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CURRENTS in theology and mission

In Christ —
Hope for the World

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In Christ — Hope for the World

I write this on Super Tuesday, a day when nine states hold primaries or caucuses to select a nominee for the Presidency of the United States. Christians need to transcend the media hype and work with all sorts of people to select a candidate of compassion, justice, and peace. Sorry, no specific endorsements here.

Improving the world requires the church to strive for all those in distress. But its mission brings *hope,* our lead article suggests, only when it can establish signs of reconciliation from the sin and guilt of the past through forgiveness, penitence, and faith in the Lord who was crucified for the sin of the world. The coming Christ is the *hope* of the world; he makes all things new.

In Christ — Hope for the World also happens to be the theme chosen for the assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, this summer in Budapest. We are happy, therefore, to present in this issue the reflections of **Vilmos Vatja** about the present, past, and future of the LWF. The author's thirty-five-year career in the LWF lends special credibility to his remarks. He writes of four types of communion within Lutheranism (in worship, in the confession of faith, in the mission to the world, and as committed covenant), and each time he points out the failure and the promise of our ecumenical life together. Readers should enjoy his insider's views on the reasons for the federation's non-political attitude in the Soviet Union and East Europe and on the repercussions of shifting the 1970 assembly from Brazil to Evian. His advice about the forming of a collegial office of bishop as part of a ministry of reconciliation would seem to have special relevance for those responsible for shaping the new Lutheran church in the United States.

The LCA will also meet this summer (in Toronto) and will debate an important social statement on Peace and Politics. **Paul G. Johnson** responds critically to a current draft of this statement, faulting it for its use of "two kingdoms" theology and for supporting the principle of deterrence. He fears that the statement makes

possible a compromise with the status quo of the arms race, and he urges the church and the government to be peacemakers rather than mere peacekeepers. The issues he raises need to be thought through by all who — in Christ — want to offer hope for the world.

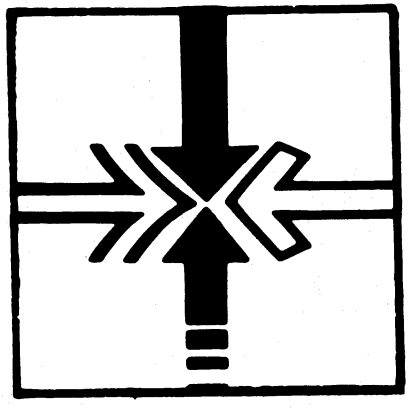
Roland D. Zimany changes the pace by summarizing for us the theological approach of Eberhard Jüngel, one of today's foremost European theologians. Jüngel's theology, our author contends, exists for the internal needs of the Christian community. He tries to test the Gospel through dialogue with the humanities, but he objects to grounding it there. As a "word of God" theologian he is able to reconcile Barth and Bultmann. For him love is the living unity of death and life for the benefit of life. A colleague in systematic theology informs me that Jüngel is coming on strong as a leading name and that his important works have begun to appear in English (e.g. *God as the Mystery of the World* [Eerdmans, 1983]).

Today's clergy must be professional and yet be more than functionaries or specialists. **James B. Wind** sets forth alternate lifestyles: the ethos of technocratic functionalism or the ethos of the forgiveness of sins; pastoral counselling ala Carl Rogers or the apostle Paul. Some ministers refuse to participate in professional culture; others seem only to do that. Perhaps these alternatives can be resolved if quiet contemplation and a disciplined movement toward and away from the world provide space for the emergence of a paradoxical perspective which can discern the presence of an integrating Word in the middle of macerated modernity.

Thomas G. Sinnott rings the changes on the biblical word "house" in order to expand our vision and our mission. Displacement or involuntary removal from housing plagues many in urban America. The author's proposal includes housing advocacy and efforts to bring people into relationships with each other and with their past, present, and future.

Christ is the hope for the world, and those who hope in him are far from hopeless. They mount up with wings like eagles; they run and do not grow weary. For them, that is for you and those in your charge, every Tuesday can be super.

Ralph W. Klein
Editor



From Generation to Generation: The Lutheran World Federation 1947-1982

Vilmos Vatja

This is an abridged version of an essay originally prepared in German and edited for the Lutheran World Federation by Gertraut Hobby and Frances Maher. The full text and its extensive documentation appear as LWF Report 16 (1983).

Introduction

A special 35th anniversary celebration was held during the Lutheran World Federation's 1982 Executive Committee meeting in Vancouver, Canada (August 4-13) to commemorate the founding of the LWF on July 1, 1947, in Lund, Sweden. For this occasion, Dr. Vilmos Vajta was asked to present a paper reflecting on the way the Federation has developed and outlining expectations for the future.

Dr. Vajta is in an excellent position to give this kind of overview, having attended the first Assembly in Lund and been closely associated with the LWF ever since. He served both in the Geneva headquarters as Director of the former Department of Theology and, thereafter, until his retirement in 1981, as Director of the LWF-related Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France.

Carl H. Mau, Jr.
LWF General Secretary

When I joined the executive staff of the LWF, the Federation was six years old. As I tried to evaluate the way this 35-year-old Federation has come, I remembered that I too was 35 when I started my work in Geneva. Although the years of service of that 35-year-old beginner have now ended, the 35-year-old Lutheran World Federation is certainly not playing with the idea of retirement! What I would like to do now is initiate a discussion about this mature adult organization by speaking of my own memories and expectations. In what follows, I shall try to engage in this dialogue between the generations with specific reference to four fundamental sets of problems.

I. Communion in Worship

THESIS:

The communion of the churches of the Lutheran confession was a reality long before the Lutheran World Federation (or its predecessor, the Lutheran World Convention) was founded. It consisted in the spiritual unity of the worshipping congregations dispersed throughout the world.

When representatives of churches from all parts of the world came together in 1947, this was a symbolic expression of the eschatological promise of the gathering together of the scattered people of God in the name of Jesus Christ (John 11:52). The church is a liturgical assembly in the name of the Lord. However the discussion of the ecclesiological character of the LWF may develop in the future, its churches gathered together for worship are, in the full sense of the word, *ekklesia.* This also indicates that the founding of the LWF in 1947 (like that of the Lutheran World Convention in 1923) is not to be explained primarily in terms of the practical necessity for interchurch aid.

Communion in worship . . . bound these churches together.

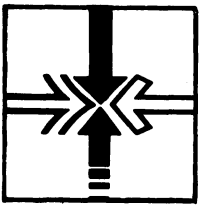
The fundamental reality was the communion in worship which, since the time of the Reformation, had bound these churches together. July 1, 1947, at 12:25 P.M., the precise moment when the constitution of the LWF was officially adopted, is therefore only the point in time when churches already enjoying communion in worship created an organization. It was only later that some of us who had shared that overwhelming experience of this worldwide communion became aware of the fact that this communion in worship also had problems, which, on closer acquaintanceship with one another, became an open wound.

Not all in the procession at Lund received the communion of the sacrament of Christ's body and blood. One of our great teachers and fathers, Peter Brunner, who has reflected most deeply on the character of the LWF, recounts that he was "deeply shaken" when for the first time he "encountered the fact that Lutheran churches refuse one another pulpit and altar fellowship although they are bound by the same Confessions." The question of eucharistic communion among the member churches, which should really be a matter of course, was therefore always on the agenda from the very beginning. All that the Executive Committee could report to the Dar es Salaam Assembly (1977) was a vague assurance that the member churches "have almost without exception stated that they are in 'pulpit and altar fellowship' with each other." Whatever the explanation, the problem remains an open wound in world Lutheranism and a radical hindrance to ecumenical credibility.

Mention should also be made of a second problem. The more emphatically it is recognized that an impressive demonstration of communion in worship has been given, the more painful the lack of interest shown by the LWF as an organization in the studies connected with worship in the churches has become. Again and again, one gets the impression that "liturgy" is something of only secondary and technical significance in our churches. It seemed impossible to speak of liturgy without arousing fears of "ritualism" or even of "Romanizing tendencies."

Despite these problems, communion in worship has continued and even been enriched by a lively exchange among the churches. One feature of almost all the churches in the post-war years has been a detailed revision of their liturgical orders. On the basis of personal contacts, ecumenical resources have also been used in most cases, so that a connection with the mainstream of western tradition is observable. No church which in its confession of faith derives the nature of the church from the liturgical assembly of the congregation (CA VII!) can remain indifferent to liturgical praxis.

This applies particularly in a period when the Roman Catholic Church has displayed unusual zeal in revising many aspects of its liturgical life to do justice to Reformation demands. It is of supreme



importance for our self-scrutiny that we should be able, at this cross-road in the development of the liturgy, to demonstrate that we are humble enough to recover certain fundamental Reformation approaches through the medium of the Roman Catholic Church. This would mean that our communion in worship, now in fact existing in the liturgical forms of a falsely developed "Protestantism," could once more embody genuine evangelical catholicity. The exaggerated emphasis on preaching does not correspond to the Reformation discovery and insight. The only way to defeat the intellectualizing of the ecumenical discussion is to respect the indissoluble connection between *doctrine* and *liturgy*. In the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue, this principle was accepted as axiomatic. But it is permissible to ask whether the Reformed-Lutheran conversation, which culminated in the Leuenberg Agreement, did not fail because the consensus reached was not tested with a view to its expression in liturgy.

In a world dominated by the material and the physical, there is a tendency to take refuge in a spirituality of pure inwardness. Here the bond between the Spirit and the physical life through word and faith must be maintained. Not even Luther's "maid" who practices a better worship than the "monk" who has fled from the world can be emancipated from the word and faith. The secular life must retain its liturgical basis if it is not to be destroyed by human complacency.

What this means is that our churches are required to give expression to the *sacramental* dimension of the spiritual life in a new way. A spirituality in which account is taken of the receptivity of the life perceptible via the senses will discover that life is sacramentally accompanied from birth to death by God's word and faith. The Holy Spirit radiates his creative life from the congregation assembled for worship and bestows significance on the daily life of the world. The new spirituality, which includes the physical in the operation of the Spirit, is able to mark itself off clearly over against both a world without God and a God without the world. The incarnation of Jesus Christ, in his presence in the sacrament, is the key to the coming world. What is given us in worship is the assurance that God does not hide away in some remote heaven but draws near to us as a life-giving Spirit in the earthly and the physical.

II. Communion in the Confession of Faith

THESIS:

By strengthening the role of the confession of faith, the LWF has demonstrably performed an ecumenical service which summons the churches of the Lutheran confession to achieve the unity of the church beyond their own confessional boundaries.

The confessional character of the church has borne good fruit.

If the movement toward Lutheran unity in the 19th century was inspired by the threat to the confession of faith, this confession of faith continued to be the basis of the LWF's attitude to the ecumenical endeavors of our present century.

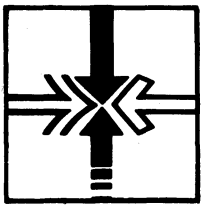
It should not, of course, be forgotten that, on the basis of the experiences of the previous century, some Lutherans had from the very beginning regarded the development of the ecumenical movement with skepticism or at least with a certain vigilance. The history of Lutheranism is shot through with a certain "unionism neurosis", which even today is still cherished in wide circles. But the idea that a straight line can be drawn from the so-called "Prussian Union" down to the Leuenberg Agreement can only be described as an unhistorical view. There is nothing in common between the "unionism" of the 19th century and the recent developments of the ecumenical movement and its concepts of unity.

The emphasis on the confessional character of the church has borne good fruit, and it is with far greater openness that the ecumenical movement today views the efforts for a common confession of faith and the studies of the common apostolic faith. Recent studies of the *Confessio Augustana,* too, have shown that a historic confessional document can be ecumenically important and even raise the question of its possible recognition outside the Lutheran churches.

The often quoted example of the Batak Confession clearly demonstrates that the confessional element for which the LWF argues includes an open attitude to independent confessional development. The purpose of the negotiations with the Batak church was to clarify its confessional position. Bishop Anders Nygren, at that time President of the LWF, showed complete understanding for an independent confession of faith, as he did, moreover, in the discussions taking place at the same time with the Indian Lutheran Church. Furthermore, even the possibility of a *Confessio Africana* was discussed among the African churches at All Africa Lutheran Conferences. These facts are sufficient proof that the LWF propounded a confessional position that was not contradictory to ecumenism but actually provides it with an essential element.

Whereas unity has very often been viewed as the affirmation of the historically-given confessional documents, the concept with which the dialogue operates today is that unity can also appear in different forms of confession, provided a reconciliation has emerged among them through dialogue. A reconciliation of this kind can at any rate express the unity in diversity in an even more satisfactory way, so as thereby to make access to the jointly confessed truth possible.

In my view, this way of proceeding, far from involving a weakening of the con-



fessional element, actually strengthens it, by securing it as an essential element for the concept and realization of the ecumenical dimension. In other words, when the ecumenical is striven for in this way as a manifestation of unity, it is no longer possible to think of "unity" in terms of mere organization, careless of doctrine, or even in terms of practical cooperation.

In virtue of the dialogues now advancing under its responsibility, the LWF faces a future that is rich in hope. If one is correct in thinking that the historical heritage of the Lutheran Reformation with its ecumenical purpose is being taken seriously again today (and not just in the Roman Catholic Church but also in the whole ecumenical movement), then the thrust inherent in our confession of faith must be translated into ecumenical reality.

Let us look now at the possible shape of this future. The report on ecumenical relations presented to the Executive Committee in 1977 mentioned the possibility of inviting churches that are not members (union churches, for example) to join the LWF. Already in Evian (1970) a statement was approved for churches involved in union negotiations in order to clarify their continued membership.

The question whether the acceptance of the Batak church was in accordance with the Constitution was a problem, and in the Evian declaration on churches involved in union negotiations a supplementary concept was introduced in order to safeguard membership "if the united church's confessional statement is in substantial agreement with the doctrinal basis of the LWF." But when one extends the range to include other churches, the question really is: Can unity be established to an even greater extent than before fundamental accord with the Lutheran confessions? In that case we should be on the way to achieve unity in reconciled diversity. It would mean that we can enter into communion with churches that have had little or nothing in common with a Lutheran tradition. This would be a discovery of a church fellowship in accord with the Lutheran confession. Whether this would be in accord with the LWF Constitution, however, i.e., as "a free association of Lutheran churches", is a real problem.

It must be frankly said that for Luther himself the very notion of a "Lutheran" church was an absurdity. And our sister churches in the ecumenical movement have always been put off by this designation. It should be noted here, however, that not all the LWF member churches call themselves "Lutheran." The Danish theologian Regin Prenter, who wrote a commentary on the Confessio Augustana for the Jubilee, came up with an excellent solution when he entitled his book "The Lutheran Confession of *the* Church". Surely that has something of importance to teach us in respect of the Constitution.

Forward to Luther!

For the Lutheran confessions, as for Luther, too, the vital question is whether they are interpreted retrospectively (i.e., in the past tense) and thus related to history in such a way that all they stimulate is a memory without any contemplation of the present or hope for the future. The Jubilee of the Confessio Augustana can only encourage us to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth in a forward-looking way.

As long ago as Lund 1947 and again in Hanover 1952, Bishop Nygren coined the phrase "Forward to Luther!" It is not only the unity program of the Confessio Augustana that is an "unused capital" in the Lutheran churches; the same applies to the theology of Luther. It is embarrassing to see the extent to which Roman Catholic theologians have gone to the trouble of studying the theological meaning of the Confessio Augustana. The theology of Luther is being rediscovered today and brought into the ecumenical discussion by Catholic scholars. Can we this time push forward beyond the polemical Reformer to Luther, the "Doctor of the Church" and the "Father in Faith"? On our ability to do so depends the future possibility of a communion in confessing the faith which does not gather around the name of Luther but points unmistakably to the Crucified One and makes it possible for us to apply to our own affairs the evangelical criticism that Luther was courageous enough to apply to his church.

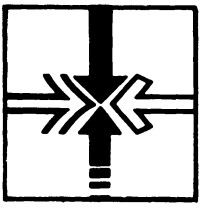
III. Communion in the Mission Into the World

THESIS:

The communion of churches is sent into the world to testify to the liberating message of Christ to the world and to serve it in obedience to Christ and in solidarity with human beings in their material and spiritual needs.

When the 1970 Assembly was convened under the theme "Sent into the World", the problems of the church's action in the world had come to have a very central place. In his address, however, Professor Mikko Juva, the newly-elected President, insisted that this was no new insight. "The founders of this LWF were aware of it from the beginning and acted accordingly." This attestation of historical continuity, coming from a church historian, is particularly cogent. For in the subsequent period of the LWF, social and political problems were not only played up but also gave rise to a serious controversy over the theological legitimacy.

This does not mean, however, that there was any noticeable essential difference between the LWF and its predecessor, the LWC, in this respect. Given the historical circumstances of the 1920s and 1930s, it is all the easier to understand the adoption by the LWC of a "non-political" attitude. The work of the organization had to be carried out under extremely difficult political conditions, and it was impossible to avoid con-



frontation with certain political problems. If the LWC had not behaved "non-politically", how would it have been possible in subsequent years to provide support for the moribund Lutheran church in the Soviet Union?

I venture to think that in its present work in the Soviet Union and in the East European countries, the LWF continues to adopt a "non-political" attitude (as the LWC formerly did in its different historical situation) in the interests of the possibility of maintaining its contacts (especially with the fellow Christians now rediscovered) and with due regard for their special political situation. If this reserve in the LWF's attitude is not taken into account, at least in politically relevant decisions, distorted views arise based on the mistaken idea that the LWF has conformed to the political opinion of these countries.

The North-South problem touches on basic relationships in countries where Christian missions worked. The first thing to be noticed is that, after the Second World War, the LWF reactivated the orphaned missions in many places — just as one of the primary tasks in the war-shattered sister churches in Europe at that time was the reconstruction of church life and work. But there was no question of rebuilding the historical "relation of dependence" as in the colonial period. In the period mentioned an enormous task was accomplished to achieve this goal. One name that cannot be omitted here is that of Fridtjov Birkeli. His vision was of Africa as the coming continent and of the need to do everything possible to make Christians in Africa conscious of their mission. So it was in the first place that the series of All-African Lutheran Conferences were held, from Marangu (1955) through Antsirabé (1960) up to Monrovia (1980). They led to the establishment of the radio station "Radio Voice of the Gospel" in Addis Ababa (1963). These regional conferences provided an example and stimulus for the Asian and Latin American regional conferences.

The problem of independent churches was not solved overnight, of course. In the annual meetings of the Commission for World Mission — to which representatives of the responsible churches and missions in Europe and America were invited — difficult decisions had to be taken in order to meet the wishes of the indigenous mission churches. This was reflected in the debate and discussion at Evian, when the Department of World Mission was transformed into a Department of Church Cooperation. The loss of the word "mission" meant for many the loss of the reality of mission. But the LWF insisted that this change inaugurated the real mission in the world. All that Radio Voice of the Gospel managed to achieve during its short time of grace in the way of evangelistic proclamation, Christian education, indigenous culture, and objective information about social problems must be considered a milestone in the history of the

The Evian Assembly . . . a "breakthrough"

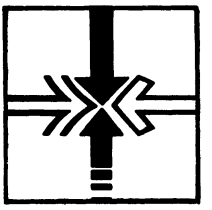
LWF and regarded as a prophetic vision.

We must touch briefly on the role of world service in the first decades of the LWF. Through direct material aid to the war-shattered countries, it helped the churches to fulfil their mission in the world. Once continually growing resources were available for this service, it also became possible to extend aid to other countries and thus into the former mission areas. But since the former mission itself carried out fundamental work in both the social and the educational sphere, some overlapping occurred, chiefly inspired by the donor organizations (even the secular development aid agencies).

It was of this risk of a gulf between material and spiritual "development aid" that the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus spoke in its letter of 1972. Here, it was made clear that a growth measured solely by the standards of material welfare was not something to be desired by the church. Aid must serve whole human beings in all their needs. Without saying it openly, the letter was a clear indication of the services the "mission" has actually performed to the whole human being. The Mekane Yesus church urged that this past work of the various services in society should not be used merely "as a means to an end", i.e., to make converts to Christianity, but be regarded as service to the whole human being inspired by the church itself. The positive result of this exhortation from an African church was, of course, that "development aid" was not divorced from but integrated into the church's ministry as it is "sent into the world."

The Evian Assembly (1970) is often spoken of as a "breakthrough". In this Assembly a number of statements were approved touching on such questions as human rights, race, and world peace (i.e., on contemporary problems of humanity), in a manner which, compared with a more cautious position on social and political issues, could be regarded as an "advance" in the life of the Lutheran World Federation. The question, however, is in what sense it is accurate to speak of a "breakthrough."

To my mind, the real "breakthrough" lay in the transfer of the Assembly from Brazil to Evian. In various ways, this transfer had concrete consequences. In the first place, "Brazil" became a symbol for the violation of human rights. That the Assembly viewed this change of venue as a mistaken decision, and in the end regretted it, did not alter the fact that the only country explicitly mentioned in the "Resolution on Human Rights" was Brazil, even though it was averred: "Yet Brazil is not the only issue. Our concern is far more broad, reaching into an almost universal crisis symbolized by increasing violation of human rights. Brazil is simply a demonstration of a circumstance which exists in many other countries. The concern of this Assembly is directed to the deprivation of God-given human rights wherever, whenever, and for whatever reason it may occur."



"Whenever and wherever" — the response was not made specific. This led one observer of the Assembly to speak of the "missed 'moment of truth'." This is what he wrote: "In the discussion of resolutions in plenary session, the issue was whether, in the condemnation of certain political and social procedures, the countries concerned should be named or not. Representatives of East European churches were here emphatically in favor of being specific and mentioning the names of the western countries concerned in the wording of the resolution. On the previous day the representatives of the same churches had strongly opposed the mention of the names of East European countries in connection with issues on which the West had critical questions to put to the East . . . This would have necessitated the specific mention by name not only of Vietnam but also the intervention of the Warsaw Pact in Czechoslovakia and the apartheid policy in South Africa, as well as the treatment of the Jews in the Soviet Union and the threat represented respectively by NATO and the Warsaw Pact. For a few moments the 'moment of truth' was very near. But the Assembly let it pass by." As an explanation of this, our observer pointed to the "decision already taken in favor of caution." I would be much more frank and simply call it diplomacy. To be sure, the Brazilian church was not named, only Brazil as "a demonstration of circumstances". But this church had suffered a severe blow even though it had, with exemplary courage, indicated to the Brazilian government its opposition to the violations of human rights. In doing so it actually made the Assembly's decision to send a delegation to the Brazilian government superfluous. If the Lutheran congregations were in danger of "assuming distant neutrality toward the social problems of their countries", this was certainly not so in the case of the church proposed as the Assembly's host. At any rate, the church diplomacy of the LWF succeeded to the extent that nine years later amends were made by holding a meeting of the Executive Committee in Brazil, even although there had been no fundamental changes in the country.

In view of all this, the "Evian breakthrough" consists rather, it seems to me, in the revelation of the powerlessness (i.e., the cruciformity) of the church, its inability in given specific cases to dispense with a "distant neutrality", in relation to a country's "social problems". Certainly courage can be shown in not adopting this position. But there are examples to demonstrate that in some circumstances the alternative to denouncing the guilty by name consists either in declarations of complete solidarity of the churches concerned with their secular rulers, or in a reserve that is not completely neutral but rather critically and evangelically silent.

Is it possible to point to South Africa as an exception? Churches discriminated against by the apartheid policy have

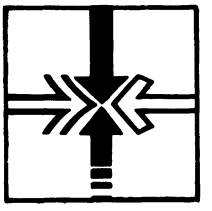
Are we prepared to let ourselves be sent?

been prepared to accept government reprisals and to protest against existing conditions. This was why it was possible for the Dar es Salaam Assembly to adopt a resolution requiring rejection of the apartheid system. Although the terms of this resolution are not completely transparent, its intention is quite plain. It appeals to the white churches, on the basis of the church's confession and unity, to reject apartheid publicly. Does this resolution signify that within the LWF an appeal should be made to churches at the wish of other member churches?

In its recent statements, the LWF has adopted the coordination of the question of peace with social and economic justice, which has long been usual in the ecumenical movement. It is said that "peace is indivisible", and this poses all the more urgently the question of the specific task of the church in relationship to governments or secular organizations. Is going along with what others are already doing the only possibility for the churches, or can they open up perspectives that detect other causes than armed conflict as the primary danger to peace? Is the LWF in a position here to expose the fundamental causes of the destruction of peace, to proclaim and to live in practice the only legitimate Christian solution, namely reconciliation, and to do so without political side-glances, i.e., taking all the risks into account? Unless we have the courage to take the side of *all* who are poor, all who suffer from apartheid and concentration camps, psychiatric clinics, hidden censureship, police threats, and torture in all parts of the world, then it makes little sense to travel to peace conferences and take part in peace demonstrations.

It is impossible to take seriously the fact that we are "sent into the world", still less to demonstrate unity among our churches in this mission credibly in the world, if we fail as Christians to heed what Marc Lienhard said about the problem of his own country in his opening sermon in Evian. He warned us that "we dare not leave the matter of peace in the world to the professional politicians" and went on to ask "Are we prepared to let ourselves be sent?" If we are only here for a rest, to speak noncomittally about the new world, without being willing to begin living it together, for each other, and for the world, then we can experience shipwreck also here on Lake Geneva. No wolves from Brazil or the press or from anywhere need to appear. We will then die on our own. Instead of living and working with a vision of a new world, we will only be play acting, a churchly puppet show, with only the will for self-preservation pulling the strings.

What are the hopes the church entertains for the future when it fulfills its mission in the world? The theme chosen for the 1984 Assembly – "In Christ – Hope for the World" – can provide an answer to this question. The Christian confession of hope is here qualified by the words "in Christ".



In our days especially, therefore, the Christian hope cannot succumb to the spell of demands for success and the supreme fulfillment of human wishes by the achievement of small earthly hopes. Sectarian movements of our time have a fraudulent attraction for young people in this respect, for the incurably sick as well as for the unfortunate and the unsuccessful. The way of hope in Christ leads to Golgotha, through the suffering of the cross. When even Christians themselves regard the cross as a "failure" and hush it up, then the hope for the world is no longer accepted in "Christ."

The countless evils in the world, for which we Christians bear our share of the blame and the responsibility, cannot be regarded as a threat that intimidates our mission. Here we must listen again to the letter of the Mekane Yesus church: "It has been suggested that the prevailing understanding that the church had largely failed to carry out its mandate in the world resulted in a feeling of shame and guilt, which resulted in a reaction to make up for this 'failure'." The letter warns here against division of ministry and witness. As long as the church understands its mission only in improving the world, it can contribute to the amelioration of distress in the world in many ways and in cooperation with many people "of good-will". But its mission only brings *hope* for the world when it can establish signs of reconciliation from the sin and guilt of the past through forgiveness, penitence, and faith in the Lord who was crucified for the sin of the world. Only if mission is able to maintain hope through and beyond the cross is the world promised deliverance in the future. It is not our activities, however well-intentioned, but the coming Christ who is hope for the world, because *he* makes all things new.

IV. Communion as Committed Covenant

THESIS:

The form taken by the universal communion of the churches is not simply a question of human law but could find its theological solution in terms of the covenant of God with his whole people.

Although the LWF is a spiritual ecclesiastical communion, in its concrete form it adopted from the start the feature of a human legal organization similar to that of secular associations for specific purposes. Within this organizational form, for example, there is still a tension between the communion of its members and the strongly emphasized autonomy of the individual member churches. But it is *churches* that the LWF exists to serve; therefore, concepts taken from the legal realm are sometimes inappropriate to describe its nature. Thus, while autonomy in the sense of a right to decide is affirmed in principle, it must at the same time be asked in what precise sense the fellowship in a community

The relationship of the churches to each other is defined by God's activity.

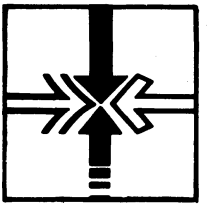
has to include a relationship of mutual dependency among its members, which is meant to serve the common building up of the body of Christ. The problem of the ecclesiological character of the LWF is in this sense a constantly recurring question for the churches.

The refusal of certain Lutheran churches to join the LWF has always been an open wound. The question of the doctrinal authority of the LWF (indeed as to whether it had any doctrinal role at all) played an important part here, as well as the question whether doctrinal discipline is exercised or whether membership can remain, on the contrary, a purely formal acceptance of the doctrinal basis of the LWF.

The answer given quite early on to these questions (which were formulated clearly by the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia) was that the LWF expects the member churches " 'to remain in close harmony' with the doctrinal basis, as an expression of the truth which must not be compromised." However, as "a Federation and not a church", the LWF "is in no position to undertake extensive general investigations . . . The churches keep a watchful eye over their own teaching and, as member churches of the LWF, keep a watchful eye over their Federation and its practices." Membership of the LWF left to every individual church the responsibility of safeguarding its doctrine and life and of deciding for itself whether or not it was in agreement with the LWF Constitution. The framework of this answer is quite clearly the idea of autonomy. What is questionable, however, is whether it is an ecclesiologically responsible answer, i.e., whether it is compatible with the nature of a communion of churches.

In the discussion before Helsinki a deeper theological view of the problem was achieved. But the depressing condition of divided American Lutheranism at that time led to last minute negotiations which proposed changes in the LWF Constitution with the purely pragmatic purpose of making room for these non-member churches within the LWF. As a result of this maneuver, the theological discussion was removed from the agenda and, instead, the constitutional changes agreed between the American churches on their own were forced on the groups as a theme for their discussion. This was deplorable at the time from the procedural point of view but also because of its completely negative effects. At that time the LWF was already too close a communion for these new regulations to have given certain churches freedom to join it. The gulf has become much wider today and the only possibility left to the LWF is resolutely to continue along the way it pursued since its foundation, without side-glances to church politics. The cause itself must convince.

It has recently been pointed out in various ways that the LWF has outgrown its constitution. A similar state of affairs has been noted in many places in this



paper. This is proof enough of my awareness of the problem. But I have learned from my wise elders that constitutional changes should only be undertaken as a last resort. Presumably we are not far off this extremity, but it seems to me that what is not yet clear is the *ecclesiological* direction the LWF wishes to take. These questions must first be clarified, therefore, and constitutional changes only undertaken subsequently to that. These, it seems to me, would have to be fairly radical if the ecumenical breadth of the Lutheran confession is taken seriously. I therefore pose, first of all, another question which, without touching such radical problems, could already be an urgent and immediate one.

When we speak of the world *Federation* we often think in terms of the law of association and assembly, the combination of individual units for a common goal. But suppose we were to start from the theological consideration of the covenant relationship of God to his people? The relationship of the churches to each other would then be defined primarily by God's activity. From this would follow the duty of the individual members of this people of God to live together as God's covenant partners in fidelity to God's covenant. The question then would not be how specific individual churches could conclude a covenant with each other (preferably without having themselves to be changed in any way) but rather the kind of communion the covenant of God has established among the different members by the Holy Spirit to serve the manifestations of the diverse gifts for the common good.

The unsolved problem of Helsinki (and of all LWF Assemblies) is this: How do the member churches submit their opinion on a document to be voted on by the Assembly and what powers do the delegates have? If the intention is once again to vote on a document with authoritative theological affirmations within the framework of an Assembly, I cannot conceive of any other than the conciliar method. For this prevents the sudden voicing of views in plenary sessions which have not been approved and recommended by churches but are simply the (good or mistaken) opinions of individuals. In 1963, for example, many delegates had only recently read the paper on justification (perhaps only in the plane) and actually responded to it without knowing that the preparatory document had been sent out to the churches for comments, and that these comments had been carefully sifted by the preparatory committee and incorporated in a revised version. Only then, in this form, was it presented to the plenary.

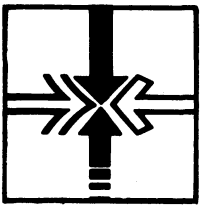
There was a failure in Helsinki to understand the "conciliar method". For if the draft of a document is not subjected to a carefully agreed procedure but can be radically reopened at every stage, it is not only impossible to adopt a document but also to enter into an

From generation to generation: doors could be opened for future history.

obligation with the other members as a fellowship in a way that is appropriate to a covenant. The limits of this obligation are established by the other partner (and not by individual autonomy or freedom of speech). I am firmly convinced that the LWF needs to be freed from the "trauma of Helsinki", and by a careful application of the conciliar method to venture once again an authoritative statement on the basis of the confession of faith.

To avoid complete futility, delegates would have to take the Assembly's decisions and the documents adopted by it back to their individual churches and to have them taken note of, even approved, or if need be rejected, by appropriate procedures. This communication between the decision-making bodies in the individual churches and in the LWF is an elementary necessity for the life of the LWF. Each church obviously bears its own responsibility. But it is not enough to recommend studies, formulate resolutions, and deliver to the church and the world statements on decisive questions without, at the same time, assuming responsibility for the way these are to be received in the individual churches. I do not get the impression (though this may be due to insufficient information) that the method generally employed is for LWF decisions to be presented for official debate, adoption, and assimilation in the main decision-making organs of the individual member churches (e.g., the synods). But this silence is a problem, for which a solution must be found. Here is a "reality" with which the constitution does not reckon. The way is therefore free for the churches to act. What I would propose is this: Instead of discussing such questions as whether the LWF has an "ecclesial function" or is itself already a "church" (world church?), communication should be developed among the member churches to make it really possible for them to speak authoritatively and to act together.

In the discussion of the nature of the LWF, the question has often been raised of a "custodian office" among the churches, which, among other things, would keep its eye on doctrinal questions, fidelity in word and deed to the confession of faith, and so on. This at once suggests "doctrinal discipline" and prompts certain reservations on the basis of historical experiences. But I am not thinking here of "discipline" among the churches, however exercised. (This would almost certainly be unacceptable to them and therefore ineffective.) Instead, I would very much like to see pastoral care between the churches taking a practical form whenever necessary and whenever possible. Would it not be possible for the very church which since Luther's day has rejected a central authority as decision-making body to assume a pioneer role and in a completely free decision resolve to create a *collegial episkope?* In this way it would help to support Lutheran churches as they try to meet their spiritual needs and in their



mission of spreading the gospel among the nations. To my mind, that would be an appropriate step, just as was the introduction of the "visitors" in the time of the Reformation. Obviously the pastoral, episcopal, and collegial dimension of a visitation responsibility of this kind would be the main one at the world level. It would need to build upon mutual trust and match the reconciliation of Christ with mutual obedience.

The specific responsibilities of a collegial episkope of this kind are diverse and changing. Mention is made here only of the most obvious ones:

a) visits to Lutheran churches that are divided from one another;
b) counselling churches with domestic conflicts;
c) contacts with churches that would be open to fellowship in the LWF;
d) conversation with Lutheran churches that are not members of the LWF;
e) advising churches on the practical implementation of dialogue findings;
f) clarifying questions addressed critically to individual churches and which concern the confession of faith in teaching and action;
g) a ministry of reconciliation to churches that are in ecumenical conflict with each other;
h) promoting church and altar fellowship among churches of the Lutheran confession and between these and other churches.

What I would hope from every church in the LWF in the future is a joyful welcome for a collegial episkope of this kind in order to give room for a pioneering development in the ecumenical movement. The covenant of God is a covenant of reconciliation. Ministry in this covenant, therefore, is a ministry of reconciliation. Let us do our part. The ministry of reconciliation in the new covenant is a call to mutual reconciliation. Will the LWF venture along this way? One is permitted to hope so. Then, in the change from generation to generation, doors could be opened for future history.

Deterrence and the Kingdom

Paul Johnson

Lutheran Church in America, Division for Parish Services

Imagine a city with two police departments, one protecting the interests of the wealthy, the other trying to serve the concerns of the poor. What if each civil authority felt it had to deter the force of the other in order to fulfill its goals? The chaos and the potential for violence we would have in that city is analogous to the one we now have in the contest between the United States and the U.S.S.R.

If we switch from police departments to the production and deployment of nuclear missiles by the two superpowers, we have the context for the Lutheran Church in America's statement on *Peace and Politics,* that will be acted upon at the LCA convention in Toronto in July, 1984. In my judgment, the nuclear arms race renders the two kingdom theory upon which the statement is based irrelevent to the needs of our times.

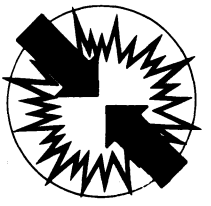
For biblical sanction the proposed LCA statement leans heavily on Romans 13, and especially verse four, in which government is understood by Paul as God's way of keeping the peace through strength. Had the Pax Romana not been in force, Paul would have been hard pressed to speak realistically of government being God's servant to "execute wrath on the wrongdoer."

Today's superpower situation does not fit the passage in Romans or the civil authority side of the two kingdom theory that grew out of it during the Reformation. To assert that God's intention for government is to restrain aggression may have some relevance when the aggressor is a terrorist roaming the Palestinian hills or a robber hiding behind a rock on a lonely road from Jerusalem to Jericho. However, when the aggressor is the military establishment or policy of another government, which believes with equal intensity that our government is the aggressor, the theory of the two kingdoms collapses under the weight of its own division.

Today many people in both the U.S. and in the U.S.S.R want peace and believe that the drive for missile superiority is not the way to achieve it, while the governments of these two superpowers lay out billions and trillions of dollars (or rubles) to gain an advantage — diplomatic and military — over the other. The realm of civil authority is divided against itself, and the danger is that the division may bring the entire earthly house down, along with everybody in it.

The Doctrine of Deterrence

The idea of two kingdoms grew out of Luther's distinction between law and gospel. It became known popularly as God's left and right hands, and in practice as the separation of church and state. The proposed LCA statement builds its case for nuclear deterrence on this 16th century concept. The use of missiles is considered immoral, to be sure, but their manufacture and deployment are "morally necessary" and "morally



tolerable." Given the reality of the current situation, the doctrine of deterrence is deeply flawed. To justify the production and deployment of nuclear weapons while decrying their actual use is to overlook the damage already being done by them. The damage shows up at numerous points, not least in the effect on employees who must work closely with radioactive materials. To pay high wages in compensation for the risk of contamination is a form of nuclear blackmail. Then, too, there is the stockpiling of missiles. That is bad enough. However, the indisposable nuclear waste that comes from their production is much worse. One leads to military redundance, the other to the death of our children. The evidence indicates that the 200 steel tanks in which the nuclear waste or "hot soup" is stored are already leaking after just three years of service. Then the leaking radioactive material goes into the water tables of nearby communities. Without having been launched, the missiles are making the earth unsafe for our children and their children. Concerning this problem, the proposed LCA statement says nothing.

Another flaw in the doctrine of deterrence, is what the money spent for missile power is already doing to people in the world. To manufacture missiles is to begin using them which is directly contributing to the starvation of people throughout the Third World and even in parts of America. In a Lutheran World Federation study book, "In Christ — Hope for the World," prepared for an LWF conference in Budapest, Hungary, this summer, we find these words: "It does not make sense to describe the present balance of terror and the arms race as 'peace' — when 15,000 human beings die everyday in the struggle for resources. As the peace movement says, the bombs are really falling now; armament races kill without war."

The basic premise in the proposed LCA statement is that to deter aggression "the principal use of force (missile force) must be its non-use." This kind of logic is supplemented with the assertion that "deterrence is working." "It is restraining aggression" in both the conventional and nuclear weapons departments. In fact, deterrence is not working in either department. Conventional weapons have been used by us in the invasions of Grenada and by the Soviet Union in the invasion of Afghanistan. As far as nuclear deterrence goes, the production and deployment of missiles is inspiring escalation not deterrence. Building missiles does not deter the other side from doing the same thing, but gives each side a reason for trying to out-build or out-stockpile the other. Peace through military strength is a farce. Military "strength" does not contain the dynamic necessary for either strength or deterrence. It does not turn an enemy into a friend.

To commit as much money as we do to the "deterrence of Communism" actually

To speak of killing in a proportionate manner is ludicrous.

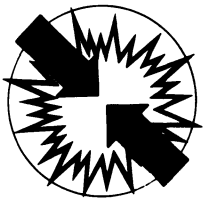
makes Communism attractive to many who are struggling unsuccessfully to survive and have nothing to lose by seeking its help. The proposed LCA statement says nothing about this. In one of its recommendation is for "preaching, as occasion warrants, upon the special peril into which we have fallen too often through a proud over-reliance upon military might." The wording and tense clearly say that we may have to wait for this occasion to arrive. While we will be spending one billion dollars per day in the next few years for military purposes, those in Lutheran pews who help manufacture missiles can continue their daily work with a clear conscience, feeling that they are contributing to peace not war, life not death.

In what is perhaps its lowest point, the proposed LCA statement acknowledges that if force must be used to deter aggression it should be exercised with restraint. In its effort to be true to the just war theory, the writers presumably feel something must be said if non-use spills over into use. The result is an extremely tragic combination of words. The statement reads: "Even so, love for the aggressor or enemy requires that lethal force be used in proportionate discriminate manner."

As any member of the armed forces knows, basic training makes imperative the goal of killing the enemy. Once international relations have deteriorated into war it is a case of kill or be killed. To speak of killing in a proportionate, discriminate manner is ludicrous. There never has been a war like that. When we move to the level of nuclear war the idea sets sanity rocking on its seat. As long as the force of a bomb was limited to the ones dropped over Hiroshima or Nagasaki it might serve a tactical or strategic, though immoral purpose. However, when the force is the size contained in any contemporary nuclear missile, the effect is drastically altered.

Earth's Own Deterrence

Actually the force is so great that nuclear missiles are basically useless as military weapons. The atomic bombs dropped on Japan confined the radiation to a limited geographical area. Many did die, but there were survivors. However, since the explosive power in today's missiles is several times greater than all the bombs exploded in all the wars thus far waged on earth, we need to take into account the relation of the fallout from such a weapon to the earth's atmosphere. The film "The Day After" was misleading in that it focused attention on only two cities, one where a nuclear bomb exploded, another that happened to be in the downwind direction of the radiation. The probability of a nuclear war being limited to one missile from each side is zero. Restraint or limited force when many missiles will land and explode is an exercise in self-deception.



Scientists describe the effect of a nuclear exchange in terms of a "nuclear winter." Less than one percent of the existing nuclear arsenals would be enough to surround the earth with dense clouds of soil laden particles, absorbing and blocking sunlight. Darkness would cover the earth, and the temperatures would fall to sub-zero levels, a genuine "nuclear freeze." This condition would persist for months, destroying plant life and disrupting the sources of food in the process. Without even talking about what might happen to the ozone layer that protects earth from the ultraviolet rays of the sun, the rotation of the earth would guarantee the extinction of most its inhabitants.

In other words, the nuclear missiles we are building and stockpiling are useless as deterrents. Even if one country had all the missiles, to launch them at an unarmed country would only mean that soon the nation or terrorist pushing the button would run into its own fallout. In the same way, but on a mini-scale, poison gas became counterproductive in World War I. Unable to control the wind, planes dropping canisters of gas all too quickly found it moving back over their own troops. The wind, of course, may die down or change directions, but the rotation of the earth continues. The earth's rotation, winds, and atmosphere make the use of missiles a kind of suicide even if only one country had them. To hide these facts, whether it be done by church or state, in New York or in Washington, is a sad lack of responsibility.

God's Deterrence in Christ

The proposed LCA statement spends so much time justifying the idea of deterrence and trying to be true to the 16th century theory of two kingdoms that it ends up subsuming peacemaking under peacekeeping, church under state, and gospel under law. It applauds non-government contacts between the superpowers (cultural, trade, and travel) and lauds the United Nations as an international framework for peaceful resolution of differences. However, gone are the references to grassroots surgings for peace or unilateral initiative which were present in the first draft and which are so integral to peacemaking. There is a brief section on God's reconciling work in Christ in order to make peace with enemies, but nothing flows from it.

Although the underlying theological doctrine in the statement is that of the "two kingdoms," there is no reference or explication made of the kingdom Jesus came preaching. For Jesus there was but one kingdom and the "gospel of God" was that of the kingdom at hand. Jesus Christ was the kingdom incarnate. When he entered the homes of the poor, when he ministered to their needs, and when he recruited disciples from their ranks, it was the word taking on flesh and blood.

The present U.S. policy demonstrates that the enemy is not Communism but

We could seek to out minister Communism.

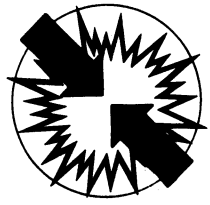
the Soviet Union. Two countries, not two ideologies are involved, the race being to see who wins the "gold medal." The leaders on mainland China are Communists, but one forgets that when they visit America, speak in our high schools, lunch with our mayors, dine with our president, and receive a police escort through our streets. Were the enemy Communism our policy would be different. Ironically, it would much more approximate the kingdom Jesus came to proclaim.

Although the governments of both America and the Soviet Union are too busy building missiles to see it, both of them have this kingdom in common. Both of them have roots in the Judeo-Christian Scripture. Ours is more directly traceable through the early pilgrims and religious groups that came to these shores. Theirs is more indirect, though nonetheless real. As a child Karl Marx was baptized into the Lutheran Church of Prussia, when his father, perhaps for economic reasons, moved his membership from the local synagogue to a Christian congregation. Regardless of his father's motives, young Marx attended parochial schools and there was exposed to the concept of a heavenly kingdom wherein all persons were brothers and sisters, a kingdom of equality. Although at that point in time — the church was not intent on the kingdom coming on earth, to Marx it seemed like an excellent idea. While the church seemed to be saying "Why rush?" Marx said, "Why wait?" Although he subsequenly disassociated himself from belief in God because of the church's heavenly preoccupation, the image of such a kingdom helped shape his beliefs. It was reinforced by the views of the philosopher Hegel, and in this round about way was even introduced through Mao Tse Tung in China.

Although both the United States and the Soviet Union have strayed far from the priorities that lead to equality — embroiled as they are in achieving missile superiority — the Judeo-Christian scriptures are still waiting in the wings. Governments have not heard the prompter, or perhaps the church has not spoken.

Were we truly serious about containing Communism, we would embark on a different course. Rather than out-missile them, we could seek to out minister them. We could challenge the U.S.S.R. to a different kind of war, a war on oppression and poverty for which Communism depends for its appeal. As a nation claiming to believe in God and what God believes in, we would be responding to a precedent for such a policy in the Old Testament prophets and in the New Testament Christ, whether we name it such or not.

In theory some academic theologians defend the two-kingdom idea on the grounds that it protects a tension, or a balance, between two realities. In Niebuhr's terms it is a dialectic. However, in reality, this is barely possible even on paper. The proposed LCA



statement on "Peace and Politics" attempts to maintain this "tension." However, since the current Washington administration thinks it is actually deterring the evil of the Soviet Union, what the LCA statement really does is to provide theological justification for the status quo.

Even if the two-kingdoms theory were to be interpreted in the light of Pauline thought, there would not be a balance between God's two "hands," for in his second letter to the Corinthians Paul writes that the gospel or dispensation of the Spirit is of greater splendor than that of the law. Inasmuch as the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. are embroiled in an activity that has theological roots in the kingdom on the left, it is appropriate to be reminded of Paul's giving pre-eminence to the Gospel, God's right hand. Were a church to set forth a valuable statement on peace, it would not only have a precedent for focusing on a peacemaking rather than peacekeeping, it would also shed light, the Light of Christ, on the present path and the future destiny of all who now walk upon mother earth.

The number of LCA congregations that have indicated their involvement in food pantries, soup kitchens, clothing banks, unemployment concerns, emergency funds for utilities, vouchers for medicine and fuel suggests that we are related to Christ. We are bearing the burdens as he said we would. However, when these burdens are caused by our government's bloated military budget, two realities begin to shout at us. One is that the church is helping make it possible for our government to budget what it does for the military. And two, were our nation's priorities more kingdom oriented, both the burdens being created at home and those on a world-wide scale could easily be taken care of.

Perspectives from Jüngel's Theology

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While much American academic theology, since the "God is dead" era, has attempted to resurrect God by means of the logic of a metaphysical system, or by identifying the structures of being, or by claiming to find evidence of the divine in everyday experience, Eberhard Jüngel, Professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion at the University of Tübingen in West Germany, has continued to mine the veins struck by Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, but in such a creative way that he has reconciled many of the disagreements between Barth and Bultmann on their own terms, while generating a variety of insights and perspectives that are not well known in this country. The purpose of this article is to report and (in some cases) comment upon several of those perspectives, to wit, (1) his claim that God is not necessary, (2) his opposition to natural theology, (3) his Heideggerian sequence of thought, (4) the role of faith in theology, (5) the significance of Jesus for knowledge of God, (6) Jüngel's view of God as being present as absent, (7) his view of theology, (8) the significance of metaphor for knowledge of God, (9) his related view of analogy, (10) his analysis of human love, and (11) one of his views of the Trinity.

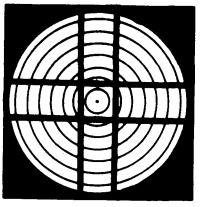
I. God Is Not Necessary

Jüngel traces the "Death of God" movement back to René Descartes' belief in God. That belief held that God was necessary, since God was needed to guarantee the continuity and certainty of Descartes' clear and distinct ideas about the world. With the passing of centuries, as people saw that the world could be comprehended without God and that God was not necessary for the technical functioning of the world, belief in God based on God's necessity vanished.

Arguing further against basing one's faith on the necessity of God, Jüngel points out that something can be necessary for something else while still being contingent itself. Consequently, proving that God is necessary does not establish the ultimate reliability and certainty of God's own being.

Then, speaking from within the household of faith, he argues that since Christians find God in a *particular* person, namely, Jesus Christ, God cannot be *logically* necessary.

Jüngel suggests that the reason why Descartes' God could perform the necessary function of guarantor of the certainty of the thinker's relationship to the external world was that, conceptually, God's essence and God's existence had been separated. To assure that there would always be a God to perform the function of guarantor, God's essence was protected from the transitory world by being detached from that world and regarded as Other. God's existence, on the other hand, was viewed as being present in the world and in our thought,



thereby certifying the validity of our innate ideas.[1]

It was that separation that led to the eventual denial of God's reality. The thinking human subject had been inserted between God's essence and God's existence in such a way that the thinker became the guarantor of God's existence, rather than vice versa. Accordingly, God exists as long as God performs a function that I acknowledge that I need. When God no longer appears necessary for me, God's existence vanishes and so does God's essence, which I never had had any awareness of in the first place. Concludes Jüngel, "Every proof of the necessity of God is the midwife of modern atheism."[2]

Jüngel's alternative is to regard God as "more than necessary,"[3] a plus for the creation. God's reality is neither created nor conditioned by the world's understanding of its own needs. God's being is event, of a type that is unrestricted, free, and self-determining. Therefore God is not limited to the order of necessity and contingency. Nor is God omnipresent.

Jüngel reaches this conclusion from his interpretation of the Cross and Resurrection. He also reaches it from his analysis and interpretation of the experience of nonbeing or nothingness. When a person in such a situation affirms being, that is an instance of God deciding between being and nonbeing, Jüngel says. For God to decide between being and nonbeing means that God is not dependent upon anything that exists. And when God is seen to be free in relation to the antithesis between being and nonbeing, so that God can be active in the very midst of that antithesis and not be controlled by its demands (as God would be if God were the ground of being), then the notion of God as the necessary grounding of the world is exploded, he claims.

God is more than necessary also because God is love. Love is free, cannot be demanded, is not related to need, and cannot reliably be included in a calculation. It does not bear the characteristics of something that is necessary.

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[1]This separation is the consequence of Descartes' position, Jüngel argues, even though Descartes, himself, did not intentionally violate the unity of essence and existence that Aristotelian metaphysics found in God. In keeping with that philosophy, when traditional Christian theology distinguished between God's essence and existence, it understood that it was making only a logical distinction and not a real one, since God was the absolutely Simple. It also considered the truth of human perception to be upheld by the divine intellect and to be dependent upon it. That relationship was changed, however, when Descartes grounded human thought in the thinking individual, rather than in God.

[2]Eberhard Jüngel, *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt: Zur Begründung der Theologie des Gekreuzigten im Streit zwischen Theismus und Atheismus* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1977), p. 23. Hereafter cited as GGW. All translations from German are mine.

[3]Ibid., p. 41.

Knowledge of God is salvation itself!

II. Natural Theology

Jüngel has pointed out that theologians have moved to accept a natural theology that is independent of faith and that claims the ability to critique all religions, including the truth-claims of Christianity. He deplores this development for all of the Barthian reasons, in addition to his view that, since God is not necessary, God is not to be conceived as universally available in all human experience.

He teaches, following Martin Luther, that not only does nature not reveal God, but only by an experience of grace does one know what nature itself truly is.

He observes that natural theology cannot distinguish between God and the Devil disguised as an angel of light, since natural theology places God in partnership with the world, where the Devil is also.

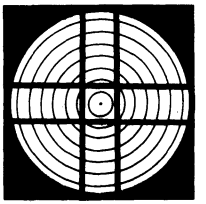
God may be considered to be the creator, but God does not testify to himself as creator apart from revelation in Jesus Christ, Barth has contended. Consequently, the "God" known through creation might be only the creature of human fantasy. The way in which Jüngel deals with this matter is to say that the only way to see God is to look at God in the eye, that is, to return God's gaze, to respond to God's direct revelation. The trouble with natural theology is that it is always trying to take a look at God while God's back is turned.

Moreover, knowledge of God is not mere intellectual knowledge or possession of facts. Knowledge of God is salvation itself. Studying nature does not bring salvation. Only Christ does. Therefore, nature does not reveal God.

Consequently, Jüngel does not examine religious experience to develop an understanding of why certain religious symbols "work", because the ultimate answer to that question lies in God, he claims, and because answers of a preparatory or anticipatory nature encourage the belief that human wisdom can provide adequate explanations of divine revelation. Nor does he seek a phenomenology of faith eidetically reduced and organized, because the eidetic elements do not automatically lead to their Essence.[4]

Jüngel objects to natural theology's insistence that a concept of God or a framework for understanding God be created first, before genuine theological statements can be made. He challenges our right to establish such frameworks or concepts of God, adding that we could not be certain that any such concept would be correct, because those concepts would come from someplace other than God. We would have attained them not by asking God but by asking ourselves.

[4]Similarly, as concerned for certainty as Paul Tillich was, he also opposed efforts to derive God from the world, based on "some characteristics of the world" that "make the conclusion 'God' necessary." *Systematic Theology,* vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 205.



We fail to see that human reason has creaturely limitations and that, consequently, the particularity of revelation cannot be subsumed under the generality of available reason. When it is assumed to be so, talk about God becomes general and unspecific. In that case, Jüngel says, God is expressed better through silence.

He claims that natural theology generally does not convince thinkers who have separated themselves from faith, even though they are the people with whom an argument by reason alone *should* have the greatest chance of success. The abstract faith that natural theology generates either leads to insignificance or requires a leap of faith, anyway.

But natural theology deceives itself when it says that God says more fully what it says in its limited way, because it assumes that God will endorse its particular approach, and it does not provide for God to say something totally different. It seems to deny, further, that the truth of Christian assertions can establish its own validity, because it tries to base those assertions on some other ground, which presumably is stronger.

While Barth objected to natural theology in all of its forms, however, Jüngel speaks of "the necessary business of natural theology."[5] That business is to accompany all of dogmatics as a "moment" of revealed theology, although not as the basis for it. Although Jüngel's theology is based on the biblical witness, he is willing to consider phenomena outside the Bible, for whatever insights they might generate, but he insists that ultimacy itself must substantiate the validity of those insights that apply to God, in order for them to be accepted as true. Accordingly, he endorses testing the truth and the demands of the Gospel through dialogue with the humanities and other theologies, but he objects to grounding them there.

III. "Thinking after" God

Jüngel's alternative to natural theology is to insist on following Martin Heidegger's revolutionary epistemological sequence, which is the exact opposite of our normal practice of starting with words that have specific meanings, using those words to form thoughts, and then following those thoughts to an understanding of being or of the object of our thought. Heidegger claimed that we can speak accurately about an object (and about being, in general) only if we let the being of that object affect our thoughts as we formulate language about that object — in other words, only if we do not impose our preconceptions on the object but let our thoughts be guided by the object's own reality.

[5]Eberhard Jüngel, "Das Dilemma der natürlichen Theologie und die Wahrheit ihres Problems: Überlegungen für eine Gespräch mit Wolfhart Pannenberg," in *Denken im Schatten des Nihilismus,* ed. Alexander Schwan (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1975), p. 439.

Jüngel's theology exists for the internal needs of the Christian community.

For theology, that means essentially what Barth had in mind when he said that we can know God only through God's own revelation. Rather than starting with our own concepts or hypotheses about God, proper thinking about God must follow God's own being, as manifested in God's address to us or in God's revelation to our community. (Jüngel warns, however, that concepts formed from our personal experiences must always be measured by Scripture and by the Risen Word, God's present self-attestation.) Jüngel calls this approach a "thinking after" God, his expression for "a prevenient, ontic restriction of thought to its object."[6] "In theology," he writes, "thinking means . . . trying to conform to God with the faculty of human reason. God goes *His* way. Thinking will not touch God, if it goes another way."[7]

IV. Faith

But God cannot be separated from faith. And faith fits into Jüngel's theological equation in a distinctive manner. Faith, for him, should not *follow* thought, as though first we develop a concept about God and then we believe in it. Rather, thought should follow the object of faith. We call that object "God," because our faith chooses to see it that way. In faith, the existence of God is given prior to thought. This view is quite similar to Michael Polanyi's notion of "personal knowledge," according to which you conform your thinking and reasoning to what you commit yourself to believing.

Jüngel argues that if what grounds the content or object of faith is not faith, the object loses its quality as an object of *faith.* And the object is not *grounded* in faith, if we *begin* with empirically or logically verifiable facts.[8]

Faith also keeps one from having to distinguish between natural and supernatural knowledge or between natural and supernatural revelation, because faith combines both polarities simultaneously. Here Jüngel appears to imply that "the supernatural" (or God) is not an entity added to natural events, but that it is the word used to designate the impact that a natural event has on a believer, enabling the believer to gain a new perspective on the world or to perceive a hitherto unacknowledged "dimension" in it.

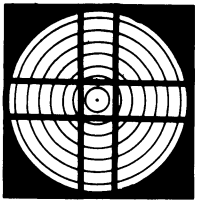
This emphasis on the role of faith, however, does not mean that nonbelievers should not be expected to understand the logic of Christian

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[6]GGW, p. 218.

[7]Ibid., p. 214.

[8]Jüngel is supported by T. R. Martland, who writes that "it is a category mistake to look for religious objects independently of religion's sustaining light. For example, it is a mistake . . . to try to prove or disprove God's existence independently . . . from faith." God is related to faith as an object is related to the eyes that see it. "An Analysis of the Religious Use of the Implausible, or More Particularly the Incredible," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 46 (December 1978): 573.



theology. "One can . . . follow the movement of faith without believing," Jüngel writes, "just as one can understand joy, although one is sad."[9] Yet to the extent that faith draws one into divine reality (or the being of God), one is in a better position to think appropriately about that reality than otherwise.

V. Jesus and Knowledge of God

The God to whose reality Jüngel's theology tries to conform itself is the God that Christians have encountered in Jesus Christ. The behavior and teachings of Jesus, plus the significance of his cross and resurrection, are what cause Christians to believe in God at all. It is not the case that first we understand God and then agree that Jesus provides a good example of God. It is rather the case that all that we can know about God must be learned, ultimately, from Jesus, because the historical and "risen" Jesus is where God has become both accessible to humanity and comprehensible.

This accessibility also implies that God communicates himself. We can affirm God's reality, therefore, because God is thinkable; and God is thinkable because our thoughts about God can be guided by a definite object, if we believe that God came in history and therefore is a God who is Self-revealing.

Jüngel sees in Jesus a being for all people, the definitive representation of God's will — what it means to be fully human, to use Paul Lehmann's formulation. In that Jesus brought people into contact with the Ultimate, God spoke through him.

Another reason for this approach to the knowledge of God is that the Existentialist experience of nothingness, the events of the Holocaust, and the economic and political experience of powerlessness have driven people to ask not who or what God is but *where* God is, if at all. Jüngel contends that questions concerning the existence and characteristics of God can be answered best by asking where God can be found and where we can be addressed by God. He finds the Christian answer in God's past (biblical) and present (continuous) Self-revelation (in God's Word of address).

Since "presence" and "absence" are merely human categories, however, he suggests that the question of where God is is not posed radically enough if it can be answered fully and literally in terms of presence and absence. He points out that even human beings can be *both* present and also removed or absent from themselves, in that they transcend themselves through both potential and imagination. So it is with God's relation to the world. And since we experience God's absence along with God's presence, God's presence is experienced always as revelation — the more so since we are aware of God's absence and can never predict when that condition will change.

[9]GGW, p. 221 - n. 17.

In faith, the existence of God is given prior to thought.

VI. God Present as Absent

For similar reasons, Jüngel finds language to be an appropriate locus for God. For when we try to put reality into words, although we make some part of reality clear, we obscure another aspect of reality. That is because, following the Heideggerian view, words cannot fully capture the ambience and flow of being. Accordingly, Jüngel writes as follows:

> The Word of God preserves a relationship corresponding to faith, namely, a relationship in which God comes near to us, without this nearness abolishing the fact that He also is removed from us. In the Word of God, the presence and absence of God are not be treated any more as alternatives. On the contrary, in the Word, God is *present as the Absent One.*[10]

Because God addresses us, Jüngel argues that God is One Who comes. God comes as Word and often through language, thereby destroying the distinction between transcendence and imminence, since language and its meanings include both. Then God is present while also being absent, since neither language nor action can capture reality fully. Even when absent, however, God can be present for salvation, as the Cross implies.

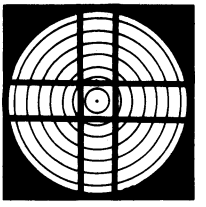
VII. Theology

It should be evident by now that Jüngel's theology, like Barth's, exists for the internal needs of the Christian community. It does not exist primarily to make the Faith comprehensible to nonbelievers, or to encapsule the mystery of the world in universally verifiable statements. Nor does it attempt to relate all truth of the Christian God, because to do so would be to put God on the same plane as the created order and to misunderstand the extra-ordinary nature of God. It concedes that it is likely, therefore, that at least some Christian claims will always have to appear arbitrary, because of two of those claims, namely, the fallen condition of human nature and the consequent necessity of God's Self-revelation, i.e., what theology calls the need for the work of the Holy Spirit.

The task of theology, as Jüngel sees it, is to be so in harmony with the present truth of the Word of God (God's past and present address to us) that the theology serves as a vehicle through which God brings people to fuller understanding and new life.

Jüngel is fond of calling theology "consistent exegesis." Yet although he considers hermeneutics to be our last avenue to certainty, he warns that in biblical interpretation there is not final certainty. That conclusion follows from

[10]Ibid., p. 222.



his claim that there is no single hermeneutical method that theology can place its faith in. Since the Word of God is an event, it "is not a priori identical with any human linguistic context."[11]

He certainly does not limit himself to a single philosophy, for, with Barth, he asks, "How can we bind ourselves to one philosophy as the only philosophy, and ascribe to it a universal necessity, without actually positing it as something absolute, as the necessary partner of the Word of God, and in that way imprisoning and falsifying the Word of God?"[12]

VIII. Word-Event

Jüngel joins Heidegger and other contemporary philosophers in opposing the Western world's traditionally restricted understanding of language, according to which language is a system of signs (words), each of which represents something with a fixed meaning (or cluster of meanings) based on conventional use. When the word "God' is used in that way, it is reasonable to ask what its content or meaning is; and much theology is devoted to providing an objective answer to that question.

But Heidegger denied that words (as subjects and predicates) must refer to specific objects. We think that all thinking and speaking is objectifying, he claimed, because we think that when we say "is", we solidify the flowing "stream of life" and make it an object that can be held in the present. We thereby deceive ourselves and falsify reality. Rather, language has a multiplicity of meanings, which are tied to the instance of its use. Jüngel comments that, by means of a statement, the abudant possibilities of a word are momentarily fixed, but only until that word is used again in another conversation, since then the address-character of language (about which more will be said shortly) will once again unleash the power of the possible against the "real" as previously "pinned down." Accordingly, for a statement to be true it must be a free response to our addressed existence and not be limited to predetermined word-meanings. Such an approach to truth reflects a thinking that is based not on concepts but on existence, which eludes full conceptualization.

Not only do words have various shades of meaning, depending on the context in which they are used, but certain types of language can have an impact on us — can be bearers of being, as Heidegger might say — that far exceeds the conventional meaning of each individual word used. "It is possible, for example, that what a poem is *talking* about *happens* when a poem is read."[13]

Metaphors provide other examples. Metaphor acts as a catalyst to get us to see things (or to experience reality) in ways

[11]Eberhard Jüngel, "God — as a Word of Our Language," trans. Robert T. Osborn, in *Theology of the Liberating Word,* ed. Frederick Herzog (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), p. 41.

[12]Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* I/2 (New York: Scribner, 1956), p. 733.

[13]GGW, p. 11.

that we are not accustomed to (e.g., "a sad painting," or "the old man was in the sunset of his years"). It does that by establishing an initially unbearable tension between conventional relationships, until the new relationship or perception that the metaphor wants to present is accepted. By means of the strangeness of the juxtaposition of the images that it uses, it opens a new dimension of existence to us. It mediates a perception of the similarity of the dissimilar. It distances us from the world as we normally experience it so that we can experience what is greater than it.

Since new perceptions mediated by metaphor come to us suddenly and unexpectedly, we experience them as though they were addressing us. Consequently, Jüngel calls metaphor an experience of direct learning. It provides for a first order experience rather than a second order reflection.

Jüngel considers metaphorical language to be essential for theology, because metaphor does not allow itself to be directed by mundane reality; and God can be discussed adequately only in language that opens us to the unconventional and the extraordinary. "God is a meaningful word only in the context of metaphorical discourse," he writes, because metaphor provides a vehicle through which ultimate reality can address us directly.[14] At least, live metaphor can do that. Originally, when Jesus was called "the Son of God," live metaphor was at work. Too often nowadays, that title functions largely as a "dead metaphor" with a specific meaning, like "the foot of the bed."

Other forms of language have an impact, under particular circumstances, simply because they are uttered. Such is the case when a judge renders a decision (e.g., "Not guilty!") or when a priest tells believers that they are absolved. Such utterances create "word-events", says Jüngel (following the New Hermeneutic), that pull the addressed person into their meaning (as metaphors do, in their way). As another example, he points out that curse words hurt us and are intended to do so. They are not merely erroneous designations.

With this perspective in mind, Jüngel claims that some words function like a sacrament (defined as "a sign of the presence of the thing"). They both designate the thing and bring it.[15] Consequently, although a word is neither true nor false, a word such as "God" can be invoked in a context in which it functions like a sacrament, thereby making the accompanying sentence true. So what the word "God" means is found when the word has an impact: when God makes himself evident: when the Ultimate brings itself to our attention.

Hence, to say that a statement about God is true when God makes it true is to say that it *can* be true but does not always have to be true (while not thereby becoming false). ("God forgives your sins" may not be false, but it is not particularly meaningful except to a person burdened with guilt. Under those circumstances, however, its truth-value can be experienced as being quite high.) A statement about God is true when the reality of the moment is experienced as God or as God being present. It is true when God comes or when it reflects God's act. It is true when our experience

[14]Eberhard Jüngel, "Metaphorische Wahrheit: Erwägungen zur theologischen Relevanz der Metaphor als Beitrag zur Hermeneutik einer narrativen Theologie," in Paul Ricoeur and Eberhard Jüngel, *Metaphor: Zur Hermeneutik religiöser Sprache*, Evangelische Theologie: Sonderheft (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1974), p. 110.

[15]Accordingly, he says that "the story of Jesus must become . . . a word of *sacramentum* (to speak with Augustine and Luther), before it can function as exemplum." GGW, p. 422.

or commitment enables us to know its truth (to speak in terms of apparent human capacity).

When the Ultimate brings itself to our attention, it does not bring only information, however. It also provides a share in the being that reveals itself. The believer's thoughts are directed by that new being. It is primarily for that reason that knowledge of God cannot be objective. *A fortiori,* knowledge of God will be verified in the depths of our being, by faith, or it will not be verified at all.

When the Ultimate brings itself to our attention, it interrupts the self-contentment of our current world-view. (Could the coming of *God* do otherwise?) In so doing, it also functions like a word that brings new meaning or new being. (Jüngel makes the point that the converse is actually the more basic, viz., word-events function in the way that ultimacy does. Words function as they do to bring meaning or to "speak being," because ultimacy itself functions in that way: ultimacy makes itself known.) Jüngel writes, "the essence of the addressing word is *approach through interruption.*"[16] Indeed, such is the route to all new knowledge. He argues that the truth of the world around us has an impact on us and advances our knowledge only when it succeeds in interrupting the self-contained status quo of our "correspondence with ourselves." Because it does so (as through word-events, but also through actions and images [he includes both in his concept of "word," although he does not emphasize this fact]), we are not limited to concepts formed from our past experiences; nor must we be molded simply by the spirit of our times (if we "think after" the truth that interrupts from outside the conventional wisdom).

But just as words and their specific meaning are lost soon after they are spoken, as the context changes,[17] so the objective aspect of God's revelation gets distorted by sin and needs to be "updated" again and again for each person as circumstances change. That is another reason why theology, as Jüngel understands it, can have no final certainty and no universal verifiability. This limitation is reinforced by his treatment of theological language as metaphorical. In metaphor, the imagination and experiences of the speaker and hearer play an essential part in the success of the communication. Hence, the meaning of theological statements will be understood slightly differently by each person. There will be concensus to the extent that each person shares the presuppositions of a community's originating revelation. If that revelation be truly a revelation of God, then its truth will be reinforced for those who are on its "wave-length," who share its metaphors. And the "updating" and reinforcement will occur always in terms that are most appropriate to each individual. Granting the absence of objective universality in this approach to theology, the basic question is whether anything else can reasonably be expected, given the ultimacy of the subject matter.

IX: Analogy

Related to his dynamic view of language in general, Jüngel calls for a new concept of analogy, when applied to God. Rather than an analogy of proportion between the characteristics of designated objects (x:a = b:c), he calls for an analogy of *relation* between those objects (i.e., "x" is related to "a" as "b" is related to "c"), so that what is being compared are not static bits of being but relationships. He makes his concept even

[16]GGW, p. 221.

[17]See Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976).

more dynamic, however, by providing for one half of one of the relations to come to the other half of that relation (x → a = b:c), thereby changing our view of the other proportion (b:c).

His proposal in his own words is as follows:

> If the analogy contains *God* as one of its members (x:a = b:c), then, on the basis of the relation of God (x) to the world (a), the relation within the world (b:c), which corresponds to this relation, appears in an entirely *new,* eschatological light, which *makes* this relation within the world itself *new.* The relation within the world (b:c), which from within itself is simply incapable of giving any indication of God, begins then to speak for God . . . as a . . . more-self-evident . . . self-understanding of the world . . . The God Who comes to the world (x → a) makes use of the self-evidentness of this world in such a way that He show Himself, in relation to it, to be more self-evident . . .[18]

One interpretation of what he is saying is that it is inappropriate to reason from an analogy of proportion to what God is like. Rather, the same analogy that relates us to God also can cause us to see differently and more penetratingly the worldly relations that it depicts, because *seeing them differently* (i.e., *as they should be*) *and seeing God are the same thing.* God is said to have "come to the world" when the world is what it should be (as expressed by the concept of God as the "more self-evident" understanding of the world), or, at least, when the relationships within the world are *seen* as what they ideally *should* be (in a "*new,* eschatological light"). Such a view can change our behavior, thereby changing the worldly relationships themselves.

This understanding of analogy, namely, as relation experienced as event (x comes to a), is the basis for what he calls his "hermeneutical thesis." That thesis states that within a great dissimilarity between God and humanity is an even greater similarity. It should be noted, however, that that similarity is not a static one but occurs as event, when God comes to us and thereby makes the similarity possible. The similarity is possible, ontologically, because God is love, and love is not a quality but a relationship — in which both God and humanity participate.

X: Love

Jüngel offers an interesting analysis of human love, which merges *eros* and *agape* and which he also applies to God (although this article does not show how, in any great detail). The analysis is presented here in six steps.

1. He begins by noting that love is selfless without being self-related. If it were, it would be only an abstraction, he claims. He argues that selfishness and selflessness are combined when I, as a lover, do not want to have myself without having my beloved and when only by having the other do I have myself in the way that I want myself (which is in a new way, i.e., with my beloved). Wanting myself in a new way, I am willing to begin myself again, as it were, this time with my beloved. I am drawn out of my isolated self, so that I then understand

[18]GGW, pp. 389-390. His ideas parallel, at points, those of Gerhard Ebeling, who says that God's Word "is not a light which shines upon God, but a light which shines from him, illumining the sphere of our existence. If God's countenance shines upon us, the world has for us another look." *The Nature of Faith,* trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1961), p. 190.

myself *with* the other and therefore in a new way. (It makes a difference, Jüngel notes, whether I think of myself as being without another or with another.)

2. Love is reciprocal giving or surrender, in which each party also receives: each party becomes the beloved. Love changes the structure of having; I can have only as I give. In order to have my beloved, I must surrender myself to her, i.e., I must stop having myself.

3. Because love entails surrender to another and therefore self-estrangement, it includes the dialectic of being and not-being. Not only does a lover reach out to someone who is not himself, but in needing the beloved, he is made aware of his own inadequacy or nonbeing. Thus does love conceal the dimension of death and nothingness within itself. A love relationship is strong, however, precisely because it contains within it a death that has been conquered, namely, the death of risking to reach out from oneself and to be rejected, and the death of not loving. Indeed, Jüngel goes so far as to say that a paraphrase for the nature of love is "the unity of death and life for the benefit of life."[19] Based on the Cross and Resurrection, he applies that description to God, also.

4. Thus, love promises a new being. It fulfills that promise, too, because "in the event of loving surrender there takes place a radical detachment from oneself *in favor of* a new closeness to oneself — a closeness, of course, in which the beloved You is now closer to me than I am to myself," since I am engaged in self-surrender, lost in the beloved without whom I do not want to exist. I thereby *get* an unexpected new self, because "the beloved You *gives* me to myself."[20]

5. Because an ideal love relationship is strong, the people in it, whose being has been expanded and reinforced by each other, both want to and confidently can reach out from themselves to encounter the world and to draw it into their relationship.

6. Love's strength depends upon its not standing still but continuing to occur. "Love is the *living* unity of life and death," Jüngel says.[21] In the divine realm, a God Who is love, therefore, must be a continuing occurrence; and so Jüngel finds God to be.

XI: The Trinity

Based on his interpretation of the presence of God in the Cross and Resurrection, Jüngel argues that God must be conceived as triune, if God is to be understood as *being* love and not just as *having* love for others. To the extent that the New Testament portrays the separation of Father and Son, thereby implying distinctions[22] within the divine being,

[19]GGW, p. 409.

[20]Ibid., pp. 440-441.

[21]Eberhard Jüngel, "Das Sein Jesu Christi als Ereignis der Versöhnung Gottes mit einer gottlosen Welt: Die Hingabe des Gekreuzigten," *Evangelische Theologie* 38 (November/December 1978): 511, no. 1.3.1.

[22]Jüngel also argues that those distinctions indicate a living relationship within God that is therefore a continuous event, which means that God's being is always becoming. But contrary to process theology, God's being is not becoming something other than God or something affected by God's relation with the world. Rather, God's relation with the world is simply an expression of God's own internal relations, which means that God has "double relational being," whereby God can be both "in-and-for-Himself" and also concretely in relation with the world. (See his scholarly paraphrase of Barth's view of the Trinity: *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being Is in Becoming* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976].)

Jüngel's argument may boil down to the view that the universe is *intrinsically* ("*in* Himself") relational in unexpected ways (its "divine" aspect), although Jüngel himself does not equate God with the extra-ordinary events of the universe. (Such a concept is my own proposal.) In view of this intrinsic relationality, therefore, any event in which the ideal is momentarily actualized or in which The God unexpectedly occurs would be appropriately referred to as "God relating *to* the world."

there are grounds for a model of God as love; the Father and Son love each other, and the Spirit is the event of love between them.

In addition, since love involves both self-estrangement and self-transcendence, that same Spirit constitutes the event of love through which God draws people into God's love.

But if God be the type of love that includes self-transcendence, then God, Who is not restricted by categories of time, would be the Trinity of love and be in loving relationship with the world simultaneously. That is why Jüngel can say that God does not want to be God apart from humanity, and that God is always both *in se* and *pro me*.

But what is this simultaneity saying about the nature or being of God? Eschewing a purely idealist concept of a purely transcendent God, it would make sense to expect that when God is in loving relationship with some part of humanity God is having a beneficial impact on humanity. But if God's being is always one of relationship with the world, then God is ("exists") only when God is having an impact on the world. God then might be any instance of perfection, or goodness, or improvement, or appropriate relations (even sacrifice) in the world. In this conceptualization, the Father would be the ideal, the Son would be any instance of the concrete actualization of the ideal in the world, and the Holy Spirit would be that mystery or "power" by which the event of actualization occurs. If the ideal were to include provision for incremental change as concrete circumstances change, rather than being limited to perfection within a perfect world, the incarnate instance of God could readily take the form of improvement accompanied by potential for even more improvement. In that way, God would be present (in the improvement or in the momentarily appropriate relationship within the world) and also absent (in the ideal of unfulfilled potential).

These are not Jüngel's conclusions, but they appear to fit his dynamic concept of God as event, as One Who *is* in the Word, Who speaks when the metaphor "clicks" but otherwise is absent or still "in coming." It is a model that fits the dynamism of music, rather than the static status of a painting. Theology has tended to think of God visually, as a picture, i.e., as always present. Yet is not music (which *is* in the instance when the notes are played, and which otherwise doesn't exist) a valid form of reality? Perhaps Barth was more revolutionary than he realized when he asserted that "God's being is in act."

XII: Frontiers

This summary of some aspects of Eberhard Jüngel's theology presents him essentially as a Word of God theologian. He reflects Bultmann's existentialist interest, but without limiting his theology to the parameters of existentialist philosophy. He reflects Barth's biblically oriented efforts to talk about God, but he goes beyond Barth by being willing to engage in phenomenological studies of more than just the biblical text. To date those studies have dealt with the experience of nothingness and of human love. He protects himself from letting these studies become the basis of his hermeneutic, by insisting that whatever value they may have for illuminating God will come only when they resonate with God's own reality.

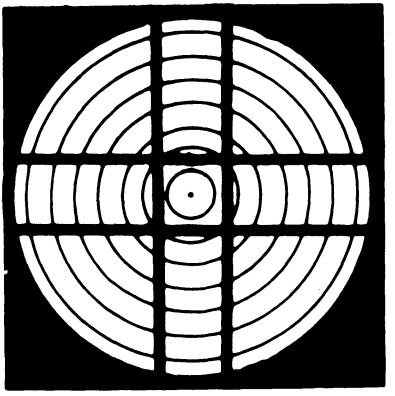
His concept of God as event may prove fruitful for several avenues of development. The concept is faithful to human experience of God (i.e., we do not experience God all the time, but only at particular moments, if at all) and it of-

fers a radical alternative to more static concepts, even to those of process theology, which can be said to present a basically static system that provides merely for movement within it, and liberation theology, which can be regarded as a subset of Jüngel's theology, in that it has heard one word (derived from the actions of Jesus among the powerless) and is developing the implications of that word. Hence, the concept provides the basis for a radically different ontology of God.

In addition, its non-objective view of God offers an alternative epistemology to those presupposed by movements toward a "public theology" or by those based on a single metaphysical system. Here, too, the theology is consistent with the human experience of knowing, as understood through doors opened by Kant and expanded by Heidegger, Polanyi, and Wittgenstein's language-games. It recognizes the fundamental role of individual interpretation and experience, but it avoids solipsism by placing itself in the context of the Christian community and its scripture.

What it is that ultimately speaks in "God's Word," Jüngel does not say, except to call it a mystery. But he does add, significantly and intriguingly, that it is the mystery of the *world.*[23]

[23]But, he qualifies, the mystery does not lie in the world's *own* ordinary powers. He does not rule out the possibility, however, that the world's own *extra-ordinary* powers are precisely what the word "God" refers to. Yet it may be that even they are of a type that is seen only by faith.



Ministry and Profession — The Paradoxical Relationship

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A familiar scene: At the end of their allotted hour, the young couple is escorted to the door of the minister's study. After the perfunctory pleasantries, the couple and minister part, the minister ushering in the next appointment, the couple heading for the car in the parking lot. As they squeeze into their station wagon, the woman asks her husband, "Well, what do you think?" Her spouse replies, "I am not sure, but one thing is clear. Our minister is very professional."

Compliment or put down? Some might regard the husband's statement as an indictment of aloofness, a criticism or an individual ensconsed behind a role. Others might venture the opinion that perhaps the husband was complimenting the minister for skills, competence and help. What is the relationship between ministry and professionalism in our current situation? It also seeks to point to an unescapable ambiguity that seems to be at the heart of ministry in a professional age. Ministers want to *and* do not want to be professional.

In order to answer the question about ministry and professionalism, I wish initially to sketch the crises in our current situation, and then describe the development of our professional matrix. After painting part of the picture in which moderns live, I will describe several options presented to contemporary ministers and conclude with constructive suggestions for individuals confronted with the fact of professionalism.

I. The need for clarity about the situation in which ministry occurs.

We live in an age of identity confusion. To illustrate that statement, let me describe three identity crises faced respectively by all modern Americans, professional ministers, and Lutheran Christians. The first crisis stems from the realization that in the last century our nation has experienced two global wars, a technological revolution, a suburban migration, a redefinition of sexual and racial relationships, a euphoric period of opportunity and economic growth, followed by a loss of national confidence and purpose. The list could be expanded and each phrase is only the crudest representation of enormous changes in ways of perceiving the world and our relation to it. In a recent book, Martin E. Marty named the period of the last three decades, "The Identity Incident."[1] With that label he sought to encapsule the social, technological and ideological changes that left Americans, and perhaps most other moderns, with little clear sense of who they are. Once upon a time people were born with intact identities. The reality that confronts individuals today is that of the relentless quest for identity; the self has become a revisable construct, constantly being remade as some new phenomenon drives or lures moderns away from old ways of seeing themselves.

[1]Martin E. Marty, *A Nation of Behavers* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 8.

Social scientists have done countless graphs and charts trying to measure the changes in American perceptions and understandings. In the 1950s they found that people sought religious belonging in ever increasing numbers while they simultaneously let go of many cherished beliefs. Thus congregational membership went up while beliefs about hell or inerrancy went down on the trend lines of many demographers. That perplexing pattern continued into the late sixties when suddenly membership trends began to slide downward, especially in mainline churches. The seventies saw the trend lines continue downward, accompanied by the phenomenon of cults and other new religious groups.[2] Beneath the movement on the charts and tables lies one theme: Americans have been involved in a quest for religious and other types of identity, and the search continues.

The second identity crisis is more peculiar to American ministers. In his introduction to the extensive survey which was part of the Association of Theological Schools' Readiness for Ministry Project, David S. Schuller commented on various attempts by clergy to find suitable roles for themselves. In the fifties, Schuller felt that ministers presided over the boom in suburban churches. During the sixties, they lost enthusiasm for parish ministry and became concerned with a variety of specialized ministries or ministries which sought to address pressing social issues. The seventies witnessed the phenomenon of burnout as clergy expressed doubt whether to live in suburban captivity, to resurrect causes and styles of the sixties, or drop out.[3]

Factors like clergy oversupply in Protestantism and priestless parishes in Roman Catholicism point to another problem for these beleaguered professionals. Churches are finding that they can function without full-time paid ministers, another sign that once secure models are slipping.

The third crisis is one that seems peculiar to Lutheranism. George Lindbeck reminds us that the question of identity is still before Lutherans, all Lutherans in America. In his review of the "Readiness for Ministry" statistics, Lindbeck found that Lutherans could not fall back on traditional guarantors of identity. Ethnicity, polity, piety, behavioral styles, these all can help some religious groups keep their sense of who they are. Lutherans, on the other hand, find their identity in one thing only: a confessional heritage. That there are varieties of confessional understandings only underscores the seriousness of Lutheran identity issues. To illustrate contemporary Lutheran diversity, Lindbeck described three major models of ministry currently functioning on the American religious terrain:

> The Lutheran Church in America reflects a concept of ministry similar to that of the United Methodist, Anglican-Episcopal, and United Church of Canada denominational families. The American Lutheran Church, however, shows an affinity with the United Church of Christ and the Reformed Church in America. The third Lutheran body, the Lutheran Church — Missouri

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[2]David A. Roozen and Jackson W. Carroll discuss these large scale trends in Hoge, Dean, and Roozen, David A., editors, *Understanding Church Growth and Decline, 1950-1978* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1979), p. 38.

[3]David S. Schuller, "Basic Issues in Defining Ministry," in Schuller, David S., Strommen, Merton P., and Brekke, Milo E., editors, *Ministry in America: A Report and Analysis, Based on an In-Depth Survey of 47 Denominations in the United States and Canada, with Interpretation by 18 Experts* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), pp. 3-11.

Synod, reflects concepts parallel to those of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).[4]

To say the least, such a diversity of styles will make the task of forming a new church interesting. Will Lutherans come to a consensus around a confessional understanding of ministry or will something else hold them together?

Add up the identity crises and the result is something other than three. The three feed and compound each other. American Lutheran ministers are left with an identity confusion about their peoplehood, their religious understandings, and their vocation. Such a situation can impel one to cling tenaciously to old images of ministry which may have more to do with an ethnic way of life than the calling to minister. Or it can drive one toward burnout as an individual seeks to find herself in one way of being a minister after another. Such a situation can also leave one very open to one-sided professionalism.

II. The professional matrix of ministry.

If what I have described so far conveys the notion that nothing holds things together in the modern situation, that notion is incorrect. We *are* held together, but by ties which render the quest for secure identity more troublesome. The bureaucratic and technological organization of modern society webs people together in a system that makes individual identities seem irrelevant. Functionally, it does not matter whether the clerk at the airline counter is a secure member of the electronic church of Jerry Falwell or an insecure one of nearby Second Presbyterian. What matters is the role that he or she fills at the counter. Talcott Parsons has argued that the "crucial structural development in twentieth century society" is professionalism, the rational/functional way of linking together the various sectors of society.[5] For sociologists like Parsons, professionalism is much more than an indicator of the competence of someone's work. Rather society is divided up into functions. Each function is tended by a group of professionals trained to fill one specialized task. A professional habit of mind develops in which people think in terms of functions, compartments, networks, skills. Television commercials reveal the extent of the professional paradigm. The overweight, gap-toothed dishwasher turns to the camera and says, "Professionally speaking, I recommend Ajax liquid." Or the announcer voices over the Mary Kay Cosmetics commercial with the assurance that the individual who calls at the door will be a professionally trained beauty consultant. By putting the highbrow Parson and the lowbrow dishwasher next to each other, I want to make one basic point. Modern Americans perceive themselves to be a part of a professional social structure. Recall the declines in liberal arts enrollments and the dramatic upswing in computer science programs. Increasingly, Americans become specialists in functions with little sense of their relations to larger purposes or ends. The professional person operates within a realm of competence and is alienated from other realms by tall walls of other professions.

This is the social milieu of the modern minister. As ministers are relegated to more private zones of personal life, they are being professionalized, being restricted to a smaller and more precise realm of competence.

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[4]George Lindbeck, "Lutheran Churches," ibid., pp. 414 ff.

[5]Talcott Parsons, "Professions," *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,* David L. Sills, editor, XII (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1969), pp. 536-47.

It was not always this way. Although the word "professional" does not appear in written form until 1541,[6] societies have had experts for centuries. Judaism's professionalism goes back to the time of the early priests and prophets of Israel. Throughout most of its history, the Christian church has been a repository for excellence, culture, expertise. When Charlemagne wanted skilled help he turned to the monasteries, as did many of the medieval rulers of Europe. Universities grew up around the learned priests and scholars of the church and were dominated for centuries by ecclesial figures. It may not be too much to say that for much of the history of the west, the church was the mother of the professions, training those who later became specialists in theology, law or medicine.

The rise of the modern university in Germany during the early decades of the nineteenth century was the harbinger of a new phenomenon — professionalism — something separate from the church. A mostly forgotten professor set the pattern when he decided that he would devote his entire life to one thing: "the Homeric question." F. A. Wolf became the model of the professor who abandoned generalization and focused on the narrowest of questions. Wolf's ideas became the model for the German university system. Soon people were flocking from around the world to drink from the professional springs flowing in Berlin, Goettingen and Halle. One scholar counted the Americans who migrated back to Europe during the nineteenth century in order to experience the new type of professional learning. Some 9,000 American names can be found on student rosters of German universities.[7] Many of these were pastors who became advocates of the new professional gospel. William Graham Sumner, for example, intended to become an Anglican clergyman. He returned from Europe a sociologist and locked away his old beliefs in a drawer. When he returned one day to see what was in the drawer, he found that his old beliefs had vanished. Although American colleges adapted slowly to the new professional model of education, the spirit of specialization prevailed.

Within half a century, psychologists, economists, orientalists and a new breed of professors were erecting a status system which challenged the traditional professions of ministry, medicine and law. The late nineteenth century was a period of medical and legal scrambling in which leaders of these threatened professions sought to erect adequate standards and create credible professional schools in the new American universities. Theological educators witnessed similar turmoil as specialized curricula began to appear in a few advanced seminaries by the end of the nineteenth century.

Although religious educators tried to keep up with the professional revolution, they never regained the status for the ministry which it had enjoyed in pre-Enlightenment days. In 1933 two English scholars published a survey of the professions. In a lengthy list which included nurses, masseurs, mine managers and teachers, there was no mention of ministers.[8] From being the seat of learning in the community the ministry had slipped almost out of sight in the new professional configuration.

While most ministers were too busy to notice their status slippage, there were movements toward finding at least some room for the ministry within the matrix

[6] *The Oxford University Dictionary,* Third Edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 1593.

[7] Carl Diehl, *Americans and German Scholarship 1770-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 50.

[8] A. M. Carr-Saunders and P. A. Wilson, *The Professions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), pp. v-vii.

of the modern professions. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, William Rainey Harper converted a Baptist seminary into the Divinity School of The University of Chicago in an effort to upgrade the ministry. During the decades after the Second World War, people like James Glasse, Granger Westburg and Jesse Ziegler led a number of attempts to make parish ministry into a profession. Thus Glasse wrote *Profession: Minister* in the 1960's, which sought to make a case for the professional status of clergy. He listed commonly accepted characteristics of a modern profession: 1) prolonged, specialized education, 2) the possession of a technique, 3) the rendering of specialized service to clients, 4) for a fee, 5) the sense of responsibility for the general good or altruism, and 6) the professional association or organization which tests competence and maintains standards of conduct for members. To make sure that ministers could meet all the criteria of professionalism, he led in calling for the formation of a professional organization, The Academy of Parish Clergy, in 1968.[9]

The ministry has been further professionalized by the emergence of distinct specialties which have their own organizations, standards and techniques. Now there are experts in pastoral care, hospital chaplaincy, parish administration, seminary teaching, denominational administration. Even worship has become a specialty in the new configuration.

A summary of what the history of professionalism has meant for the ministry is Joseph Sittler's remarkable and chilling phrase, "the maceration of the minister." To macerate means to chop up into little pieces. Said Sittler: "The minister's time, focused sense of vocation, vision of his or her central task, mental life, and contemplative acreage — these are all under the chopper."[10] Name the chopper professionalism, or modernity, but the tendency to break everything apart, to reduce things and people to the functions they perform, or the skills they possess, to equate identity with professional role, these are the dominant features of our situation.

III. Ministry in the professional matrix.

Having surveyed the contours of the modern context, ministers can ask themselves, "Are we or are we not professionals?" While some may debate whether they should work at the status game by trying to meet all Glasse's criteria, I would suggest that like it or not, ministers are professionals in the sense that they are participating in a "culture of professionalism."[11] People view ministers as religious experts. Biblical and theological language has become one jargon among many; clergy are valued for specific techniques, i.e. baptizing, burying, counselling and running the food pantry. Certainly the Doctor of Ministry explosion of the last decade and the emphasis placed on continuing education by most mainline denominations remind us of culture-wide processes that require people to become increasingly skilled in more and more specialized areas. The latest professional inroad into ministry is the emergence of the burnout specialist.

Two alternatives tempt moderns, given uncertain identities and the per-

[9]James D. Glasse, *Professions: Minister* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), pp. 35 ff, 144.

[10]Joseph A. Sittler, "Maceration of the Minister," *Grace Notes and Other Fragments* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 57-68.

[11]Burton J. Bledstein coined this name for our age in *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1976).

vasiveness of professionalism. They can become ecclesiological purists who refuse to contaminate their religious beliefs and heritage by participating in the wickedness of the professional culture. Or they can be so attracted to the allurements of professionalism that they become purveyors of little else. Yale's James Dittes describes either posture as being "on the verge of ministry."[12] Either one refuses to risk involvement with the professional principalities and powers of the age or she embraces them uncritically, failing to provide authentic ministry to people whose lives are shaped by the professional matrix.

I would like to suggest a third option to the two just posed, one that is more complicated, more in danger of keeping one perpetually wondering whether his identity is professional or minister or some hybrid. This alternative suggests that ministers must be professional in the sense that they must be trained, must be increasingly more skilled, and must always be seeking to provide adequate help for the needs of people. At the same time they must be more than functionaries, more than specialists who remain in the marginal niches that have been allocated for them. I am calling for a paradoxical style of ministry which is professional because that is the shape of the age and the situation of people whose lives are built and destroyed in the ebb and flow of professional life. At the same time, this style of ministry will always be in tension with the professional imperatives, pointing out their deadly reduction of humans to functionaries, fragmentation of community, their separation of means and ends. A paradoxical style of ministry will be in, with, of, against and for the professional style of the age.

Keeping the ministry paradoxically professional requires a perspective which both *is* and *is not* of the professional culture. A healthy historical perspective can remind late twentieth century inquirers that there is no static definition of ministry which prescribes once and for all the exact shape of the minister's task. The Scriptures themselves reveal an amazing variety of ministerial possibilities which cannot be condensed into one model. Reading on in the church's history we see further evidence of transitions and shifts in the forms of ministry. At one time the priestly ruler style dominates; at another, the evangelical preacher. In our age perhaps the "pastoral director", first described by H. Richard Niebuhr, reigns.[13] A historical perspective allows assessment of current models of ministry with a critical eye. Now, as in other periods of church history, individuals operate with partial understandings of what ministry is. They may have unconsciously settled on an image that a favorite pastor, teacher, parent or historical figure exemplified and have made that image the controlling idea. A careful reading of present and past history permits one to see how forms of ministry change to meet new circumstances. It also keeps one wary of the ever present tendency for ministry to become captive to its circumstances and to bear much more of the spirit of an era than the Spirit of the New Testament.

A reading of history also permits a change of directions. In his masterful book, *Ministry,* Edward Schillebeeckx makes an impressive historical case for his claim that beginning in the 11th century, ministry began to be privitized;

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[12]James E. Dittes, *Minister On The Spot* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1970), and *When the People Say No: Conflict and the Call to Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979.)

[13]H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), pp. 79 ff.

that is, treated as a distinct entity apart from the Christian communities which were entrusted with it. The late middle ages witnessed concern for the status of the minister; it became such a pressing matter that the church became preoccupied with priests and lost sight of the ministry of the people.[14] His argument raises the question of whether or not ministry can be discussed without a fully developed understanding of the ministry of the Christian community. Can we even discuss clergy burnout without first discussing the burnout which is a part of the American churches and the American culture?

In addition to a historical perspective on ministry, it is necessary to refine our theological understanding. With James Luther Adams we can look at the minister as an ethos-bearer, a bearer of a way of life.[15] What ethos are today's ministers bearing? Do they bear the ethos of technocratic functionalism or one of the forgiveness of sins? When the life crisis of a parishioner is squeezed into the 7:30 slot on the daily calendar, or when ministers wait around for people to become consumers of a particular expertise, what is communicated? Does current pastoral counselling take its cue from Carl Rogers or the apostle Paul? Do ministers unwittingly play the game of professionalism under the veneer of ecclesial trappings which perpetuate dependency of people upon the religious "pro"? Does such practice render the Christian message unintelligible?

Another way of pressing these questions is to hear the criticism raised by Johann Baptist Metz and others who seek to do political or liberation theology. Metz calls for a second reformation of the church which will cast off the bourgeois religion that legitimates modern patterns of alienation, domination, repression and injustice. His hope is in an emergent church, patterned much more after New Testament models of religious community than the functional style of religion which supports the status quo of modernity.[16]

With H. Richard Niebuhr, we need to ask, "What is the purpose of the church and its ministry?" Niebuhr found his answer in the nurturing of faith which made possible true love of God and love of neighbor.[17] Such a penetrating question can push beneath the variety of chopped up pieces of ministerial practice to seek the integrating purpose. Such a question can lead the minister back to Luther's *"was christum treibet"* or the Lutheran Confession's "rendering Christ necessary" or the hymn "Lift High the Cross" as the overarching task which shapes all the varied, and often seemingly unrelated, tasks.

The search for ecclesial and ministerial vocation opens the possibility of discerning a calling which can orient and ground the modern American minister. Paul Tillich described moderns as people who live in an artificial or "second nature" type of reality.[18] Professional and technological ways of life flatten ministerial horizons to the point that the world becomes artificial, disenchanted, mechanistic. People are rendered unable to perceive any spiritual reality in the midst of the fragmented, macerated pieces of their lives. To counter such a deadly situation, Henri Nouwen urged ministers not to avoid the second nature

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[14]Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), p. 56.

[15]James Luther Adams, "The Social Import of the Profesions," *Bulletin of the American Association of Theological Schools,* No. XXIII, June, 1958), pp. 152-68.

[16]Johann Baptist Metz, *The Emergent Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), pp. 48 ff.

[17]Niebuhr, pp. 31 ff.

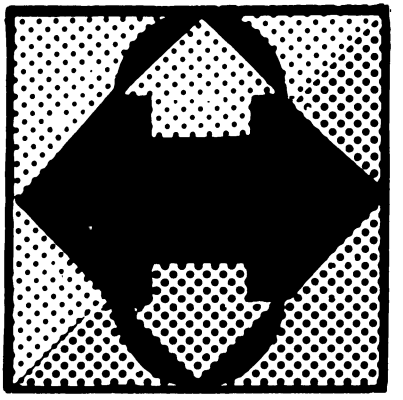
[18]Paul Tillich, *The World Situation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 5.

of professionalism, but to press beyond it. Nouwen advocated a way that seems quite foreign to most of us.[19] Quiet contemplation and disciplined movement to and away from the world provide space for the emergence of the paradoxical perspective which can discern the presence of an integrating Word in the middle of macerated modernity. Recent books by scholars like David Tracy and Urban Holmes have underlined the fundamental need for new ways of perceiving or imagining the ministerial situation.[20] The church's key antidote for flattened modern imaginations is the proclamation of the Gospel. In words from the cross ("Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"), the tomb ("He's not here . . ."), the font (I baptize you in the name of . . .), the table (Take, eat, drink) is an address that quickens professionalized imaginations to envision again new possibilities for self and others. Such sanctified imagination may allow one to see in the professional failures, tensions and pressures that make up so much of modern ministry, the occasions where new creation can and does happen.

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[19]Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Creative Ministry* (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1971), p. xxi-xxii.

[20]David Tracy, The Analogical Imagination: *Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981); Urban T. Homes III, *Ministry and Imagination* (New York: Seabury, 1981).



Theological Reflections on Housing

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One of the most critical issues urban residents face is housing. What defines adequate housing for each person living in the city? What can the church do to further the quantity and quality of housing for all people?

I propose to consider the biblical roots of the concept of "house," the context in which we find ourselves, and a few areas in which I think our biblical understanding of "house" can inform the actions which we may take as individuals, congregations, or as the larger church.

The Hebrew word for house has at least four meanings in the Old Testament. First of all it is the place where God dwells (1 Kings 8:10, 11), or the place where we will dwell with God (Psalm 23:6).

Secondly, "house" denotes a household. This refers to the extended family including parents, children, aunts, uncles, slaves, servants and anyone else who dwells together (Genesis 7:1, 12:1, 20:18; Numbers 1:4).

Thirdly, the house is also a place in which one lives, that is a dwelling place or shelter. Such a place includes the structure and all the possessions which one owns (Exodus 20:17). The commandment not to covet your neighbor's house includes a list of possessions, i.e., manservant, maidservant, ox, or cattle.

Fourthly, house can also refer to a state of being, especially of being oppressed (Deuteronomy 13:5, 10). The Israelites referred to the time in which they were slaves in Egypt as their "house of bondage."

From the biblical perspective house is not, as we tend to think of it, a single isolated unit. Far more than a mere building, a house is also an extended family which has a continuous relationship to the past, the present and the future. A house is a place where God lives, and a place in which we will find our future fulfillment with God as recipients of his promise. The house includes our friends and family, our clan and tribe, our possessions and our social and spiritual life.

A house can even be a state of being in which we find ourselves. It can be an experience of oppression, or it can be the experience of liberation with our God and with our entire community. The biblical assumption is that everyone is part of a house, either as head, or heir, or servant, but always in relationship to the community.

Modern Housing Issues

During my ten year pastorate in Philadelphia many of the problems and issues which people talked about and brought to the church, were housing related issues. Fires, evictions, new neighbors, life-long friends moving away, and a whole range of other problems manifest in social dysfunction were felt by everyone regardless of age, race, language or tenure in the community.

Moving from Philadelphia to Jersey City provided very little change in the context. As I began work in Jersey City, the city government here began a massive urban renewal project of a section of Jersey City known as the Montgomery Gateway. Montgomery Gateway was a $7 million project which sought to construct 485 new units and 375 Section 8 apartments through both rehabilitation and new construction. In order to accomplish this, more than 360 families plus 83 individuals, 99% of whom were minority persons, were "displaced" from their community. Many others were persuaded or forced to move before the city stepped in.

Displacement is increasingly a problem affecting many areas of the United States. Each year displacement afflicts some 2½ million Americans, and some 500,000 lower-rent units are lost.

"Displacement" is the involuntary removal of an individual or family from a dwelling unit due to conditions beyond their control, despite having met all the reasonably necessary conditions of tenancy. Current literature on displacement enumerates a number of possible causes: abandonment, arson, fire, code enforcement, co-op or condo conversions, demolition, foreclosure, institutional expansion, disaster, planning and zoning decisions, housing rehabilitation, rising market prices and rents, and urban renewal.

Displacement can occur when *disinvestment* takes place in a neighborhood. A collective decision is made that a neighborhood is no longer desirable. Abandonment, arson, property deterioration, decline in city services, and large unit sub-division are among the phenomena which take place when a neighborhood undergoes disinvestment. Often the poor and racial minorities move into such a declining neighborhood, attracted by the low rents, and sometimes steered in by public and private service agencies.

Displacement also occurs due to *reinvestment* or renewal of a neighborhood. When investors move back into a neighborhood, taxes, rents and real estate prices all rise. "Urban Renewal" projects improve public areas and services, as they remove persons from the area through new and existing laws. Large units, sub-divided during a time of disinvestment, are converted back to single family homes.

The effects of displacement are profound and devastating as neighborhoods move through the disinvestment/reinvestment cycles. The effects can be measured in human and social costs, as well as economically.

An example of the economic impact of disinvestment/reinvestment is the wide scale incidence of arson. When property values begin to increase, an investor can clear a property for rehabilitation without resorting to expensive condemnation procedures and the responsibility such procedures entail. An investor can make a large profit from insurance proceeds if a well-insured property, purchased at a low price, is burned and settlement made at rapidly escalating fair market values.

But the economic cost of displacement by arson is small compared to the human and social cost, borne by the victims of displacement. Personal injury, the loss of innocent life and the loss of property due to arson are among the tragedies we read about almost daily in city papers. Criminal activities, such as arson-for-profit, illegal eviction, and violation of tenant civil rights for discriminatory reasons, add to the social and human cost of displacement.

Many of the dysfunctional social problems with which urban pastors deal on a

day-to-day basis are the direct results of displacement. Those displaced face higher housing costs, worse housing conditions, multiple moves in a short period of time, homelessness, longer commuting distances, and higher commuting costs.

Reseachers have also documented what some call the "subjective" consequences of displacement: depression, loss of community, low self-esteem, stress, and other health problems. The disruption of the community into which displacees are moved is manifest in fear, hostility, and ethnic and cultural misunderstandings.

Investment in one area often means disinvestment in another area. For example, the persons displaced from the Montgomery Gateway moved to other areas in downtown Jersey City and to the Bergen Avenue area of multi-family apartments. This means that in a matter of years, whole sections of the city undergo racial, economic, and cultural transition with all the pain, turmoil, and instability which such a transition entails.

One area of the city improves at the expense (economic and human) of another area, with the old, the poor, and the powerless becoming the victims in the transition. Those displaced from their houses are moved into a "house of bondage".

The biblical concept of "house," as we saw, includes dwelling, an extended family, a community, a sense of continuity with the past, present and future, and a relationship with God, including a place to worship him. Displacement, especially of the elderly, racial and linguistic minorities, and the poor, creates unbelievable problems for the persons displaced and for the larger community. Simply finding a new shelter is not enough; a house necessitates much more than four walls and some furniture.

Housing Advocacy

Housing, in the sense of shelter within a larger wholistic community, is a basic, God-given right. To guarantee this right, we strive to do "neighborhood ministry," seeking to build the extended church family in relation to all who dwell around us. Neighborhood ministry is thoroughly incarnational, seeking to be inclusive, intentional, interdependent and intensive.

There are some who view housing advocacy efforts as subversive to the development of the economic strength of the community. They question the church's involvement in the housing issue or other "advocacy for justice" issues. Many city officials groan when church and community groups, trying to interrupt the "disinvestment/reinvestment" cycle, attend meetings or request rights on behalf of others. As God's people, we must always side with the poor and the oppressed and raise the cry for social justice and wholeness in the community. Such partisanship is integral to the mission of the church.

A biblical understanding of housing can inform our actions as congregations, institutions, and the larger Church. We can and should be advocates for persons who need help in dealing with government or individuals so that all are provided adequate, safe housing. We can work with appropriate groups in helping persons realize their responsibility to be good caretakers of their own and others' property.

As a church we are in a unique position in the community to build bridges of understanding between new and old residents, racial and linguistic groups, and institutions working within the community, such as schools, other churches, social service organizations, tenant and block associations, and city government. Bringing people into relationships with

each other is an essential mandate of the Gospel.

We can enable people to realize their connection with the past, present and future. For Hispanics, this may mean Spanish language worship. For Blacks it may mean hymnody and worship sensitive to Black culture. For Northern Europeans it may mean Lucia Festivals and sauerkraut suppers. We can do all of that under one roof. As Christians, we sense the definite link to the future, for we are promised a mansion in God's house. We can celebrate our hope and vision and promise of the future.

How can we become involved in housing advocacy? I am aware of a number of congregations that sponsor or provide hospitality for block associations. Others have worked actively with area housing coalitions or with anti-arson coalitions. Congregations reach out and endeavor to build bridges among all those with whom they live and minister. In Jersey City and Hoboken we have been active with the Coalition to Save the Montgomery Gateway, testified at City Council Caucuses and before Zoning Board and Planning Council hearings, met with City officials, attended numerous meetings related to housing issues, and participated in an arson watch, always in partnership with many persons of all faiths and backgrounds.

Bridges of understanding have been built in many ways because of our housing efforts. Ecumenical relations among Lutherans, Catholics, Episcopalians, Reformed, Methodists and others have been strengthened, and in some cases begun.

At times it seems that the economic and political forces swirling about us make the task of keeping our house in order a difficult one. But as the church, we are challenged by our biblical, theological and ecclesiastical heritage to be advocates for housing as that is understood in a wholistic sense. As we move ahead in the partnership with God, the church needs to work effectively with others so that everyone may have a home here and in the world to come.

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

Book Reviews



THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE: GOD'S PROMISE AND OUR RESPONSE. A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace, issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, May 3, 1983. Published by the United States Catholic Conference, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20005. 103 pp. $1.50.

THE BISHOPS AND THE BOMB: WAGING PEACE IN A NUCLEAR AGE. With the Text of the Bishops' 1983 Pastoral Letter. By Jim Castelli, Foreword by Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C. New York: Doubleday Image Books, 1983. 282 pp. $7.95

PEACEWAYS. By Charles P. Lutz and Jerry L. Folk, with other contributors. Foreword by David W. Preus. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983. 224 pp. $7.95

Why has the Roman Catholic bishops' "Pastoral Letter on Peace" received so much attention? It is not only, as some might like to think, because of the sheer size of the Roman Catholic church in this country (about one out of every four Americans) or its presumed special talent for staging media events (though the spectacle of 288 bishops gathered in one place to debate these issues is indeed newsworthy). The document has received and deserves continuing attention primarily because of its inherent excellence as a social-ethical tract for the times.

What are some of the virtues of the "Peace Pastoral", as it is known, from which we in other communions could learn something? First, the process of its preparation was both unusually thorough and unusually open. Particularly noteworthy was the decision to make public the successive drafts of the document, so that the whole world could watch the drama when — to take the best-known example — the Reagan administration expressed its satisfaction that the bishops, in the third draft, proposed only to "curb," rather than "halt," the testing, production, and deployment of new nuclear weapons systems; whereupon the bishops, in the final version, changed it back to "halt" again.

Also impressive, secondly, is the range of the document, its comprehensive scope. A glance at the Table of Contents indicates how it moves from biblical and theological foundations through an analysis of the present strategic situation to some very specific judgments about policy options confronting the United States today. Thus the bishops proclaim *against* counter-population warfare; *for* a "no first use" policy; *against* the notion that a nuclear war can be "contained" or "won" in any meaningful sense. They are *against* the introduction of destabilizing weapons systems; *for* regular U.S./U.S.S.R. summit meetings; etc. These judgments are protected against the appearance of arbitrariness by the very careful conceptual grounding that has gone before. Thus the document avoids the errors of either getting stuck in generalities, or a "rush to judgment" on specific issues.

Third, it is heartening to note how seriously the letter deals with the biblical materials. No proof-texting here, but rather, a substantial survey of the various meanings of "peace" (*shalom, eirene*) in the Old and New Testaments, considered in relation to creation, the covenant, and the eschatological kingdom, and culminating in the question of how the message of Jesus was received in the early church and in the later Constantinian period.

Equally impressive is the presentation of the "just war" doctrine, which may be said to have resulted from this dialectic between eschatological vision and historical reality. The classic tenets by which a war — or particular military actions within a war — may be judged to be justifiable (i.e., tragically necessary) or *un*-justifiable are set forth, and then applied to the present situation. The unavoidable conclusion is that, in view of such basic principles as non-combatant immunity (the protection of civilian populations), to name only one, the use of nuclear weapons cannot be justified under this doctrine.

The question then becomes one of how to prevent their use, and it is at this point that the pastoral letter enters into the moral and strategic dilemmas of deterrence policy. If the *use* of nuclear weapons is found to be abhorrent, can their *possession* be justified, if this is intended only to deter an opponent from such use? The bishops' cautious answer is: Yes, but only if this is seen as a step on the way to progressive disarmament.

The Pastoral Letter concludes with a section reminiscent of Luther's catechism, in which questions and admonitions are directed to specific vocational groups: to priests, deacons, etc.; to educators, parents, and youth; to men and women in military service and in defense industries; to men and women of science; to the media; to public officials; to Catholics as citizens. Unlike the draft statement on peace being considered by the Lutheran Church in America, which pronounces a benediction on those working in the armaments industry (they are to be affirmed "as participating in the work of peacekeeping"), the Pastoral Letter calls for a searching of conscience, with the clear implication that some will find that they must dissociate themselves from such activities.

Jim Castelli's *The Bishops and the Bomb* is a "You Were There" style account of how the Peace Pastoral came to be. Castelli, a professional journalist, tracked the drafting committee's meetings and was granted access to its files — again, an unprecedented act of openness. He has woven the meetings and hearings and public debates into a fascinating narrative of how "the mind of the church" is formed on such an issue. Castelli is very frank in identifying the personages involved and the positions they took. Our own Chicago hero, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, comes off very well as the chair of the committee, combining prophetic leadership with skill in consensus-building.

Does Lutheranism in this country have anything similar to show as evidence of its concern for peace? Though this fact is still unknown to many Lutherans, it does — in the excellent statement adopted by the American Lutheran Church at its 1982 convention, "Mandate for Peacemaking," and now in this study book, *Peaceways.* The ALC statement is similar to the Pastoral Letter in intention and scope, though its length is equal only to the seven-page *summary* of the Roman Catholic document. Therefore, it cannot establish its arguments with such care or enter into the intricacies of current problems. But its basic thrust is the same: to pray the Lord of the church and of the nations to "guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79).

The ALC statement, like the Roman Catholic one, has the courage to be specific; thus it urges the U.S. government to:

1) Invite the Soviet Union and other nations to join us in a freeze on the development of any new nuclear weapons systems and on the production of any additional warheads or delivery vehicles within already-developed weapons systems.
2) Invite the Soviet Union and other nations to join us in a step-by-step reduction of the number of warheads and delivery vehicles which now exist.
3) Invite the Soviet Union and other nations to agree with us not to deploy nuclear weapons in a manner that makes warheads unverifiable, since the philosophy of security through deterrence requires that all parties be able to know the capabilities of all parties.
4) Show a willingness to take some risks through specific, unilateral steps, inviting adversary nations to reciprocate — understanding that continuation on the present course of nuclear terror carries exceedingly high risks.

The statement also has a valuable section on theological and conceptual foundations and another on action implications for the church and its members. It established peacemaking as a church-wide emphasis "for at least five years" (which will just about take it up to the point when the new Lutheran church comes into being).

Copies of the ALC statement are available from the Office of Church in Society, 422 South Fifth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55415, at 20¢ each or $12.00 per hundred. Members of other Lutheran bodies have as yet nothing comparable from their own national offices, and in at least one instance, that of the LCA, the effort to create an equivalent is meeting rough going, with the preliminary draft (already referred to above) being widely, and in my view justly, criticized as tilting too little toward peace, and too much toward the military mentality. The other Lutheran bodies would do well simply to adopt the ALC statement as their own; it has not been outdated, but rather made even more pertinent, by developments since 1982.

The book *Peaceways,* which is not directly related to the ALC statement but breathes the same spirit (and reprints the statement as an Appendix), is admirably suited to be a congregational study book on the whole question of war and peace in our time. It is co-edited by Charles Lutz, director of the ALC's Office of Church in Society, and Jerry Folk, director of the Shalom Center at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Contributors in addition to the editors include George Brand, who makes "The Case for Deterrence"; Martin Sovik, who analyzes the present impasse in arms control; Mark Lund, Christopher Chapman, and Mary Pellauer, writing on the relation of the peace issue to questions of economics, world hunger, and sexism; Peter Kjeseth and Herman Diers on biblical perspectives; Dorothee Sölle, Peter Hovda, and Alan Geyer on the implications for action. Thus this is an ecumenically oriented volume, of Lutheran origins. An appendix presents "100 Peacemaking Ideas" and "50 Key Resources," the latter including the names, addresses, and brief descriptions of twenty national organizations and action groups on peace and related issues. Questions for discussion follow each chapter, making the book all the more valuable as a text for group study.

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IN SEARCH OF HISTORY. By John Van Seters. New Haven: Yale, 1983. xiii and 399 pages. Cloth. $30.00.

Throughout this investigation of historiography in Israel, Greece, and the ancient Near East the author seeks to uncover the techniques and first appearance of history, "that intellectual form in which a civilization renders account to itself of its past." Though there are germs of this genre in the chronicles of Babylon and similarities in the later work of Herodotus, the first Israelite historian, and the first known historian in Western civilization, turns out to be that anonymous writer of Israel's exile known today as the Deuteronomistic Historian.

The massive erudition in support of this hypothesis is wrapped in a polemical cloak that challenges a number of major scholars (Gunkel, von Rad, Noth, Albright, Cross) and most of the common conclusions about the dating and reliability of biblical historical accounts. Van Seters has long held that the Pentateuchal source J is exilic or later, but now he also sees the Court History of David (2 Sam. 9-20; 1 Kgs. 1-2) as a post-exilic supplement to the Deuteronomistic History (Dtr), and he believes that the events reported therein may be an imaginary attempt to question the legitimacy of the Davidic house and contemporary messianic ideologies. In his view the author of Dtr wrote most of his work de novo, with little use of sources or other traditions.

This is not the place to debate Van Seters since this will take place at great length in journals directed to professional exegetes. The reader should know, however, that most of his conclusions are decidedly minority points of view. Brilliant comparative studies are too often blunted by his outspoken negative conclusions about the Bible's history — words like fiction, imaginary, invented, and contrived abound. Strangely, pages 57-59 are repeated verbatim on pages 239-242! But

for all his iconoclasm, Van Seters' survey of ancient historiography will now be must reading for all who would write Israel's history, and his questioning of critical orthodoxy on the date and character of Israel's "earlist" historiographical writings reveals once more that the great post-war synthesis, articulated so clearly in Bright's *History of Israel,* has now become highly controversial and urgently needs redoing in the light of later discoveries and current research.

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PILGRIMAGE OF THE HEART: A TREASURY OF EASTERN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY. Edited, with introduction and epilogue, by George A. Maloney, S. J. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983. xii and 254 pages. Paper. $8.95

The name and work of George A. Maloney are well known to those who have, at some point in their career, developed or sustained an interest in devotional or "mystical theology" of the Orthodox Church. Fr. Maloney has been director of the John xxiii Institute for Eastern Christian Studies at Fordham for many years; he is well known through more than twenty other books. He is eminently qualified to assemble a compilation such as this.

The book's introduction brings to our attention some of the main names in the history of Orthodox spirituality and indicates the peculiar shape of that tradition, with its emphasis on the path of negative theology and the psychology of the soul (undeveloped in any full sense in the West until Teresa and John of the Cross), the focus on the prayer of silence and the Jesus-prayer (the hesychast tradition), and the pre-eminent focus on God as One and as Love. The East, unlike those parts of the West dominated by the Augustinian/Platonic tradition, tends to see creation, redemption, and sanctification as one whole work which is known in time as an historical progression but is, *sub specie aeternitatis,* the full whole of the One who is Love; this One is experienced beyond the Divine Darkness through prayer and sacraments ("the mysteries"). Thus the Incarnation is an "act" of the Divine logic which follows as a matter of course from the "act" of Creation, which is an effusion of the same Love. The Orthodox do not hesitate to go further: Athanasius said "God became human in order that the human might become divine," and this has been Orthodox teaching through the centuries. In what way we can become divine was answered in time by the doctrine of the uncreated and created energies of God; we participate in the latter, not in the former.

Fr. Maloney's book follows this theologic of orthodoxy; the chapters are organized theologically, not chronologically, and the main characters in the developing drama are brought in as witness to the theo-logic. The clearest statements of positions hammered out in the fire of love for and in God have been chosen for this anthology. It is truly a masterful work. Maloney's book opens up the world of orthodox spirituality to those who have neither the patience nor the desire to seek the *Philokalia* (a three volume work).

I have been one who, for years, has advocated a healthy dose of Eastern spirituality as an antidote to the rationalism and moralism of so much of the West. Fr. Maloney's book is the right medium for the medicine, if not of immortality, at least of resuscitation.

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ANCIENT MYTHS AND BIBLICAL FAITH: SCRIPTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS. By Foster R. McCurley. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983. xiii and 192 pages. Paper. $11.95

The problem is not being unaware of mythological themes that echo in Scripture but in knowing how to deal with them. Some prefer to ignore them or consign them to the arcane preoccupations of scholars, and by default deny their significance. Others may delight in them for their shock value or the evidence they provide for scholarship or openness. Rarely, however, are they integrated into the Gospel proclamation.

The excellence of McCurley's book is, aside from the wealth of data assembled and clearly presented, the model of balanced and positive integration of these features in the overall Biblical witness. He isolates three major themes basic to Ancient Near Eastern mythology: the battle of order against chaos, life-death (involving fertility and sex), and the sacred mountain. Each major theme is divided into three chapters. The first examines how that theme functioned, sometimes differently, in the major cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan. The second chapter studies how that theme is utilized in the Old Testament. Concepts and names similar to those in the ANE mythologies are not merely cultural remnants that weren't sufficiently eliminated but deliberate choices with specific emphases about the nature and work of Yahweh as distinct from the ANE gods. The third chapter shows how the New Testament further reapplied that theme to clarify the person and mission of Jesus Christ. Some of the freshest passages of the book come in this section: the significance of "rebuke," the eschatological battle in Revelation, the transfiguration. The final chapter is a superb summary of the entire book.

What makes this book helpful is not just the assembling of data or the clarity of writing or the individual insights, but the underlying perspective that alerts us to the nuances and emphases that startled and instructed the faithful of the biblical age.

As rich and meaty as this book is, it would be an even more usable tool had an index of Scripture references and names/themes been compiled and included. Even that wish, however, simply emphasizes that this book will be a helpful reference and guide long after the initial reading.

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THE LUTHER LEGACY. By George Wolfgang Forell. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983. 79 pages. Paper. $3.95

This short work by one of North America's pre-eminent Luther scholars is a helpful overview of Luther's importance in the 20th century. Forell places Luther within the theological matrix of his time and culls from the Reformer's writings essential concepts which are worth remembering even after the 1983 anniversary year. Forell says, "Thus, it is my claim that the reasons why one might want to recall Luther today are essentially theological — even if they have social and political implications. . . But we should remember that Luther's theology was hammered out in the midst of life, a life of prayer and study, preaching, teaching, and debate. If we want to understand Luther, we must approach him not as archaeologists digging for the past, but as fellow Christians listening to a faithful teacher who tried to obey his Lord's command 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.' (Mt. 28: 19-20)."

Forell treats issues such as the "setting" and course of Luther's life from his childhood through his great controversies of his later life, as well as the great theological concerns of "Word and Sacrament" and "Faith Active in Love". The inclusion of wood-cuts and prints appropriate to the text offers the reader useful aids for understanding Luther's context. All in all, this book is a welcome introduction to the question of Luther's continuing impact on Christian life and thought.

Dennis A. Laskey
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THE COST OF AUTHORITY. By Graham Shaw. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983. xi and 292 pages. Kivar. $16.95.

As little as a decade ago, few would have imagined how biblical studies would currently be exploding with an abudance of new methods for reading the scriptures. Graham Shaw's book is an example of one such creative approach to New Testament studies. Shaw himself hardly fits the literary-archaeologist mold out of which, until recently, almost all exegetes have come. He is Chaplain of Exeter College at Oxford University. His motivation for this study is pastoral and begins with a question: "Why is the church more effective in conveying guilt rather than communicating forgiveness?" To consider

this, Shaw fashions an *ad hoc* method which is suggested by the religious writings of Leo Tolstoy: to consider doctrines in light of the interests of those who preach them. Of what advantage is it to believe what one believes? What benefit accrues to the person believing it? This rather cynical approach has created this book, dubbed by Krister Stendahl on the cover as "wonderfully troublesome." I would heartily concur.

In an introductory chapter, Shaw calls the church to institutional repentance. At the heart of the gospel is a call to freedom. What the history of the church reveals is a story of how authority has been used to manipulate the faithful and control them. Shaw's plan is to look at the Pauline corpus and the Gospel According to Mark to see how authority functions within these texts and to assess whether it is consonant with the freedom which the gospel proclaims.

Part One consists of ten chapters in which Shaw considers Paul. He portrays a particularly perverse Paul, who delights in using the language of freedom and faith to assert his own power within the Christian communities he leads. Each of the first nine chapters covers one of the Pauline epistles. If your theology is heavily grounded on a footing of Pauline texts, you may find yourself reacting with a combination of embarrassment and rage as you read Shaw. At times he appears unfair; he is a master of colon-criticism — telling us what Paul is saying, followed by a colon and then the text itself. Shaw always reads Paul in the worst possible light, and his analysis would be discounted except that there is enough arrogance in Paul himself to make all of it "wonderfully troublesome."

Some examples will help. According to Shaw, Paul is masterful at using flattery for manipulation. He demands complete obedience without being challenged or criticized. Paul's discussion of sexual behavior in 1 Corinthians suggests to Shaw "a combination of unperceived homosexual preference and repudiation of the body and its attendant sexuality." (p. 75). Paul's charismatic spirituality is used consistently to bolster the authority of the apostle rather than encourage spiritual insight of other Christians.

And yet for all of his stinging criticism, Shaw ends this section with a note of praise for Paul. Moving from the earlier to later writings, one finds a modification in Paul's position. By the time of Romans, Paul is suggesting that freedom and mutual respect must modify the life of the Christian. In fact, it is Paul's own position which begins to be modified in Romans 14. Comments Shaw, "we see the leaven at work."

Part Two uses the same methodology for reading Mark, but its effect is less consistent, or, perhaps, more subtle. From the beginning, the reader of Mark is in a position of superiority compared to characters of the story by being informed of Jesus' messianic status. The author, unlike Paul, remains invisible, working through the subtlety of narrative. Shaw studies miracles as indicative of the power of faith to free people from impotence and confront them with the divine will. Jesus' authority is seen in his challenge of religious authority and further developed in his practice and teaching of reciprocal, rather than hierarchical, forgiveness. Shaw analyzes the secrecy-motif in Mark as something larger than the messianic secret; he sees it, rather, as Jesus' freedom from conformity to an audience. This secrecy, however, is self-dissolving, and the Markan gospel distances itself from the twelve in order to see leadership of Mark's church as a foil, portrayed in categories of servanthood and poverty. With these, says Shaw, Mark takes up the subterfuge of control of which Paul is guilty.

In a concluding chapter, Shaw "counts the cost" of ecclesial authority. He urges a reassessment of scriptural authority by suggesting that holiness is not submission but rather exercise of freedom. He further calls for a repudiation of paradox, mystery and "act of God" as fronts behind which Christianity hides itself from criticism. Finally, Shaw suggests that "the only reality of God lies in the use of that word by human beings" (p. 282), a use which makes possible creative imagination by which we construct a new and different world.

For all its troublesome wonder, this book finally leaves me with too little to make Christian faith viable. If God-talk is simply

human consciousness writ large, why not simply dispense with it altogether? Would that not be the greatest exercise of honesty and human freedom? Or perhaps Shaw makes a wrong turn very early on, when he suggests that the essence of the gospel is human freedom. That is a type of good news consonant with twentieth-century Western thought, but the truth of these first-and second-century texts may point to a good news beyond freedom, beyond human dignity, in the constraints of a new creation. Shaw is valuable in encouraging us to view the subterfuge of control in New Testament texts; his work on Paul is especially challenging. There is a great deal here worthy of our wrestling. But in the end Shaw's vision of an emancipated Christian faith is too thin to support either text or life.

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LUKE: A CHALLENGE TO PRESENT THEOLOGY. By Eduard Schweizer. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982. 103 pages. Paper. $9.95.

Eduard Schweizer is an elder statesman among contemporary interpreters of the Bible, and in this book, first offered as public lectures at Highland Park Presbyterian Church in Dallas, Texas, he reveals his heart as well as his head. The heart is warm, and the head is level. It is fascinating to hear him reviewing the theological and exegetical trends of the 20th century, since he knew or knows so many of the greats as his teachers or colleagues (Ch. I-II).

Equally as fascinating and even more helpful is his careful analysis of terms and slogans often tossed about rather carelessly, as though everyone agreed on their definitionss and truth. He looks hard at what history is and what the notion of salvation-history implies, since Luke is often named as the first church historian and the inventor of "salvation history" (Heilsgeschichte). (Ch. II)

In Schweizer's view Luke is far better described as a story teller than as a theologian of salvation history, a champion of orthodoxy, or an advocate of existentialism. He sees some truth in each of these claims, especially in the last, which is surprising. Schweizer says that Luke offers us rich and unsystematized fare, an abundance of narratives, not slogans, not titles, not formulas, not dogmas or patterns or theories. (Ch. IV)

Finally (Ch. V) he attempts to apply some of his insights on Luke to the dialogue between Catholics and Protestants. He begins with an exploration of parables and goes on to speak of Jesus as parable of God and of Luke as storyteller, challenging both Protestant and Catholic traditions regarding the mode and manner of God's presence in Jesus Christ.

Typos present in the book are always annoying, but usually understandable enough. For example, this book has omitted about half of the umlauts required in German names and words. More intriguing are other typos. The publisher offers "Will" for "Willi" Marxsen (p. 18), perhaps because they are on familiar terms. Instead of Old Marburgers, the Bultmann alumni are called Marbugians, perhaps a combination of Marburg and Humbug (p. 19). And the prayer is called "Vater User," perhaps out of a sense that the Father after all does condescend to serve and be used by his creation (p. 45).

But these are small matters. We have in this book the warm and thoughtful musings of a man of real stature on important matters: how can we and how should we speak of God? What aid does Luke offer us? Schweizer wrestles passionately and helpfully with these questions.

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THE MARTIN LUTHER EASTER BOOK. Translated and Arranged by Roland H. Bainton. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983. 87 pages. Paper. $3.50.

This volume is a portion of Luther's Meditations on the Gospels, previously published (1962) by Westminster Press. Fortress brought out this new edition as a complement to its *The Martin Luther Christmas Book* and as one of its offerings for Martin Luther's 500th birthday.

It is a fine job, lovingly translated and edited by the late Professor Bainton who

has also selected woodcuts of sixteenth century artist Virgil Solis to accompany the text.

It is perhaps a bit unfortunate that we do not have Luther's meditations on the words and deeds of the ministry of Jesus, especially the comments on the miracles. We have become accustomed, I think, to Luther's warm and marvelous appreciations of Christ in his lowliness and weakness, and it is interesting to see how Luther handles Jesus' mighty deeds. But perhaps there will be another anniversary!

This present volume majors in the rejection and suffering of Christ, of course. And it is all handled movingly. Meanwhile we can all be grateful to Bainton and to Fortress for making available these meditations on the struggles of Christ — and of Luther.

Robert Smith

APARTHEID IS A HERESY. Edited by John W. de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983. xiii and 184 pages. Paper. $5.95.

Co-author and contributor de Gruchy grew up as a white South African in the mostly unsegregated atmosphere of the Congregational Church in Cape Town. Later, as pastor and scholar, he came to see that English-speaking churches in South Africa, though not pro-apartheid in principle, tended to practice discrimination much as their Dutch Reformed neighbors. He became a convinced opponent of the system and a major architect of a strategy by a group of Reformed churchmen — black, white and coloured — to declare apartheid heretical on scriptural and theological grounds. This audacious group has now assumed a "confessing church" presence within the Reformed churches and has sought to make apartheid a matter of "status confessionis" for all South African churches. De Gruchy's recent visit to the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, coinciding with the publication of this volume, provided a public forum on the church struggle in South Africa.

In 1961, the World Council of Churches, in a joint consultation with South African churches at Cottesloe, condemned discrimination in the church on the basis of race and set forth the goal of a visible expression of unity in Christ. This precipitated twenty years of anguished debate by Reformed Christians and led to a hardening of attitudes and the withdrawal of most Dutch Reformed Churches from both the WCC and the South African Council of Churches. In 1982, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, led by a coloured South African, Allan Boesak, took the unique step of declaring apartheid a heresy and challenging the right of white South African churches to remain within the WARC unless they altered their position. This volume documents the entire development biblically, theologically and pastorally by providing interpretive essays and *pro et contra* statements by the churches involved. The essays are living testimony to the manner in which church life in South Africa has become a major battleground in the struggle for human liberation and reconciliation in Christ.

James A. Scherer
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

COMMENTARY ON THE OCCASIONAL SERVICES. By Philip H. Pfatteicher. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983. Cloth. $16.95.

Philip Pfatteicher has become the definitive commentator on the *Lutheran Book of Worship.* The co-author of the *Manual on the Liturgy* and the author/editor of *Festivals and Commemorations* has now written an authoritative commentary on the orders in *Occasional Services: A Companion to Lutheran Book of Worship.*

An introduction provides a history of occasional service books and agendas in North American Lutheranism and a description of the work of the Task Force on Occasional Services appointed by the four Lutheran Church bodies which cooperated in this project (AELC, ALC, ELCC, LCA). The chapters in this commentary provide an important clue to the organization of *Occasional Services* in terms of the orders grouped into each division. Pfatteicher provides a general theological and pastoral introduction for

each major division (e.g. The Services related to Baptism) and then analyzes the individual orders in that division in terms of purpose, characteristics, historical background, a survey of the service, and a comparison of the rite of *Occasional Services* with comparable rites in non-Lutheran books (mostly Roman Catholic and Episcopalian). He comments only on what is in *Occasional Services,* not on what is not in it. He also writes with the objectivity and restraint that befits a reference book. That's what this volume is. One is not likely to sit down and read through it. But pastors and other worship leaders ought to buy it and consult it before they use an order in *Occasional Services* for the first time. Pfatteicher provides a vision of the intended use of each order along with some pastoral guidance as to how each order may be adapted to various situations. The only major fault I find is a failure to link the tradition of American Lutheran occasional service books with the longer tradition of manuals, agendas, pontificals, etc. in the introduction. This would have provided a broader vision of the ecumenical liturgical tradition in which this new worship resource takes its place.

Some people are exercized over the fact that Augsburg and Fortress have published *LWB*-related materials stamped with the *LBW* emblem, thus indicating that these commentaries have an authoritative status which they should not have. Therefore it needs to be pointed out that all *official LBW* volumes have green covers. Augsburg's *LBW* reference books are in brown covers (including the Ministers Desk Edition, which is also a tool even though it is simply a miniature of the official Ministers Edition which is used at the altar) and Fortress's *LBW* reference books are in maroon covers. Even though this commentary is authoritative (by virtue of the author's scholarship), it is not authorized; it's a maroon book.

Frank C. Senn, Pastor
Christ the Mediator Lutheran Church
Chicago, Illinois

THE NEW CHURCH DEBATE: ISSUES FACING AMERICAN LUTHERANISM. Edited with an introduction by Carl E. Braaten. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983. v and 183 pages. Paper. $6.95.

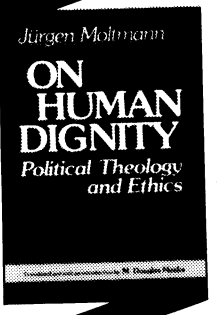
The book is a selection of the essays delivered at a symposium sponsored by the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. The symposium was organized to bring together Lutheran theologians to debate the structure of the new Lutheran church that promises to become a reality in 1988. The symposium was organized by a systematic theologian and all the papers in this volume were prepared by systematic theologians.

Herein lies both the strength and the weakness of this volume. It was good that a group of high-powered systematic theologians were able to focus on some of the theological issues involved and to force the large number of attenders to join them in that struggle. Despite Robert Jenson's suspicion that theology does not matter a tinker's dam, it is true that church administrators and shapers want to do that which is theologically proper if theologians will help them by preparing practical, down to earth interpretations. Not all of the essays in this volume measure up to that criterion.

The weakness of this volume is the glaring absence of the formal representation of exegetes and historians. It is almost incredible that a symposium on the future shape of American Lutheranism would ignore its own roots in Scripture and church history. The systematic theologians could enjoy several days of dreaming free from the restrictions of the other two disciplines. It is true that the systematic theologians occasionally refer to historical events from the church's past, so some of the essays seem to take history seriously. But none of the burning hermeneutical issues that are demanding the attention of exegetes and historians today show up in these essays. The ecumenical perspective is also absent from volume, although the essays prepared by Father John Meyerndorff and Father Avery Dulles appeared independently in an issue of *Dialog* magazine.

The publisher's blurb on the outside back cover of the book incorrectly identifies the AELC as the American

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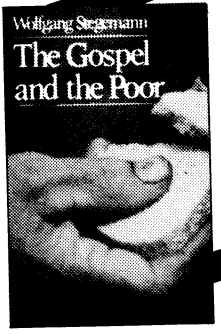
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Herbert T. Mayer
St. Louis, MO

"RIGHTEOUSNESS" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: "JUSTIFICATION" IN THE UNITED STATES LUTHERAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE. By John Reumann, with responses by Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Jerome D. Quinn. Philadelphia: Fortress and New York: Paulist, 1982. 278 pages. Paper. $13.95.

Here we have three essays prepared for the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue: Reumann's exhaustive study of " 'Righteousness' in the New Testament," Fitzmyer's careful response to Reumann's essay, and Quinn's brief discussion of "The Pastoral Epistles on Righteousness."

At heart the book is an extended word study of all the occurrences of the verb, noun, and adjectives deriving from the root *dikaio* in the New Testament. First Reumann surveys righteousness in the Old Testament (making far too much of "cosmic" righteousness, in my opinion). Then he proceeds through the New Testament, dealing with the various bodies of literature chronologically, studying each verse in detail. He finds that righteousness/justification is a far more pervasive theme than even recent scholarhip has seen. Justification is not simply a Pauline development. Already pre-pauline materials (I Peter 3:18, I Cor. 6:11, Rom. 3:25 and 4:26, to note a few examples) make use of justification terminology.

This is not a particularly easy book to read. Reumann deals with a wide spectrum of scholarly views on each verse. At times he indulges in the exegete's prerogative of noting alternatives without coming to any definite choice personally. Fitzmyer's critique is a boon. One soon learns to read Reumann with this critique at hand. (The numbering of Reumann's paragraphs simplifies this immensely.) This "dialogue" sets many issues clearly and rescues the reader from the flood of detail. Often the concurrence of their views is striking. On James, for example, they seem to converge on a mediating position, finding James to be correcting not Paul himself, but a caricature of Paul which would propose a "cheap" faith/assent alone.

The final chapter of "Summary Reflections" (together with a very useful chart of development, p. 188) pulls the matter together helpfully. He sums it up ". . . the prevalence of righteousness/justification thought . . . is even more impressive than the sixteenth-century confessors probably assumed, and certainly more varied than most Lutherans have realized . . . it has a sound claim for centrality in the Scripture." It is difficult to claim *priority* for any single biblical metaphor in these days when the discontinuities between biblical theologies seem to loom larger than the continuities. Yet if one understands "centrality" to mean "lying at the heart of the spectrum," what metaphor/perspective would one claim is a more central statement of the Gospel?

Reumann also points out that righteousness language is pervasive in the Scripture, and indeed it is. Yet it is at this point that I would put a major question to Reumann. If much of scriptural righteousness language is used in an ethical rather than a forensic/justification sense, can one argue from all these passages for the centrality of the justification perspective?

Fitzmyer admits to finding justification more significant in the New Testament than he had earlier thought, but still prefers to speak of it as *the* primary metaphor only in Paul. Nonetheless, the evident agreement between the two scholars is heartening. I wonder just how much disagreement lurks behind Fitzmyer's surprising final paragraph. He observes that a complete study of the biblical basis of "justification" should include a study not only of righteousness, but also of reward and merit.

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Dialogue between Realist and Romantic

Walter M. Stuhr

President, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

Recently I visited an exhibit of the work of Grant Wood, at the Chicago Art Institute. Wood's fame is based on his portraits and landscapes of rural and small town Iowa. His "American Gothic" may be the most familiar of all American paintings.

Wood's America is laid out in neat, freshly turned rows, and tidy streets. His people are straightforward, in tune with the dependable cycle of seasons, and proud of who they are and where they live. There is occasional evidence of urban-industrial artifacts and values; touches of satire can also be detected. But overall, his work is a celebration of rural, small-town values. The urban-industrial manifestations are clearly intrusions, and the satire is never allowed to dominate.

Accompanying the exhibit is a slide show sponsored by the Chicago Tribune. It depicts the larger socio-historical context within which Wood painted. It is the Depression years with their unemployment, breadlines, closed banks, land foreclosures, crowded cities and political upheaval. It is an America and Americans in deep distress, the America captured by the Depression photographers such as Dorothea Lange. That America is virtually ignored by Wood, and for that reason he is considered a romantic, while Lange is considered a realist. As such, he has received both popular and critical acclaim — a tribute to both his skill as an artist and his effectiveness in reaching people.

We pastors and other church leaders have similar goals — to receive recognition for our professional skills and to demonstrate our effectivness in reaching people. Such goals are not unwarranted. If we are going to have a "professional" ministry, we should have goals consistent with the "profession."

As with the artist, we also feel the tension between the romantic and realistic in our work. Demographically, our Lutheran churches, especially as we consider the AELC, ALC and LCA together, have strong elements of both the rural, small town and the urban, the agricultural and the industrial. But, even where the demographics are urban-industrial, the pull of the rural-agricultural is strong.

Probably a majority of our members have the Grant Wood-like images and values as a part of their consciousness, if not of their immediate experience. On the other hand, the world as it really is seems driven by images and values associated with urban-industrial life: competition and greed; violence and suspicion; dirt and noise; extremes of poverty and wealth, ignorance and erudition. They are not intrusions upon reality; they are reality.

It is often lamented that our people wish to escape to the romantic rather than to be confronted by the realistic. Since we judge the Gospel to require the realistic approach we feel forced to choose between popularity and integrity. Certainly the choice is there, but the

alternatives are not so distinctly lodged in the two perspectives.

For example, isn't it true that Gospel-related values are similar to those associated with the romantic perspective, and dissimilar to those associated with the realist perspective? There is a sense in which people seek to escape to the realistic — the inevitability of human failure, and need to be confronted by the romantic — the vision of what God calls us to be.

The error is in associating failure with one set of demographic characteristics, and vision with another. Contemporary social and individual failures cut right across the demographics, as do the glimpses of the vision. Our task is to identify the failures and lift up the vision in whatever the circumstances. But we must not tie them so closely to a particular set of circumstances as to abdicate individual and communal responsibility in favor of social determinism.

For carrying out our task, the artists remind us of the power of imagery in reaching people. Those artists who must effectively reach people are those whose images touch and evoke a response from the images which are already a part of the experience, beliefs, and hopes for the viewers. Both romantic and realistic images can have the power, since both the romantic and realistic are in all of us.

The objective, however, is not simply to strike the responsive chord, and thereby to evoke popular and perhaps critical acclaim. Having evoked a response, we want people to acknowledge their failure and renew the vision — to be changed.

The other side of the power of images is that they can become ends in themselves. We can as easily leave the powerful images of the sermon when we exit the church as we can the powerful images of the artist when we exit the exhibit hall. The emotional response to the image can be the extent of our action. Or we can wrap ourselves so tightly in the images as to insulate ourselves from the world around us, indeed even from God.

The Grant Wood exhibit comes to San Francisco after it closes in Chicago. I'm going to see it again. Does that make me a romantic? I don't think so. But having thus reflected, I would like to pursue the dialogue at greater depth.

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