregational support for one another and others instead of depending on the "one representative of the one God" to uphold and nurture the community. The church is a community, not a private outpatient clinic. In terms of skills there is no reason why lay people cannot be taught effective ways to care for each other. Pastoral care logically should have no problem with this, because a major part of the empirical validation of the efficacy of Rogerian principles (through his followers' research) was a simultaneous demonstration of the efficacy of paraprofessionals using these principles.

The cross also determines what is to be our ultimate loyalty: to follow him, to stand with him in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, especially those who are "least" in societal standards. This loyalty stands before and critiques all others. Often, this simply means that pastoral care is a call to listen and empathically communicate the Gospel. But at other times our solidarity to which we are called may involve advocacy and even protest against oppression, even if the advocacy does not strictly conform to a certain "professional model" (e.g. medical) of care giving. This loyalty also critiques pastoral care that excludes those "least" for whom Christ died "outside the gate." Thus, for example, when pastoral counseling seeks eligibility for medical insurance reimbursement, it must ask itself if any *subjects* of the

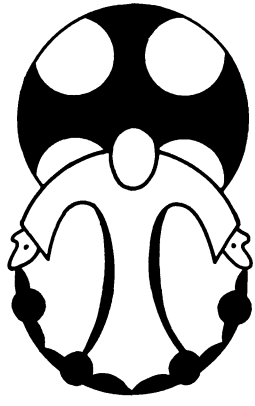
[18]Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), 103.



Kingdom are left outside as a result (as happens in much of our medical system). After all, Christ did not die only for those who carry Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

## Conclusion

Our primary concern here was not to establish Moltmann's theology as *the* theology of pastoral care. There are certainly many other credible theological ideas worthy of similar review. Rather, our primary purpose was to reinforce the necessity of having a theological center in pastoral care. Further, we see that center as the trinitarian event of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Psychological theory and technique are certainly useful but should only be evaluated from a clear stance that is firmly grounded in the Gospel.



# The Role of Music in the Burial Liturgy

**Mark P. Bangert**

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## First Principles

Christian death is the privilege of participating personally in the Easter mystery of Jesus Christ. Looking at an individual's death from God's perspective helps us confess that death is nothing less than the penultimate passage rite by which God escorts one into the divine presence. It is, therefore, Baptism in a new dimension, a personalized pasch, an Easter Vigil with new scenery, a variation on a theme composed from eternity!

As a personalized Easter Vigil, death has those same dynamics we have come to know in the death of the Lamb: the awful possibility that darkness will prevail, the chilling confrontation with the chasm that has separated God and people, the graceful persistence of light, victory, hope, and life, the assurance of sin forgiven, the pain of passage, and the total reliance on the power of God.

Death can be understood as another face of Baptism itself. The primal scream rendered by the very young as they pass through the cold waters of Baptism finds a counterpart in the battle people wage with death in the fears they have learned to expect with the last breath. Having been reborn once through water, we have come to know that the life we now enjoy is untouchable; that Christian death is in fact a sleep, as Luther was relentless in saying, and should be feared as little as crawling into bed at night.

The connections to Holy Communion are likewise strong. It has been argued that Holy Communion is more closely linked to the death of a Christian than to the Christian's burial.[1] Perhaps so. What is certain in death is that God has taken the Offertory prayer seriously: "Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—ourselves. . ." And in return: The Body of Christ for you. His life is given for ours. Our total history is transformed, and we, coming from a deep sleep, are presented to the Father with shouts of thanksgiving.

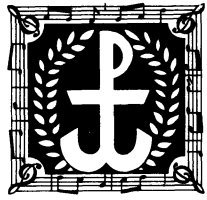
While it is true the burial rite is for the mourners, it is also true as Phil Pfatteicher has pointed out, that "In the Burial Service we say what we would have said at the moment of death had we been present."[2]

To enunciate theological-liturgical principles for the transformation of burial liturgies is to say, "Let the Easter Vigil be your guide." Phrases like "the ancient darkness has been banished," "who paid for us the debt of Adam," "rescued from the gloom of sin," "the night is as clear as day," and "the morning star who faithfully sheds light on all the human race" surface as foundational.

Liturgically and theologically the music connected to the burial rites needs

[1]Damien Sicard, "The Funeral Mass," *Reforming the Rites of Death* (New York: Paulist Press, 1968), 51.

[2]Philip Pfatteicher and Carlos Messerli, *Manual on the Liturgy* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 361.



to deal with loss, that loss addressed by him in the tender words, "Woman, behold your Son." It needs to deal with sin, for death, it is said, is the sacrament of sin.[3] It needs to deal with loneliness—that loneliness inevitably intertwined with a member of the church militant undergoing transformation to the church triumphant. But it also needs to deal with light, life, hope, and victory, with the assurance that nothing—not even death—can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. With that, death is transformed into an instrument of adoration."[4]

## Why Music?

Why do we turn to music at death? Music is a gift of God, first of all, if you are a Luther fan, and that is enough to invite it even into a burial rite. Or, with pre-Christian folk, we could justify its presence by noting that music possesses a power for driving away the fearsome, dangerous spirits let loose at death.

Suzanne Langer has made a case for the relationship of feeling and music, not in the usual sense that music expresses feelings or conveys feelings, but rather in the sense that music expresses feelings logically and symbolically: "A composer not only indicates, but *articulates* subtle complexes of feeling that language can not even name, let alone set forth; he (or she) knows the forms of emotion and can handle them."[5]

Music enables the content of feelings to be symbolized and invites insight from us.[6] Langer therefore continues: "Because the forms of human feeling are much more congruent with musical forms than with forms of language, music can reveal the nature of feelings with a detail and truth that language cannot approach."[7]

With that she sounds like a structural anthropologist who tends to see the value of ritual in the way events and phenomena are tied together or are related. Ritual, according to these structuralists, is a means by which people are able to make sense out of their experiences.

Hence, music is a way of articulating or giving structure to emotionally charged experiences, such as the death of someone close. In providing a symbolic articulation, music has initiated the delicate process of handling those intense feelings connected with death. In a word, music aids the process of mourning. When Jesus approached the professional mourners, hired to ritualize the death of a girl whose father was a synagogue official, he did not slight their task; he merely asked them to cease

[3]Reginald Fuller, "Lectionary for Funerals," *Worship*, 56/1 (January, 1982), 37.

[4]Wilhelm Bruening, "Death and Resurrection in the Christian Message," *Reforming the Rites of Death* (New York: Paulist Press, 1960), 15.

[5]Suzanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: Mentor Books, 1951), 189.

[6]Ibid., 190.

[7]Ibid., 199.

**The musical involvement of the mourners is essential in the burial liturgy.**

because the young woman was not dead. Even the flute players were asked only to step aside, to be invited back, one can surmise, for a real death in the family. So take heart, instrumentalists and organists, there is room for your music, too. In his "Preface to the Burial Hymns," Martin Luther wrote: "Nor do we sing any dirges and doleful songs over our dead and at the grave, but comforting hymns of the forgiveness of sins, of rest, sleep, life, and of the resurrection of departed Christians so that our faith may be strengthened and the people moved to true devotion."[8] In the end, he continues, all of this is done "to defy death." The effect of such music making is seriously diminished when left to vicarious performance. The musical involvement of the mourners themselves is essential in the burial liturgy.

## Rubrical Ideals

A look at what the rubrics suggest for music during the burial liturgies indicates something of a common pattern: Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and Lutheran liturgies specify music for the time when the body is brought into the worship space, music according to custom after each of the Lessons; a Hymn of the Day (in the Lutheran Rite only); music for the commendation (Episcopal and Roman Catholics only); music for the recessional from the worship space; and music along the way to the burial site.[9]

For Entrance music the *Book of Common Prayer (BCP)* recommends a Psalm or anthem; *The Rites of the Catholic Church (The Rites)* prescribes the usual Entrance Song; and the *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)* a psalm, hymn or verse.

After Lesson I, the *BCP* suggests a canticle or Psalm, *The Rites* material from the *Simple Gradual,* and *LBW* a psalm hymn or anthem.

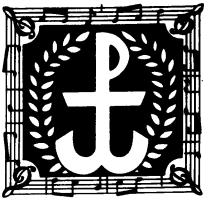
Following Lesson II the *BCP* encourages a canticle, hymn or psalm, *The Rites* relies on the *Simple Gradual* once again, and the *LBW* prescribes one of two verses.

At the Commendation the *LBW* provides for no music, the *BCP* suggests an anthem or Hymn, and *The Rites* recommends the so-called "Song of Farewell" ("Saints of God, came to her aid. . ."). Musically, this might be recognized as the high point of the entire Roman Catholic rite for funerals.

As the body is taken form the church, the *BCP* suggests a hymn, anthem or the Benedictus, the Nunc dimittis, or *Pascha nostrum* (Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us); *The Rites* recommends psalms

[8]Martin Luther, "Preface to the Burial Hymns," *Luther's Works,* AE, 53, 326.

[9]For the burial liturgies see *The Book of Common Prayer* (The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1979), 462-510; *The Rites of the Catholic Church* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1976), 645-720; *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1978), 206-214.



and antiphons, the *LBW* a psalm, hymn, anthem, or the Nunc dimittis if not used during Holy Communion.

At the Committal, the *BCP* prescribes that an anthem is sung or said, *The Rites* encourages an "appropriate song" at the conclusion, and the *LBW* suggests that verses be sung or said on the way to the burial site.

In most instances throughout these rites anthem means a verse from the Scripture such as, "I know that my redeemer liveth," "I am the resurrection and the life," "Blessed are the dead," or a traditional verse such as "Into paradise may the angels lead you."

It is worthwhile for us to note the musical honor accorded to the entrance and exit rites of these liturgies. In each of the traditions some sung musical material is either prescribed or strongly urged. One should note that this tendency among Christians to sing at these moments is not only a witness to that persisting musical passion, at which Pliny marveled already in the second century, but it is primarily a demonstration of the faith which proclaims that death does not end one's movement into and out of the worshipping community, that the community is not without hope, and that this person deserves to be serenaded into the "Christ time." Moreover, the sung word at this time awakens the sure knowledge of our own death and resurrection via both the eye and ear.

Entrance Psalms, according to the *LBW* are appropriately chosen from Psalms 23, 90, 118, and 130. To that list one might add 51, 115, 121, 122, 123, 126, 132, and 134, as is suggested in *The Rites*. Some phrases in this latter list may need scrutiny lest they be taken amiss by certain mourners.

For Psalms after the First Lesson, *LBW* proposes 42, 46, 121, and 143, and the other two traditions concur. It is important to remember that in the *LBW* Psalms 23, 42, 46, 90, 121, and 130 appear also in mettic versions.[10]

One of the more endearing of the anthem texts is in the *In Paradisum*. Into paradise may the angels lead you. At your coming may the martyrs receive you, and bring you into the holy city of Jerusalem.[11] Other versions add: "May the choir of angels welcome you where Lazarus is poor no longer."[12]

This anthem is reminiscent of that third stanza of Martin Schaling's hymn "Lord, Let At Last Thine Angels Come/ To Abr'hams bosom bear me home. That is the stanza used by J.S. Bach at the burial of Jesus in his *Passion According to St. John*.

Another of these anthem texts is *"Media vita,"* which Luther turned into a three-stanza hymn "Mitten wir in Leben sind" (Even as we live each day, *LBW* 350). The anthem itself is used in the

[10]See Hymns 451, 456, 452, 228, 229, 320, 445, and 295.

[11]*Book of Common Prayer*, 500.

[12]*The Rites*, 679.

first liturgy of the *BCP* at the Committal and in the second during the Entrance. It is not used in *The Rites* and for the *LBW* Luther's hymn version may be used as the body is brought into the church.

While music is provided in the *LBW* for psalms and hymns, no music whatever has been provided for the verses and anthems. To my knowledge there is likewise no music provided for the anthems in the *BCP.* The International Committee on English in the Liturgy, on the other hand, has provided a collection of musical settings [13] for the *Rite of Funerals,* including settings of "Saints of God," "I know that my Redeemer Lives," "Lord you raised Lazarus," and "May the Angels Lead you into Paradise."

Independent choral settings of anthems or psalm texts range form the very straightforward "I am the Resurrection" of Thomas Morley to the profound Psalm 90 of Charles Ives. Competent church musicians will have no trouble finding useable versions according to local need, though collections, like those available for weddings are surely needed.

If the funeral is to assist mourners to move through their heavy feelings to hope, the entrance music can and probably should ventilate the hard realities of death. The hymn "I know that my Redeemer lives" is probably not approprate at this point. "Even as we live each day" or Psalm 90 would be more to the point—both of which acknowledge the confrontation with the sense of loss, sin and loneliness and help the mourners to move beyond. Psalm 130 or "Jesus sinners doth receive" would be equally effective.

A different nuance is developed by the psalms chosen in *LBW* to follow the First Lesson (42, 46, 121, 143). They express confident faith.

Verses before the Gospel prepare for our Lord's presence in Word, and are Christological acclamations, designed to lead the mourners to see Jesus Christ as the one in whom all things hold together.

The Hymn of the Day may be one chosen by the deceased or by the mourners; in any event, it might return for a bit to the grief there present, pointing the mourners to the hope and confidence present in Word and Sacrament. Likely choices are: "He leadeth me," or "Jesus Christ my sure defense" or "O God our help in ages past."

As the body is taken from the church, expressions of light, life, hope and thanksgiving are surely in order. The mortality of each one present might also be reiterated. "For all the Saints" comes to mind or "O Morning Star, how fair and bright," (See stanzas 5 and 6).

Finally, on the way to the burial site, the Assisting Minister is to sing or say verses (anthems). To the music publishers we say: "When will we see music"? We need simple melodies without accompaniment. Perhaps their design would permit the interspersing of hymn stanzas with these verses. Seasonal hymns would draw on the resources of the church year, for instance: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel," or stanza 5 of "Lo, How a Rose is Growing,":

O Savior, child of Mary,
Who felt all human woe;
O Savior, king of glory,
Who triumphed o'er our foe:
Bring us at length, we pray,
To the bright courts of heaven
And into endless day.

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[13]International Committee on English in the Liturgy, *Music for Rite of Funerals and Rite of Baptism for Children* (Washington: The Secretariat, ICEL, 1977). cf. also *Worship II* (Chicago: G.I.A., 1975), 783-799.

When the liturgical energy of the entire rite is perceived and honored in such a way, the rite will become an effective tool for processing grief and faith.

The overall impact of music at the burial rite is of course dependent upon available musical resources. Choir participation is ideal but not often possible. In parishes where there are day schools and children's choirs, the presence of such a group earns special significance both for the singers and the mourners. A soloist is more common, but one is often subject to the vocal eccentricities connected with singers eager to sing for such occasions. Soloists should be assisted in choosing psalms to sing, hymn stanzas, or simple anthems. What is needed is a training course for cantors, so that a cadre of people evolves who can render music in a proper liturgical fashion.

Music for the psalms is more plentiful than music for verses and anthems. The LBW tones work well. Other methods of singing the psalms are available from the Gelineau settings, or from *Worship II* or from *Psalm Praise*.[14]

My hunch is that psalms will not replace hymns as the most important musical material for a funeral. Hymns, because they find their way into the inner core piety, clearly declare a specifically Christian hope as opposed to the psalms. Moreover, hymns can be sung anywhere: church, funeral, home, cemetery. Pastoral responsibility demands that they be chosen carefully.

For keyboard people and instrumentalists, the profuse attention given to vocal music is not meant to minimize the importance of your fields. Preludes, preservice music, hymn introductions, organ anthems or stanzas can provide insight and commentary on the dynamics of the burial rite. Hymn-related compositions are essential, but other compositions are not automatically excluded. Even transcriptions are less odious today than in former years; perhaps even something like the "Hallelujah Chorus" might be used.

## The Pastoring Musician

These days we put our seminarians through rigorous testing to determine their readiness for ministry. Part of that procedure is to isolate a skill, attitude, or proficiency, and then to compare the profile of a denomination's expectations with the seminarian's profile. Invariably we discover the student to be more rigid, less accepting than the people he or she expects to serve, often also in the area of worship. Part of that of course is due to the idealism of the students, but part is due also to the fact that people in need desire love and not conversion to partisan idealism.

As a church musician, I can say that church musicians are too often not "ready" for their ministries. Perhaps we need to learn how to be more accepting, how to become "softies" as a friend of mine continually urges, in order to be pastoring musicians. Effective ministry at the time of death calls for acceptance of that core piety we talked about. This may require of us to transcend our cherished canons of good taste. Occasionally we need to give ourselves permission to make decisions without the fear of the church musical establishment looking over our shoulders.

Pastoring musicians need to make a practice of immersing themselves in the liturgies of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil, there to discover the dynamics of death, sin, loss, forgiveness, victory, light, life, and hope; otherwise the musical task grows empty. We need to build with our

[14]*Psalm Praise* (Chicago: G.I.A., 1973).

pastors a common approach to ritualizing death in the burial liturgy.

It would help the entire panorama of a parish's church music program if the same person who helped the grieving family choose hymns and plan music for the liturgy and who produced the music during the liturgy should also carry out the musical responsibilities of the last part of that liturgy by singing the verses on the way to the burial site. The role of cantor and Assisting Minister would happily merge under those circumstances.

As pastors increasingly encourage parishioners to participate in the planning of their own burial liturgies, the pastoring musician will want to exert an active role in the process. That might happen in a variety of ways: assisting in choosing service music, establishing a relationship of trust, commissioning a musical piece, or educating the congregation so that death, resurrection, burial customs, rites, and music are issues addressed in the context of everyday parish life.

## Life With Death

A ministry of music for the time of death is made more effective when death is a constant ingredient in the ongoing ministry of music.

One of the functions of ritual is to provide for people those structures and stories by which they are able to integrate the givens of their existence. One of these is death. Christians are drawn into the paschal mystery of Christ through baptism so that death is passage, not termination. We have been imprinted with his history. Each day becomes a series of intertwined death/resurrection experiences which we can negotiate because of our baptism. To participate in them actively is to render the last breath here and the first breath there as matters of routine. In the midst of life we are in death.

Popular fears about death should no longer prevent us from pointing out the rather surprising baptismal imagery in "He Leadeth Me," for instance. Death and Resurrection references abound in the hymnody of the LBW and appear there with rhetoric not embarrassing to twentieth-century people. There is some justification for urging children to memorize hymns of death and resurrection. Intensive care units in hospitals rarely permit reading by patients, but hymn stanzas once memorized provide a ready resource for self ministry. Stanzas need to be quoted from the pulpit and recommended for family singing. In other words, pastoral leaders can help to shape core piety.

Music literature—that is the great classics—abound with attempts to structure death and resurrection in ways which offer insights not available anywhere else. I have my favorites: the unresolved seventh at the close of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde;* the shocking victory of "Es ist vollbracht," as unfolded by Bach in his *Passion According to St. John;* the struggle of death and resurrection in his Cantata 4, a struggle which is a paradigm of daily living; the defiant statements against death in the Romans 8 material by Bach in his motet, "Jesus Priceless Treasure"; the harshness of life's realities—that a person is like the withering grass—in Charles Ives' Psalm 90 and the beauty of God's mercy emerging from the final measures of that work; and, of course, I need to mention one of my favorite composers of death and judgment: Hector Berlioz. He has been described as one who attempts to storm the gates of heaven with wave after wave of sound; the mighty *Tuba miram* of his *Requiem*—quadraphonic brass choirs, a kind of Cecil B. DeMille

before his time. Think what you will of him, at least he gives you some notion of what the other end of the continuum is like after we have come to know the still small voice.

So many night prayers, those sung, too, are paradigms of death: "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep," "Lord, Jesus Since You Love Me," "All Praise to you, My God, this Night." Stanza 3 of that Thomas Ken hymn reads:

> Teach me to live, that I may dread
> The grave as little as my bed.
> Teach me to die so that I may
> Rise glorious at the awesome day.

The "teach me" part happens day by day, night by night, as we permit the liturgy and music of the church to structure our spirituality. Prayer at the Close of Day begins with the words "The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and peace at last." Peace at the last comes from the quiet night. So life with death, musically and liturgically, brings us to the burial liturgy prepared for passing to that portal whereon this rhyme immortal is found in script in gold:

> Who there my cross has shared
> Finds here a crown prepared
> Who there with me has died
> Shall here be glorified.

# Goodbye and Keep Safe

**Mary Ellen Hansburg**
*Columbus, Ohio*

Leaden sky
  trees wearing a mantle of snow
Crunch, crunch, footsteps in February
  break the silence
As we bear the body down.

Cold and we left you ritual words:
  endings and beginnings
  frozen nose, frozen toes,
  words hanging in the air.

Hoarfrost and heartloss
  leaving the dead, the pain and the grieving
Babies and birdnests
  the signs of the living.

Spirit of God, all flesh containing
  entered our state; suffered uncomplaining
With us in life, so with us in death.

Hoarfrost and icicles
  snow driving fast,
The body now still, at graveside at last.

Frozen and freezing, is it more than we bear
  hunger and hoarfrost,
Returning to eat, a meal of remembrance
  of One who washed feet.

Icicles of the mind
  snow driving fast
In life and in death
  we come to the last.

Hoarfrost and heartloss
  leaving the dead, the pain and the grieving
Babies and birdnests
  the signs of the living.

# Theses for Liberating the Dialogue Between Lutherans and Liberationists[1]

**Michael Hoy**
*Graduate Student, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago*

Robert A. Kelly, in his essay, "Liberation Ethics: A Lutheran Approach to the Need for Liberation,"[2] has called Lutherans away from the theological position of Liberation Theology. Kelly sees no other alternative if we are to remain faithful to "our identity as Lutherans." Nevertheless, Kelly seems to think that we can still "engage in constructive dialogue (with Liberationists) with the common goal of expressing Christian solidarity with the poor in our actions and reflection," while somehow leaving theology out of the dialogue, lest it get in the way. Is that all that theological ethics has come to? Strategies for justice? In any event, I doubt whether Liberationists will agree to such a dialogue unless the theological issue is kept front and center.

What has brought about this call for Lutherans to distance themselves theologically from Liberationists? Says Kelly: "Liberation Theology eliminates the unconditional nature of the Gospel and leaves us only with human achievement as a basis for salvation." In short, Liberationists are theological Pelagians, or semi-Pelagians at best, according to Kelly. Why he did not come out and boldly say so is puzzling. Perhaps his fear is that if he did so he would cut off any possibility of dialogue—as if the Liberationists could not handle such a direct criticism. Whatever Kelly's reason, the dialogue between Lutherans and Liberationists is limited at best and may be in serious trouble, unless we liberate the dialogue by facing the issue head on.

The basis for Kelly's theological suspicion of Liberation theology is traced to "Juan Luis Segundo's criticism of Luther and any theology derived from Luther." "According to Segundo," Kelly writes, "Luther, by removing the notion of merit from the doctrine of justification, removed the possibility of connecting human action in history with God's action in Christ." The end result of Luther's position, according to Segundo (via Kelly) is that the Kingdom of God gets restricted "to the past and the future and allows no relationship between the construction of that kingdom and action in history." This has been the problem Segundo also perceived in the "political theologies of Moltmann, Rubem Alves, and Richard Shaull." One could also add to that list the names of Johann Baptist Metz and (most important for our discussion in this essay) Rudolf Weth.[3]

However coarse Kelly's re-presentation of Segundo's argument is here, he has managed to put his finger on the primary issue for Segundo when he notes Segundo's basic criticism of all

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[1]I wish to acknowledge the insights of Robert W. Bertram's "Liberating by Faith, Confessing," (presentation at the Conference on Liberation Theology, Seguin, Texas, February 22, 1984), which are used freely throughout various parts of this essay.

[2]*Currents in Theology and Mission* 12 (1985): 232-237.

[3]Juan Luis Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976), 143-144.

"justification-by-faith" derived theologies: "In each case there is no useful connection between the kingdom of God and human action in history."

If only Kelly could have pursued that final point further! However, he concentrates only on all the doctrines Lutherans stand to lose simply because Segundo has made some critical remarks on two kingdoms and the doctrine of justification. Kelly develops a "domino-theory": giving up two kingdoms means giving up Law/Gospel, which means giving up Lutheran theology, which means giving up justification by faith ("the heart and soul of Lutheran theology"). He does not stop to question whether this argument is (a) fair to Segundo or (b) adequate for our critical sensibilities.

Kelly seems to say a lot of things which our critical sensibilities might regard as contradictions. He says that "political liberation is not the concern of the Gospel"; but then he also says, "the Gospel does not support political oppression or quietism." In one sentence he writes, "Segundo and others do not correctly understand Lutheran theology and ethics if they think that the doctrine of justification cuts us off from giving an *ultimate importance* to human action in history" (italics mine); yet in the very next sentence he writes, "The ultimate triumph of the kingdom of God (is not) dependent on our efforts," and human work is reduced from being of "ultimate importance" to being only "meaning"-ful.

Of course, Kelly might object that I have misunderstood or distorted what he really meant. Well, maybe; but I don't think so. Still, conceding the point for the moment, might Kelly also be able to perceive that he has possibly misunderstood or distorted what Segundo really meant? At least we might all want to empathize with his view that "formulating an ethic of liberation based on our faith in Christ will not be easy."

My reading leads me to conclude that Kelly is seeking to maintain two distinctions under one distinction: the distinction between Law and Gospel and between ethics and soteriology, respectively. This seems most apparent to me when he writes: "Political liberation is not the concern of the Gospel. . . . But political liberation is most assuredly the concern of God's Law. . . . While political liberation is not a part of soteriology, it is most assuredly a central concern of ethics." The danger of Kelly's argument, however, is a bifurcation of the kingdoms, consigning Gospel to soteriology and Law to ethics. Soteriology and ethics are at odds with each other. Might this problem be at the base of the contradictions we noted earlier?

Nevertheless, perceiving what Kelly is laboring to say, Segundo might respond: "Is that what you thought, Robert? That I was somehow trying to deprive God of his unconditionally promising grace in Christ? That somehow I am proposing a program of work righteousness for the Latin American poor (as if they need another burden)? Haven't I said that 'justification by good works . . . would seem to be hardly Christian at all, or very Old Testament in cast at best'?[4] (Old Testament exegetes are invited to the critical dialogue.) And haven't I commented in another place how all liberation activity derives 'from the strength of God who promotes it'?[5] I do not want to drive a wedge between soteriology and our action."

This brings us back to the heart of the mattter which Kelly touched upon, but

[4]Segundo, 150.

[5]"Capitalism—Socialism: A Theological Crux" in *The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith,* Concilium, 96 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1974), 123.

did not pursue adequately. What does Segundo mean when he speaks so emphatically of the "connection between the kingdom of God and human action in history"? His favorite term to describe that "connection" is *"causality"*—concrete, historical, human causality.[6]

Here is where we must point out Segundo's flaw in reading Luther—or perhaps we should say, his *not* reading Luther (i.e., not consulting the original source), but his reading of Rudolf Weth's interpretation of Luther and taking that at face value. Segundo reports Weth's interpretative comment on Luther's interpretation of Matthew 25:34: "*God himself* brings about the revolutionary action that is decisive for the *coming* of his kingdom. His action cannot be effected or replaced by *any human action.*" (italics Segundo's) Then Segundo quotes the text from Luther which Weth provides: "How could they [Segundo: the children of the kingdom] *merit* what already belongs to them and what was prepared for them long before they were even created? It would be more correct to say that it is the kingdom of God which *merits* us as its inheritors . . . the kingdom of God has already been prepared. But the children of God must be prepared for the kingdom. So it is the kingdom that *merits* the children of God, not the children of God who *merit* the kingdom." (italics mine) Segundo concludes: "Leaving aside the whole question of the correctness of Luther's exegesis here, we can readily see that it thoroughly rules out any attempt to find or establish a *causal relationship* between activity in history and the construction of God's kingdom. It situates that kingdom in the remote past and the remote future (the *eschaton*), thus detaching it wholly from historical activity in the present."[7] (italics mine)

Luther, perceiving what Segundo is trying to say could respond: "Is that what you thought, Juan? If only you would have consulted the text of my treatise directly, though perhaps the title scared you off—*De servo arbitrio,* The Bondage of the Will.[8] In any event, we both really agree that one cannot *merit* the kingdom, as in some form of work righteousness. But look what I say about *causality* in my response to 'Reason' who turns up her nose at the idea of the Spirit working through concrete, historical, human means: 'It has pleased God to impart the Spirit not without the Word but through the Word, so as to have us *cooperators* with him . . .'[9] Soteriology and human action are not to be wedged apart! God will have it no other way than to have human beings causally involved in his kingdom."

In fact, Segundo can sound almost "Lutheran" when he speaks about faith—i.e., a liberating faith, not a faith "paralyzed by the problem of personal security and individual salvation"—as that which "liberates man [and woman] from a preoccupation with the law so that he [and she] can launch out into creative love."[10] Of course, there might be good reason to be preoccupied with the law, especially when we consider that it is God's critique of us. But with faith in Christ, who survives that critique, we too are freed to be the people—as Luther and Segundo both affirm—with "disinterested love" and "spontaneity of heart open to others."[11] Such is the nature of the "freedom" faith brings.

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[6]Cf. Segundo, 143, 144, 145.
[7]Segundo, 143-144.
[8]Segundo, 153, n. 21.
[9]Martin Luther, "The Bondage of the Will," *Luther's Works* 33 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 155.
[10]Segundo, 150.
[11]Cf. Segundo, "Capitalism, 119-123; Luther, Bondage, 153.

Still, that "freedom" operates in the old creation, in which Christians vibrantly live *incognito* most of the time, becoming more public about their identity only now and then, but always with their identity in the Kingdom. From that perspective, Christians become the world's best critics, criticizing undeterred, because they know whose world it is. And they know that criticism and reciprocity are the way God governs his world left-handedly.

Even in those places where Christ and his faithful cooperators are missing, they can still perceive and applaud the workings of God's other kingdom; for God uses the very self-interest of others to accomplish his purposes of justice, always having the upper hand over evil tendencies by forcing evil to do good.

Because that way of governing the world, *via* criticism and critical justice, is so basically prevalent, it is not what makes the cooperators of the kingdom so revolutionary—their zeal to be critics. Even some non-Christians can be quite zealous in their critiques.[12] Rather, it is justifying faith, in the Lord who claims us and our doings, which makes eligible our movements as *his* movement—movements which would be in themselves nothing more than the ambiguous events of history. What is revolutionary is that others may receive the benefits of Christ—his forgiveness, his freedom, his justification—through the liberating events of our times and places where Christ and his cooperators are present. And receiving those benefits, they too join the ranks of the kingdom cooperators. The Kingdom comes in the concrete, historical, human liberating events of our times and places!

The revolutionary dynamic of the kingdom coming is bound up in the words of Jesus: "Your faith has made you well!" Not all will see that in the liberating events of our times and places. That is what Jesus laments of the nine lepers who, though healed, miss out on the revolutionary cooperation. (Luke 17:11-19) Still, that seems to be the vision which Segundo has grasped—the Kingdom coming now in the liberating events of our times and places through human agents—and the vision which Luther himself wants to encourage.

Rather than using our Lutheran heritage to distance ourselves from our fellow "cooperators" in the Kingdom, let us see if we cannot once again celebrate the ecumenical vision which our Lutheran heritage has sought to promote in the liberating event of the Reformation! Let the dialogue of the Word begin!

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[12]Cf., e.g., Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York: Seabury, 1979), 60.



# Mercy and Our Many Selves: A Meditation on Psalm 51

**Timothy Weber**
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**Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.**

Have you ever felt on trial with God? With busy lives and packed-full schedules, it's easy to run past reality, What counts, what really matters.

And this does matter—our trial with God. So we begin like true culprits before the Judge, pleading for his mercy, not pleading excuse. We know our guilt without being served the papers.

**Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity: and cleanse me from my sin.**

We ask not for a lighter sentence, or time off for good behavior. Rather, we ask, we pray for cleansing—a thorough, total, giant job of reformation, renewal, cleaning house, new life. But how? In the fresh wash of his lovingkindness.

**For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.**

Perhaps the greatest sin is not knowing that your sin is ever before you, but believing, instead, that somehow you're O.K., at least for the time being, and need not worry about being on trial before God. Perhaps that illusion is the greatest sin.

**Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.**

We're saying here that the Judge's word is right in judging. There's no mistake. We're the culprits caught with no defense. Sometimes we like to qualify what judges say to us. We like to change the story, add facts here, subtract facts there, to get the records straight for us.

But here, before God, what matters most is not defense, but confession. For we know, God knows.

**Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me.**

Sometimes when pressed before a judge, we like to plead that there was "once upon a time" when things were O.K. with us, before those bad conditions caused us to be the way we are today. We all like to claim, or dream, that "once upon a time" we were innocent.

**Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.**

"Truth" and "wisdom" for us, the culprits in court, mean to know and confess, without defense, who we are. Confession actually means "same saying" in Greek. That is, you "say the same verdict of guilty" which God, your Judge, is saying to you. Confession,

"same-saying," is agreeing with the Judge's verdict.

**Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

"Hyssop," says the dictionary, was a plant used in purification rites by the ancient Hebrews. Snow, we know, as pure and fresh.

Here, we pray for the Judge not only to forgive, but also to work a change in us; not only to punish, but to do better than that, to make anew.

We have confidence to ask because we know this Judge doesn't retire to distant chambers, but comes down from the bench and lives with us. God's love is aimed at greater things beyond a day in court. God's love is aimed at making us fresh, like snow. God's love is Christmas and Easter big!

**Make me to hear joy and gladness: that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.**

The Christian lives, what some might call, a fool's life. Here we see that the Judge's word of "guilty" is not to be taken lightly. God's word of judgment on us, the culprits, hurts, and pains, and breaks the bones of pride, and finally kills in death. Death is God's will, you know.

But, foolish as we are, we trust that the same Judge who hurts and kills also makes alive. The Cross turned Easter and other signs of life from death have shown us that. And so, we pray, "Make us to hear some joy and gladness, you, who crushed our bones in pain."

It's a fool's way called "faith" to trust the Judge and executioneer.

**Hide thy face from my sins: and blot out all mine iniquities.**

If someone else knew you as you really are, I mean, really as you are, with no "ifs, ands, and buts" as your defense, what would happen?

For me, I know, I would be a bit embarrassed, ashamed, perhaps afraid for what might be found that I know and don't know in the corners of my life, too dark and musty for conscious consideration.

And so we ask the God who seeks to do just this—to know us inside and out—we ask that when God finds out that he not turn away and hide his face from us. We ask, in other words, that God stand the stink.

**Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me.**

"Heart" and "Spirit." Here we're saying we want our inner core, our inside selves, to change anew. We know our sin is deep. And thus, we pray that the healing will be deep. Nothing like a little change, a New Year's resolution, a quick resolve in the morning breakfast to make this a better day. Nothing like this will or can do the job we need. The healing needs to go much deeper.

That's why we say and pray: "Create, create, create." We mean just that: CREATE!

**Cast me not away from thy presence: and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.**

Who are we to ask these things of God, the Judge? We know the right response, the just reaction, is for us to be his castaways. Another Psalm says we are like grass before the Judge, like grass which quickly grows, withers, and dies.

But here, we pray that God will hold us as much more precious than grass, that he will remember us as his own dear children. We castaways seek his lovingkindness.

**Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation: and uphold me with thy free spirit.**

"The joy of salvation." Does that simply mean knowing that we're heaven-bound? Does that simply mean confessing with timid, tired lips before the sermon that "Jesus is Lord"?

Why, no! There's more, like living as you have never lived before, living with a "free and willing spirit." To be free in a world of chained and captured spirits—that's the "joy of salvation."

**Then will I teach transgressors thy ways: and sinners shall be converted unto thee.**

A free spirit is contagious. Living with the daily joy of salvation is not a silent affair. Here we have a prescription: The best way to teach others about the ways of God, the best way to convert, is to be the kind of person people want to catch and hold and be: a free spirit who's come from broken bones.

**Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.**

"Deliver us from ourselves", our guilt, we pray, not because you ought or owe us that, dear Lord, but because of your—what's the word?—your righteousness, your wanting to make us right with you, your need to have us close to you again. Dear Lord, make us all, even those of us with cracking, raspy voices, want to sing aloud.

**O Lord, open thou my lips: and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.**

Have you ever felt like you had something to say and you just couldn't keep quiet? Well, we have a pair of lips and a mouth which make known to others who we are down deep. What comes out for others to hear identifies who we really are.

If we, each new day, rise from bed knowing that from first to last our living moments have been given by the Lord of life, then somehow, to someone, somewhere that day, that news can't help but come forth. We pray that when the time comes and the chance is there that our lips may be open to show and share that praise.

**For thou desirest not sacrifice, else I would give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.**

We've seen, so far, how the Christian made anew is changed in the deepest ways: a freeing of the spirit, a cleaning of the heart, an opening of the mouth in praise. But then, sometimes, we coast along and think our faith is nothing but a time and place for weekly worship, a nice thing to do if you've got the money to spare as they pass the plates for offering.

It's tempting in an age of skin-deep commitment and religious lives like cosmetic creams to only touch the surface and be satisfied, to live with the outward and forget the inward life.

But God says "No!" "No!" That's not for me, and you will find it's not for you. Outward show and piety without the inner heart will leave you shallow and will leave me angry, says the Lord.

**The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.**

The outward is propelled by the inward. One test of the penetration of Christ into your life is whether you sense it in your bones, and whether that new life moves in your muscles. More important than pennies from your pocket is the sacrifice of your life—the faithful, living movement of bones and heart and muscle and tissue as you remember whose you are and why you're here and what you're to be about as one called "disciple."

With this attention to the inward, comes the happy experience that the outward becomes less of a duty, and more of a joy.

**Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.**

Now comes the time to thank God for community. The church is not simply a gathering of individuals made new. Rather, we are a body, one with another. We pray that renewal, the good life in Christ, comes not only to each of us, but also to the body, the bride of Christ, the church.

So we look for this to happen as we ask God to send his blessings on Zion or Jerusalem, as it was called. Our Zion, our Jerusalem, our holy place is the people of Christ. And here we pray that our strength and life might stand firm. What began in this Psalm as a cry from one person has now become a prayer for a people, the body, the church.

**Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.**

When all this has happened: When we turn from broken bones to people of joy; when our free and willing spirits become contagious and excite others to question, to hope, and to be made anew, alive; and when the body, the church is given to us and sustained by God's good word, . . . then our worship, our daily devotions, our smallest offerings, our mumbled prayers, our quiet confessions—all this outward, when driven by the inward, becomes pleasing to God who is pleased with his people.

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# Book Reviews



**CHURCH AND CONFESSION: CONSERVATIVE THEOLOGIANS IN GERMANY, ENGLAND, AND AMERICA, 1815-1866.** By Walter H. Conser, Jr. Atlanta: Mercer University Press, 1984. viii and 361 pages. Cloth. $28.95.

American Lutheranism over the last 125 years has been dominated by theologies that understood themselves to be "confessional." What it means to be confessional has been disputed, but most have agreed that confessional is what we should be. But what does it mean to be confessional? Walter Conser's new study of confessional theologians in the first half of the nineteenth century can be a contribution to the discussion of this question. The nature of the study is indicated by the title. It is a study of theologians rather than of theology. Large sections of the text consist of biographical sketches of some leading figures (August Vilmar, Theodor Kliefoth, and Wilhelm Loehe in Germany, the Tractarians in England, John Nevin, Philip Schaff, and Charles Philip Krauth in America). The study stops in the 1860's. Thus Charles Philip Krauth is discussed rather than his more famous son Charles Porterfield Krauth. The historical situation within which these men thought and acted is clearly described. The usefulness of the book lies in this biographical and historical focus. If one wants a well written, straightforward introduction to the background and some of the men of nineteenth century confessional theology, this is a book to read.

The weakness of the book is the partner of its strength. Too often the actual theology is not imaginatively probed. Two questions are raised but not sufficiently explored. First, the structure of the book assumes that the Lutheran confessionalists, the Anglican Oxford Movement, and the Reformed Mercersburg Theology can helpfully be seen as part of a single movement. Conser rightly points to their common ideas and emphases. All emphasized the church as institution rather than voluntary association: all were suspicious of theological and political liberalism: all were influenced by romanticism: all resisted the incursion of the state into the life of the church. The biographical and historical focus, however, does not allow a nuanced discussion of whether we should think of a single confessional movement in the early nineteenth century churches. The question whether Lutheran confessional theology in the nineteenth century is best seen as part of a wider movement is posed but not settled by Conser.

Second, Conser notes that these theologians were not simply refusing to enter the modern world. They were all tinged by romanticism, whose very nostalgia is a sign of its modernity. Is this confessionalism best understood as a pre-modern survival, fighting to preserve what has been, or as part of a persistant tradition of modern dissent from the dominant liberalism? Conser raises the question but only hints at a preference for the first alternative. This question is not a trivial one. American theology, including Lutheran theology, has yet truly to engage the great modern dissenter from the liberal tradition, Karl Barth. In American theology, writers such as George Lindbeck are developing a powerful alternative to both liberal theology and fundamentalism. And no one less than Harvey Cox is telling us that the liberal era is over and we should look to anti-modern traditions for aid in the theological task. Cox does not discuss the men who people Conser's book, but they are candidates for precisely this discussion of the shape of a future "post-liberal" theology.

Conser provides an introduction to a conversation that we need to know about and that needs to continue in contemporary Lutheranism.

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**HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH 1-8.** The Old Testament Library. By David L. Petersen. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984. 320 pages. Cloth. $24.95.

Haggai and Zechariah, whose ministries about 520 B.C.E. overlapped, have not been blessed with comprehensive and insightful English commentators—at least until now. This volume is not only an impressive interpretation of these often-neglected biblical books, but a model of what a wise and understandable commentary should be.

Discussion of the early post-exilic period has been dominated in recent years by a proposal of Paul Hanson, who sees the Jewish community divided between exclusivistic Zadokite priests, who were satisfied to have reinstituted the temple cult, and a visionary party, composed of Levites and prophetic disciples, who clung to a promise of decisive divine intervention though they were unable to integrate this with "real history." Hanson dismisses Haggai and Zechariah as ideological spokesmen of the Zadokite, exclusivistic party. While Petersen does not pursue a dialogue with Hanson, his findings are relevant for the discussion and throw Hanson's proposal into considerable question. Haggai is far from an uncritical propagandist for the cult since he indicates that the people's sacrifices have not been acceptable because they have neglected to carry out a foundation stone ceremony as a prerequisite for proper worship. Only when this ceremony has been properly carried out, did he report that from this day forward God would bless the people. Material prosperity is but the downpayment on God's blessing, to be followed by great eschatological triumphs. The wealth of the nations will flow to Jerusalem and the temple, the enemy nations will be overthrown by God himself, and Zerubbabel will be installed as messiah, yes, even as a signet ring on God's hand, thus reversing an oracle of Jeremiah against Zerubbabel's grandfather Jehoiachin. Hence, eschatology is central to the message of Haggai and not peripheral as Hanson would have it. Haggai's description of God's coming intervention transcends present realities at least as much as did the oracles of the so-called visionaries.

Eight visions make up the core of Zechariah 1-8, and Petersen excels both in individual interpretations and in overall appreciation of their message. While Haggai pushed for immediate action in building the temple and hailed Zerubbabel as coming messiah, Zechariah describes God's decisions about world order and the actions of his angelic agents as prerequisites to any human participation in the restoration program. Again this strikes one as quite distinct from Hanson's understanding. In additon, Petersen lists eight significant areas in which Zechariah was trying to modify the alternate post-exilic program of Ezekiel (e.g. Zechariah looks for the restoration of the whole world and not just Palestine; priests must be ritually cleansed before they are fit for service, etc.) In Hanson's view Ezekiel offers *the* blueprint for the Zadokite program. The picture of the restoration period that emerges from reading this commentary is of a complex society, not without controversies, but also not polarized into two rigid camps.

The greatness of this commentary is tainted at places by minor errors of fact. The author asserts that Zerubbabel was the nephew of Jehoiachin (p. 45) whereas he was really his grandson. He also states that Ezekiel foresaw a city 25,000 by 5,000 cubits (p. 169), though the text actually foresees a city 5,000 cubits square. He claims that Darius is called "king" only in Hag. 1:1 and Zech. 7:1 and draws structural conclusions from this observation (p. 282), conclusions that need to be modified in view of Hag. 1:15. "Josiah" appears for "Joshua" on p. 273 and the discussion of the dates on p. 281 does not tally.

But let there be no mistake: This is truly an outstanding contribution to biblical studies. In a second volume Petersen will complete the book of Zechariah (chaps.

9-14) and comment on Malachi. Since Deutero Zechariah is in many ways one of the most difficult and obscure parts of the Hebrew Bible, I wait for volume two with high anticipation.

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**THE MESSAGE OF THE PSALMS: A THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY.** By Walter Brueggemann. Augsburg Old Testament Studies. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984. 206 pages. Paper. $10.95.

Walter Brueggemann has provided a creative and fresh analysis of the Psalms in this theological study. He evaluates sixty different psalms according to their structure, content, and meaning for today's readers. In the unique style so characteristic of this author the messages of the Psalms are set forth with theological and social-psychological evaluation.

Brueggemann is indebted to the pioneering scholarship of Hermann Gunkel, Sigmund Mowinckel, and Claus Westermann, particularly in terms of their form-critical analysis of the psalms. But he is no slavish devotee to their classifications, for he boldly presents new categories for evaluating the psalms. His categories of orientation and disorientation are designed to translate the depth of feeling in the Psalter into modes relevant for modern readers.

Brueggemann offers three major categories for the psalms: 1) "Psalms of Orientation" are those which express a sense of well-being and gratitude for a "happy blessed state" and the "reliable gifts of life" (p. 25). Previous commentators spoke of these psalms as "Descriptive Hymns" or "Psalms of Praise." Brueggemann discusses psalms which he calls "Songs of Creation" (Pss. 145, 104, 33, 8), "Songs of Torah" (Pss. 1, 119:, "Wisdom Psalms" (Pss. 37, 14), "Songs of Retribution" (Ps. 112), and "Occasion of Well-Being" (Pss. 133, 131).

2) "Psalms of Disorientation" are those which are uttered in a time of pain, anger, disorder, or despair. Previous commentators called these psalms individual or communal laments. In similar fashion Brueggemann discusses "Personal Laments" (Pss. 13, 86, 35) and "Communal Laments" (Pss. 74, 79, 137). But Brueggemann distinguishes his own unique categories among the laments: Psalms of rage and despair (Pss. 88, 109), Psalms of divine anger (Pss. 50, 81), Psalms of internal or psychological disorientation (Pss. 32, 51, 143, 130), and Psalms with didactic realism in the face of crisis (Pss. 49, 90, 73).

3) "Psalms of New Orientation" are those which follow after a period of disorientation and reflect gratitude for newly experienced grace, deliverance, healing, and stability. Previous commentators called such psalms "Thanksgiving Hymns." Brueggemann also includes here the "Royal/Enthronement Psalms," "Psalms of Trust," and certain "Psalms of Praise." His classification distinguishes "(Individual) Thanksgiving Songs" (Pss. 30, 40, 138), "Communal Thanksgiving Songs" (Pss. 65, 66, 124), "Victory-Enthronement Songs" (Pss. 114, 29, 96, 93, 97, 98, 99, 47), "Songs of Confidence" (Pss. 27, 23, 91), and "Hymns of Praise" (Pss. 135, 103, 113, 146, 147, 148, 100, 149, 150).

His discussion and use of the term, disorientation, as a key to unlock the message of the Psalms is the single strength of this work. It allows the author to plumb the depths of psychological meaning for modern people. Disorientation is a concept which relates to the experience of many people better than the old category of lament. This invites the reader to perceive why the Psalmist utters a word of pathos and to identify more directly with the words of the text. Disorientation Psalms are for those who recognize the chaos around them and for those who need to break through the facade of false optimism to perceive the reality of life. Once true disorientation is perceived the Psalms of New Orientation assume greater meaning as the grace of God is perceived in its diverse manifestations. Brueggemann seeks to accomplish with more appropriate linguistic categories the same effect as the old homiletic dialectic of Law and Gospel attempted (when Law was perceived as more fully describing the human condition rather than merely scolding people).

Brueggemann's work is a worthwhile addition to the pastor's resources for preaching and teaching. His assessment provides fresh insight into the Psalms as well as the greater human condition. The reader may pardon idiosyncratic modes of expression which are peculiar to this author, for they are his way of seizing the reader's attention to convey old truths in new fashion. The commentary is well organized, lucid and offers good footnotes for further research (unfortunately bibliography is lacking). Readers will discover a new invigorating assessment of the Psalms.

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**LOVE OF ENEMIES.** By William Klassen. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984. xiv and 145 pages. Paper. $8.95.

With this book, Klassen challenges the thinking of religious people everywhere who are struggling with the peace issue. From the outset his Mennonite background is evident.

After examining the Greek culture, the Hebrew Bible, and Judaism, Klassen discusses the life and teachings of Jesus as the Prince of Peace. Here Jesus is seen as turning the retributive precepts of the ancient world upside-down by saying "love your enemies." Paul continues Jesus' teachings and develops them even further in the life of the early Church. Klassen draws especially from Romans 12.

Klassen concludes that the world has seen through devastating wars what happens when people build relationships on suspicion and hate. He advocates that loving the enemy as a realistic solution to today's problems.

The strength of the book lies in the clarity with which Klassen presents his case. The book is a credit to the *Overtures to Biblical Theology* series and must reading for all who are struggling with the way to peace in our world.

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**OLD TESTAMENT LAW.** By Dale Patrick. Atlanta: John Knox, 1985. 278 pages. Paper. $15.95.

"Law is the order of justice and right to which individuals and groups should conform and which judicial authority should enforce," asserts Patrick in his survey of the legal texts of the Old Testament. Patrick's book fills the need for an introductory text on biblical law and is timely reading in an age when "justice" is too frequently determined merely by a compromise between "interests."

The Ten Commandments, the Covenant Code (Ex 20-23), the Deuteronomic Law, and Holiness Code (Lev 17-26) and Priestly Law are treated in four separate chapters. The bulk of each of these chapters is devoted to commentary on the biblical texts in which Patrick seeks to penetrate, beyond the moral and judicial rules of law, to the legal concepts and principles that inform them. These sections contain frequent, helpful comments on individual words and phrases (e.g., his contrast of honoring and obeying [51-52]) and, where possible, discussions of narrative and prophetic texts which pertain to specific laws. Patrick has clearly immersed himself in this legal material and the reader of his book will not fully appreciate the service he has rendered unless one attempts to make a similar plunge. These chapters are the heart of the book and are best used as an introductory guide to be read along with the biblical legal texts, not in lieu of them.

In a chapter entitled "The Written and Unwritten Law," Patrick develops the view that the codes initially "were not prescriptions with statutory force but testimony to God's just and righteous will." The documents "were created to inculcate the values, principles, concepts, and procedures of Israel's legal tradition, not to decree specific rulings for specific cases" (190). Josiah's reform is responsible for a shift in attitude *from* legal material serving to instill a sense of substantive justice *toward* an identification of divine law with the rules of law. Patrick clearly is not enthusiastic about the shift, for he asserts, "the more law becomes identified with the rules of law, the greater is the danger of sophistic casuistry, of formal justice that violates substantive justice, and simply of

textual tampering and manipulation" (202). The New Testament with its double commandment of love, Patrick claims, revived the idea that God's law is an unwritten law which validates and critiques all written law and interpretation. "In distinction from the Old Testament law, love requires persons to surpass the principles of justice and righteousness in the name of a new humanity and a new world" (219).

The movement from something good (lawcodes for education in substantive justice) to contamination (rules of law) to revival in a reinvigorated form (love commandment) is not historically or theologically satisfying to this reader. Historically, there is too much implied disparagement of the legal developments in Israel during the exilic, post-exilic and rabbinic periods. A few paragraphs about the open-ended character of rabbinic legal reasoning do not remove the implied charge of legalism. Theologically, Patrick seems to depend too much on the avoidance of rules of law to protect against legalism. It would be better to stress the reality of the experience of God. God judges both our rules (written laws) and our principles and values which the rules express. God's activity is our protection against our own and others' legalism.

Patrick wrote with both contemporary communities of faith and scholars of the Western legal tradition in mind. Both will be served well by using this book. The book would be more passionate, however, if Patrick had addressed primarily those for whom the Bible is "a witness to their God and a source of guidance for their lives" (41). Discussion of the relevance of biblical law to the modern reader is "set off" in a thirteen page postscript which fortunately does not reduce the relevance to a few bland, universal truisms. Echoes of Patrick's earlier book, *The Rendering of God in the Old Testament,* can be heard here and elsewhere, and they are sufficiently passionate to move the reader from a productive study session on biblical law to renewed attempts at just and right living.

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**PASTOR AS PERSON.** By Gary L. Harbaugh. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984. 172 pages. Paper. $8.95.

Every pastor (and seminarian) is bound to find him- or herself mirrored in Harbaugh's book. The author, who teaches pastoral care and counseling at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, OH, has molded a fine instrument for reflection by pastors in their ever-changing identity as persons who are pastors. But, lest one "see in a glass darkly," I feel others—spouse, children, colleagues, parishioners—should be asked to help us reflect; the book alone, good as it is, will not suffice.

Harbaugh distills masses of information, theorizing, and analysis from many sources to elaborate on his (w)holistic model of the pastor-person: I am my physical, mental, emotional, and social being. Life-choices are made—or need to be made, if they are not—taking all these aspects of my being into account. In addition to his selective use of both holistic and wholistic models (note his middling, idiosyncratic spelling), he bases his model on biblical ideas of personhood, and makes particularly heavy use of the life-cycle theories of Erik Erikson.

To breathe life into the presentation, Harbaugh introduces four pastors—three men, one woman—and has us live with them as they confront themselves while confronting problem situations. Those "case studies" are, however, more truly springboards for what Harbaugh wants to say then they are actual vehicles for our learning. Better use of the case method can be made, as it is advocated, for example, in James D. Glasse's *Putting It Together in the Parish* (Abingdon, 1972).

Not least among its virtues are Harbaugh's citations of many sources that could profitably be mined by those interested in further reflection on these things. But for study groups of pastors and seminarians, *Pastor as Person* is a very good place to start.

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**THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE AND THE RISE OF THE MODERN WORLD.** By Henning Graf Reventlow. Translated by John Bowden. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. xx and 688 pages. Cloth. $42.95.

Reventlow seeks to trace the origins of biblical criticism in the early modern period. The research and scholarship behind this volume are impressive, offering to the English speaking world a thorough and erudite evaluation of intellectual development. His special concern is the interplay of religion, philosophy, and politics among English thinkers between the Reformation and the Enlightenment and how their contributions relate to the rise of biblical criticism.

He challenges several assumptions commonly made about the rise of biblical criticism: 1) England—and not Germany—was the birthplace of critical attitudes toward the Bible. They developed in the crucible of religious and political controversies connected with the Puritan Revolution, the Restoration, the Glorious Revolution, and the aftermath of these events (1580-1730). 2) The ultimate stimuli for biblical criticism were really medieval humanism and late medieval spiritualism. Erasmus, Bucer, and even John Milton and the Puritans are seen as heirs of these forces. 3) Medieval humanism and spiritualism were the most formative influences on the theological development of Puritans, Latitudinarians, and Deists alike. In reality, the presuppositions, methodologies, and even some of the goals of these three groups were remarkably similar. Deists, in particular, were more religious than is commonly acknowledged. They did not reject the Bible or natural revelation, and they inherited the anti-cultic bias and the ethical-moral tradition of the Puritans (due to their common humanist and spiritualist roots). 4) Throughout he emphasizes the continuity of individual thinkers with the theological and philosophical heritage of the past and their contemporary milieu. Reventlow intently maintains certain figures are more religious (Erasmus, Hobbes, Newton, and Deists in general) and others are more humanistic or rationalistic (Bucer, Milton, and Puritans in general) than is recognized generally.

The critical use of the Bible was developed by Puritans, Latitudinarians, and Deists, who used the biblical text as a resource or arsenal for their discussion of theological-political controversies. No longer read in naive fashion as an absolute authority, the biblical text was read by thinkers with contemporary value systems, most notably humanism and spiritualism. Exegesis was done not for its own sake but for specific political, religious, and ethical-philsophical questions by all parties. Ultimately the Deists would play the greatest role in developing biblical criticism for they criticized the Bible's authority in order to undercut their Tory opponents. Yet Deism was transitory, for it used the Bible selectively to create a religion which would eventually no longer need a biblical source of revelation.

Reventlow has accomplished a massive assignment. However, it may be asked whether he has molded material too much according to his presuppositions. To stress the continuity of these thinkers with medieval humanism and spiritualism may be a healthy corrective to views which tend to isolate intellectual movements, but it can become an overgeneralization in dealing with vast amounts of literature and so many scholars. His use of sources betrays dependence upon older established scholarship, and the omission of contemporary research can be dangerous to such broadly propounded theses. Many of his critical observations are no longer scholarly breakthroughs but commonplace assumptions among specialists in the respective fields.

The volume might be a slight disappointment to those interested in the issue of biblical authority. The consideration of how Deists and their contemporaries treated the biblical text is important, but narrow, and the reader might wish a wider consideration of pre-modern biblical criticism. Much of the material treats the broader intellectual background rather than biblical criticism and authority directly, so that the work is more of a significant contribution to the history of Christian thought than biblical studies.

Despite these criticisms, the work will stand as a significant piece of scholarship and a thorough resource for students on the early modern period of English

thought. Though it is difficult to render Reventlow's turgid German into fluid English while remaining faithful to the original, Bowden has produced a readable translation. Fortress Press should be complimented for providing this monumental work for students and scholars.

**Robert Gnuse**

**FAITHFULNESS IN ACTION: LOYALTY IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE.** By Katharine Doob Sakenfeld. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985. xviii and 158 pages. Paper. $8.95.

In an age of short-term commitments Sakenfeld's book beckons us to reflect on "loyalty." "Loyalty" is the word Sakenfeld uses to translate the Hebrew term *hesed* ("steadfast love" and "kindness" in the RSV). The texts and traditions in which the term appears are varied and Sakenfeld ably employs the variety to enrich our understanding of "loyalty." She does not, fortunately, attempt to catalogue different uses after the fashion of entries in theological dictionaries.

"Loyalty" is a term used to express both divine freedom and divine self-obligation. This one Hebrew term, Sakenfeld asserts, can "evoke in a single breath both the commitment of God to the community of faith and the radical freedom of the One who can in no way be coerced by the people with whom relationship has been established."

The most important expression of God's faithfulness to Israel was in forgiveness, "made known both in the restoration of personal communion and in the modifying of the concrete consequences of sin." The ordinary usage of "loyalty" (e.g., in the David and Jonathan stories) suggests aspects of its theological usage, but forgiveness is distinctive to divine loyalty. The loyalty or faithfulness of God that takes the shape of forgiveness is both promised and surprising. It is not cheap forgiveness, for "God's forbearance should become the occasion for repentance, recommitment and rejoicing, not for business as usual."

"Loyalty" is also a response that God desires from the human community. Faithful actions are not reducible to absolutes, but that does not lessen the demand to do God's will. Human loyalty is exercised with the trust that God's great loyalty will forgive actions which miss the way of God. Human loyalty exists as a response to God's loyalty. If God is not loyal and faithful, no amount of legalistic preaching or revolutionary rhetoric will make us steadfastly faithful to each other.

This is a fine book. It helps us re-read familiar OT texts and brings them to our deliberations on loyal living in family, work, nation and church.

**Richard Nysse**

**BIBLICAL FAITH: AN EVOLUTIONARY APPROACH.** By Gerd Theissen. Tr. John Bowden. Philadelpha: Fortress, 1985. xiii and 194 pages. Paper. $8.95.

Evolutionary theory has long since been accommodated by modern theologians, and even, in the case of the Process school, integrated into theology. Theissen, Professor of New Testament in the University of Heidelberg (and known heretofore for his work on the sociological matrix of the early church), uses evolutionary theory to *express* Christian theology, in much the same way as Aquinas used Aristotelian categories and constructs. It makes for an entirely fresh statement of the Christian tradition.

While the Process school and Teilhard de Chardin speak of the evolution of God, Theissen says God is the "central reality," a kind of unmoved Mover. Culture, which includes art, science, and religion, evolves; adaptation, selection, and mutation occur in culture as they do in the biological sphere. (Dr. Marc Jenkins, a scientist friend who helped me review the book, says mutations, strictly defined, are far too rare to account for much change or variation: "Much more variation is provided by genetic recombination which occurs by sexual reproduction." Substituting "variation" in some of the instances where Theissen uses "mutation" is in my judgment a minor correction, nothing more.)

Questions arise. Dr. Jenkins, using Theissen's own argumentation, asks why an atheistic religion cannot theoretically occur as a successful coping mechanism. He finds Theissen dismisses this possibility too hastily. I am troubled by Theissen's

dismissal of the differences among the world's religions (p. 35), linking them all together, biblical and otherwise, in "an unending story of trial and error" (p. 50). What then is the nature and function of revelation, and what is the uniqueness of Christ, among other things? Where, if anywhere, does an eschatological vision figure in Theissen's scheme?

While serious questions like these must be addressed, the book merits such attention. It is obvious that a restless, broad-ranging, powerful intellect is at work here. Many books can be called provocative, exciting, challenging. Only a few can be called seminal. I judge that this is one.

**Frederick Reklau**

**WHO WAS A JEW? RABBINIC AND HALAKHIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE JEWISH CHRISTIAN SCHISM.** By Lawrence H. Schiffman. Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav Publishing House, 1985. xii and 131 pages. Cloth. $14.95; Paper. $8.95.

Schiffman, Professor of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University, asks why the Jewish community of Palestine, which tolerated sectarianism and schism without regarding the adherents as non-Jews in the Second Temple period, dissociated itself completely from Christianity which arose within it? That is a major problem in the self-identification of Judaism in the first two centuries of the Common Era and in the history of early Christianity.

One born of a Jewish mother is by definition Jewish, even if fathered by a non-Jew. (The reverse is not true.) Conversion to Judaism had four basic requirements: acceptance of the Torah (i.e., identification with the past, present and future of the Jewish history and way of life, *halakhah)*, circumcision, immersion, and sacrifice (which drops after the destruction of the temple. S. dates these *halakhic* regulations back to the period of the Second Temple, i.e. prior to 70 C.E. Neither heresy nor apostasy lost a person status as Jew, though the apostate might lose the right to send offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem.

The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. led to the hegemony of the Pharisees in Judaism. They took pains to insure the survival of Judaism. The benediction against the *minim* (Jewish Christians) inserted into the Eighteen Benedictions (the major synagogue prayer) was designed to prevent them from serving as precentors in the synagogue, but did not exclude them from Judaism. (S. differs sharply from Rabbi Kimelman, who recently argued that the curse was directed against all Christians, *per se,* and was late.) In addition, the Pharisees made certain that the emerging Christian Scriptures did not achieve status within the Jewish community.

The final break with the Jewish Christians was preciptated by the exclusion of Jews (and Jewish Christians) from Aelia Capitolina, the Roman refoundation of Jerusalem after 135 C.E. Then the leader of the Christian community became a gentile, and the church assumed a largely gentile cast. This led the Jewish community to cease dealing with Jews who had "gone astray but who still fulfilled the halakhic requirements of Jewish identity" (p. 76) and saved the Jewish people from extinction through submersion into the new Christian community.

The author published an earlier version of this material as an essay in *Aspects of Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period,* vol. II of *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981). The present version is written for a wider audience, with extensive documentation in the notes. The disagreement with Kimelman is the major addition. It deserves wide reading in both forms.

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**FOR MY PEOPLE: BLACK THEOLOGY AND THE BLACK CHURCH, WHERE WE HAVE BEEN AND WHERE WE ARE GOING.** By James H. Cone. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984. xiii and 271 pages. Paper. $9.95.

Volume 1 in "The Bishop Henry McNeal Turner Studies in North American Black Religion" Series is not going to be a best seller. For most white, American religionists black theology probably occupies a niche that is, at best, several fads ago. As a priority for most of the religious book market, professional and popular,

black theology probably ranks only slightly ahead of the predestinarian controversy.

As an historical and theological assessment the paragraph above may be so superficial as to merit treatment on some 21st century version of "The Rest of the Story." In the case of *For My People* it is most unfortunate, because Cone is almost as good in print as he is in person. Either way, he is not to be missed.

The dedication of this book is unusually significant: "To the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the community where I first heard the gospel preached, and to black Christians everywhere in the hope that we will remake our churches according to the liberating heritage of Allen, Varick, Tubman, Sojourner, Martin and Malcolm."

The title of the book is significant too: *For My People.* It is taken from a profoundly moving poem by black poet and author Margaret Walker. The poem follows the dedication as an eloquent testimony to that heritage, which, as Cone so powerfully contends, is the indespensible formal principle of black theology and the black church.

*For My People* is usually absorbing, often deeply moving. It is compelling, convincing and superbly documented. I wish the footnotes had been printed at the bottom of each page. I wearied of flipping back to the end of the book to read them—and some of the juiciest and sweetest morsels are in the footnotes (it is well worth the extra effort to pursue them).

At times, especially in Chapter 5, "Black Theology and the Black Church," and in Chapter 10, "Where Do We Go From Here?" I felt a bit like a voyeur (the pigmentation of the reviewer is not black). More accurately, I felt privileged to listen in on a terribly important and exceedingly intimate family conversation.

Chapter 2, "Black Theology as an Attack on White Religion," is simply essential reading.

The exceptional candor and self-insight in Chapter 4, "Strengths and Weaknesses in the Early Development of Black Theology," make it fascinating and rich.

Chapter 7, "Black Theology, Black Churches, and the Third World," is tremendously hope-full. It is exciting! For their practical implications this chapter and Chapter 8, "Black Theology, Black Churches, and Other Minorities in the United States," are probably the most important in the book.

Theologically Chapter 9, "Black Christians and Marxism," is probably the most important.

A personal note: I felt a surge of pride as I read several references to the Alamo Black Clergy (of the San Francisco Bay Area) as one of the first radical black clergy organizations, knowing that my Bishop, Will Herzfeld, was one of the prime movers in that organization. To see Will listed as one of the chief figures in the early development of black theology (p. 25) triggered even greater pride and pleasure.

Another personal note: Cone has whetted my appetite to learn more about some of the prophets little-known outside the inner circles of black theology: Gayraud S. Wilmore, John Mbiti, an African theologian, Vincent Harding, C. Eric Lincoln.

I feel a bit like Jacob after Jabbok: I have just wrestled with an angel. I have experienced some dislocation, but I have received a blessing.

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**THE WANDERING PEOPLE OF GOD: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS.** By Ernst Käsemann. Translated by Roy Harrisville and Irving Sandberg. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984. 255 pages. Cloth. $21.95.

This translation of Käsemann's classic study on Hebrews has a noteworthy origin. The work first appeared in 1937 after the author prepared the rough draft while serving a prison term due to his opposition to Hitler. Thus a subtle message in the work was designed to address the contemporary German churches and encourage them in their resistance to Hitler. The "epistle's concern is with the need for persistent endurance in the wandering assigned the people of God ... in abandoning their own path (they) would abandon his as well." The symbol of Christ's procession from the earth to the heavenly

temple inspires Christians to be ready to wander; that is, they must relinquish the desire for ecclesiastical security and follow their Lord's leadership despite the challenges and dangers which result. Such a message was appropriate not only for the radical Confessing Church of the 1930's; it still retains a vibrant relevance for Christians today.

The substance of the study is a scholarly and detailed evaluation of ideas and language in Hebrews demonstrating their dependence upon prevailing hellenistic Gnostic thought. He compares the ascension of Christ to the heavenly temple with the heavenly journey of the divine anthropos redeemer, and the functions of divine sonship and highpriesthood of Jesus are likewise paralleled with this Gnostic counterpart. Käsemann's intent is not to demonstrate that Hebrews is a Gnostic document for he is quick to point out how Hebrews diverges from Gnostic thought on crucial points and modifies its imagery throughout. Rather Gnostic imagery became the vehicle by which Christian thought could be presented most effectively to its hellenistic audience. The letter "appropriates elements ... only to the extent they make clear the way of Christ."

The work is a classic both in terms of its scholarship and its theological message. Augsburg Press and the translators offer this work as a tribute to Käsemann and in an effort to "delight old friends and enlist admirers from a new generation of readers." However, the scholarship is dated somewhat; discussion of Gnosticism and its influence upon Christian thought has moved beyond Käsemann's nuances in this study. Furthermore, the chief reason for a modern consideration of this study is its message about the wandering people of God, yet this theme receives little consideration in the total exposition. The book is more a consideration of Gnostic influence and provides us with a fine example of critical scholarship; the theological message about the wandering people of God remains only as a subtle nuance throughout the work. Despite these criticisms, however, the book is a valuable resource and worthy of consideration by students of New Testament research.

**Robert Gnuse**

**LUKE-ACTS.** Edited by Charles H. Talbert. New York: Crossroad, 1984. 244 pages. Paper. $11.95.

The subtitle calls these collected essays from the pens of 12 scholars "New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar."

George Rice thinks that the Western text of Luke 24 defends the apostles by inserting excuses for their unbelief. T.L. Brodie writes of *mimesis* in order to show the usefulness of an understanding of Greco-Roman literature. John Townsend argues that Luke-Acts was written in the middle of the second century. David Barr and Judith Wentling trace connections between classical biography and Luke-Acts. Charles Talbert takes another look at the proof from prophecy or promise-fulfillment scheme in Luke-Acts but not the only one or necessarily the central one. Jack Sanders sees the Jews in Luke-Acts as rejecters and rejected. R. Brawley says that Luke does not repudiate the Jews but uses them to explain Paul's Gentile mission. D.L. Jones concludes that Luke, writing late in the first century, used "servant" of Jesus not to indicate connections with Deutero-Isaiah but as a more general title of honor, as he also used it of David. William Kurz notes that tracing a geneology back to a god or divine principle is a Greco-Roman rather than biblical (OT) strategy and nicely compares the geneology in Luke 3 with assertions in Acts 17:26-29. Earl Richard begins with Acts 15 and concludes that the mission to the Jews, only partially successful, is still open at the end of Acts.

Jerome Nyrey studies Paul's defense speeches on the basis of models presented in ancient handbooks of rhetoric. G.W. Trompf thinks Luke wrote Acts after the death of Paul but deliberately concluded his narrative to a point before Paul's execution because he did not wish to end with a description of imperial enmity (or hypocrisy) or leave the readers worrying about divine justice.

These essays sometimes contradict one another in conclusions but all illustrate the conviction that Luke-Acts must be interpreted within the broad Mediterranean milieu and make good use of Greco-Roman as well as OT materials, convictions nurtured and promoted by

editor Talbert over the years, and rightly so. These essays will be of interest to serious students of Luke-Acts.

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**SEBASMATA, STUDIEN ZUR ANTIKEN RELIGIONSGESCHICHTE UND ZUM FRÜHEN CHRISTENTUM.** By Hildebrecht Hommel. 2 vols. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 31, 32. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1983-1984, : x, 415 pages +16 plates. Cloth. DM 228.00. II: x, 382 pages + 5 plates. Cloth. DM 198.00.

German Classicists have made outstanding contributions to the study of the language of the New Testament. The names of Friedrich Blass and Albert DeBrunner come immediately to mind. Classical scholars, such as Sir William Ramsay in Scotland, T.R. Glover in England, and F. Blass, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, Wilhelm Schmid, Hermann Usener, Eduard Norden, Wilhelm Reitzenstein and Max Pohlenz in Germany, have used their knowledge of the ancient world to illuminate the historical, cultural, and religious context of the New Testament. Now the name of Hildebrecht Hommel should be addded to the list.

Hommel, raised in a pious Lutheran home in Munich (his father, Fritz Hommel, was an outstanding Semitist), from childhood on had a broad knowledge of the Bible, Christian hymnody, and the traditions of the church. He naturally came to note parallels between Greek and Latin literature and thought and the New Testament. That tendency was reinforced by a guest professorship at the Kirchliche Hochschule in Berlin after the Second World War (1948-1955). *Theologia Viatorum,* the annual published by the Kirchliche Hochschule, regularly carried articles on the Greco-Roman world and the New Testament by Hommel. Later, as Professor of Classical Philology at Tübingen University, he conducted seminars in which he carefully interpreted texts of the New Testament in their classical context.

The fruit of that lifetime of interest is presented in these two volumes. Volume I contains sixteen essays on ancient religion. Four discuss aspects of God—as heavenly father, everywhere present, the creator and sustainer of all creation. Two essays discuss the mysterious SATOR square, found in many places, from Dura Europas on the Euphrates to Gloucester in England, and the influence of Stoic thought on the NT and early Christianity,[3] *Pantokrator* as a description of God (Rev 1:8, 4:8, and 11:17) reflects Stoic influence while 1 Cor 8:6, Col 1:16, and Heb 2:10 use the Stoic *ta panta* formula with multiple prepositional phrases about God. Hommel traces the formula through the fathers into the Nicene Creed and the Roman Symbol. Two other highly important essays deal with the place of Psalm 139 in the history of religions and Vergil's "messianic" poem, the Fourth Eclogue.

Volume II contains thirteen essays that relate directly to the New Testament and six that relate to later Christianity: John Cochlaeus, Luther's comic poem on Johann Agricola, reflections of antiquity in Lutheran hymnody, and the piety of his grandfather's diary (formed under the influence of Wilhelm Loehe).

The essays deal with significant texts and motifs of the New Testament. Hommel surveys the Areopagos address (Acts 17) in recent scholarship to conclude that it is highly Stoic in outlook, close to Posidonius in detail. A series of essays deal with aspects of NT moral teaching (e.g. Qorban). Two highly important papers discuss Romans. The first deals with the term *ktisis* in Romans 1 and 8; Hommel regards Vergil, *Ecl 4:50-52,* as the key to the groaning creation. Paul has in mind the whole of creation (cf. Gen 1), but the stress falls on "living creation," i.e. on animals and humans (with humans in the central position). The other paper interprets Rom 7 in the light of the popular topos of unwitting injustice. Hommel writes a commentary to show that Paul uses the topos in a peculiar fashion, but stands nonetheless in the hellenistic tradition. An outstanding paper discusses Tacitus, *Ann* 15.44.2-3, for the light it sheds on the Neronian persecution of Christians. Other topics discussed are the

iconography of the flight into Egypt, and the crucifixion of the Righteous One in Plato and John.

In the winter semester 1963/64, I participated in Hommel's seminar *Antikes im Neuen Testament.* These two volumes are a reminder of an outstanding teacher's methods in that seminar and an extension of its content. I shall treasure them for that reason. But NT scholars (and I along with them) will appreciate the meticulous attention to philological detail and the use of ancient texts that are not common coin in NT studies. Hommel's work will have lasting value, even when specific details of his essays are not persuasive. He stands in the tradition of Norden and Pohlenz—and that is high praise. It is a welcome addition to NT bibliography, even though the unfortunately high cost will keep it out of most personal libraries.

**Edgar Krentz**

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD.** Ed. by Bruce Chilton. Philadelphia and London: Fortress and SPCK, 1984. 162 pages. Paper. $6.95.

This is another in the series "Issues in Religion and Theology." The aim of each volume in the series is to address a specific issue by gathering key essays, all previously published. To the editor of each volume falls the task of selection and of composing an original essay which will rehearse the history of the investigation of the question, describe the present state of the issue, and map out possible moves into the future.

The present volume is a really excellent contribution to the series. Five of the eight essays originally appeared in German (by Rudolf Otto, W.G. Kümmel, E. Grässer, M. Lattke, and Hans Bald). Three of them are offered here in English translation for the first time. Editor Bruce Chilton is represented not only by his introductory essay but also be a selection from his book *God in Strength.* The remaining two essays were penned by Norman Perrin and T.F. Glasson.

The kingdom of God was at the heart of Jesus' proclamation. The modern debate over the meaning of Jesus' message has been long, hot and complicated. This volume will introduce readers to the debate in an extremely helpful fashion, or serve as an excellent refresher course, and in any case equip readers to enter with greater intelligence and sensitivity into the debate as participants.

**Robert H. Smith**

**NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION THROUGH RHETORICAL CRITICISM.** By George A. Kennedy. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984. 171 pages. Cloth. $14.00. (Paper, $6.95).

We are hearing much these days about literary criticism and its usefulness in interpreting the Bible. We have heard considerably less about rhetorical criticism and its application to the Bible, but now George Kennedy, professor of classics at the University of North Carolina, has written a splendid introduction.

Literary and rhetorical criticism have much in common. Both are devoted to the text as it stands in contrast to every method which seeks to penetrate behind the text to social forces or to the biographies of kings, or of prophets, or of Jesus, or of anyone else outside the text. Both focus on the narrative world as opposed to the historical world and on how the narrative works and what it means. Both are far less interested in the sources of a text than in its power.

Literary criticism operates with a variety of theories and methods developed in recent decades for making sense out of modern literature and applies these modern insights to ancient texts. Rhetorical criticism functions with theories and methods developed in the ancient world primarily for understanding ancient oral but also written communications.

Kennedy first introduces rhetorical criticism (chapter 1). Aristotle launched the tradition of identifying three species of rhetoric: judicial, deliberative, epideictic. That is, a discourse may seek to persuade an audience to render a judgment about past events (judicial), or it may urge them to a future action (deliberative), or it may try to persuade them to affirm or reaffirm some value or point of view in the present (epideictic).

Kennedy clearly and concisely outlines the means available to a speaker seeking to persuade an audience no matter what species of discourse the speaker has chosen: ethos, pathos, logos. These three are related to fundamental constants of every rhetorical situation: the speaker, the audience, the text. Ethos refers to the character of authority of the speaker, pathos to the emotional involvement and reactions of the hearers, logos to the rational power of the argument. The introductory chapter contains much else of importance but this summary will serve as a sample of the rhetoric of rhetorical criticism.

In subsequent chapters Kennedy analyzes a New Testament example of each species of rhetoric: Deliberative Rhetoric—the Sermon on the Mount (ch. 2), Epideictic Rhetoric—John 14-17 (ch. 3), Judicial Rhetoric—Second Corinthians (ch. 4). Later he examines the Rhetoric of the Gospels (ch. 5), the Speeches in Acts (ch. 6), and the Rhetoric of Thessalonians, Galatians and Romans (ch. 7).

Some of the analyses are disappointingly brief (the Rhetoric of the Gospels), some are especially interesting because Kennedy is taking issue with other rhetorical critics (as when he registers his disagreements with the analysis of Galatians offered by H.D. Betz in the Hermeneia commentary), some seem especially helpful because they offer a fresh perspective on well-known material (on the Sermon on the Mount or the Farewell Discourses). Once in a while Kennedy forgets himself and makes remarks about the historicity of narrated events or comments on sources (in his work with the speeches of Acts). But always he is helpful as he introduces readers in delightful and readable fashion to a field where most of us are neophytes.

I would stress "readable." For all its technicalities and precision, this book is wonderfully clear of verbal thickets. This work comes from the hand of an expert communicator, and pastors and students will appreciate this volume as much as teachers.

**Robert H. Smith**

**THE CHURCHES THE APOSTLES LEFT BEHIND.** By Raymond E. Brown. New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1984. 156 pages. Paper. $4.95.

This small and attractive book is a companion to *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* and *Antioch and Rome.* It asks how it was when the last apostolic witness disappeared from the scene and the church could no longer depend on the testimony of eyewitnesses. Most of the New Testament was written after the death of the last known apostle. By 67 C.E., Peter, Paul, and James had disappeared. Therefore, the last third of the first century should be designated as the "Sub-Apostolic Period."

Brown recognizes the diversity of the churches in this sub-apostolic time and chooses seven different traditions which carry on the apostolic heritage in various ways: The Pauline heritage in the Pastoral Epistles, in Colossians/Ephesians, and Luke/Acts, the Petrine heritage in 1 Peter, the heritage of the Beloved Disciple in the Fourth Gospel and in the Epistles, and the heritage of Jewish/Gentile Christianity in Matthew. Each tradition is described, especially in its ecclesiology, as well as the sources permit, and then evaluated as to its strengths and weaknesses. What makes the book especially interesting is the constant evaluation of present events in the Roman Catholic Church after Vatican II in light of these New Testament church traditions. Brown warns against triumphalism, divisions, onesidedness, and a theology which is based on polemics. Some strengths may easily become weaknesses.

The book is characterized by clarity of thinking and writing. The only question one might ask is whether our information is really quite as reliable as Brown supposes. But the book is plausible and very stimulating. Even though it is written in a Roman Catholic context, it is well worth reading for non-Roman Catholics, both for its description of the early church situation and for reflection on our churches today.

**Wilhelm C. Linss**
*Lutheran School of Theology*
*Chicago, Illinois*

**EDUCATING FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE: RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS.** By James McGinnis and others. St. Louis: Institute for Peace and Justice, 1985 Edition. 240 pages. Paper. $14.25.

The 1985 edition of this resource manual has revisions that make it more ecumenically appropriate, give it greater flexibility for a wider variety of educational settings (elementary and secondary schools, colleges and seminaries, parishes), and put greater emphasis on the spiritual dimensions of peace and justice. The manual consists of six units of study; Today's Peacemakers, Peace and Justice, The Prophets, Gospel-Culture Contrasts, Peace and War, and Social Programs.

Each unit focuses on one theme, presents several key concepts on that theme, gives a variety of teaching activities for communicating each concept, presents some action possibilities around that theme and a short reading for adult participants. There are suggestions for using the manual with primary and middle elementary school grades, junior and senior high students, college and seminary classes, adult/family education programs and even Canadian religious education. The goals for each unit are aptly stated in terms of awareness (cognitive), concern (affective) and action outcomes.

The manual is very helpful in its careful definition of terms. Peace, for instance, is defined as developing alternatives to violence as a means of resolving conflicts. But it is more than the absence of war or overt violence. Peace is also the realization of justice. Working for peace means seeking for the kinds of relationships among persons and groups that promote the well-being or development of all persons. The manual is also helpful in the rich variety of resources made available to the teacher, both in the manual and from other sources.

*Religious Dimensions* is the third volume in a series that includes Volume One on *National Dimensions* and Volume Two on *Global Dimensions.* Any teacher interested in educating for peace and justice will do well to have these volumes. They are invaluable resource for the task.

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

**SPOUSE ABUSE: A TREATMENT PROGRAM FOR COUPLES.** By Peter H. Neidig and Dale H. Friedman. Champaign, Illinois: Research Press, 1984. 245 pages. Paper. $14.95.

A wise man once said that the task of the psychologist is to "give psychology away." This little book does a better job of that than anything I have seen recently. Read the chapter headings and see for yourself: Chapter One: Introduction to the Program, Chapter Two: Beginning the Program, Chapter Three: Understanding Violence, Chapter Four: Anger Control, Chapter Five: Additional Anger-control Techniques, Chapter Six: Stress and Violence, Chapter Seven: Communication, Chapter Eight: The Inevitability of Conflict, Chapter Nine: Jealously, Sex Role Stereotyping, and Marital Dependency, Chapter Ten: Closing the Program. This is followed by an appendix which includes a detailed Intake Interview form and a brief Long-Term Evaluation form.

Chapters two thru ten contain 41 different exercises that can be used to assist people in both understanding and controlling their tendencies toward violence, all contained in a Cognitive Therapy approach to their problems. In case Cognitive Therapy is a new form to you, let me extole its virtues by saying that it is simple and straight forward enough that high school dropouts can understand it, and furthermore, it works like gang busters when consistently and carefully applied. Also it appears to have an excellent track record for durability. People who get successfully treated with Cognitive Therapy not only get better, they stay better.

After reading this book pastoral counseling specialists may want to consider starting a spouse abuse program for couples, or at least revise a present program, and certainly will want to utilize some of the exercises and approaches contained in this book in their regular marital and family counseling work.

The non-specialist parish pastors, concerned about doing quality pastoral care with the many marital and family abuse situations that confront them will find in Neidig and Friedman a helpful way to think about these situations and many helpful approaches to the problems they contain.

The title offers a program, and the book

delivers a program, complete in all its details. Even if you will never run such a program there is a lot here for you if you minister to families and couples. The book is so practical and down to earth that at first I thought it must have been written by nurses, but Friedman has an MS in Health Education and Neidig has a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, which makes me proud!

**Paul Bauermeister**
*Christ Seminary - Seminex*
*Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago*

**WHAT'S RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH.** By William H. Willimon. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985. 144 pages. Cloth. $13.95.

There is so much that is right about this book that one hesitates to raise any cautions at all. The author writes from his own experience to exalt the church's shortcomings as major proof of its churchly nature and mission. He stresses the "scandalously non-functional nature of the church and then goes on to characterize it as the "only community that is consciously formed, sustained, and criticized by the truth."

His comment on the Moral Majority bears repeating. He writes that the Moral Majority legislatively tried to force everyone to adopt the moral standards that they cannot enforce even in their own churches!

He defines the parish as a congregation of those who have been called forth to live the truth which is Jesus Christ. There is a streak of loving realism that adds credibility to all that he writes. For example, he grants that Christians have demonstrated over and over again that we will exchange anything for a taste of security.

He singles out Jim Wallis' comment on the desperate need for koinonia within the framework of the parish as the foundation of all other answers to questions about the church, its nature and mission. He might have added that nothing runs more contrary to American individualism than Christian koinonia.

This reviewer would have wished that the author had come up with a strong statement on the church's mission. In his attempt to correct certain false understandings of what the church is, he may have drifted into an almost Augustinian understanding of the church as a group of people who have fled from life and history when they gather for worship.

**Herbert T. Mayer**
*Pilgrim Lutheran Church*
*St. Louis, MO*

## *Briefly Noted*

**Joshua, Judges, and Ruth.** By A. Graeme Auld (Westminster, $15.95 cloth; $8.95 paper); **Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.** By J.G. McConville (Westminster, $14.95 cloth; $7.95 paper); and **Twelve Prophets.** By Peter C. Craigie (Westminster, $15.95 cloth; $8.95 paper). Here are three more volumes in the Daily Study Bible Series, designed to be a companion to the series authored by William Barclay. The series aims to introduce the reader to some of the more important results of modern Old Testament scholarship and to assist in making the Scriptures a living and relevant force in everyday lives.

**Biblical Themes in World Literature.** By Sol Liptzin. (KTAV, $20.00). In 28 chapters L. assesses the literary impact on the Western world of such OT themes and characters as the tower of Babel, Moses, Ruth, David, Solomon, the heroine of the Song of Songs, and Jonah.

**The Pilgrim's New Guide to the Holy Land.** By Stephen Doyle, O.F.M. (Michael Glazier, $7.95). There are much better archaeological and geographical guides to the Holy Land (e.g. Max Miller, *Introducing the Holy Land* and Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land).* What makes this book unique and worth packing for the big trip is its printing out relevant passages from the Bible and its suggestions for reflections and prayers alongside its very brief descriptions of a site. It even has the text and music for more than 30 hymns for groups of pilgrims to sing.

**Dear Uncle: Letters by J.K. Nikander and Other Pioneer Pastors.** Tr. Ray-

mond W. Wargelin (Parta Printers, New York Mills, MN 56567). These letters were written by pastors of the Church of Finland, who served their scattered brothers and sisters in the United States during the years 1885-1901. Most are by Nikander, pastor at Hancock, Calumet, and Allouez, Michigan, and later president of Suomi college and seminary and of the Suomi Synod. The "uncle" to whom the letters were addressed was the director of the Finnish Missionary Society.

**Four Other Gospels.** By John Dominic Crossan. (Winston Seabury Press, $15.95). The "other gospels" here introduced are the Gospel of Thomas, Egerton Papyrus 2, the Secret Gospel of Mark, and the Gospel of Peter. C. believes that the canonical Mark and John are dependent on Egerton Papyrus 2, and that Mark directly and John indirectly are also dependent on the Secret Gospel of Mark. The passion-resurrection source found in the Gospel of Peter was used by all four canonical gospels.

**From Luther to Tillich.** By Wilhelm Pauck. Edited by Marion Pauck (Harper & Row, $19.95). In ten elegant essays written over a 50 year period, the late Wilhelm Pauck portrays Luther, his contemporaries and his heirs: Buzer, Calvin, Melanchthon, Schleiermacher, Harnack, Troeltsch, Holl, Barth and Tillich. Jaroslav Pelikan describes the shape of T's work as that of an ellipse with one focus in the Reformation and the other in the modern critical temper.

**The Pauline Circle.** By F.F. Bruce (Eerdmans, $4.95). B. looks at several of Paul's closest friends and associates in terms of their relationship to the apostle and to the early church. There are some 70 people mentioned by name in the New Testament of whom we should never have heard were it not for their association with Paul. The twelve chapters appeared originally in successive issues of *The Harvester.*

**The Cambridge Ancient History. Plates to Volume III.** Ed. John Boardman (Cambridge, $39.50). The 19 maps and 385 black and white pictures contained in this volume illustrate and supplement the knowledge of ancient countries otherwise known from written sources (summarized in other volumes of the Cambridge Ancient History). Fourteen chapters cover the Middle East (including the states in Mesopotamia, Israel and Judah, and Egypt), the Greek world, and the Balkans before the 6th century B.C.E. The 29 plates related to Israel and Judah consist of inscriptions, the Megiddo ivories, the Hazor water system, the "Holy of Holies" excavated at Arad dating to the 8th century, pottery, and architectual decorations.

**The Jewish and Christian World. 200 BC to AD 200.** By A.R.C. Leaney (Cambridge, $14.95 paper; $49.50 cloth). This book offers a historical survey of Judaism and Christianity over a four hundred year period, including a 33-page history of Rome and an introduction to the literature of Jews and Christians that falls outside the canon and the Old Testament apocrypha. It is intended to preface and augment a series of six Cambridge commentaries on this para-biblical literature. While it does not have the depth of G.W.E. Nickelsburg's *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah,* it has the advantage of introducing Jewish and Christian history and literature in a single volume. Its comprehensive lists of other writers in the Roman Empire, of dates, and of all the principal Jewish and Christian documents surviving from this period are most useful.

**Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.** Abridged in One Volume. By Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Eerdmans, $44.95). This "Little Kittel" presents the gist of every entry in the original nine volume work in about one sixth the space. The abridger, who also translated the original work, reduced the material on philology and archeology, omitted the extensive footnotes and bibliography, and left only cursory references to classical, Hellinistic, apocalyptic, rabbinic, and patristic information. In short, he retains primarily the material dealing with the New Testament itself. For many non specialists this will be fully adequate. The following statistics give the abridged and the original page lengths for a few key words: father 10/77; flesh 7/53; peace 4/20; Son of Man 8.5/78; Wisdom 8/63. Those who have the original set can skim the longer articles for themselves and read what seems pertinent to them without acquiring this volume; seminarians and church librarians may

consider this condensed version a quality, must-buy bargain. It is also much more portable!

**A New Wedding Service for You.** By Arthur Homburg (CSS, $4.75). Here are nineteen orders of worship, worked out by the author-pastor and prospective couples, and adaptable for the specific needs and desires of couples anywhere. The book includes a variety of vows, Scripture readings, prayers, and meditations.

**Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany.** By John Rogerson (Fortress, $29.95). This report on last century's giants by a British scholar concedes that the critical method was born and developed in Germany, and that even into the 20th century theirs was the more creative achievement, whereas English scholars contented themselves with testing and evaluating the results of their continental colleagues. Two reasons for this are suggested: the theological tradition in Germany has been ready to reinterpret theology around a center in justification by faith in radical ways; and, secondly, the empirical tradition in England is more ready to admit it does not know than to build elaborate theories upon slender premises.

**This Immortal People: A Short History of the Jewish People.** By Emil Bernhard Cohn. Revised by Hayim Perelmuter (Paulist, $5.95). This brief sketch of Jewish history from Bible times until today was first published, in 1936, to help German Jews who had lost contact with their tradition and who, under the pressure of Nazi persecution, felt a deep need to be in touch with their origins again. Rabbi Perelmuter translated it back in 1938 and has added an epilogue for this edition that includes an account of the war and the Holocaust, the founding of Israel, and today's Jewish Christian dialogue. Rabbi Perelmuter regularly teaches a course on Judaism, with Dean Franklin Sherman, at LSTC.

**Judges.** By A.D.H. Mayes. **Job.** By J.H. Eaton. **Daniel.** By P.R. Davis (JSOT Press, each $3.95). These brief (roughly one hundred page) volumes outline the contents of the biblical books in question, assess the current scholarly consensus on critical questions and provide theological orientation. They would give an excellent review to a pastor who wanted to teach an adult Bible class, or who wanted to update his or her own biblical knowledge. Mayes, for example, tells what has happened in the last generation to the once dominant hypothesis of an Israelite amphictyony and outlines the social context of the book of the Judges. These Old Testament Guides are, in fact, what the publisher promises: short, concise, comprehensive, manageable, and affordable.

**Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches.** Edited by Constant H. Jacquet, Jr. (Abingdon, $15.95). Here are current statistics, statements of purpose, and lists of officers and major organizations for all major religious groups in North America. Also included are seminaries and colleges, service agencies, and religious periodicals. Under the latter entry we found no reference to *Currents* or to such other Lutheran journals as *Dialog* and *Word and World.* Maybe next year.

**The Church: A Bibliography.** By Avery Dulles and Patrick Granfield. (Michael Glazier, $7.95). This is a bibliography mostly of books (rather than of articles), primarily with Roman Catholics in mind, but also including much material dealing with other communions. Items are listed under 51 categories (#8-19 deal with various historical periods, and the rest cover issues like the fourfold marks of the church, the papacy and the teaching office, basic communities, women in the church, the parish, and the social mission of the church).

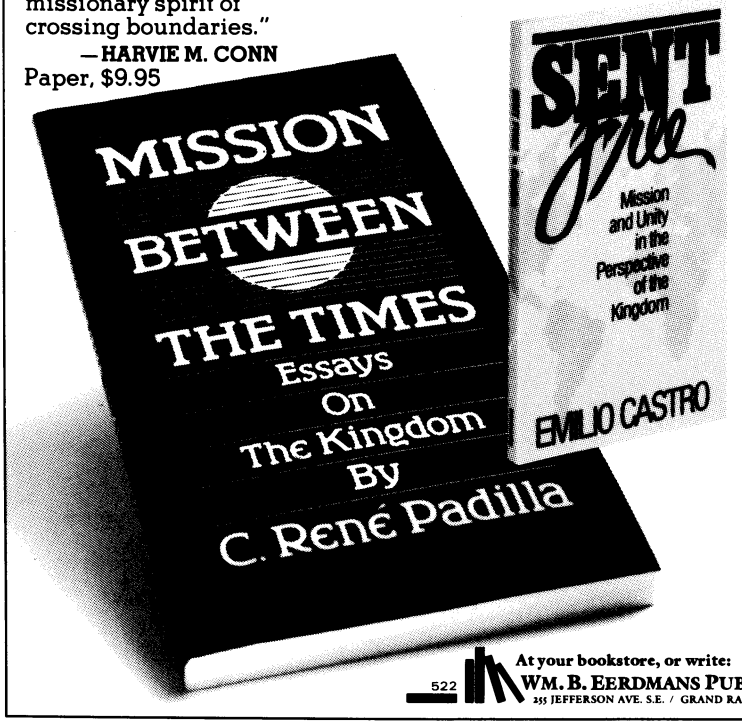
**God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea.** By John Day. (Cambridge, $49.50) In this revised dissertation the author explores the conflict between Yahweh and the Sea (cf. Rahab, Leviathan, the dragon) and concludes it derives from the Canaanite myth of Baal's conflict with the sea god Yam. This same mythological Leviathan shows up at the end of Job, together with the enigmatic Behemoth, whom D. relates to El's calf Atik mentioned in the Ugaritic texts. He interprets the conflict with the nations motif and the inviolability of Zion as a historicization of the divine conflict with the chaos waters. The Son of Man in Daniel 7 is understood, following J.A. Emerton, his doctor father, against a Canaanite background, and is

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not merely a collective symbol of Israel, but specifically of Michael, Israel's guardian angel. All of these conclusions are more or less common coin among many Old Testament scholars today, but D. documents the conclusions exhaustively and fends off many alternate hypotheses convincingly.

**Feminist Interpretations of the Bible.** Edited by Letty M. Russell (Westminster, $10.95). The eleven essays in this book are part of an attempt to liberate the Bible from a one-sided white, middle-class, male interpretation and from a hermeneutic that avoids God's concern for justice and ecological responsibility. After a section examining how women have come to a new perspective for reading the Bible, a second section describes and illustrates current feminist exegetical methodologies, looking particularly at the story of the Gentile woman in Mark 7:24-30, at Deborah, and at sexual imagery in Hosea. A final section of papers evaluates the uniqueness of feminist interpretation. Though written from a variety of perspectives ranging from moderate to radical, all the contributors have this in common: they seek to discover a biblical faith that yields wholeness and well-being for them as women. But even as they denounce idolatrous patriarchy and call for radical change, they are also aware of their own potential for idolatry. Such essays deserve and demand our reading.

**The Prophetic Persona: Jeremiah and the Language of the Self.** By Timothy Polk (JSOT $13.50). The focus here is on Jeremiah as depicted in the text (the prophetic persona), not on the historical Jeremiah or on the Jeremiah "behind the text." Thus, the author reads the text of Jeremiah synchronically, as a present, simultaneous whole. Since Jeremiah's personal and prophetic identity are one, it is judged inappropriate to refer his speech to private experience, or to explain it in terms of innate temperament or spiritual genius, as in the work of John Skinner. The "Confession" in 20:7-13, for example, shows that the previous narrative dealing with Jeremiah's suffering at the hands of Pashhur (20:1-6) typifies the suffering of the righteous in general and God's promise for their vindication. The self-curse in 20:14-18 must be interpreted by the subsequent judgment on Zedekiah and the promises to Ebedmelech and Baruch. Through such judgment and promise, God vindicates the prophet and refuses to let self-curse be the final word on his fate. This technical work makes an important contribution to a literary reading of the book of Jeremiah.

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# What Future for Theological Education?

**John H. Tietjen**
*President, Christ Seminary - Seminex*

By the time these words are published, the Consultation on Theological Education will have issued its long-awaited report on the future of theological education in the new church. Will the report give us a *plan* that charts the future course of theological education, or will the report sketch a *picture* that projects the present into the future?

The Consultation's decision is crucial for the future of theological education. It is true that the Commission for a New Lutheran Church is ultimately responsible for making recommendations concerning theological education in the new church and that the Consultation reports to the CNLC. But with only two meetings left the CNLC will have little time to do much with the Consultation's report.

As I *write* these words, there is no way to know how the Consultation will decide. But as you *read* these words the Consultation's report and recommendations will be before the CNLC for action. You can see how the Consultation proposes to resolve the crucial issues that have been before it.

One of the crucial issues arises from the demographic data the Consultation gathered and the implication of the data for the mission of the church. Will the new church become as multicultural as American society or will it continue to be one distinctive subculture within that society? That depends on whether it will concentrate its mission in regions of the country where Lutheranism is now underrepresented, namely in the South and West, or stay preoccupied with its mission in the North Central and Northeastern regions of the nation. To reach out in mission to the South and West, it will have to shift resources from the North and East, since resources are in limited supply. What does the Consultation report propose? Do our insitutions of theological education stay where they are, or are resources consolidated and redeveloped? The answer is crucial for what the new church will be and do.

A second issue is closely related to the first. What has priority: institutional preservation or the mission of the church? It should come as no surprise that institutional leaders are interested in perpetuating their institutions and that they do so because they are convinced that their institutions serve the mission of the church. For that very reason the future of theological education has not been given to the seminaries to decide. The question is: who speaks for the church? Will the Consultation do so, or will it succumb to the determined efforts of institutions to preserve themselves?

As a representative of a seminary that has decided to go out of business as an institution at the time of union for the sake of the mission of the church, I dare to be frank about the issue of institutional preservation. I am distressed at the efforts of individual institutions to protect their turf and build their kingdoms and assure their institutional survival. In the world of Lutheran institutional

theological education it is essential that there be a group which, while concerned about the well-being of individual institutions, makes its decisions out of concern for the mission of the church. Whether the Consultation is such a group can be determined by reference to its report.

Another crucial issue before the Consultation is the nature of theological education itself. Will theological education be broadly understood as applying to all the people of God, as it is in the statement of purpose adopted by the Consultation, or will it be narrowed to what goes on at seminaries in preparing people for ordained ministry? Will the emphasis in theological education be placed on academic learning or on preparation for ministry?

What does the report of the Consultation say? Does it emphasize the institutional status quo? Or does it propose and provide for theological education by extension and other alternative forms of theological education? Does it envision seminaries as part of a network of institutions that provide theological education for laity in addition to pastors and for other forms of ministry? Does it include continuing education as an integral part of the process of educating for leadership? No one questions the importance of academic learning or the need for graduate theological education. At issue is whether these will be in the service of the church's ministry.

Why ask questions about a report not yet published? Why not withhold comment until after the report is out? The purpose of these words is to underscore for the readers of *Currents* the importance of the work of the Consultation on Theological Education by highlighting some of the issues before it so that you will be sure to read the report. Whatever the resolution of the issues, the outcome is bound to be crucial both for theological education and the mission of the church.

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