June 1983
Volume 10
Number 3

CURRENTS in theology and mission

Essays In Honor of
Alfred Von Rohr Sauer

CONTENTS

Page

Editorial: To Von 130
Ralph W. Klein

Righteousness: Human and Divine 134
Carl Graesser, Jr.

Of Things Beyond Me: Wisdom in the Book of Job 142
Norman C. Habel

History and Poetry in Lamentations 155
Delbert R. Hillers

Oh Blessed Rage 162
Herbert E. Hohenstein

Habakkuk and Justification by Faith 169
Walter E. Rast

Bone of My Bones and Flesh of My Flesh:
The Politics of the Yahwist 176
Walter Wifall

A Book Worth Discussing:
Occasional Services: A Companion to
Lutheran Book of Worship 184
Marion J. Hatchett

Book Reviews 186

Briefly Noted 192

Drawings by Stacy Boorn

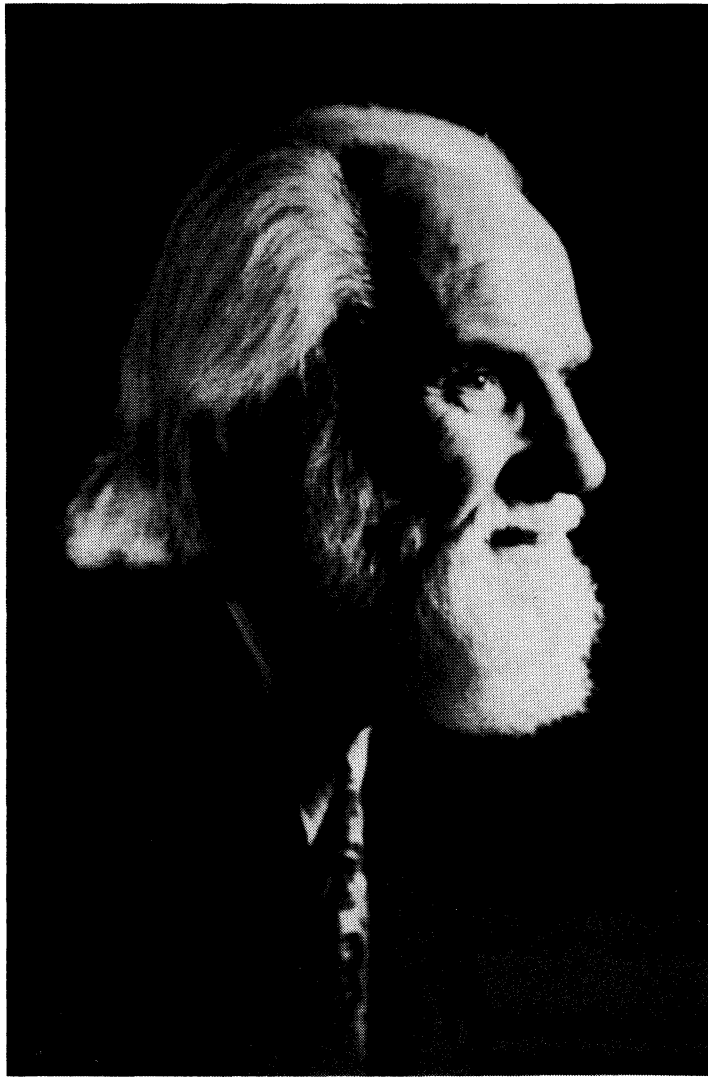
Staff

Printed in U.S.A.

Editor: Ralph W. Klein
Assistant Editor: Stacy Boorn
Homiletics Editor: George W. Hoyer
Circulation Manager: Penny Berner
Editorial Board: Wesley A. Bartels, Thelda Bertram, Stacy Boorn, Ronald Fels, Marcus Lohrmann, Ronald Modras, Arthur E. Otto, H. Douglas Rathjen, John H. Tietjen.

CURRENTS IN THEOLOGY AND MISSION is published bimonthly, February, April, June, August, October, December, by Seminex, a non-profit organization, 539 North Grand Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63103, to which all business correspondence is to be addressed. Subscription rate is $8.50 per year. Second Class Postage Paid at St. Louis, Missouri 63103.

CURRENTS is indexed in Elenchus, IZBW, NTA, OTA, Religion Index I (formerly IRPL), Religious and Theological Abstracts, and Theologische Literaturzeitung.
(ISSN:0098 – 2113)



To Von!

The person who ceases to change
ceases to remain the same.

Alfred von Rohr Sauer, whose forthcoming seventy-fifth birthday is commemorated by the essays in this issue, could be characterized by the word "presence." Think of the way he used to stride across campus or rattle the windows with his stentorian voice. Think of his snow-white (Moses-like) beard or the way he is always the Vorsänger at parties at his house. Born on the day of St. Nicholas, in recent years he has played a lanky Santa Claus for student and faculty children.

Trained in the Wisconsin Synod, he did graduate work at Chicago and Bonn, served Lutheran parishes from 1939-1948, and taught us all at Concordia and Christ Seminary — Seminex since 1948. In the early days — as he would be the first to admit — he was an authoritarian. Veterans of those classes remember memorizing Genesis 1 in Hebrew and his incredible quizzes. Those of us who took Arabic with him found ourselves memorizing page after page of the Arabian Nights. He was "old school" when it came to biblical criticism.

But that all changed, beginning perhaps with a sabbatical leave in Jerusalem with one of his greatest students, the late archaeologist Paul Lapp. Those of us who were students in the early 60s witnessed the change, complete with equivocations, and grew with him. By the time the siege of Concordia began in 1969, he made a solid phalanx with all his colleagues.

Perhaps as striking as the shift in scholarly viewpoints was the transformation in personal bearing. Who can forget the moment he tore up the Board's notice of early retirement before a cheering student body? "Von" comes from "von Rohr," a name of German nobility, but now a dear nickname used by colleagues and, of course, these days by students. He thrives in the lifestyle of Seminex, biking

at times to work or slipping away in the afternoon to "pump iron" at a local health club.

Von participated in archaeological excavations at Tell Deir Alla and Tell Ta'annek, finding at that latter site an impressive Canaanite cultic stand — and hundreds of pig bones! Recently his scholarly activities have included membership on the committee to revise the RSV, where he has provided the drafts of the books of Exodus, Hosea, and Jonah.

Naturally —!— this year he is taking a year-long course in Clinical Pastoral Education, readying himself for a new phase in his career, serving as a hospital chaplain. Without a doubt he will know more psalms by heart than any of his colleagues.

His wife Ellie deserves a *Festschrift* all her own for her freshness, her incarnation of the definition of hard work, her independence, and her mothering of the six Sauer children. The following essays by former students of Von are dedicated to him, but we all know that without Ellie, Von would be a far lesser person.

The Essays in Honor of Alfred Von Rohr Sauer

Carl Graesser, Jr. writes about the biblical word righteousness, which means doing what is called for in a given relationship. Righteous can mean innocent; its antonymn is wicked. The poor in the Bible are righteous in God's eyes; so too are those who aid the poor by righteous judging in court. We are to show God's bias for the needy. The righteous person does what God commands, trusts in his promises, or confesses sin and relies on God's mercy. God rescues those in need in order to continue his relationship with them. Hence righteousness comes to be a synonym of salvation.

For **Norman Habel** *"wisdom"* is that deep and mysterious principle which governs all other laws and principles of the cosmos. Such wisdom is inaccessible to humans, and the book of Job discredits the claim of the friends to have inherited it from their first fathers. God does possess wisdom, but Job accused him of manipulating wisdom with fickle intent. Through the divine speeches Job is led to

understand that he cannot comprehend God's design unless he has first-hand knowledge of the principle governing the cosmic blueprint. Even the wisdom of piety (to fear the Lord is wisdom) offers Job no understanding of the reason for his suffering. But while Job lacks wisdom, he gains knowledge of God through the theophany in the whirlwind. Wisdom is inaccessible but God is approachable. Job sees God and survives.

Delbert Hillers reminds us that history is not the only vehicle for God's revelation. Through passages from Lamentations he demonstrates that references to foxes prowling around Jerusalem or people engaging in cannibalism during a siege may be traditional ways of depicting the severity of suffering. Yahweh is active in history — that notion dominates in Lamentations — but historical events are not revelatory in themselves. Though Jerusalem's fall was the fulfillment and confirmation of covenantal theology, reassurance came to the nation through the religious experiences of individuals. What individual Israelites had found to be true in their private lives — "Yahweh's mercy is surely not at an end . . . it is new every morning"—is the basis for confidence and hope at Jerusalem's fall.

According to **Herbert Hohenstein,** our conversations with God too often are wishy washy, sparing God our feelings of disappointment and anger. In the laments of the Psalter and the book of Job, the worshipers acknowledge the ambiguity of faith — life is not all sweetness and roses; God is both benefactor and enemy. If one cannot cry out before God, then, pray tell, before whom can one scream? God, who listens to our cry, does not let anger be the final word. In the cross God showed himself no stranger to suffering, the holy rood shouts the love of God. Our liturgies need to be for the bitter and despairing as well as for those who are celebrating.

The book of Habakkuk was written in the early 6th century, and it too complains about violence and ruin, but also about God's justice gone overboard in letting the Babylonian enemy ravage unchecked. **Walter E. Rast** discusses the structure of the book (two laments and

responses, a series of woes, and a hymn) and focuses on 2:4, which he would translate "The righteous one shall live by his steadfast faith." Note that he does not oppose faith to faithfulness, but argues that the biblical text calls for *faithful living toward* God's promised action. Before the oppressor was finally dealt with, Israel was urged to trust in the ultimate vindication of God. He sees Habakkuk as a kind of embryonic apocalyptic, with the woes of 2:5-20 showing the ultimate overthrow of the chastiser, and the poem in chapter 3 hailing God in a grand finale, anticipating the time when he will be all in all.

The interpretations of Gen. 2-3 are legion, and **Walter Wifall** adds to this list with a political approach. He sees these chapters as a kind of critical allegory of wicked queen Athaliah and her weak consort Jehoram. Whatever these chapters say about creation or the fall of mankind in general, our author proposes that they castigate Athaliah for her Canaanite loyalties and threaten her with banishment from the temple of the Lord. The Yahwist, whom Wifall is inclined to identify with Jehoiada, foresees an enmity between Athaliah's grandson Jehoash and Canaanite religion. While such a reading of these chapters must remain tentative, it reminds us of how all biblical theology and all our own theology must intersect with the totality of everyday life.

There is a time to stand firm and a time to change; a time to weep and a time to laugh. This year is surely a time for a grateful church and a host of grateful students to rejoice, and to praise God for an honored teacher. Happy 75th, Von!

Ad multos annos!
Ralph W. Klein
Editor

Righteousness, Human and Divine[1]

Carl Graesser, Jr.
Professor of Exegetical Theology (Old Testament), Christ Seminary — Seminex

"Righteousness" lies at the heart of the biblical story, from father Abraham, whose faith "was counted to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6), and Amos, who thundered "Let righteousness roll down like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24), down to Paul, who proclaimed redemption in Christ Jesus, "to show God's righteousness" (Rom. 3:24). For many of us Western Christians the term "righteousness" conjures up a vision of the statue at the court building steps, blindfolded justice, holding the balances of "equal" justice. Few images could be more misleading and inappropriate for grasping the biblical concept of "righteousness."[2]

Luther found, to his dismay, that such an idea of a "righteous" God led only to despair. More careful attention to actual Old Testament usage in the context of ancient Israelist culture is very rewarding and brings happy surprises. In fact it was Luther's discovery of what God's righteousness really meant that lay at the heart of his theology.

In The Right Relationship

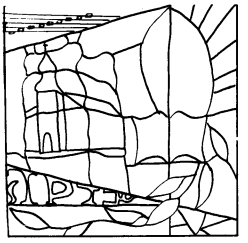
Righteousness is a relationship word. At the root of its many developed meanings is the idea of "being right with the other person", of doing that which is called for in the relationship, that which continues and preserves the relationship. When David found his pursuer Saul in a cave at En-Gedi he chose not to harm him. Saul then praised him, "You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil" (I Sam. 24:17). More strikingly, when Judah failed to provide daughter-in-law Tamar with a Levirate husband, Tamar tricked her father-in-law into fulfilling that duty by posing as a harlot and seducing him. Yet Judah says of the relationship, "She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah". (Gen. 38:26). It is hard to imagine what could show more clearly that "righteousness" is a relationship word than a "more righteous" harlot.

Righteous and Wicked In Legal Contexts

Consider the court system in the Israelite village. When two neighbors could not agree about the ownership of a certain errant sheep, they would go to the city gate with their argument or "lawsuit." There the elders of their clan

[1] It is a pleasure to include this study in a collection honoring my father in the Old Testament, teacher, and colleague, Von Sauer. It is appropriate that it should deal with a virtue which he has modeled so well for us.

[2] It is unfortunate that some biblical translations (following the Vulgate *justitia*) occasionally use the term "justice" to translate "righteousness." See for example Psalm 143:1 in the New American Bible.



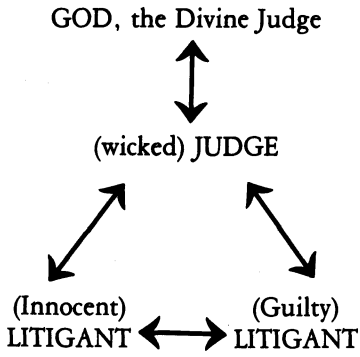
would hear the evidence argued. In such a lawsuit one person would be "righteous"/in the right relationship/innocent *(ṣaddîq)*. The other would be "wicked"/in the wrong relationship/guilty *(rāšā')*. After deciding the case, the elders would "declare the one to be righteous" and "declare the other to be wicked." The judgments "righteous" and "wicked" were not decisions about the litigants' overall reputations. (The "righteous" one might actually be a lout generally.) It referred only to the relationship of these two litigants in *this* particular case of the disputed sheep. This language is displayed in Deut. 25:1: "If there is a dispute between men and they come into court, and the judges decide between them, acquitting the innocent (literally, "declaring the rightous one to be righteous") and condemning the guilty (literally, "declaring the wicked one to be wicked") . . . ." When the evidence in a certain case was unclear, the accused might be asked to take a self-imprecating oath of innocence, thus passing the decision up to the higher, heavenly court. Therefore Solomon prayed at the dedication of the temple, "if a man . . . comes and swears his oath . . . in this house, then hear thou in heaven and act, and judge thy servants, condemning the guilty (literally "declaring the wicked one to be wicked") by bringing his conduct upon his own head, and vindicating the righteous (literally "declaring the righteous one to be righteous") by rewarding him according to his righteousness" (I Kgs. 8:31-32). Clearly the English "righteous" and "wicked" are not the best translations in such a court context, "innocent" or "in the right" and "guilty" or "in the wrong" would be more accurate English translations.

In order to understand how the term "righteous" is used of God in the Old Testament, it is important to recognize that "righteous" is used in court contexts to describe *several*" relationships, not only to describe the innocent litigant, but also to describe the judge who is in the right relationship to the litigants. Such a "righteous" judge is one who declares the innocent to be "righteous" and does not acquit the guilty litigant. God is often pictured as such a "righteous judge" who comes to the aid of the innocently oppressed.

Exodus 23:1-3 and 6-9 form a decalogue of commandments inculcating proper courtroom procedure by judges and witnesses. Verse 7 is particularly illuminating. It rather remarkably uses righteous/wicked legal language of no less than *three* relationships: of litigant to litigant, of judge to litigants, and of God, who judges the human judge. ". . . do not slay the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit (declare righteous) the wicked." 1. One litigant is innocent and righteous in relationship to the other litigant. 2. A judge who slays the innocent and righteous litigant (that is, whose decision wrongly brings the litigant's execution) is wicked/in the wrong relationship with that litigant. 3. God,

whose righteous judging goes without saying, will not acquit, "declare to be rightous," such a wicked/unrighteous human judge.

Virtually all of the developed meanings of the term "righteousness" in the Old Testament can be understood as analagous to or derived from these three relationships.



Righteousness in the 8th Century Prophets

Righteousness is a well-known theme in the 8th century prophets Amos and Isaiah. They use it in two respects, of the oppressed poor who are in the right over against the wicked who afflict them, and of those who are not poor, whose proper relationship with the needy should be to aid them by their righteous judging in court.

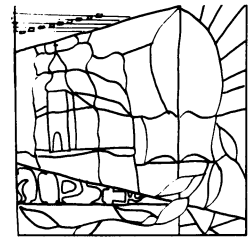
Amos waxes eloquent in denouncing those who take advantage of the poor and needy by enriching themselves at the expense of those whom they afflict. These oppressed are therefore "righteous," or at least potentially righteous, for if they were to take their case to court, they should be pronounced to be "in the right/righteous."

> For three transgressions of Israel,
> and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,
> because they sell the righteous for silver
> and the needy for a pair of shoes —
> they that trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth
> and turn aside the way of the afflicted. (Amos 2:6-7)

Through usage in parallelism like this, the term righteous came to bear connotations of "poor, needy, and afflicted."

However, when the afflicted came to the gate and cried for redress, the courts often failed them through lack of "righteous" judging. The prophets score "wicked" judges who destroy the last hope for the oppressed.

> "I know . . how great are your sins,
> you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe
> and turn aside the needy in the gate." (Amos 5:12, cf., Isa. 5:23).



In a pair of puns Isaiah decries the lack of righteousness. Yahweh looked in Judah for *mišpāṭ* (justice) but found rather *miśpāḥ* (bloodshed). He looked for *ṣĕdāqâ* (righteousness) but found rather *ṣĕāqâ* (a cry). (Isaiah 5:7). The latter pun is particularly telling since this word "cry" is virtually a technical legal term for the oppressed person's cry to the court for redress. Israel's judging should bring righteousness but results only in more cries for redress! Amos pleads that justice and righteousness not be intermittent, like the seasonal streams of Palestine, but perennial, like a spring-fed brook.

> "Let justice roll down like waters,
> and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (5:24 cf., 5:7)

One suspects that Amos would include in righteousness more than simply proper judging in the courts, but also general aid and relief for the poor. In any case, such benevolence is often urged in everyday wisdom. (Prov. 14:21, 31; 19:17; 28:27). Deuteronomy is eloquent in its humanitarian concern for the needy person who has nothing more to offer as pledge or collateral for a loan than the cloak off his back. "If he is a poor man, you shall not sleep in his pledge; when the sun goes down you shall restore to him the pledge that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you; and it shall be righteousness to you before the Lord, your God," (24:12-13). Strict banker's justice, of course, would entitle the creditor to keep the cloak. But God expects kindness towards the needy. This is what the text means when it says that such kindness would be "righteousness," a right relationship with God, and by implication, also with the poor borrower. (It is but a short step from this usage to the meaning which "righteousness" came to have in later Judaism, "almsgiving." [Matt. 6:1-2])

Righteousness Before God

A person's human relationship with God is often described in terms of righteousness or the lack of it. Just what constitutes a person's righteousness varies with the particular situation.

The gateway to the temple courts marked the boundary between the profane realm and the awesome presence of God. In theory, at least, the gate-keeping priests screened out the "wicked" who might profane the sanctuary and bring down God's curse, allowing only those declared to be "righteous" to enter. Thus the entering king cries out, "Open to me the gates of righteousness" and the priest replied, "This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter through it." (Ps. 118:19-20)

In Deuteronomy where the covenant relationship is highlighted, Israel's righteousness will consist of "being careful to do all these commandments" (Deut. 6:25), that is, the fulfillment of their relationship within the covenant. Abraham, on the other hand, responds to

God's promise of progeny appropriately, by trust and faith in that promise. Thus his faith is "reckoned to him as righteousness". (Gen. 15:6) The parable of the pharisee and the publican highlights yet another facet of the proper relationship with God. The parable is introduced with the note, "He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others." (Luke 18:9) The publican could only confess his sin and appeal to God's pity, "be merciful to me a sinner." Jesus states that this publican "went down to his house justified." The word "justified" is what Martin Franzmann aptly termed a "numimous passive," that is, a passive verb of which God is the unnamed agent. Thus the parable teaches that God declares that sinner to be "justified" (in the right relationship) who confesses his sin and throws himself on God's mercy.

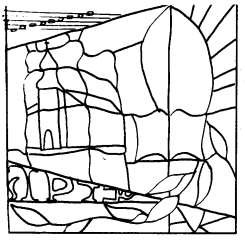
God's Righteousness Towards His People

God's relationship with mankind is also described in terms of righteousness. Psalm 143:1-2 sums up the matter superbly. It uses the category of righteousness of two possible relationships between the psalmist and God. It speaks of God as a judge to whom the psalmist appeals and as a co-litigant with the psalmist.

(1) Hear my prayer, O LORD
. . . answer me in thy righteousness.
(2) Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for no man living is righteous before thee.

If it were ever a matter of a relationship on an equal footing with God, as litigant to litigant, then no one can possibly be "in the right/righteous!" That would imply that God is "in the wrong." Only one in extreme distress, such as Job, dares claim such a blasphemy. (Job 9:15, 20; 29:14; 34:5; compare the friends, 4:17; 25:4; 32:1; and God, 40:8.)

In verse one, however, the psalmist bases his appeal on a very different relationship. He appeals to God to be a righteous judge, that is, one who rescues the oppressed psalmist from his enemy. Note carefully the slight but significant semantic shift in the meaning of "righteousness." In an Israelite court the judge who righteously gave the verdict to the oppressed litigant in effect *rescued* that person. The *righteous* judge was a *rescuer.* This is the key to understanding the term righteousness as used of God. Since the righteous judge was a rescuer, the term righteousness developed the meaning of "having to do with rescuing." In Ps. 143:1, the focus has shifted completely from the *process* of the judge's declining to the *effect* on the litigant, namely his rescue. There is no question here of whether God has judged strictly according to the merits of the case. In fact, in verse 2 the psalmist



directly admits his guilt! Rather God's righteousness is that he rescues people in need — *in spite of* their guilt. This is the astonishing fact: *God's* righteousness consists in this, that *he rescues those who are in need.* No blindfolded justice here!

Actually, God's action of rescuing the one in need often also involves a punishment or defeat of the oppressor or the enemy. Yet the term "righteousness" is regularly used only of the rescue, not of the punishing aspect of that selfsame divine act! It is extremely rare for "righteousness" to be used specifically of God's punishing wrath. ". . . only a remnant of them [Israel] will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness." (Isa. 10:22; 5:16 may involve both punishing and rescuing aspects.)

God's righteousness is his *rescuing!* Very early in Israel this usage was exhibited as shepherds sang songs of Yahweh's victories (righteous acts).

> To the sound of musicians at the watering places,
> there they repeat the "righteousnesses" of the LORD,
> the "righteousnesses" of his peasantry in Israel. (Judg. 5:11)

The literal translation, "righteousnesses," limps badly in English, of course. The RSV translators therefore resorted to a number of alternate renderings when this term appears elsewhere. ". . . the *saving deeds* of the LORD which he has performed for you . . ." (1 Sam. 12:8). ". . . men shall . . . proclaim his *deliverance* to a people yet unborn." (Ps. 22:29-30) "My mouth will tell of thy *righteous acts* . . ." (Ps. 71:15) The term "righteousness" in this sense of "deliverance" was especially dear to the authors of Isaiah 40-66, who proclaimed that God would rescue Israel from Babylon and return them to Zion. "Righteousness" is used no less than nine times in parallelism with "salvation" to describe this coming rescue. "I bring near my deliverance [righteousness] . . . and my salvation will not tarry". (46:13; cf. 45:8; 51:5, 6, 8; 56:1; 59:17; 61:10, and 62:1.) Here righteousness has reached a glorious highpoint in its usage. The term righteousness has taken on the meaning "salvation"!

Prayer To The Righteous Judge

This metaphor of God, the heavenly Judge whose righteousness rules in favor of the oppressed and needy who cry out to him, lies behind a great deal of the imagery of prayer in the Old Testament, even where the term "righteousness" is not explicitly used. That marvelous bias towards the needy is clearest in Abraham's prayer for the righteous in Sodom. The theological problem which bothers Abraham is not that God should allow some wicked to go free, but that he should punish some who are righteous along with those who deserve punishment! "Far be it from thee to do such a

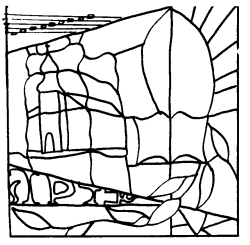
thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Shall not the Judge of all the earth act justly?"(Gen. 18:25)

This image also lies behind the picture of the cry of the oppressed slaves in Egypt moving God to rescue them. It is remarkable that all four "strata" of the Pentateuch (J, E, D, P) use this same picture of *rescue* of the *oppressed* who *cry out,* though the language differs in several cases. "I have seen the affliction of my people . . . have heard their cry because of their taskmasters . . . I have come down to deliver them." (Yahwist, Exod. 3:7) "The cry of the people of Israel has come to me and I have seen the oppression . . . I will send you . . . bring forth my people." (Elohist, Exod. 3:9-10) "The Egyptians . . . afflicted us . . . Then we cried to the LORD . . . and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction . . . brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand". (Deuteronomist, Deut. 26:6-8) "I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold in bondage . . . I will bring you out". (Priestly Writer, Exod. 6:5-6)

The psalter swarms with pictures of God as righteous-rescuing judge: "He will judge the world with righteousness". (Ps. 96:13; 98:9; Cf. 7:11; 9:4; 58:11.) A few Psalms, sometimes referred to as "the psalms of the accused," were responses by people during their trial.

When a case could not be decided locally, because the case was too difficult, or two witnesses could not be found, etc., the case was brought to the temple. (Deut. 17:8; 1 Kgs. 8:32) There the accused would claim innocence before God, sometimes taking a self-imprecating oath. "Judge me O Yahweh according to my righteousness." (Ps. 7:8, 3-5; cf. 17:1; 26:1) Other psalms use the image of God's righteous judging or his rescuing answer to prayer. "In thy righteousness, deliver me". (Ps. 31:1; 71:2; 143:1) "Vindicate me . . . according to thy righteousness". (Ps. 35:24)

Not a few times the psalmist makes the claim, "I am poor and needy" (Ps. 40:17; 70:5; 86:1; 109:22; cf. 12:5; 35:10). This is apparently a technical term, not a comment on the psalmist's economic status. By it the psalmist lays a claim on God and "throws himself on the mercy of the court." This use of the term "poor" has remained alive to recent times in the Lutheran liturgy. Their fine clothes and crowded parking lots notwithstanding, many Lutheran congregations still confess, "I am a *poor,* miserable sinner," and thereby claim God's forgiveness. (*The Lutheran Hymnal,* p. 16; *Lutheran Worship,* p. 136.) The appeal to God as refuge which initiates many psalms is to be interpreted in a similar manner. (Ps. 7:1; 16:1; etc.) This same situation lies behind Jas. 5:16, "The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects."



Conclusion

In conclusion, a number of points deserve underlining:

1. The concept of righteousness, of being in the right relationship with God and with others is a major theme in the Old Testament. It is at the very core of the faith and plays a significant role in all the major sections of the Old Testament.

2. The wonder of God's righteousness is that he rescues those in need in order that he may mend and continue his relationship with them. God has a strong bias toward the humble and chastened needy. It is part of the divine mystery that he gives proud oppressors their just desserts, but shows his righteousness to the needy.

3. Thus our hope and assurance ultimately lie in his righteousness, not ours. Though we are unrighteous in our relationships with God, yet in his righteousness towards us he is merciful to needy suppliants. He rescues.

4. God calls on those whom he has righteously rescued to reflect his righteousness. We are to be "in the right" relationship with one another. In particular, we are to show his divine bias towards those in need.

5. The implications for the individual Christian and for the church as institution today seem quite clear. Simply put, the Christian and the church *are* on the side of the poor and oppressed. Not to be an advocate of the needy would be a clear demonstration one has mis-read the Old (and the New) Testament. Strict, blind "justice" may fail to rescue the one in need, but not that righteousness which is of God and his people.

Of Things Beyond Me: Wisdom in the Book of Job

Norman C. Habel

Dean, Faculty of Humanities, S. A. College of Advanced Education

I consider it a great privilege to contribute this paper in honor of my mentor and friend, Dr. Alfred von Rohr Sauer. By some quirk in the design of things, Dr. Sauer was the first person I met when I arrived to study at Concordia Seminary in 1955. In the years that followed he became a father to me both personally and professionally. Whether or not wisdom be found with the aged, I have gained a rich measure of knowledge and discernment from my beloved mentor and friend.

In his study of *The Wisdom of God in the Book of Job,* Peter Zerafa concludes:

> The Book of Job is not so accommodating; it does not give the sages a chance. Not only does it depreciate all human wisdom — this is competently achieved by the human protagonists themselves, who incessantly delapidate *(sic!)* each other's wise perorations — but outrightly denies it both in the theophany (chs. 38ff) and in the hymn to wisdom (ch. 28). Wisdom is out of man's reach, it is not found on earth; man cannot discover it and cannot buy it. In this way the doctrinal edifice of the wisdom schools which sought to encase Yahweh's designs within the scheme of their scholarly speculations is completely demolished. Only God is wise, and His ways cannot be controlled by man's foolish mind.[1]

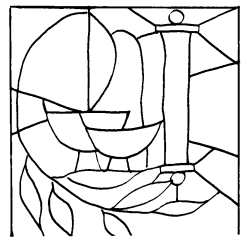
How valid are Zerafa's conclusions? I have long been struck by the fact that the author of Job never has any of the human participants actually designating himself as 'wise,' though each in turn lays claim to an authoritative source of knowledge as if he were a sage.[2] This raises the question of precisely how the author of Job uses the term 'wisdom' *(ḥokmâ)*. An answer to this question is important if we are to appreciate the charge of God that Job is obfuscating his 'design' *(ʿēṣâ)* without 'knowledge' (38:2), a charge to which Job eventually agrees:

> Indeed I spoke without discernment,
> Of things beyond me, which I did not know. (42:3)[3]

[1] P. P. Zerafa, *The Wisdom of God in the Book of Job* (Rome: Herder, 1978), p. 184.

[2] Though Eliphaz claims an unusual revelatory experience (4:12-16), he, like Bildad (8:8) and Zophar (20:4), cites the tradition of the first fathers (15:18) as the source of his knowledge. Job appeals primarily to his own experience (13:1) and Elihu to his inner spirit (32:8; 33:4).

[3] The rendering 'Of things beyond me' is taken from the fine translation by M. Greenberg, J. Greenfield and N. Sarna, *The Book of Job* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1980). All subsequent translations in the paper are my own.



Our task in this limited paper will be to explore the theme of wisdom in the Book of Job using the author's poem on wisdom (ch. 28) as our starting point and taking into account the various near synonyms of wisdom employed in the Book.[4]

Wisdom in Job 28

The problem of how to understand and define wisdom in ancient Israel has long exercised the minds of scholars. Some have emphasized its practical dimensions. Thus Zerafa, following the tradition of von Rad, considers the basic meaning of wisdom to be 'the art of success'.[5] Others have argued that wisdom is essentially superior intelligence gained through appropriate training and instruction.[6] Still others incorporate various categories of wisdom in their definition. Crenshaw defines wisdom as 'the quest for self-understanding in terms of relationships with things (nature wisdom), people (juridicial and practical wisdom), and the Creator (theological wisdom)'.[7] Our task here is not to debate the merits of these definitions, but to ascertain the particular way in which wisdom is understood by the author of Job.[8]

Most studies of wisdom begin with human wisdom as a special skill or superior mental ability without any moral or religious reference.[9] Thus skillful women who spin (Exodus 35:25) or experienced sailors who navigate (1 Kings 9:27) may be designated 'wise.' In such studies divine wisdom is usually interpreted as a development from a prior

[4] The relevant near synonyms are *bînâ*, 'discernment' (28:12, 20, 28; 28:4, 36; 39:17, 26), *hēqer*, 'profound truth' (8:8; 11:7; cf. 5:9; 9:10 and the verb *ḥqr* 28:3, 27), *tûšiyyâ*, 'understanding/know-how' (11:6; 12:16; 26:3; cf. 5:12; 6:13), and '*ēṣâ*, 'design/counsel' (12:12; 38:2; 42:3; cf. 5:13; 29:21). Zerafa, *op. cit.*, p. 105, also includes *dēa*ʿ 'knowledge', but the parallels are less explicit.

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 105, G. von Rad, *Theology of the Old Testament* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), Vol. 1, 418, defines wisdom as 'practical knowledge of the laws of life and the world, based on experience'.

[6] R. N. Whybray, *The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974), 12, speaks of wisdom as basically a 'superior mental ability'.

[7] J. L. Crenshaw, "Method in Determining Wisdom Influence upon Historical Literature," *JBL* 88 (1969), 132.

[8] J. Lévêque, *Job et son Dieu* (Paris: Gabalda, 1970), Vol. II, ch. 3, classifies all references to the root *ḥkm* under the categories of a) human wisdom, b) divine wisdom at work in creation, c) divine wisdom as revelatory or educational, and d) wisdom as fear of God.

[9] For example, R. B. Y. Scott, *The Way of Wisdom* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 6ff.

understanding of human wisdom. The author of Job, however, is a theologian and a poet. It seems appropriate, therefore, to take as our starting point the pivotal poem where his position is articulated (ch. 28).[10] I now accept this poem as integral to the Book of Job and view it as a closure for the cycle of speeches between Job and his friends.[11] As a closure this poem may be viewed as the poet's own commentary on the efforts of the preceding participants to probe the hidden side of wisdom and understand the riddle of Job's case.

The governing theme of this poem is the search for wisdom. This search is compared with the quest of mortals for precious gems and metals. In both quests three motifs dominate: the source or "place" of the precious item, the "way" or means of access to it, and the process of discovering it. Human beings may be able to discover the way to, and place of, precious gems in the most obscure regions of the earth, but they cannot find "wisdom." God alone finds her.

The poem culminates in the following finely honed conclusion:

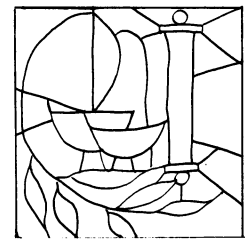
> God understood the way to her
> (i.e., wisdom)
> And he knew her place,
> For he looked to the ends of the
> earth
> And saw everything under
> heaven.
> When making the weight of the
> wind
> And meting out the waters by
> measure,
> When making a rule for the rain
> And a way for the thunderstorm,
> Then he saw her and appraised
> her,
> Established her and *probed* her.
> (28:23-27)

A close scrutiny of this passage reveals a number of key elements about the nature of wisdom:

a) Wisdom is here not a natural attribute of God, but something acquired or found. Wisdom is explicitly portrayed as a discrete entity with a "place" of her own and a "way" to that place (v. 23). God "looks" to the ends of the earth to locate her (v. 24). Finally he "sees" her, "appraises" her, and "probes" her (v. 27). Thus wisdom is a separate entity which God discovers and scrutinizes closely like the most precious gem of all.

[10] Zerafa, *op. cit.*, p. 53, also views ch. 28 as the close of the first part of the Book of Job. This hymn, he writes, 'proves that man cannot attain wisdom: only God is wise'.

[11] I argue the case for authenticity of this chapter as a closure statement in my forthcoming commentary on Job in the Old Testament Library series (Philadelphia: Westminster Press). Cf., Zerafa, *op. cit.*, p. 53. On closure forms see B. Herrnstein-Smith, *Poetic Closure* (Chicago: University Press, 1968).



Bruce Vawter has shown that in the related text of Prov. 8:22 wisdom is also "acquired" rather than "begotten" or "created."[12]

b) Wisdom is acquired in the process of God creating the domain where she operates. The creative activity of God in this passage is the celestial ordering of the celestial forces of "wind," "rain" and "thunderstorm" (vv. 25-26). These phenomena are presumably illustrations of God's total creative activity. The key expression "when making" which introduces both verses 25 and 26, refers to the process or activity of creating.[13] In that process God discovers wisdom.

c) Hence wisdom is the principle or design which governs the activity to which she relates. The specific ordering activity of God described in this passage involves determining weights and measures (v. 25), establishing "rules" (cf. 38:33), and designing "ways" (cf., 38:24-25) or laws according to which various celestial forces operate (v. 26). In this creative "ordering" of things wisdom is obviously not herself any one of these "laws" or "rules," but is discovered in their establishment. She must therefore be the basic overall design or principle which governs them. She informs all "ordering" and is discovered in the process of ordering.

When God discovers this principle which governs all other laws and principles of the cosmos he "probes" her. The verb "probe" *(ḥqr)* in Job refers to penetrating hidden depths (28:3; cf., 5:27; 29:16; 32:11; Prov. 25:2). The derived noun *ḥēqer* comes to mean something very deep and profound (38:16; cf. 5:9; 19:10), and as such is a near synonym for wisdom (8:8; 11:7). Thus wisdom is apparently the deep and mysterious principle behind all other laws, principles, and designs of the cosmos.

The priority of wisdom as a governing principle in the ordering of creation also implies her primordiality, that is, her absolute priority as the original principle of the created order. Vawter's study of the related text of Prov. 8:22 supports this conclusion. According to Vawter, wisdom is identified as "the beginning" of his works. That is, wisdom is the *principium*, the "first principle" or "model" which precedes and informs the creation of the cosmos. In similar vein, I argued elsewhere that "way" in Prov. 8:22 refers to the foundation prin-

[12] B. Vawter, "Prov. 8:22: Wisdom and Creation," *JBL* 99 (1980), 205-216, especially pp. 214-215.

[13] "When making" renders the infinitive forms *laʿăśôt* (v. 25a) and *baʿăśōtô* (v. 26a). The "when" of the creative process is balanced by the explicit "then" *(ʾāz)* of the discovery (v. 27a). That *ʾāz* may mean the original "then" of the primordial is evident from Prov. 8:22.

ciple which precedes Yahweh's "work" or creation.[14] It remains to be tested whether the rendering "governing principle(s)" or "underlying design" is basic to the meaning of wisdom in other contexts.

By employing the definite article with *ḥokmâ* in the body of the poem (28:1-27), the author may be stressing that this wisdom is "the" first principle which governs all other principles of the universe.[15] In any case, the meaning of "governing principle" or "design" fits the sense of the poem admirably.

Wisdom in the Dialogue between Job and His Friends

Does this understanding of wisdom illuminate references to wisdom and related terms in the speech cycle between Job and his friends? In his second response to Job Eliphaz asks with ironic tone:

> Were you the first human ever born?
> Were you brought forth before the hills?
> Did you listen in on the *council* of God
> And keep *wisdom* for yourself?
> What do you know that we do not know
> Or discern that we do not? (15:7-9)

Once again wisdom is something which precedes the event. The activity involved seems to be the planning of creation in the heavenly council of God.[16] Were Job born before creation he could have participated in that council and acquired wisdom for himself.[17] Thus Job would have first-hand knowledge of the governing principles of the earth and "know" more than his friends.

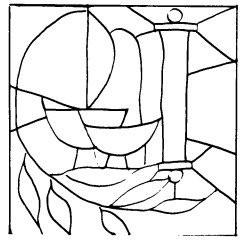
This ironic question of Eliphaz must be seen considered in relation to his subsequent claim to knowledge.

[14] N. Habel, "The Symbolism of Wisdom in Proverbs," *Interpretation* 16 (1972), 154-155.

[15] Note R. Gordis, *The Book of Job* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), Special Note 23 where he makes a major distinction between 'higher wisdom' and 'lower wisdom', the former being *ḥokmâ* with the definite article. This distinction is hard to maintain since the wisdom of God elsewhere appears without the definite article.

[16] For *sôd* as the 'council' where planning and decisions are made see Jer. 23:18, 22.

[17] The meaning of wisdom as "first principle" is appropriate whether or not one believes Eliphaz is alluding to a myth about the heavenly first man.



What *wise men* have announced
And *the fathers* not hidden
To whom alone the land was
given,
When no stranger passed among
them — (15:18-19)[18]

The fathers here are not the previous generation but those to whom the land or earth was first allocated, presumably by God (Deut. 32:8). This land has not been polluted by strangers. The fathers are therefore those who experienced the land or earth first hand and discerned the principles of its operation. These fathers are apparently the "wise," that is, those who acquired wisdom at the beginning. For Job to have knowledge superior to that of Eliphaz, he would need to have lived before the wise men from whom Eliphaz claims to have received his knowledge by tradition.

Bildad's claim to knowledge is essentially the same when he urges:

Ask now of the *first* generation,
And consider the *profound truth*
of the fathers,
For we are of yesterday and know
nothing. (8:8-9a)

Here too the focus is on the "first" generation, that is, the primordial or distant heroic past. What the first generation found is designated *ḥēqer,* "that which was probed" (*ḥqr,* cf. 28:27). The "probed" or "profound truth" of the fathers recalls the "wisdom" which Yahweh "probed" when ordering the heavens (28:27; cf. 11:7). This "profound truth," therefore, seems to be synonymous with the "wisdom" of the fathers, a wisdom Bildad is claiming as his authority. In making his claim Bildad is following a known practice of appealing to ancient or primordial tradition as the ground for authoritative knowledge.[19] Thus for Bildad true wisdom among human beings is derived from the original fathers who probed the principles of life on earth by first-hand experience at the beginning. Later Zophar appeals to ancient primordial tradition in the same way:

Do you not know this, that from
time immemorial
Since humans were set on the
earth . . . (20:2)

In depreciating Job's claims to knowledge,[20] however, Zophar asserts,

[18] Whether or not the fathers are synonymous with the wise as in my translation, the focus is on authoritative knowledge being transmitted from the very beginning.

[19] N. Habel, "Appeal to Ancient Tradition as a Literary Form," *ZAW* 88 (1976), 253-272.

[20] In his preceding speech (chs. 9-10) "knowledge" (the root *yd'*) is a major theme. Note 9:2, 5, 21, 28; 10:2, 7, 13.

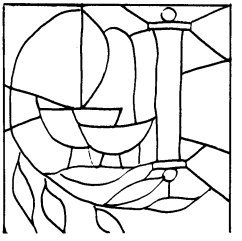
If only God would speak
And talk to you himself.
He would expound to you the
secrets of wisdom
For there are *two sides to understanding.*
(Know that God exacts from you
Less than your guilt deserves.)
Can you find the *profound truth*
of Eloah?
Can you find the *limit* of Shaddai?
It is higher than heaven — what
can you do?
It is deeper than Sheol — what
can you know? (11:5-9)

The "profound truth" of God clearly stands in contrast to the 'profound truth' of the fathers (8:8). The profundity of this truth or mystery is emphasized by making it synonymous with the "limit" of Shaddai (cf. 28:3), the inaccessible depths of God's knowledge. This "profound truth" is greater than the extremities of the cosmos. Apparently, therefore, this mystery is equivalent to "wisdom," the underlying design or principle governing the universe. In verse 6 this mystery is explicitly identified as "the secrets of wisdom." "Secrets" *(ta ălūmôt)* is literally "hidden dimensions." The profundities of God's wisdom are hidden from mortals; "understanding" *(tûšiyyâ)*[21] has two sides — the manifest and the hidden.[22] Wisdom as the underlying principle governing the cosmos is hidden from mortals; what the fathers probed was apparently the manifest side. Thus Zophar concurs in part with the poet of chapter 28 in asserting that wisdom is the hidden first principle, greater than the cosmos itself and inaccessible to human beings.

What of those references to wisdom which do not focus explicitly on the primordial or the profound? How do they relate to the proposed interpretation given above? Eliphaz maintains that mortals are creatures of clay whose ephemeral existence may be terminated at any time without their knowing "wisdom" (4:21). Wisdom is not innate; it is normal for mortals to die without acquiring it. God, adds Eliphaz, foils the "plans" and "design" of the so-called "wise" (5:12-13). Significantly the "wise" of the world are those who have a "design" or plan by which they operate. Both Job and Elihu contend that wisdom is not with the aged of the community

[21] This noun carries the connotation of "effectiveness" or "success" (cf. 5:12). Perhaps the American expression "know-how" is a suitable rendering.

[22] The term *kiplayim* does not mean "manifold" (RSV), but "double, duplex." Cf. M. Pope, *Job* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), 84.



(12:12; 32:7-9). Job argues that God retains wisdom, not the aged (12:12-13).[23] Thus wisdom is conspicuous by its absence among the human participants. "I do not find one wise person among you" concludes Job (17:10; cf. 26:3). At one point Job quips:

> Truly you are the people
> With whom wisdom will die.
> (12:2)

Job's tone is one of biting sarcasm. Job is not crediting his friends with being wise, but with claiming to be a privileged group who possess wisdom. In reality they are human beings on the same intellectual level as Job (12:3; 13:4). Job closes this speech with a similar sarcastic comment in which he declares that the friends could be counted as "wise" if they kept silent (13:5). The context makes it clear that Job is calling his friends "fools" (cf. Prov. 17:28). Eliphaz, in turn, derides Job for pretending to be wise but instead spouting forth the empty babble of a fool (15:2). These references say little about the essentials of wisdom, but they do underscore its apparent absence. In spite of their claims to knowledge, the protagonists are found berating each other as fools. The claim of the friends that they have inherited the "profound truth" of the first fathers seems discredited. The primal fathers are a spurious source of wisdom if the friends are faithful witnesses to that wisdom.

Wisdom in the Elihu Speeches

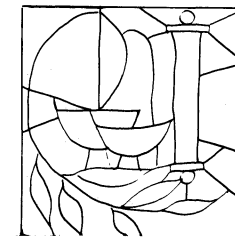
Yahweh's design for the natural world included "allocating a portion" of wisdom to each species (39:17). The ostrich is the exception which interprets this rule. She was deprived of her portion of natural wisdom and therefore lacks an instinctive knowledge of the principles of survival and motherhood typical of other creatures (39:13-16). Because the natural world possesses this intuitive understanding of the principles of life, humans can learn from nature (cf. 12:7-8). Or as Elihu says:

> (God) who teaches us by the
> beasts of the earth
> And makes us wise by the birds
> of heaven. (35:11)[24]

Elihu seems to argue that human beings possess a natural endowment like innate wisdom of the animal kingdom. That inner wisdom is a gift which is not dependent on age, tradition or length of experience. Thus he asserts:

[23] 12:12 may be taken as a quotation of the friends (Gordis, *op. cit.*, 138 or rendered as an ironic question as in the translation of Greenberg, Greenfield, and Sarna, *op. cit.*

[24] This verse is variously rendered. For this translation see Pope, *op. cit.*, 262.



I said to myself, "Days will
testify
And many years teach wisdom."
Surely her spirit is in mortals,[25]
The breath of Shaddai gives them
discernment.
But the aged are not wise.
Nor do old men discern justice.
So I say, "Listen to me.
I will speak my mind.[26] Yes, I
will." (32:7-10)

Elihu supports the position that wisdom is derived from the breath of Shaddai within. That gift enables him to discern first-hand the underlying factors involved in Job's case. Elihu's alleged understanding of these hidden principles gives him the confidence to claim that he can teach Job "wisdom" (33:33). Elihu's arrogance reaches its zenith when he asserts that his natural endowment makes him "perfect in knowledge" (36:4), an expression he uses later to describe God's level of understanding (37:16). The language of this passionate hothead (32:1-5) convicts him of being a bloated fool (see 32:17-20).[27] The poet thereby leaves the audience with the impression that innate wisdom is a spurious vehicle for interpreting the underlying factors in Job's case. For Elihu makes a fool of himself.

Wisdom in the Yahweh Speeches[28]

We proposed above that wisdom for the author of Job basically means the first principle(s) or underlying design of an activity or order. To possess wisdom is to have probed and understood that principle. The friends claim that the first fathers probed the principles of life and handed down "profound truth" as wisdom. But their claims are not convincing and Job finds them lacking in any understanding of his case. Elihu's claims to an inner wisdom are likewise spurious. Zerafa therefore seems to be correct when he contends that the Book of Job depreciates all human wisdom.[29] The one thing on which all human protagonists agree is that God possesses wisdom. Job, however, maintained that

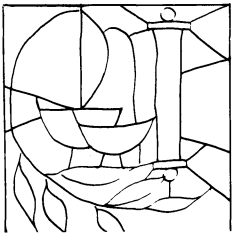
[25] I take the pronoun *hî'* as a reference back to 'wisdom.' The text may then be rendered "she is the spirit" or "her spirit." cf. W. Michel, *The Ugaritic Texts and the Mythological Expressions in the Book of Job* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1970). Others render "it is the spirit" (RSV). Either way, an intimate link between the indwelling spirit of God and wisdom is evident.

[26] "Mind" renders the noun *dēa'* a word for knowledge found in this form only in Elihu's speeches. Zerafa, *op. cit.*, p. 105, considers it a synonym for wisdom.

[27] See N. Habel, "The Role of Elihu in the Design of the Book of Job," in a forthcoming volume in honor of Gošta Ählstrom.

[28] For a recent exploration into the ambiguous and paradoxical nature of Yahweh's speech see the articles entitled "The Book of Job and Ricoeur's Hermeneutics," in *Semeia, 19 (1981).*

[29] *Op. city.*, p. 184.



God manipulates wisdom with fickle intent. He controls the governing principles of the cosmos to produce upheavals in nature and disorder in society (12:13-15; cf. 9:4 ff.). Job seems to hold that he does not need to return to the primordial to discern the governing principle by which God operates. He knows from personal experience and observation (13:1). Even the animals know God's arbitrary and fickle design (12:7-9).

Yahweh's response to Job's accusations is the challenging question:

> Who is this who clouds *my design* with darkness,
> Presenting arguments without knowledge? (38:2)

The charge against Job is not the use of sacrilegious language or the sin of *hubris,* but the obfuscation of Yahweh's design through lack of knowledge. The "design" of Yahweh seems to be a near synonym for the wisdom of the cosmos acquired by God himself in the process of creation (28:23-27). From the details of the speech which follows it is apparent that this underlying design incorporates both the structures and functions of the created world. Wisdom is the first principle which governs that primordial design. Job has obfuscated that design because he lacks the first-hand knowledge of the governing principles at work in the cosmos. In short, he lacks the wisdom which God has acquired. Job would need to have been present at creation to discern the hidden design of the earth:

> Were you there when I laid
> earth's foundations?
> Tell me, if you have *discernment.*
> (38:4)

"Discernment" is a synonym for "wisdom" in related passages of Job (38:36; 39:17, 26; 28:12, 20, 28). If Job were present at the construction of the earth he would have wisdom, that is, he would know the first principle of its design and be able to answer the repeated challenge questions,[30] including those which ask "Do you know?" (38:18, 21, 33; 39:1-2). The caustic comment "Surely you know, for you were born then!" (38:21a) accentuates the focus on primordial participation as fundamental to an understanding of the blueprints of Yahweh's cosmic design. The design theme is emphasized especially by the metaphor of earth's creation as the planning and construction of a massive edifice according to divine specifications (38:4-7).

The challenge questions posed by Yahweh expose Job's lack of knowledge about numerous domains in his design

[30] On the challenge question form of the speeches of Yahweh see H. Rowold, *The Theology of Creation in the Yahweh Speeches of the Book of Job* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1977), 57ff.

for the physical and natural world. If Job possessed wisdom he would understand the underlying structures and functions of Yahweh's design for the cosmos. These structures include fixed limits (38:8-11), designated "places" (38:12,19), appointed "ways" (38:19-20, 24-25) and "times" (39:1-4), celestial "laws" (38:31-33) and the in-built principle of wisdom (38:36; 39:26). The functions of this design include constraint of the wicked (38:12-15), judgment (38:22-23), providence (38:39-41) and celebration (38:7; 39:19-25). Job's lack of knowledge about these features of Yahweh's design exposes his lack of wisdom. Of the numerous challenges addressed to Job the following may be selected for comment:

> Who has the wisdom to count the clouds? (38:37a)

The image of someone attempting to count clouds whose shapes change constantly as they scud across the sky is rather comical. The question posed, however, is whether anyone, namely Job, has "wisdom," that is, knows a principle or hidden law which will make counting clouds possible. Yahweh alone knows the governing principles of his cosmic design; he alone possesses this wisdom.

Yahweh's response from the whirlwind seems to suggest that if Job lacks wisdom then the same is true of the other human participants. As an answer to the eternal why of innocent suffering Yahweh's response may seem evasive and paradoxical. For it implies that Job's unwarranted affliction is to be understood in the light of a "design" which is hidden.[31] A mortal like Job cannot comprehend that design unless he has wisdom or discernment, that is, first-hand or primordial knowledge of the principle governing this cosmic blueprint.

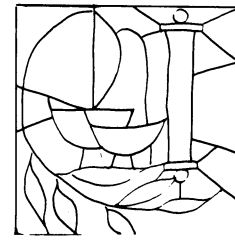
Does Job Acquire Wisdom?[32]

Does Job finally acquire wisdom through his first-hand experience of suffering? Is his submission to Yahweh (42:2-6) evidence of "fearing the Lord" which is "the beginning of wisdom?" (Prov. 9:10). The closing lines of the wisdom poem cited above read:

> Yet to humans he said,
> Behold to fear the Lord is
> wisdom,
> To shun evil is discernment.
> (28:28)

[31] It is hard to accept the claim of M. Fox, "Job 38 and God's Rhetoric," *Semeia* 19, *op. cit.*, 60, that the "design" of God is manifest and known. The challenge questions which follow expose Job's ignorance of the underlying principles of that design.

[32] J. Kleinig, *The Getting of Wisdom*, Master of Philosophy Dissertation, Cambridge, 1981, contends that in Proverbs the mode of "getting wisdom" differs depending on whether the sage, Dame Wisdom or Yahweh is the source.



This verse seems to be diametrically opposed to all that preceded in the rest of the poem where wisdom is declared inaccessible to all but God. This verse is therefore deleted by many scholars as a conservative theological postscript designed to redeem the preceding poem.[33] But radical surgery is not required if we ask how this verse fits into the literary design of the poet. The theological approach which developed in Israelite piety maintained that Yahweh imparts wisdom as a special gift (Prov. 2:6) and that the "fear of Yahweh" is the "beginning" or "principle" of wisdom (Prov. 9:10; cf. 1:7; 3:7; 15:33; Ps. 111:10). The relevant passage in Job (28:28) goes a step further and equates the fear of the Lord with wisdom itself. If this equation is true, then Job is wise. For the terms used to define wisdom here, namely "fearing God" and "shunning evil," are the very terms employed to characterize Job in the opening lines of the prologue (1:1). The repetition of these terms in 28:28 constitute a major *inclusio* which frames the first half of the Book of Job (chs. 1-28). In terms of the traditional piety reflected in the prologue and the closing verse of this wisdom poem, Job is wise. But this *inclusio,* like the prose legend which frames the Book of Job, serves as a foil and backdrop against which an alternative reality is depicted. In that world the wisdom of piety proves futile; it offers Job no understanding of the reason for his suffering. In the dialogue speeches which fall between these framing references to piety as wisdom, the bankruptcy of that tradition is exposed. Though Eliphaz urged Job to find strength in his past "piety" (4:6; cf. 22:4), Job makes it clear that this "piety" offers him no support (6:14) and neither do any of the traditional answers of the friends who espoused this tradition.

Central to Job's change of attitude is that he no longer sought understanding through past piety or traditional mediated vehicles for knowing God. He sought a first-hand knowledge with God himself present to face Job in court. In fact, Job is no longer interested in finding wisdom, but in finding God (23:3). Because Job seeks personal vindication for his integrity rather than an intellectual solution to the riddle of theodicy, God replaces wisdom in Job's quest. But God, like wisdom, is hidden and impossible to "discern" directly (9:11). Job does not know how to "find" God or penetrate his dwelling place (23:3; cf. 28:12, 20). He cannot "discern" him in the West or "behold" him in the North, because he, like wisdom, is hidden (23:8-9; cf. 28:21). In spite of his elusive ways and in spite of the "terror" of his presence which intimidates mortals (9:34; 13:21), Job wants to see God face to face to prove his innocence. God's

[33] Zerafa, *op. cit.,* 155, for example, argues that this verse is out of place in a book where human wisdom is "continuously taken to task, parodied and denied."

"face" *(pānîm)* or presence is a pivotal theme in several of Job's speeches (especially chs. 13 and 23). Job wants to present his suit before God's "face" (13:35; 23:4), but God hides his "face" (13:24; cf. 23:9, 15, 17).

After Yahweh appears in the whirlwind and confronts Job with a barrage of challenge questions, Job admits:

> Indeed, I spoke without discernment,
> Of things beyond me, which I did not know. (42:3)

In this confession Job reluctantly agrees that he lacks the first-hand knowledge to understand Yahweh's primordial design. In short, he admits he does not possess wisdom. But that was not Job's primary objective. He wanted God to come out of hiding and face him in court. And God does, even if he does not formally acknowledge Job's innocence. Job can therefore declare:

> I have heard of you with my ears,
> But now I *see* you with my eyes. (42:5)

Job has "found" the God he sought to "see" (23:9). Thus Job may lack the wisdom which derives from a primordial knowledge of the principle governing Yahweh's design for the cosmos, but he gains a first-hand knowledge of God through the theophany of the whirlwind. He did not find wisdom but he found God. That experience makes all other claims to knowledge relative. In the last analysis wisdom, as the principle which governs all other structures and principles of the world, is inaccessible to humans, but to heroic mortals like Job, God himself is not. Job sees God and survives!

History and Poetry in Lamentations

Delbert R. Hillers

The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD

While in Jerusalem several years ago I remarked to a friend, an historian at the Hebrew University, that I was working on a commentary on Lamentations. He expressed great interest, attracted by the possibility of extracting from the series of poems some historical data to flesh out the bare picture of the fall of Jerusalem given in Kings. Encouraged by his suggestion, I dived into the book again and came up almost completely empty. For though Lamentations was written soon after an overpowering historical event, it provides almost no historical information and is related to "history" in an indirect, mediated fashion.

These conclusions will be elaborated in more detail below, but are stated thus baldly here because they raise the question of how central "history" is in Old Testament religion. That "history" is the particular arena of divine action and divine revelation has been a prominent assertion of many recent theologians. "The Old Testament is a history book" (von Rad). "God reveals himself in historical events, and not in ageless myths or in a system of propositions" (Noth). "Israel is distinguished by the fact that it experienced the reality of God not in the shadows of a mythical primitive history but more and more decisively in historical change itself" (Pannenberg). Thus in these and many other thinkers about the Old Testament — also in America — history is considered significant and vital as contingent, concrete event, free and unexpected, as opposed to any timeless scheme, either the myths of the ancient world or the rigid dogmatics of the present time.

Such stress on history as a religious category is probably somewhat less popular now, but is perhaps still sufficiently alive that an examination of a biblical book in this connection may not be completely out-of-date. This critical review of history as a religious category is deliberately exegetical rather than philosophical, and is deliberately limited to Lamentations and some related compositions, with no claim to be more universal in scope.

One is struck, in reading Lamentations, by the dearth of specific dates and such details as personal names and placenames. The Kings account of the Fall of Jerusalem is rich in these respects: the conquerer is Nebuzaradan, and his specific title is *rab tabbāḥîm,* "Captain of the Guard," is added; he enters the city in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the 19th year of King Nebuchadnezzar. Lamentations does not even inform us that the conquerers were from Babylon, and far from telling us the name of Babylon's king or the name of the general, does not even supply us the name of Israel's king. Of foreign nations only Edom is mentioned, in a curse on her for her part in the spoiling of Israel. And there is a great reduction in contrast to the prose account. The cast of actors is reduced to two: Yahweh and Israel, and the latter is so passive that one can almost speak of Yahweh as

the only actor. Of course one may observe that if, as is likely, Lamentations was written soon after the event, then the congregation of worshippers knew the details; they knew the dates, they knew the names, and did not need to be reminded. But this objection to the point made here seems rather irrelevant to me. The related passage in Kings was evidently also written soon after the events, and the author *did* think it important to give the details. We have to do with a question of the writer's intention, and his conception of what was important, and the poet, however much his hearers may have known or forgotten, did not think it important to give historical details in the same way that the prose writer did.

Some of what Lamentations does seem to tell us turns out to be shaped by the literary and religious tradition, not by observation. There is much material in the book that cannot conceivably be called historical information, long passages where the language is obviously metaphorical, or where Yahweh is presented as the destroyer of Israel in a series of poetic images. This does not at the moment concern us. But there are some passages where one might suppose historical evidence is being communicated, even if that was not the author's main purpose. On examination, however, these prove to reflect literary and religious tradition more than fact. Chapter 5:18 provides a simple, almost trivial example. "On Mount Zion, which lies desolate, foxes prowl about." The historian Enno Janssen, writing of Judah in the Period of the Exile *(Juda in der Exilszeit)*, quite understandably turns to Lamentations to support the meager amount that we know about this period, and he lights on this verse. The question concerning him is a typical historian's question: how many people were left in Jerusalem, if any? Evidently there were some, he answers, yet the city is badly enough ruined that wild animals live there, even right on the site of the temple: see Lam. 5:18. Beginning with Mesopotamian texts from the end of the 3rd Millennium B.C., we have many examples from outside the Bible of a rather stereotyped description of a ruined city, often including the idea that wild animals now roam in the streets of the ruin.

This turns up in the Bible also, in Isa. 34 and 13, and in Zeph. 3. Thus for example Isa. 34:11f speaks of Edom: "The hawk and the porcupine shall inherit it, and the owl and the raven shall dwell in it. It shall become a dwelling of jackals, an abode for ostriches; and desert animals shall meet with jackals, the satyr shall meet with his fellow." This is not only literary convention, but reflects a religious conviction as well. One of the curses attached to the first Sefire treaty (Sef I A 32-33) says: "And may Arpad become a mound to (house the desert animal) and the gazelle and the fox and the hare and the wildcat and the owl and the (?) and the magpie." Israel conceived of her relation to Yahweh under



the form of a treaty, from very early times, I believe, but certainly by the time of Jeremiah, and part of this treaty with God was the conception that if Israel broke it, the curses of the covenant would come upon her. The author of Lamentations is at this point making a religious point, that Jerusalem has suffered the typical fate of a rebellious city, and he is following a literary commonplace — Jerusalem is described the way ruined cities have been described for a very long time.

As a further example of how the literary tradition shapes a poet's description of historical events, we take a more problematic case: the description of famine and specifically of cannibalism found in Lamentations. There is no doubt that the people of Jerusalem suffered famine. According to Kings "On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land." As a result the king and a party of others fled. This episode came after the city had been under siege for a year and a half; even though the siege was lifted at one point when the Egyptians diverted the Babylonian army, which probably happened in summer of 588, we still must reckon that the people had lived for a solid year on what was stored within the town.

Thus it is not problematic that Lamentations makes repeated reference to hunger. "As the children and babies fainted in the streets of the city they said to their mothers, 'Where is there grain and wine?' " (2:11-12) Commentators have wondered whether the little children would have called out for wine along with their bread, but that is probably being hyper-critical. There is no difficulty with the main point: "My priests and elders expired in the city while seeking food to keep alive." The problem is with the references to cannibalism: "Look, Yahweh, and consider who it was you treated so — Should women eat what they bore, the children they have raised?" (2:20) "The very women, the kindly women, cooked their own children. That was the food they had when my people was ruined." (4:10) There is no mention of this in the prose accounts of the fall of Jerusalem. Does Lamentations thus provide us with a grisly detail to add to our histories?

One can raise this question if only because cannibalism as a result of prolonged starvation is an extreme of human behavior which is not so terribly common. People can starve to death without sinking to this. Yet these passages in Lamentations are not completely isolated in the Bible. In a well-known passage from the cycle of Elisha stories set in the time of the siege of Samaria (2 Kings 6:28-30), a woman complains to the king: "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' So we boiled my son and ate him." The other woman does not keep her part of the bargain, as it turns out. One would be more certain about this reference to cannibal-

ism if it were in a source with higher historical reliability; the Elisha stories, as is well-known, contain many touches of legend and folk-lore. Josephus does tell of cannibalism on the occasion of the great siege of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. (Jewish War VI 3, 4.) His account is highly circumstantial, with the name of the guilty woman and many details, and so is perhaps not to be questioned, though it also contains calculated literary devices, such as dramatic speeches which Josephus made up. Oppenheim has gathered references to cannibalism in Akkadian literature. In historical writing we have such references to two version of Ashurbanipal's campaign against the Arabs who were on the side of Shamashshumukin: "The remainders (of the Arab troops) who succeeded to enter Babylon ate (there) each other's flesh in their ravenous hunger." In another version: "Irra, the Warrior (i.e., pestilence) struck down Uate', as well as his army, who had not kept the oaths sworn to me and had fled before the onslaught of Ashur, my lord — had run away from them Famine broke out among them and they ate the flesh of their children against their hunger." Provisionally we may say that cannibalism is mentioned in Assyrian historical records, but we will later want to reexamine these passages.

Cannibalism is also a feature of the literary tradition, and this is where the doubt arises. In Mesopotamia, we have mention of it in the Atrahasis epic, an Old Babylonian composition of greatest interest to Bible students because of its flood account, which supplements that in the Gilgamesh epic and is in some respects closer to the Noah story. According to this epic, before Enlil hit on the idea of using the flood against the bothersome race of mankind, he tried to wipe them out by hunger. (Assyrian recension "S" rev. vi 1-15) "When the second year arrived they suffered the itch. When the third year arrived the people's features were distorted by hunger. When the fourth year arrived their long legs became short, their broad shoulders became narrow, they walked hunched in the street. When the fifth year arrived daughter watched the mother's going in, But the mother would not open her door to the daughter. The daughter watched the scales at the sale of the mother, The mother watched the scales at the sale of the daughter. When the sixth year arrived they served up the daughter for dinner, they served up the son for food . . . One house consumed another. Their faces were overlaid like dead malt. The people were living on the edge of death." This is the end of the description. Note that cannibalism is the limit, the extreme stage. The earliest reference to cannibalism known to me is in the Curse of Agade, a text I mentioned above, from about 2000 B.C. "May the oxen-slaughterer, slaughter (his) wife (instead), May your sheep-butcher butcher his child (instead)."



The curses attached to Mesopotamian treaties from the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. repeatedly threaten treaty-breakers with cannibalism, and this is done in terms at times very close to the literary tradition. To quote just one specimen, note Esarhaddon's treaty: "A mother [will close her door] against her own daughter. In your hunger eat the flesh of your sons. Let one eat the flesh of another." Here two stages are cited in the same order as in the Epic: first the mother refuses her daughter access to food by barring the door in her face; then the climactic stage, namely cannibalism. It is this very frequent occurrence of cannibalism among the treaty-curses which leads me to question the historical value of such references in Ashurbanipal's annals. Let me cite again the passage on the sufferings of the Arabians for an example of how it is possible that the treaty pattern, or covenant theology if you prefer, may have shaped Assyrian "history": "Famine broke out among them and they ate the flesh of their children against their hunger. (The gods) inflicted quickly upon them (all) the curses written down in their sworn agreements." The writer goes on to quote almost verbatim another curse attested in the treaties.

Israelite covenants also had such a curse — one mentioning cannibalism — attached, to judge from the conclusion to covenant legislation in Deuteronomy and Leviticus. Thus Lev. 26:29 "You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters." The version in Deuteronomy is much expanded, and is too gruesome to quote. I will mention only that the author of Deuteronomy heightens the effect of his curse by saying this will be done by "the most tender and delicately bred" man or woman. As you may recall, Lam. 4:10 makes the same point: The women themselves, "the kindly women" committed the awful crime. Jeremiah threatens Israel with doom in similar words: "And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters. Each shall eat another's flesh." Isaiah (9:19-20) and Ezekiel (5:10) say much the same thing.

This may suffice to make clear the problem with history as depicted in the poetry of Lamentations. The events are not given to us direct, but as refracted through an age-old tradition, a tradition both literary and religious. In literature this was how one stated that the utmost starvation had taken place. This we may propose is one of the traditional limits in Israelite literary style. The sky is the traditional limit for height, the earth for depths, stars and locusts for great number, the sea for breadth, Sodom and Gomorrah for wickedness, and cannibalism for the limit, the extreme of famine. If the author of Lamentations says "For your ruin is as vast as the sea" using a simile as old as Ugaritic literature, or can say that the iniquity of his people was greater than that of Sodom and Gomor-

rah, then we may suppose him capable of saying that the people turned cannibals, as a traditional and expressive way of depicting the severity of the suffering. From the religious side, this was a way of asserting that Yahweh had done what he threatened. The author of Lamentations quotes one curse from (or at any rate a traditional curse) Deuteronomy at 1:5 when he says "Her enemies have become the head." Compare Deut. 28:44 "He shall be the head, and you will be the tail." So it is not inconceivable that also in referring to cannibalism his main interest was in asserting that covenant-breach had brought its inevitable consequences. One of the apocrypha, Baruch, makes this connection explicit: (2:1-2) "Nowhere under heaven have such deeds been done as were done in Jerusalem, thus fulfilling what was foretold in the law of Moses, that we should eat the flesh of our children . . ."

Thus such "history" as we have in Lamentations is not told with an eye to the unique, particular unrepeatable, contingent circumstances; it is experienced and narrated in conformity to certain pre-existing literary and religious patterns.

Turning to the more strictly theological question with which we began, is God represented in Lamentations as revealing himself in history? In one sense, the answer is obviously in the affirmative. Long passages in the book speak of what happened to Judah in 587 B.C. as the action of Yahweh. "You who pass by on the road, consider and see: Is there any pain like my pain — that which he caused me, Which Yahweh inflicted on me the day of his burning anger? From on high he sent fire and sank it into my bones. He stretched a net for my feet; he turned me back . . . The Lord heaped up in my midst all my strong men, then summoned an assembly against me to crush my young warriors." There is no question that Yahweh is active in human history; he so dominates the book as to make it more appropriate to question whether Babylon had anything to do with the fall of Jerusalem! Yahweh's sphere is obviously not a remote divine world, where he confronts other gods in myth, but the world of human beings, and conversely, the world of mankind is not sealed off from divine action, but open to it at every point.

But in another sense the book provides a basis for questioning the point of view of the theologians cited above. Historical events are not presented as though by themselves they are revelatory. Instead there always seems to be present the idea that an event must be expected or predicted in some way to be meaningful. It must conform to an existing conception of what divine action is. "Yahweh has done what he planned; he has carried out what he said he would, What he commanded from olden times." To say, as Pannenberg does, that he is revealed "in historical change itself" does not seem to apply to this book. I wonder if it applies even to the prose narrative in



Kings? One can raise a similar objection to the rather more extreme statements by Hans Walter Wolff, who asserts that the Old Testament person was interested neither in the thought forms of myth, with its idea of return and recurrence, nor in a world-order of action and consequences — "Rather now it is the unforeseen fact which attracts interest, the change in history, the new in the irreversible progress of events." The fall of Jerusalem was scarcely an unforeseen fact, yet it is the only one our author is really interested in. He presents it in a style which emphasizes, not the new and particular in the situation, but its conformity to old pattern; he presents the catastrophe as the fulfillment and confirmation of a preexisting religious conception. If so, this reduces the contrast between "history" and myth or propositional theology.

Was an Israelite's self-understanding, his hope, grounded in a set of events in history as some theologians have affirmed?

When we turn to Lamentations, it is to discover that Israel's history plays practically no role in this book, intended to help a despairing community, whatever. The only meager references to anything in the national past other than the recent destruction of the city are the statement "Our fathers have sinned," the allusions to the sin of prophets and priests, and to the sinful policy of foreign alliances. But there is no reference to the mighty acts of God, for very good and obvious reasons! The last mighty act of God had been an act of judgment. Yahweh had brought about his "day" — judgment day, we might say, and our author is sufficiently imbued with the spirit of the prophets to know that there can be no appeal now to the ancient acts by which God had given Israel assurance of her election.

Instead of turning to history, he turns to another area of religious experience to be able to interpret the catastrophe. That is the area of individual experience, what the individual faithful Israelite had found to be true of God in his private life, not in the national life. The individual is not here called on to interpret his destiny in light of the national history, but the nation is called on to learn from individual experience. At a time when it was pointless for them to say, "We have Abraham as our father," they are directed to a separate resource of assurance: the typical experiences of the hard-pressed believer (e.g., Lam. 3:22-36). Lamentations is demonstratably not unique in this respect. The Psalms of complaint by the individual are the most common type in the psalter, and in all of them there is not one reference to the national history. I am not suggesting that history, the particular events which Israel identified as acts of God, did not ever provide assurance and self-understanding to the Israelite. But Lamentations and the psalms of Lament (not to mention the wisdom literature) suggest that Israel's religion was complex enough to encompass a wider range of ideas.

Oh Blessed Rage

Herbert E. Hohenstein

Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Louis MO

Surely I jest. Rage is not blessed. In fact, as every Christian with a sensitive conscience knows full well, rage or anger is strictly forbidden and taboo. Almost from infancy one is taught to believe that angry thoughts, feelings, words and deeds are incompatible with the presence of the Spirit in one's heart, and that to be angry with God is an unthinkable, unforgivable blasphemy.

But the rage is there, rage against life, people, and sometimes even and especially against God. Regardless of what we have been taught, the anger burns and blazes undeniably in our seething hearts. The hurts, blows, burdens and sorrows are too great and grievous, mysterious and unbearable, eternal and unending for it to be otherwise. To pretend the rage is not there, to attempt to ignore or repress it, is both an impossibility and an unhealthy denial of our humanity and perhaps even our faith in God.

And so the intolerable tension persists. On the one hand parental or pastoral admonitions have drummed into us that feelings and expressions of anger have all but departed from the hearts and lives of God's baptized sons and daughters, while on the other hand the rage within us remains and cries out for expression.

The article that follows is an attempt to address this tension from the biblical perspective. First I shall furnish some pertinent Scriptural data, including that which focuses on rage against God, and then I will offer a few comments and conclusions based on that data.

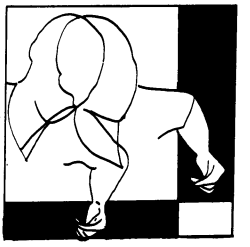
A Biblical Perspective[1]

God, the Enemy

Who really is the enemy? When we have one of those terrible days, when life frustrates and infuriates us, becomes maddening and miserable, who gets the blame? Pets and people! We kick the dog (or a tin can) and we lash out at our spouse.

But who is the enemy? Deep down we know. It is none other than God himself. We know that, and so did the men and women who march across the pages of the Bible. With unerring perception they recognized that the opponent, the adversary was God. It was no mere mortal, not even a devil or demonic power, but the great God himself with whom Jacob so fiercely and furiously wrestled all night long at the Jabbok stream (Gen. 32:24-31). Does that wrestling match perhaps mirror our life-long battles against God, our personal Gethsemanes when we struggle to submit to the mysterious, inscrutable will of the Father, our agonizing Golgathas when we, with the crucified dying Savior, can-

[1] I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness for much of the material in the first two sub-sections of this article to W. Robert McClelland's insightful observations presented in *God Our Loving Enemy* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), especially chapters 1 and 3.



not comprehend why God has forsaken and abandoned us in the terrifying darkness?

Or what about Job, sitting alone and deserted on his manure pile, angrily shaking his fist against a cruel and unjust God who has so unfairly inflicted on him all those undeserved miseries? Or Jeremiah, passionately insisting that God shape up or allow him to ship out? Or the Psalmists, calling God to account, putting him on trial, for personal and community disasters? Or, for that matter, even Jesus himself? Are we to believe that those forty long lonely days in the Judean desert were exclusively a struggle with Satan, or is it possible that the Savior's wilderness opponent was also God himself, that Jesus began his public ministry locked in a wrestling match with God over the meaning of his messianic mission? Again, was it only Satan who battled the tormented Christ of Gethsemane and the cross, or was it also with God that the anguished dying Jesus wrestled in the darkness?

And so the enemy is God. In fact there are some who would go so far as to assert that authentic contact and communion with God begins not on the mountaintops of inspiration and joy, celebration and praise, but in the depths of heartbreak and despair (Ps. 130:1). Paul Tillich, for example, argues that if we have not confronted God as the enemy, we have not truly met him at all:

> *It is safe to say that a man who has never tried to flee God has never experienced the God who is really God. When I speak of God, I do not refer to the many gods of our own making, the gods with whom we can live rather comfortably. For there is no reason to flee from a god who is the perfect picture of everything that is good in man. Why try to escape from such a far-removed ideal? And there is no reason to flee from a god who is simply the universe, or the laws of nature, or the course of history. Why try to escape from a reality of which we are a part? There is no reason to flee from a god who is nothing more than a benevolent father, a father who guarantees our immortality and final happiness. Why try to escape from someone who serves us so well? No, those are not pictures of God, but rather of man, trying to make God in his own image and for his own comfort. They are the products of man's imagination and wishful thinking, justly denied by every honest atheist. A god whom we can easily bear, a god from whom we do not have to hide, a god whom we do not hate in moments, a god whose destruction we never desire, is not a God at all, and has no reality.*[2]

[2] Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), pp. 161-62, quoted approvingly by McClelland, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

The Human Response

If biblical people perceive God as the enemy, what is their response? Predictably and understandably, it is often anger and rage. Take the case of Job. Even a casual reading of the book explodes the myth that Job is a paragon of patience, a model of silent and submissive suffering. Throughout the drama he rails and rages against God, angrily accusing the Almighty of monumental injustice and all the while passionately protesting his own innocence and integrity.[3] In fact so certain is Job of his case against a heartless and unjust deity that he goes so far as to demand a post-death confrontation with the Lord, at which time Job's innocence will once for all be established and proclaimed.[4]

And so Job is not deceived. Let the author of the Prologue attempt to convince his audience that the chief culprit behind Job's insufferable sorrows is Satan (1:6-12; 2:1-6).[5] Job knows better. Correctly he recognizes that the real enemy is God (19:8-12). And it is precisely because he so stubbornly clings to that conviction, takes God so seriously, and has such an unshakable faith in God's control over everything, including misfortunes and evil, that he vents his anger against his divine adversary. Thus, far from being evidence of a wobbly or non-existent faith, Job's rage only bears unmistakable and eloquent testimony to the strength and vitality of his trust in God.

Or consider the Psalmists. Presumably without guilt, shame or embarrassment they express their laments to the Lord, and in so doing frequently hurl their anger heavenward, so much so, that laments are one of the most common categories in the Psalter.[6] In fact, as Walter Brueggemann has so perceptively observed, the lament plays a prominent role through the Sacred Scriptures.[7] In convincing fashion Brueggemann contends that the biblical authors consistently followed the structure of the lament as they composed their documents.[8] Featuring a journey of faith from despair to hope, from the depths to the heights, from feeling overwhelmed and engulfed by distress to being certain of near divine deliverance and salvation, the lament structure of Israel's faith apparently governs the biblical presentation of the nation's history from the Exodus to the disaster of 587 BCE.[9] Even the New Testament authors, according to Brueggemann, proclaim a portion of their Gospel message in this lament form.[10]

And what is the mood of the lament? Varied and alternating. Doubt, despair, anger, hostility, bitterness, resentment, hopelessness, perplexity, fear, and accusation appear side by side with hope, faith, confidence and courage. That varied, alternating, ambiguous mood is precisely what one would expect from a

---

[3] See, for example, 7:11-21; 9:14-24; 13:20-27; 19:8-12; 21:7-22; 27:1-5; 29:1-6.

[4] That seems to be the message of passages like 16:19-21 and especially 19:24-27.

[5] The assumption here is that both the prologue and the epilogue are not a part of the original book. For a discussion of this issue see Samuel Terrien. "Job," *IB*, vol. 3 (New York, New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), pp. 884-890.

[6] Nearly a third of the Psalms may be classified as laments. See A. A. Anderson, "Psalms," *New Century Bible*, vol. I (Greenwood, South Carolina: Attic Press, 1977), pp. 36-37.

[7] Walter Brueggemann, "From Hurt to Joy, From Death to Life," *Int.* 28 (1974), 3-19. Also "The Role fo the Lament in the Theology of the Old Testament," by Claus Westermann, *ibid.*, pp. 20-38.

[8] *Op. cit.*, pp. 13-19.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 14-18.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

doubting-believing child of God in desparate straits.[11]

But what about anger? How prominent is that emotion in the laments? Certainly the mood must have been present in the heart of the speaker, even though it is not explicitly verbalized. I for one find it scarcely imaginable that any person could ever have uttered the curses of the imprecatory psalms without at least a tinge of anger. It is unthinkable that one could petition God to butcher foes and slaughter enemies (Ps. 69:23-28 and Ps. 139:19-22) without harboring anger and rage against the hated adversary.

It is most certainly understandable, perhaps even allowable and forgivable that the Hebrew lamenters should express anger against their human enemies. But what about God? Is he ever the target of the Psalmists' wrath? Probably not explicitly. Yet if we can attribute normal human emotions to the lamenters, if they at all felt as we ordinarily do under similar circumstances, then some anger must have been in their hearts when they indicted God for national disasters (Ps. 44) or viewed *him* and not mere mortals as their implacable enemy (Ps. 88). At the very least, the language is suggestive of anger.

And then there is Jeremiah, the young prophet whose rage against God is notorious. With a candor that shocks us and perhaps even offends our sensibilities he lashes out against the Lord, accusing him of being a liar and a deceiver, nothing but a fading mirage in the desert (20:7 and 15:15-18). Is it realistic to assume that laments such as these could have been uttered without bitterness and anger?

Finally, we appeal to Christ himself. As he suffered the torments of the execution tree, he took upon his parched and fevered lips the words of a familiar lament: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Ps. 22:1). What were the emotions in his tortured soul as he shouted those words? Doubt, fear, anguish, feeling of forsakenness, possibly even anger and rage? Or in the Gethsemane moments, when the Evangelists inform us that the very sorrows of death flooded his tormented body (Mt. 26:36) and his bloody sweat soaked the garden ground (Luke 22:44) — in that unmatched anguish what were his emotions as he whispered the words of submission to the Father's hard and unsearchable will? Surely, when in such desperate agonizing straits one prays with "loud cries and tears" (Heb. 5:7), anger can be heard in the words that are expressed. Listening to the Christ character in the rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar," as he sings the Gethsemane prayer, one cannot help but discern the anger in his voice as he literally spits out the words of resignation to the horrors of the cross. Does the singer do violence to our Lord by so portraying him in his garden anguish, or has he perhaps captured the completely understandable and entirely human mood of Jesus in that Gethsemane experience better than some docetic artists whose painting of the Christ kneeling with his hands folded on a rock gives the impression that he was barely scratched by pain?

[11] Even a casual reading of any of the following Psalms reveals the gamut of these emotions: Pss. 3, 5, 6, 7, 17, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 35, 39, 41, 42-43, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 61, 63, 64, 69, 71, 86, 88, 102, 109, 130, 140, 141, 143. These are generally classified as Psalms of Individual Laments. Corporate laments are: 44, 60, 74, 80, 83, 85, 90, 124, 126, 137 and 144.

Comments and Conclusions[12]

Rage is compatible with faith. Once the enemy has been correctly identified as God, then to rage against him is not only inevitable, it is necessary. Otherwise we vent our anger on the wrong person. We fight with our mate or we shout at our children. In the words of McClelland:

> *Look at those marvelous models of blasphemy in the Bible: Job, Jeremiah, the psalmists, even Jesus. They knew who the enemy was. They knew with whom they were doing business. 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' You do not say, 'Shh, shh, don't say that,' or 'It isn't God's fault . . . God is nice.' When we are enraged at God, cursing God becomes the expression of the relationship. That is why Karl Barth says, 'Blasphemy . . . , even the blasphemy of Job, is blasphemy against God,' not emptiness (Karl Barth, **The Epistle to the Romans,** 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press), n.d., p. 156). Cursing God is as much an affirmation of faith in God for the person who hurts as is singing the Doxology for the person who is happy. The difference in style is where life finds us.*[13]

Or again:

> *It makes sense to curse God. But it makes absolutely no sense to deny him, because we cannot run far enough away to escape the tragedies that haunt us and call into question the meaning of life and the goodness of God. It makes as much sense to deny God as it does to deny life, for God is Life. So the first thing we have to say about rage is that the Bible, through its very models of faith, gives us permission to be enraged at times with God when we see him as the enemy.*[14]

The laments of Scripture, with their rage against both God and fellow human beings, display an authenticity that is admirable. Laments feature real people attempting to respond authentically to the real experiences of life. Thus a study of biblical laments could conceivably provide a welcome corrective for an institutional religion that desires to isolate itself from the pains and hurts, the darkness, dangers and sacrifices of life as it really is.

Precisely because they are so genuinely and authentically human, the laments of the Bible present a needed and constant anti-dote against a recurring docetic view of the Scriptural authors, the people of God, or even of Jesus himself. Thus the laments embody and express a kind of eloquent incarnational theology. They honor our humanity and that of God as he is enfleshed in the lamenting Messiah of Gethsemane and Golgatha.

Biblical laments proclaim and affirm the ambiguous nature of faith. God's sons and daughters believe and doubt, trust and despair, hate and love simultaneously. The lament therefore becomes a salutary corrective to the euphoric, celebrative misconceptions of faith which romantically pretend that the life of God's people is all sweetness and roses, joy, praise and laughter.

The laments with their anger also demonstrate that biblical faith is

[12] Once again I acknowledge my indebtedness for much of the material that follows to Brueggemann, Westermann, and McClelland.

[13] *Op. cit.*, p. 56.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

supremely dialogical. The angry encounter is with God, not with an inferior subordinate. This holds true in both times of prosperity and misfortune. If in the former the benefactor is God, then in the latter God is the enemy. As the biblical author gratefully rejoices in God's presence for blessings received, so he also vents his strongest doubts, most bitter resentments, sharpest anger, and deepest despair. If not before God, then, pray tell, before whom? Thus the very anger and rage of the lament actually takes God far more seriously and authentically than the disimpassioned and mechanically mumbled words of pious and politely uttered "church" prayers. Consequently . . .

Angry laments tend to vitalize prayer. It is extremely fortunate that God is an incurable insomniac (Ps. 121), or I am convinced that the emotionless prayers which frequently ascend to his throne would put him to sleep. That cannot happen when the prayer becomes an angry lament. If there is one truth that stands out in a study of the biblical lament it is that God does not ignore the lamenter but instead always listens to the plaintive cry. Angry laments keep God awake.

Anger is not the final word. Almost without exception, the lament concludes on a note of confidence and hope, trust and joy. Generally the faith of the lamenter is irrepressible. That is because God is utterly trustworthy and reliable when he issues his promises of salvation. At last the lamenter comes to realize that the "enemies" who chase, hunt, hound and pursue are none other than "the goodness and mercy of God" (Ps. 23:5). Finally it dawns on the angry lamenter that the love of God is also inescapable (Ps. 139). The divine shepherd looks, seeks and searches for the lost sheep *until* he finds it (Luke 15:4). Sitting alone on a dungheap, dejectedly certain about being hemmed on all sides by nothing but trouble and misfortune, the lamenter looks to the mountains that surround Jerusalem. Suddenly faith comes alive again and the lamenter confidently shouts: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from this time forth and for evermore!" (Ps. 125:2). Hemmed in to be sure, not by trouble, but by God! The lament becomes a hymn of hope; despair takes wings.

The angry laments of Scripture suggest that perhaps our hymnals, liturgies and prayerbooks should be restructured so as to make Job feel more comfortable in the worshipping community. If despairing Job should ever show up, what songs could he sing? What prayers could he pray? What liturgy makes "Job" feel at home in the midst of the celebrating assembly? Expressions of anger, hatred, rage, resentment, bitterness, betrayal, abandonment, unbelief have for the most part been consciously or unconsciously banned and eliminated from liturgies, hymnals and prayerbooks. It is not acceptable to feel that way before God and in the presence of one's fellow worshippers. And yet the ancient Hebrew hymnal, the Psalter, displaying precisely those forbidden emotions, gives every evidence that people like Job must have composed many of the hymns, written many of the prayers, and been a warmly welcomed member of the worshipping community. McClelland puts it well:

> *The usual theological understanding of the divine-human encounter is that God loves us, and we are, therefore, to adore him. As a result, Christian worship is customarily heavy with praise and thanksgiving.*
>
> *Such an understanding of wor-*

ship is, however, too narrow. It omits many of the moods and emotions that I and others feel in relationship to God. Such feelings are candidly displayed by the heroes of faith in the Bible. Consider Job, for example. Picture Job sitting on his dung heap, shaking his fist in the face of God, demanding that God respond to his demands for justice. For him to sing the Doxology seems inappropriate, if not ludicrous.

Jeremiah, the young prophet, delivered his message of doom and destruction day after day, only to be met by the laughing ridicule and scorn of his audience. In private, he laid his complaint before God and demanded that God shape up or allow him to ship out. Adoring silence would not be his style.

The Psalms are filled with cries of dereliction and anger, demanding revenge born of emotions other than adoration and praise. Have these moods no place in worship or in our relationship to God? How, then, did they get into the Bible?[15]

In a similar vein, Westermann comments:

It would be a worthwhile task to ascertain how it happened that in Western Christendom the lament has been totally excluded from man's relationship with God, with the result that it has completely disappeared above all from prayer and worship. We must ask whether this exclusion is actually based on the message of the New Testament or whether it is in part attributable to the influence of Greek thought, since it is so thoroughly consistent with the ethic of Stoicism.[16]

Should not our worship materials be revised to include more hymns and prayers, more laments appropriate to Job?

Finally, the rage one senses in so many biblical laments begins to subside at the cross of Calvary. For the lamenter, life becomes intolerably absurd, insufferably mysterious. How does one reconcile the dark and cruel mysteries with a caring, compassionate, loving, omnipotent, benevolent God? And so out of the heart of nearly every lament there arises the plaintive, anguished, "Why, Lord, why?" Thus God is called to account, put on trial, and the lament becomes a theodicy, a theodicy to which the cross provides some partial answers.

The cross proclaims that God is no stranger to human suffering. Anyone who believes that God is eternally immune to our heartaches and heart-breaks has never gazed up into the tormented, anguished, terrified face of the dying God of Calvary.

Second, the cross announces that God brings good out of evil. At Calvary the human race committed the supreme sin of deicide. Yet out of that unspeakable evil, God brings to all people unspeakable good. Blessings out of burdens, joy out of sorrow, crowns out of crosses, life out of death, light out of darkness, the glory of Easter out of the gloom of Good Friday — that is the good news of the cross.

Third, the cross shouts the love of God. If the Lord of the universe loved us enough to become a lifeless unclothed corpse on a cross for our eternal salvation, then surely that self-giving love must somehow be at the heart of all that happens in the lives of his cherished and redeemed people, even and especially the dark and agonizing mysteries.

[15] *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

[16] *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

Habakkuk and Justification By Faith

Walter E. Rast

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana

It is a pleasure to participate in this celebration for Alfred von Rohr Sauer, former teacher, fellow archaeologist, and personal friend. The subject has been chosen because, being of the confessional background that he is, Von can no doubt easily resonate to words which bring Lutherans, not normally inclined in such a direction, the closest to ecstasy they seem to be able to come: "The righteous shall live by his steadfast faith" (Hab. 2:4).[1]

That this extraordinary declaration became so important in the New Testament (Rom. 1:17, Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38), and in the theology of the Reformation, is one of those events in the history of thought and interpretation which eludes adequate explanation. Clearly the text went on to open up its "surplus of meaning," in Paul Ricoeur's words, and thus it lived. But even when the original context of the whole book is examined, it can be seen that it was an engaging declaration central to the meaning of Habakkuk.[2] This essay tries to probe that original context in order to understand Habakkuk's message and the significance of Hab. 2:4 in it.

These become clearer if it is recalled that the Book of Habakkuk came into being in an experience of crisis. The crisis was deeper, however, than a simply external one. The dilemma posed in Habakkuk was how trust and obedience toward God could be maintained at all in the present. The work gave expression to a new type of *Angst* generated by the shattering events of the late seventh and early sixth centuries B.C.[3] At this time the destruction wrought by the armies of the new Babylonian regime produced not only serious social and political upheaval, it also fostered a spreading doubt regarding the workings of the God of Israel. Questionings which had not existed previously surfaced, necessitating new reflection and an anticipation of a new shape in the divine response. Habakkuk stems from such questioning, and it is in such a context that his famous utterance is to be understood.

[1] The translation "steadfast faith" was proposed by William H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk* (Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, No. 24; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), p. 125, in trying to find a term encompassing both faith and faithfulness. I find this an excellent solution to the problem of *'ĕmûnâh* in 2:4.

[2] Rabbinical interpretation similarly viewed the verse as central. Rabbi Simlai in the tractate *Makkoth* stated that Habakkuk based all 613 commandments received by Moses on the single principle that "the righteous shall live by faith." See "Makkoth" in Isidore Epstein, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud, Seder Nezikin IV (The Soncino Talmud;* London; Soncino, 1935), p. 173.

[3] On the problems of a date for Habakkuk see J. H. Heaton, *Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah: Introduction and Commentary* (Torch Bible Commentaries, ed. John Marsh and Alan Richardson; London: SCM Press, 1961), p. 82. As I see it the book has to be located in a period when the Neo-Babylonian threat had moved far along, and thus I would place it in the first decade of the sixth century B.C. at the earliest.

A Key to Habakkuk

How the Book of Habakkuk is read and understood is dependent in large manner on how one views the origin and fundamental organization of the work. There is common agreement on the variety of "forms" found in the book, which includes at least the following: 1) A lament (1:2-4); 2) A divine response (1:5-11); 3) A second lament (1:12-17); 4) A second response (2:1-4); 5) A series of woes (2:5-20); and 6) A psalm (3:1-19).

It was this heterogeneity of forms which led some scholars to hold that the book cannot be a unity.[4] On the other hand, the tendency in Old Testament scholarship more recently has been less atomizing, and such approaches as rhetorical criticism, the new literary criticism, and new perceptions emerging from hermeneutics, have fostered approaches which take books as "wholes," even though levels of tradition development and redaction certainly continue to be recognized. In what follows it would make little difference whether one were to think of two or even more Habakkuks rather than one, although I incline to the view that the struggle and its resolution imaged in this book are the product of one person.

In the interpretation proposed here, the key lies in the decisively different content of the laments and the divine responses which are found successively in the first two chapters of the book. This follow-up of one lament and response by a second is, it seems, not the result of simple and unrelated addition. Rather, the second lament and its response represent the very action of deepening the questions of the beginning of the book, along with awaiting the divine response, which is also communicated in a new form and with a substantive new content. The first lament and its answer make use of the traditional rubrics long known in the cult of Israel. The second lament breaks through to radical questioning, and its answer proposes a new level of understanding the workings and self-disclosure of God. Furthermore it goes on to link both a series of "woes" and a psalm of theophany to its perspective.

The First Lament and Its Response

Many students of the book now recognize that Habakkuk, like Nahum, was a prophet with close connections to the temple worship of Jerusalem. He was well-versed in the traditional liturgies of the temple and his book was modelled on these.[5] Specifically the cultic form employed by Habakkuk was the lament, which in his book sets up the basic issue. The lament, in both its individual and common form, had its home in the temple of the monarchy, as the psalter with its numerous examples attests. Study of the function of the lament by form criticism, on the other hand, has shown that the lament did not always stand alone, but was uttered for a purpose. This was to receive from God a confirmation which would clarify and, above all, change the distress in which the petitioners found themselves. That response of God seems often to have been com-

[4] For references see Georg Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (tr. David E. Green; Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), p. 453. By contrast see the fruitful holistic reading of the book by J. Gerald Janzen, "Eschatological Symbol and Existence in Habakkuk," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44 (1982), pp. 394-414.

[5] Paul Humbert, Problèmes du Livre d'Habacuc ("Mémoires de L'Université de Neuchatel; *Neuchatel:* Secretariat de L'Université', 1944), especially pp. 29, 293.

municated through a temple functionary, probably one of the priests of the temple staff. The fact that lament psalms sometimes shift in their latter sections toward gratitude, or that a whole class of psalms with thanksgiving as their central motif is found, indicates the manner in which a priestly oracle promising a resolution of the grief was interposed.[6]

The Book of Habakkuk begins with such a traditional lament in 1:2-4. The conventional formulae of laments are present, including "how long?", "I cried and you did not answer," "why?". In customary form God is challenged for his slowness to act. He has not shown signs of his presence or that he cares. The complaint proper in vv. 3b-4 is that ruin and violence are rampant evils the prophet himself is witnessing, and signs of internal dissension and the disintegration of the society around him are present. The result is that Torah "grows weak" while evil people manipulate the righteous and justice is made crooked.[7]

The various attempts to find a specific historical case to which Habakkuk's complaint can be related have understandably not met with broad agreement.[8] Consequently it seems best to take the non-specific character of the complaint at face value as intentionally general. What the lament seems to be projecting in its crystallized expression is a background for the oracle which follows. Briefly and vaguely it sketches an instant portrayal of the defection of Habakkuk's people, a condition which his prophetic contemporaries, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, had condemned at greater length. It does not detail the evils to which the oracle is an answer, probably because when Habakkuk is composing the work the die has already been cast. Thus this first lament and its response function to set the stage for the intensified issues of the following lament and oracle.

Usually an oracle in response to a lament was one containing a promise of deliverance, the so-called priestly oracle of salvation. In this first oracle the divine response is just the opposite. It begins with a call to "the peoples," or "the traitors," to witness what God is about to do.[9] God declares that he will introduce "the Chaldeans" upon the scene, and there follows a colorful depiction of the ferocity with which the army of this nation is to carry out a punitive mission (1:5-11). Thus in this oracle can be seen two things which are unique to Habakkuk's use of the priestly oracle as a response to a lament. One is the negative aspect of the oracle. The other is that, even though negative, the chastising activity of God will presumably bring about a time of setting things right, and thus, in a round-about way, is an act of salvation.

---

[6] On lament and oracle the most important works remain those of Hermann Gunkel, *Einleitung in die Psalmen* (Göttinger Handkommentar zum Alten Testament; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933), 136-38, 177, 243-47, and Joachim Begrich, "Das priesterliche Heilsorakel," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 52 (1934), 81-92.

[7] Janzen proposes on the basis of the *tāpûg* ("grows weak") that the crisis of faith in Habakkuk is that the divine word itself has lost its effectiveness. While this is a possible explanation, it may just as well be that the verse is attacking the cold indifference toward the Torah, in which sense it has become weak. See Janzen, "Eschatological Symbol," pp. 399-400.

[8] Cf. Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (München: Christian Kaiser, 1960), II; 201.

[9] The Massoretic Text of the beginning of v. 5 reads *baggôyîm,* "O peoples," whereas *LXX* and the *Qumran Pesher* read *bôgedîm,* "O traitors," or "treacherous people." The specific reference in either case is not evident.

The Second Lament and Its Response

The central problem of the book is introduced, however, with the second lament (1:12-17). That this is a lament form is evident again from the conventional language, such as the questioning posture, the use of "why?" in 1:13, and the statement of complaint in 1:15-16. Yet the lament in this section goes beyond the normal mode of questioning God. Here Habakkuk comes closest to the Book of Job in placing God, as it were, on trial. It is this little section which has often been singled out as indicative of Habakkuk's concern with theodicy. The burden of the complaint is clearly the "overkill" which has resulted. God raised up a chastiser to purge his people as he had done in the past. But in this case the vessel of his wrath went overboard, raising the problem of God's own justice. "Are they then to slaughter the nations without pity?" (1:17, *NEB*)?"

It is at this point that the encounter between the prophet and God is raised to a new level, affecting both the content of the divine self-disclosure and the manner in which it is transmitted and received. The reply to Habakkuk's second lament may be said to include all the material of chapter 2, with the section separated, however, into two components which follow one another: 1) the prophet's readiness to receive the revelation in 2:1-4, and 2) the communication of the ultimate overthrow of the chastisers in the woes of 2:5-20.

Hab. 2:1-4 first describes the prophet as taking his watch, and then with v. 2 receiving an answer from God. The stance of watching is important because it is connected with Habakkuk's deepened grasp of the divine response. To receive God's answer necessitates "waiting" (2:3). The assertion "there still is a vision" *(ôd ḥāzōn)*,[10] also in 2:3, may suggest that the older form of cultic manifestation, or of response generated by lament, may no longer pertain in the same way, but there is revelation and action of God nonetheless. The new revelation comes in the form of vision which is also for the future, kept in a state of reservation but characterized by surety. It is for "the appointed time," and although it may be delayed in its realization, its fulfillment is inevitable. When it begins to unfold there will be "no time to linger" (2:3).

This is the immediate context for the significant verse 2:4, which consists first of a negative assertion followed by a terse half-verse regarding the posture of faith or faithfulness. The negative declaration of the first half is problematic, but it seems best to take the one who is called

[10] J. Gerald Janzen, "Habakkuk 2:2-4 in the Light of Recent Philological Advances," *Harvard Theological Review* 73 (1980), pp. 56-57, suggests emending the adverbial *'ôd* to *'ēd*, which would result in giving up the force of a vision "still" to come in favor of the meaning of "witness.' This results in an interesting understanding of the section as a whole, but it also drastically alters the meaning of 2:4b. The latter would then be read as "its reliability," referring back to the emended *'ēd* as over against the traditional meaning of "his faith," with the suffix connected with the righteous one. There is, of course, no manuscript support for this change. Janzen argues for it by collecting uses of the parallel word *yāpēaḥ*, and showing how instances of *'ēd* occur in parallel with that term. Hab. 2:3, he then argues, ought to be re-read in this manner since it would fit that pattern. The present writer has seen the collapse of too many examples of patternings in a different field, that of archaeology, to accept the principle that, once a pattern has been identified, it can be counted on for explanation. I doubt if it is less so in language.

"puffed up" *(uppĕlâh)*[11] as the same Chaldeans who are the subject of the book throughout. Indeed the verse which follows proceeds to depict precisely the Neo-Babylonian aggressor. By contrast, what characterizes "the righteous one" is his faithful trust in the vindication of God, which for the moment may be held in abeyance.

That God might not act at once but would surely do so at the appointed time demanded a reconception of the shape of faith and faithfulness. This came as a correlate to Habakkuk's own reflections on both the horizontal and temporal dimensions of evil he and his people were witnessing. Horizontally the second lament, and the woes in 2:5-20, depict one of the earliest experiences of the expansiveness of evil in the world of the ancient Near East. Imperial conquest there certainly was much earlier, from the end of the third millennium B.C. onward, but a magnitude was reached in the case of the Neo-Babylonian dominance which was unparalleled. Similarly in a temporal sense the "time" of evil now seemed to extend beyond what was usually inferred as necessary for God to set things right. Habakkuk, of course, was not the only one wrestling with the "time" of evil's reign, for this problem included other prophetic figures of the period. But in Habakkuk it erupted into questioning the workings of God.

The declaration "but the righteous one will live through his steadfast faith" must consequently be seen as a new kind of challenge to holding on before the vision was fulfilled and the oppressor dealt with. This holding on would be the most genuine expression of the righteous one's life. In this sense *'ĕmûnâh* is not adequately translated by "faithfulness" alone, which would stress that the future possibilities would pivot around the *ṣaddîq* himself. To be sure faithfulness is also implied, particularly if the lament over the coldness of the Torah in 1:4 is kept in mind. But the thrust of the second oracle is toward an anticipated outcome, delayed for the moment but assuredly to come about, when God would act anew. Living toward that promised action seems to be the strength of the word *'ĕmûnâh* here. In the last section below we shall discuss this significant mindset of the prophet as an eschatological one, which suggests that his work is a step in a new direction.

The Transformation of Two Further Forms

It is not necessary to go into detail here regarding the final two segments of the book, the series of woes in 2:5-20 and the psalm of theophany in Hab. 3. What only needs to be indicated is how these two older forms are likewise provided with a new dimension in the framework of Habakkuk.

Woe oracles are abundantly known among earlier prophets (e.g., Is. 3:9), where the form was a flexible one for mediating the retribution decreed by God. What is important in Habakkuk's use of the woe oracle is the universal context in which it is set. The pillager Babylon will receive destruction in the measure that it has wrought it. There is, in other words, a new ring to the woe as with the oracle. Its realization is positioned in the future with a more distanced outcome. The context suggests that in Habakkuk we find an early stage of that eschatologizing of woes, which

[11] For the meaning of *ʿuppĕlâh* as "puffed up, arrogant," see under *ʿāpal* in W. Gesenius and F. Buhl, *Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (15th ed.; Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel, 1910), defined as "aufgeblasen, vermessen."

became a marked feature later, especially in the tendency to make lists of apocalyptic assertions of this type.

The psalm of theophany in Hab. 3 also has its significance in the more futuristic thrust of Habakkuk. It is commonly held today that the theophanic poem, with its expressive language and imagery, had its setting in the cultic activities of ancient Israel.[12] If the Book of Habakkuk is viewed as a very early example of reinterpretation from a perspective which can be called eschatological, the psalm has its significance as representing the grand finale. That is what the book has been concerned with, in grappling both with the reserved appearance of the vindicating God, and the sense of certainty that he will indeed appear and act. Thus an interpretation which sees the psalm merely as a later appendage with no integral connection with the book, fails to comprehend the wholeness of the work which is well-climaxed by this poetic conclusion. With its cosmic panorama, the psalm too must be read as a product of nascent apocalyptic eschatology.

Summary

The conclusion of this study, therefore, is that Habakkuk, although a small book, is nonetheless a turning point on the way toward a grand-scale visionary interpretation of the workings of God which finds expression in later books such as Daniel. In Habakkuk this transformative process is a conscious one, since the prophet begins intentionally with older forms, only to move them to new dimensions of meaning with the perspective an eschatological outlook casts on their older content. Of course Habakkuk is not yet fully developed apocalyptic. Still it contains that kind of thinking in embryonic form, and therefore the book would seem to be more profitably read from that perspective rather than by strict reference to Wisdom. It may be that the further apocalyptic interpretation the Qumran community gave to this book, as expressed through its extensive *pesher* on it, was not really a tour de force, but consonant with the book's original tendency.

Paul Hanson has recently helped advance our grasp of the movement we call apocalyptic in the post-exilic period. This he has done by employing a methodology which eschews generalized definitions, while rather concentrating on texts in which the contours of apocalyptic formulation can be seen emerging. For Hanson the earliest intimations are found in the exilic disciples of Isaiah, and specifically Third Isaiah (Is. 56-66). In addition, Hanson attempts a social location for this movement, arguing that it had its home among Levites of the exilic age who found themseves at odds with the priestly hierarchy of Zadokites reestablishing itself. This paper would suggest that Habakkuk ought also to be considered as an early representative of this type of interpretation. Indeed, Hanson notes that apocalyptic cannot be successfully pinned down to any single party or representative, and probably had a rather broad representation among a number of differing types and persons in the exilic and post-exilic communities. Yet, while recognizing its sociological features, I would not want to minimize the overwhelming amount of theological

[12] W. F. Albright's important study of Hab 3 proposed that it was based on archaic and archaizing motifs which go back as far as the Ugaritic texts of the Late Bronze Age. See W. F. Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," in H. H. Rowley, ed., *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Presented to Theodore H. Robinson* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950), pp. 1-18. This use of archaic imagery is also characteristic of apocalyptic.

construction which was going on among representatives of this type of interpretation.[13]

In the end what Habakkuk was coming to grips with was the often inscrutable ways of God's workings.[14] That God could let evil extend and expand elicited new reflection on his operations in time. That he could hold back his response led to a formulation in which the divine action was held momentarily in suspense as backdrop to a heightened anticipation of an ultimate showdown. One can conclude that only such an intensified answer was adequate to the scope of crisis encountered by Habakkuk and his contemporaries. Simpler answers could no longer suffice to address the enormity of the dilemma. Thus apocalyptic begins to arise as a genuine effort to comprehend the continued validity of faith and faithfulness addressed to historical extremities.

To return to Hab. 2:4, faith or faithfulness in Habakkuk has already become faith or faithfulness in such an eschatological sense.[15] That is how the righteous will live at a time when the power of evil has overrun its bounds. In this there is a continuing message for persons seeking to be both faithful and faith-full in our own time. Those living in such a fashion today often find themselves in the very same dilemma posed by Habakkuk. We may work and speak on behalf of the divine righteousness, truth and love in the world, but discover rather that "Torah grows weak." More probable is our encounter with a face of evil which presents itself as seemingly beyond the capacity of human beings to expunge successfully. We witness the ceaseless quarrels of nations and peoples bringing misery to many, and watch as a rampant selfishness carries through to inevitable oppression. We experience an occasional shiver as we recall that what was once the myth of burning our world up in the fire has now become the scientific and technological headline of our age.

In the face of any and all such extremities, even as we continue working, our mental and spiritual path meets that of Habakkuk, and we hear not only the three-word gem, but also what may be taken to be his own final commentary on it:

The Lord is my strength,
Who makes my feet as nimble as a hind's,
And sets me to range the heights.
(3:19, *NEB*)

---

[13] For a succinct statement of his method see the first chapter in Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975). Perhaps the reference in the apocryphal work *Bel and The Dragon* to Habakkuk as being a Levite (1:1) is not entirely off the mark. It would undergird this prophet's relation, à la Hanson, to a group engaged with visionary interpretation. But cf. R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), I: 658, n. 1, on the problem of the accuracy of the statement.

[14] This is the emphasis in the very pastorally written book of Donald E. Gowan, *The Triumph of Faith in Habakkuk* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1976).

[15] The conclusions of Janzen along this line are similar to those of this paper. See his summarizing remarks in "Eschatological Symbol," pp. 412-14.

Bone of my Bones and Flesh of my Flesh — The Politics of the Yahwist

Walter Wifall

St. John's University, Jamaica, NY

Some years ago, in his brief survey of recent critical interpretations of Gen. 2-3, J. L. McKenzie[1] described the stories there as reflecting a combination of pre-literary Israelite folklore, edited and crafted through the considerable literary and theological skills of the Yahwist (J). As a result, both literary and theological tensions remain between the sources employed by the Yahwist and the unified account of the "creation" and "fall" he has left to us in these two chapters of Gen.

One of the Yahwist's sources, preserved in Gen. 2:23, McKenzie[2] called a "doxology." This verse reads, "Now this (woman) is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This (woman) shall be called woman because from man has this woman been taken." The following verse (Gen. 2:24) ("Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh") McKenzie identified as a Hebrew *masal* or proverb.

Somewhat along those same lines, L. Alonso-Schökel[3] later identified a combination of "sapiential" and "covenant" themes running throughout Gen 2-3. According to Alonso-Schökel, the Yahwist created a story about the "Man *(Adam)* of all time" from a combination of his own personal human experiences plus the national experiences of Israel, collected from her history with Yahweh. The royal wisdom of knowing "good and evil" (1 Kgs. 3:9; Isa. 7:15) and the "shrewdness" of the serpent he saw reflected in the historical conterparts of Adam and Eve, the sinful rulers of the North, Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kgs. 16-22). Thus, Alonso-Schökel would date the Yahwist at least in the mid 9th century B.C., if not later; however, his observations are mainly theological and any historical reference is tangential to his argument.

Other commentators on Gen. 2-3 have approached the Yahwist account from different perspectives than those above. For example, J. Skinner[4] compares Israel's stories to others from the ancient and modern Near East through cultural anthropology; G. von Rad[5] suppresses the historical and traditional in favor of the etiological; B. Vawter,[6] similar to McKenzie, stresses humanity's social nature and a biblically-based equality of the sexes; and R. Davidson[7] approaches the Yahwist account from the psychological perspective of human existential and religious "loneliness." These

[1] J. L. McKenzie, "The Literary Characteristics of Genesis 2-3," *TS* 15 (1954), 541-559.

[2] J. L. McKenzie, 560.

[3] L. Alonso-Schökel, "Sapiential and Covenant Themes in Genesis 2-3," *Modern Biblical Studies* (Milwaukee: Bruce Pub. Co., 1967), 49-61.

[4] J. Skinner, *Genesis* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 67-70.

[5] G. von Rad, *Genesis (OTL;* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 85.

[6] B. Vawter, *On Genesis* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977), 74-75.

[7] R. Davidson, *Genesis 1-11 (Camb Bib Comm;* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973), 38.

various approaches can all be helpful in appropriating the Old Testament for our time. However, the political approach proposed some years back by W. Brueggemann[8] still seems to offer the best promise of uncovering what the Yahwist was originally up to in Gen. 2-3.

I

Brueggemann attempted to demonstrate that 2 Sam. 9-20 and 1 Kgs. 1-2 have also served as the Yahwist's prototype for his description of the *Urzeit*. Brueggemann[9] claims that the Yahwist crafted both his Primeval and Patriarchal accounts (Gen. 2-11 and Gen. 12-50) for the political purposes of lending legitimacy to the Davidic monarchy in Jerusalem and warning the House of David against unwarranted political and religious ambitions. The Yahwist discerned the path of all history through the specifics of the history of the Davidic royal family. Just below the surface of the "human predicament" in Gen. there lie the actual events of the family of David as recorded in Sam.-Kgs.

According to Brueggemann, the Yahwist's four stories in Gen. 2-11 reflect four historical episodes in the David Story. David and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11-12) have been retrojected by the Yahwist into his Primeval History as "Adam and Eve" (Gen. 2-3). David's rival sons, Amnon and Absalom (2 Sam. 13-14) appear as "Cain and Abel" (Gen. 4:1-16). The violent relationship between David and his ambitious son, Absalom (2 Sam. 15-20) is reflected in the story of "Noah and the Flood" (Gen. 6-9). The problems of Solomon's succession to power (1 Kgs. 1-2) are behind the story of the "Tower of Babel" (Gen. 1:1-9).

Brueggemann[10] admits in several places that these analogies are not exact, but he believes the theological patterns in the relations between God and the human actors are the same in both the David Story and Primeval History. To Brueggemann, the Gen. stories represent the Yahwist's way of writing about the ruling family of his own day, and Gen. 2 serves to legitimate the events of Gen. 3-11 much like the "Davidic Covenant" in 2 Sam. 7 serves as the prologue for the historical events described in 2 Sam. 9-20 and 1 Kgs. 1-2.

In a subsequent article, Brueggemann[11] turned his attention to the identification of "Adam" with the "king." Adam's "rise" (Gen. 2:7) and "fall" (Gen. 3:19) "from dust to dust" is compared to the rise and fall of king Baasha (1 Kgs. 16:1-3). In terms of kingship, to be "taken from the dust" means to be "enthroned" as king, and "to return to the dust" means to be "deposed" from kingship.

In spite of the apparent parallelism of royal themes between the so-called "David Story" in Sam.-Kgs. and the Primeval History in Gen. 2-11, the latter probably cannot solely be defined as a retrojection of the former. Brueggemann's own parallels range beyond the period of David and Solomon and, as I[12]

[8] W. Brueggemann, "David and his Theologian," *CBQ* 30 (1968), 156-181.

[9] W. Brueggemann, "David and his Theologian," 157-158.

[10] W. Brueggemann, "David and his Theologian," 162, 171, and 173.

[11] W. Brueggemann, "From Dust to Kingship," *ZAW* 84 (1972), 1-18.

[12] W. Wifall, "The Breath of his Nostrils: Genesis 2:7b," *CBQ* 36 (1974), 237-240; "Genesis 3:15 — A Protevangelium?" *CBQ* 36 (1974), 361-365; "David — Prototype of Israel's Future?" *BTB* 4 (1974), 94-107; "Genesis 6:1-4 — A Royal Davidic Myth?" *BTB* 5 (1975), 294-301; "Son of Man — A Pre-Davidic Social Class?" *CBQ* 37 (1975), 331-340; "The Status of 'Man' as Resurrection," *ZAW* 90 (1978), 382-394.

have argued elsewhere, Gen. 2-11 also reflects Israel's cultural milieu in the ancient Near East at the time of the Yahwist. Brueggemann believes that they for the most part represent the *ad-hoc* theological creations of the Yahwist. Nevertheless, both the actual history of the Davidic monarchy and the mythology of ancient Near Eastern kingship seem to be reflected in the Yahwist's description of the creation of "Adam." According to the Yahwist's perspective, God's creative breath and power to rule worked through "the man" (Adam) just as Yahweh ruled as King politically through the Davidic ruling family over Israel and her empire during the monarchy.

II

Descriptive phrases and terms in Gen. 2-3, such as "breath of life" (Gen. 2:7)[13] "seed" and "tread upon your head" (Gen. 3:15),[14] and "dust to dust" (Gen. 3:19)[15] have all been interpreted as royal terminology adapted by the Yahwist for use in his stories of the "creation" and "fall." Apparently, another such royal and political phrase now also theologically adapted by the Yahwist was "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23).

This latter phrase occurs elsewhere in an address of Laban to Jacob (Gen. 29:14); of Abimelech, the son of Gideon, to the men of Shechem (Judg. 9:2); of the tribes of Israel to David at Hebron (2 Sam. 5:1); and of David to the men of Judah after Absalom's conspiracy (2 Sam. 19:13, 14). Commentators[16] have noted that this phrase represents a formula, describing flesh and blood kinship.

However, apart from the social sense of this phrase, the last three references above and 2 Sam. 5:1 in particular express a political nature and setting. In this latter instance, the tribes of the North came to David at Hebron to conclude an agreement whereby David would become king over all Israel in place of the house of Saul. Abner had already earlier negotiated with David to make a formal alliance between Israel and Judah (2 Sam. 3:9-21), with the proviso included that Michal, David's first wife be removed from her present husband and returned to David. Later, when the covenant or alliance was finally and formally ratified (2 Sam. 5:1-3), the phrase "we are your bone and your flesh" was used as the preamble to the official declaration and ceremonies that made David and his family the head of all Israel.

Similarly, in Judg. 9:1-6, the phrase "I am your bone and your flesh" on the lips of Abimelech served as the "pretext" for his alliance with the men of Shechem and for his formal recognition as their king. And in 2 Sam. 19:13, 14, David addressed the men of Judah and Amasa, his family ally in particular, with the words, "you are my bone and my flesh." This phrase expressed both the presuppositions for David's reaffirming his covenant mandate over all Israel and toward reestablishing the tribal unity Absalom's rebellion had torn apart.

A. Malamat pointed out that the royal covenant with David's family had to be

[13] W. Wifall, "The Breath of his Nostrils: Genesis 2:7b".

[14] W. Wifall, "Genesis 3:15 — A Protevangelium?"

[15] W. Brueggemann, "From Dust to Kingship."

[16] J. Skinner, *Genesis*, 67-68; B. Vawter, *On Genesis*, 75.

publicly renewed ten times in the space of 200 years.[17] Apparently, a formal, public ceremony of reaffirmation and renewal was necessitated by threats to the dynasty and to the line of succession. Basically, the covenant with David's family was publicly accepted in Jerusalem and Judah throughout the period of the monarchy. However, in the North, the agreement was reaffirmed with difficulty and finally repudiated.

The story of the alliance between Jehoshaphat of Judah and Ahab of Israel (1 Kgs. 22:1-4, 2 Chr. 18:1-3) offers a variant formula to "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" and a political setting perhaps helpful in our analysis of Gen. 2-3. The alliance was sealed by marriage between Ahab's daughter,[18] Athaliah, and Jehoshaphat's son and successor, Jehoram (2 Kgs. 8:18; 2 Chr. 21:6), whereby the house of David and the house of Omri entered a period of peaceful cooperation against common external enemies, instead of the previous rivalry and violence between the North and the South. Jehoshaphat confirmed the alliance with the words, "as myself, so you; as my people, so your people" (1 Kgs. 22:4; 2 Chr. 18:3).

III

Thus, since Brueggemann and I have previously attempted to demonstrate that several words and phrases in Gen. 2-3 had political referents before being theologically adapted into his story by the Yahwist, a similar process for the alliance formula "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23) should not be surprising. Behind the figure of "Adam" as the "man" lurks the "king" as a member of the "ruling class," just as behind the figures of the "man" as "husband" and the "woman" as "wife" there lurk royal figures such as Michal, the daughter of Saul, and her husband (2 Sam. 3:12-16) as subjects within a political alliance.

Within the formula "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" and the accompanying play on the Hebrew words "man" *ʾîš* and "woman" *ʾiššâ* (Gen. 2:23) interestingly three times there occurs the term of contempt *zōṯ*, or "this (woman)." The use of the Hebrew demonstrative pronoun to imply contempt also occurs in the masculine, for example, in reference to Moses, when during the plagues the advisors of Pharaoh hostilely referred to him as "this (man)" (Exod. 10:7). In the feminine form, Absalom's beautiful sister, Tamar, is referred to as *zōṯ*, "this (woman)," by David's oldest son, Amnon (2 Sam. 13:17). In this instance, Amnon had forcibly raped Tamar, after which his previous love for her had turned to hate. But perhaps most related to Gen. 2:23, the word *zōṯ* was used by the Yahwist zealot, Jehu, to describe the Canaanite queen of Israel and wife of Ahab, Jezebel, as "this (woman)" (2 Kgs. 9:37).

Just such an attitude of revulsion and hostility seems to be reflected by the Yahwist in his description of "this woman" in Gen. 2:23-25. In other words, "this woman" should have been physically and socially suitable for the "man" as "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh." Yet, to the Yahwist, there was something deeply wrong with the relationship.

---

[17] A. Malamat, "Organs of Statecraft in the Israelite Monarchy," *BA* 28 (1965) 34-65.

[18] Most commentaries follow 2 Kgs. 8:18 that Athaliah was Ahab's "daughter," despite 2 Kgs. 8:26. However, for the opposite opinion, that Athaliah was Ahab's "sister," see J. Montgomery, *Kings* (*ICC;* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 396.

The result of this "marriage alliance", which made the "man" and the "woman," like two royal families, "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24), was that the "man" would "forsake" or "abandon" his own father and mother and "cleave" to his new wife. Through his association with the contemptible "this woman," someone like King Jehoram of Judah perhaps is described here by the Yahwist. Jehoram "forsook" the Lord (2 Chr. 21:10) and the ways of his father, Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs. 22:42-43; 2 Chr. 20:31-32), through his devotion to his Israelite wife, Athaliah of the house of Omri (2 Chr. 21:6). And, perhaps, to the Yahwist it was no accident that King Jehoshaphat, who had concluded the alliance that was nearly fatal to the house of David, had a Queen Mother whose name was Azubah or "Forsaken" (1 Kgs. 22:42; 2 Chr. 20:31). For truly, when the "man" "clung" to "this woman", he had "abandoned" both the Lord Yahweh and his own family, the house of David.

According to the Yahwist (Gen. 2:18, 20), the "man" had received from the Lord a "suitable" "helper". There is general agreement that the first Hebrew phrase means something like "his social equal" or someone "on his level," contrary to the other previous inferior and unacceptable creatures in the story. The other Hebrew term has variously been translated "helpmate" or "partner" but elsewhere acutally meant "ally," pertaining to both human and divine help in times of conflict.

To the Yahwist, "this woman" had become the "man's wife" as through an "alliance" of royal families. She was socially of equal standing and the marriage had made the couple "allies," just as ruling houses were allied politically. As "bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh" the "woman" was more "suitable" than the foreign wives of Solomon (1 Kgs. 11:2), or the Ammonite mother of king Rehoboam (1 Kgs. 14:21). Yet, theologically, the Yahwist despised her as "this woman," because, as he says, both she and her husband "were naked and not ashamed" (Gen. 2:25).

The Yahwist, through the introduction of the "serpent" as not just a temple artifact (2 Kgs. 18:4)[19] but as a theological symbol of his story, shows in Gen. 3 just how far the religious and cultural depravity of "this woman" has led. Not only has she corrupted the domestic relationship with her husband, so that they are both unashamed in each other's presence, though they should be, but she has also publicly misused those holy and religious things that belong to the Lord Yahweh alone. Like queen Athaliah, who led her husband, Jehoram, astray after Baal (2 Kgs. 8:18; 2 Chr. 21:6) and "perverted her son, Ahaziah (2 Kgs. 8:27; 2 Chr. 22:3), "this woman" posed a real threat not only to the house of David, but also to the religion of Yahweh in Jerusalem.

The religious degradation to which the house of David had been led was symbolized by the Yahwist through the contrast in types of clothing made and worn by the man and his wife before the Lord (Gen. 3:7) versus those provided by the Lord himself (Gen. 3:21). The garments the first couple made for themselves were "loincloths" or "girdles," which could serve as a garment, but which revealed more than they covered. With such a garment, one could easily expose his nakedness, and for just such a reason

[19] Up to the time of the Yahwist, the "serpent" had positive meaning for Israel as part of her temple symbolism. As the religion of Yahweh during the monarchy was being challenged by the religion of Baal, the danger of the serpent as a pagan symbol was becoming evident to the Yahwist.

Michal had despised David for his lack of shame as he danced and worshipped before the Lord and his subjects (2 Sam. 6:14-23).

The garments the Lord provided the man and his wife were "tunics,"[20] which covered the whole body. Such a garment was worn by officials of the royal family (2 Sam. 15:32; Isa. 22:21) and by the priests in the temple of Yahweh to cover their nakedness and to prevent their being exposed on the altar of the Lord, as were their Canaanite counterparts in their worship of Baal (Exod. 28:42-43). What the Yahwist had in mind was the "long-sleeved gown" worn by the unmarried daughters of the royal household, which served as a symbol of their chastity and unmarried status (2 Sam. 13:18-19). The man and his wife could no longer live and worship in Eden — that is, in Zion[21] the city and house of the Lord Yahweh — unless they conformed to the ways of the Lord and not to those of their Canaanite neighbors.

Conclusions

The stories in Gen. 2-11 can be understood as the Yahwist's way of writing about the Davidic dynasty of his own day. The formula in Gen. 2:23, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" seems to fit the pattern of royal political titles and phrases that have been adapted by the Yahwist to introduce his story of Israel under the Lord Yahweh and the house of David. As Brueggemann himself[22] has pointed out, the dependence of the Yahwist in Gen. upon the "David Story" in Sam.-Kgs. can at best be only partially supported. For example, the "woman" takes the initiative in Gen. 3 as oposed to the initiative of the "man" in Gen. 2 and 2 Sam. 11-12; the reaction is one of "fear" before the Lord in Gen. 3 versus "confession" in 2 Sam. 12; and the paradigm extends beyond just "David and Adam" to the line of David and even, in the case of Baasha of Israel, to the rulers of the North as well as those of the South.

The stories in the so-called "Primeval History" are more than theological *ad-hoc* creations of the Yahwist; they also lent political legitimacy to the Davidic monarchy and warned his successors against excessive religious and political ambitions. Thus, the hostility and revulsion of the Yahwist against "this woman" originally had a particular historical referent, as did the reference to the gullible and equally culpable "man" in Gen. 2-3. As described in the previous paragraph, Brueggemann's analogy between "David and Bathsheba" and "Adam and Eve" is not totally convincing. Neither would there be a complete correspondence between "David and Michal" (2 Sam. 3) and the first couple. Although Michal could be included with the North as David's "bone of bone and flesh of flesh" (2 Sam. 5:1), contrary to "this woman" she loathed David's naked display (2 Sam. 6:16), and she would remain barren to her death (2 Sam. 6:23), contrary to "this woman's" royal heir or "seed" (Gen. 3:15).

[20] The "tunics of skin" (Gen. 3:21) are contrasted with the "fig-leaf" wraps of Gen. 3:7. Special and distinct garments were required to worship Baal (2 Kgs. 10:22). Possibly, at the time of the Yahwist, those loyal to Yahweh wore skin garments, in contrast to the fabrics used by the Canaanites, who were devotees of Baal.

[21] B. Vawter, *On Genesis,* 63-73; W. Brueggemann, "David and his Theologian," 163, 178.

[22] W. Brueggemann, "David and his Theologian," 162; and "From Dust to Kingship."

The only historical referent to "this woman" whose characteristics match the Yahwist's description in Gen. 2-3 is queen Athaliah (2 Kgs. 11; 2 Chr. 22:10-23:15). The diplomatic marriage between Athaliah of the house of Omri and Jehoram of the house of David sealed the alliance of former enemies (2 Chr. 18:1-3). As queen, Athaliah took up her residence within the house of David as king Jehoram's "equal ally" (Gen. 2:18, 20) as well as his "woman" or wife (Gen. 2:22). Through her father, Ahab, she was Jehoram's "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23); and she also was the mother of Jehoram's "seed" (Gen. 3:15) or heir, Ahaziah (2 Kgs. 8:26; 2 Chr. 22:2), as well as the grandmother of Jehoash (2 Kgs. 11-12) under whom her Canaanite policies were reversed to those of her Yahwist predecessors in Jerusalem. Athaliah fits as the Yahwist's "Eve" (Gen. 3:20) or the mother of the "living rulers"[23] of the line of David, namely Ahaziah and his brothers and offspring.

Yet despite the promise of renewed unity of the North with the South Athaliah brought with her to Jerusalem, and despite the hopes of the Yahwist that the Davidic claims would again soon be reestablished over all Israel, Athaliah in reality had become the Yahwist's disappointing and despised "this woman" (Gen. 3:23). "This woman" Athaliah, just like her parents, had turned her Davidic husband, Jehoram, into a "Canaanite" like herself (2 Kgs. 8:16; Gen. 2:24-25), and had also "perverted" her son, Ahaziah (2 Chr. 22:3), along with his brothers to turn against the Lord (2 Chr. 24:7). It was the royal family itself that had broken into the Lord's house to turn its worship into that of Baal (2 Chr. 24:7; Gen. 3:1-7) and had in addition built its own Baal temple, complete with its own Canaanite priesthood, right on Yahweh's own hill (2 Kgs. 11:18). Not even Solomon had been that unashamedly idolatrous (1 Kgs. 11:7)!

But along with "banishment" from Yahweh's temple (Gen. 3:23-24),[24] the Yahwist believed a retribution from the Lord, like that to be visited on that "cursed woman" Jezebel in the North (2 Kgs. 9:34), was now being visited upon her cursed offspring in the South. The lone remaining true "seed" of David, Jehoash (Gen. 3:15; 2 Kgs. 12-13) would soon crush Baal and his devotees (the serpent and his seed); Athaliah's own personal mastery over her husband and her family was limited by the Davidic mandate held by her husband and sons as the only legitimate royal heirs (Gen. 3:16); king Jehoram was already afflicted with a painful intestinal disease that within two years would take his life (Gen. 3:17-19; 2 Chr. 21:18-19); and Ahaziah as Jehoram's successor would rule for only one year, before he was murdered by the Yahwist fanatic, Jehu (2 Kgs. 8:25-26; 9:27-29).

All these events were setting the stage for the show-down conflict between "this woman" Athaliah, and her Canaanite religion, and her grandson, Jehoash, who was sponsored by the priest, Jehoiada, the spokesman and

[23] W. Brueggemann, "From Dust to Kingship," 4; note also the salute to the newly-anointed and crowned king, Jehoash, "may the king live!" or paraphrased, "long live the king!" (2 Kgs. 11:12). "Life" and "breath" were mediated through the king to Israel.

[24] Yahweh "drove" them "out". This term is used of the priest Abiathar, who was "banished" from the temple and priesthood by king Solomon (1 Kgs. 2:27), and of Yahweh who "banishes" his enemies from his house (Hos. 9:15).

leader of the Yahwist faction in Jerusalem (Gen. 3:15; 2 Kgs. 11). To the Yahwist, soon, as in the North with Jehu and the prophets of Yahweh, Elijah and Elisha, there would be no more excuses (Gen. 3:8-13) or compromises (Gen. 3:21-22)[25] between Yahweh and Baal. No more "both-and" but a clear-cut "either-or." The Yahwist portrays the Lord alone as God and the One who "knows good from evil" (Gen. 3:5, 22). The faith of the Yahwist was also that of the priest, Jehoiada, and his wife, Jehosheba, and they both bravely defended it against "this woman" and her family (2 Kgs. 11-12). Is it only coincidental that the name Jehoiada ("Yahweh knows")[26] summarizes the Yahwist's theological message in Gen. 2-3? Perhaps, only the Lord will ever know!

[25] The scanario for the "excuses" (Gen. 3:1-13) perhaps ran something like the following: the royal family had become notoriously "Canaanite" at home in the palace (Gen. 2:24-25). Now they, led by the Queen Mother, Athaliah, created a public scandal by trying to turn Yahweh's own house into a Canaanite-like temple. Jehoiada and the religious and political leaders of the Yahwist faithful warned the royal family that they had gone too far. Athaliah and Jehoram finally "saw the light" and acknowledged that there was a conflict of religious ideas and practices, but they believed Canaanite-type "loincloths" should be enough covering, even in Yahweh's presence. That was not enough of a concession to the Yahwists, so the royal family was banished altogether from Yahweh's temple, their own royal chapel (Gen. 3:20-24).

[26] Jehoiada and his wife, Jehosheba (2 Kgs. 11:3; 2 Chr. 22:11), both had names that placed the "Yahweh" element first, just as he was in their lives. Such also was the case with Jehu in the North and with Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Jehoahaz (2 Chr. 21:17) in the South. Jehoiada's name, marriage, and historical setting in general so corresponded to the ideals and setting of the Yahwist that the identity of the two would not seem to be out of the question.

A Book Worth Discussing: *Occasional Services: A Companion to Lutheran Book of Worship.**

Marion J. Hatchett
Professor of Liturgics, School of Theology, Sewanee, Tennessee

This "Agenda" is designed to take the place of *The Occasional Services from the Service Book and Hymnal together with Additional Orders and Offices* (1962). It is a much larger book, greatly enriched by the addition of a number of new rites and the revision and enrichment of rites retained.

Some rites from the *Lutheran Book of Worship* are repeated in this more convenient pocket-sized volume: Individual Confession and Forgiveness, Marriage (with Propers), and Burial (with some Propers printed and additional ones suggested).

Rites retained from the earlier edition of *Occasional Services* have been revised and enriched in various ways: through inclusion of more Scripture readings and additional options, or through recovery of traditional structures and contents or traditional means and signs. Provision is made for celebration of Holy Communion at marriages and burials.

Some of the new rites are designed to celebrate anniversaries (baptism, marriage, ordination). Others mark points in the life of a parish or institution (organizing or closing a congregation, opening or closing a school year). Others are designed to meet pastoral needs (affirmation of marriage vows, comforting the bereaved, prayers during the time of separation or divorce). Certainly the most revolutionary new provisions are those for an adult catechumenate in four stages.

Provisions related to baptism support the new baptismal rite of the *LBW*. *Occasional Services* provides a rite for the enrollment of candidates and outlines a four-stage catechumenate comparable to the new adult initiation rites of the Roman Catholic Church and the provisions of the Episcopal Church's new *Book of Occasional Services*. The rite for the public recognition of an emergency baptism has been greatly enriched. A rite, for use in the home, celebrating the anniversary of a baptism is a strong addition.

The form for the blessing of a civil marriage has been revised in conformity to the new marriage rite. New rites provide for the celebration of the anniversary of a marriage and for the affirmation of marriage vows, and prayers are included for use at the time of a separation or divorce.

Three sections take the place of the old Order for the Visitation of the Sick: first, a substantial section of psalms, lessons, and prayers, grouped according to various needs rather than thematically; sec-

* *Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House; Philadelphia: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1982. 316 pages. Cloth. $21.50.*

ond, a Service of the Word for Healing, with rich suggestions for psalms and readings, and a helpful rubric suggesting when the use of this rite might be suitable in a public service, and a form for Laying on of Hands and Anointing the Sick; third, a form for Laying on of Hands and Anointing the Sick for use in a hospital or home with those unable to attend the public service. Provisions for laying on of hands and anointing are new to this edition.

A brief form is provided for the celebration of the Holy Communion with the sick or homebound by the minister, and that is recommended at certain seasons, but this book also provides for the distribution of Communion from the public rite by either lay or ordained persons.

A litany has been added to the commendation of the dying, and a form which might be used prior to the burial is provided for comforting the bereaved. The burial rite has a greatly enriched lectionary, and provision is made for the celebration of Holy Communion.

The new book provides for the recognition of more ministries within the congregation than the old. Even more significant is the addition of a rite of affirmation of the vocation of Christians in the world.

Rites associated with the building and furnishing of churches have been revised. The form for the blessing of a dwelling now provides for a perambulation with appropriate lessons and prayers in the different rooms.

The ordination rite has an expanded lectionary, incorporates a pledge of support from the congregation, provides for the newly ordained to function in the Eucharist, and recovers the historic laying on of hands with prayer (as have recent revisions of Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and other churches). The prayer associated with the laying on of hands is very similar to that in the Episcopal rite for the ordination of a priest. Analogous changes have been made in the order for the setting apart of a deaconess. The laying on of hands with prayer was not, however, restored to the rite for the installation of a bishop (formerly president); this is still an installation, not an ordination. The rite for the installation of a pastor is enriched by an enlargement of the questions asked of both the pastor and the congregation and by the inclusion of a procession to the font, the pulpit, and the altar or a presentation of a baptismal shell, a Bible, and a chalice and paten. A much greater choice of lections is offered.

This is a rich book. It is obvious that the compilers were steeped in liturgical tradition and that they were alert to current revisions, especially those of the Roman Catholic and Episcopal Churches. There is, in fact, a great deal of direct borrowing, yet at key points this book, like the *LBW* itself, is distinctively Lutheran (compare, for example, the forms for setting apart oil for the anointing of the sick, or the ordination rites).

There are many improvements in the rites retained from the earlier edition of *Occasional Services,* and also in rites drawn from other sources. The separation into two distinct rites of the celebration of a wedding anniversary and the affirmation of wedding vows, for example, is an improvement on the Episcopal rite which was its inspiration. And the book contains new material (for example, the celebration of the anniversary of a baptism, and the prayers for a time of separation or divorce) which, I predict, will be incorporated into the liturgies of other churches.

Book Reviews

PAUL'S FAITH AND THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL. By Daniel Patte. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983. xxiv and 408 pages. Kivar. $21.95.

At critical junctures in the church's history, the reading of Paul has been of paramount importance. Marcion's decision about the centrality of Paul was a major factor in the definition of the New Testament canon. Luther, of course, continued to appeal to Paul to defend the Reformation emphasis on justification by grace through faith. In our own time, Rudolph Bultmann found in Paul a link between the biblical worldview and twentieth-century existentialism.

And yet, for all his prominence at these pivotal points, Paul remains extremely elusive. Ask an adult Bible study group about Paul and you discover you have put a spiritual Rorschach test before them. Paul is judged a bigot and a hero, the model of the man justified by grace and the epitome of arrogance. Who is the real Paul? Marcion's? Luther's? Bultmann's version of Heidegger's embodiment of *Dasein?*

Daniel Patte's latest book attempts to find in the Pauline writings the faith of the apostle. Patte's tool for uncovering faith through literature is structuralism. Faith, says Patte, is a system of convictions, or, to use the structural term, a semantic universe. Faith is the body of self-evident truth that shapes perception and helps us to interpret action and thought. The way to discern faith most often is not by what a person says but by what remains unsaid. What is self-evident for Paul? Upon what does Paul rely to guarantee the validity of an argument? Faith is the stuff that slips between the cracks in the logic. It is a deep structure of the human mind.

For anyone familiar with the convoluted rhetoric of the structuralist, *Paul's Faith* will come as a pleasing shock. Gone are the semantic mountain peaks of Patte's last book, *Structural Exegesis.* Patte has obviously labored to make this work as readable as it is perceptive, and yet its prose is not labored at all. The linguistic technical terms have been either eliminated or translated into understandable English. Patte has given us an excellent lay introduction to the fruits of structural research. In this book we see the broadest strokes of structuralist method rather than the fine detail work which characterized Patte's previous book.

And for anyone convinced of Paul's narrowness of thought or certain that Paul is simply a first-century Protestant, this book portrays a Paul who is convinced that parochialism is the archheresy of Christian faith. It is, in fact, a different Paul, a "new" Paul whom Patte describes here, and Patte's book will challenge many of us to look at Paul with new eyes.

Through eight chapters, Patte performs a variety of readings on the letters of the Pauline corpus. Each letter is addressed by a new set of questions which attempts to discern another dimension to the apostle's faith. Galatians reveals that Paul is opposed to the Torah when it is seen as the absolute, final revelation of God. An excursus in chapter three allows Patte to share his research in Pharisaic hermeneutic. Pharisaism was not legalistic; Paul's objection to Pharisaism is that it operated with a closed rather than an open understanding of revelation and truth. Thessalonians shows us how Paul's faith is typological. The validity of Christian faith is found in *personal experience* before it is shared in theology. Paul is so convinced of the reality of the good news that he is certain it can be seen acted out in our lives. We believe by seeing the faith in

ourselves and others, and Jesus is the type of that faith, not the focus of our gaze.

Philemon and Philippians show us the Christian's vocation: to see Christ in others, and to be Christ for those who look at us. Another excursus in chapter six deals with the relation of convictional faith and theological formulation. This prepares the reader for Patte's reading of Romans, in which the radical charismatic faith of Paul is more deeply explored. Paul's faith is a matter of finding God at work in the present experience of those around me. The revelation is not limited to Jesus; rather, Jesus becomes the key by which I can discern God's action in the present. People are converted from idolatrous systems (idolatrous only in that they treat truth in absolutes!) as God simultaneously identifies with opposite parts of the idolatrous convictional system. Jesus died on the cross and so, from the perspective of idolatrous faith, was obviously a sinner. But through Jesus the destructive power of sin is defeated, and thus he is obviously a manifestation of the divine. By God's operation simultaneously through both the positive and negative definitions of reality, the idolatrous sytem's power is broken; a new paradigm — a new faith — must be sought.

Patte climaxes his book through his reading of the Corinthian correspondence. The heresy of Paul's opponents is that they had absolutized Christ; they had become so infatuated with the resurrection that they looked no further for revelations in present experience. Paul's tactic in mission work is not to present Christianity as the ultimate absolute alternative to false religions or false cultures, but to use the cross and open tomb of Jesus as God's hermeneutic to read culture a new way. The Christian's program is to de-absolutize idolatrous cultures and to allow the partial truth expressed in each culture to add to the chorus of truth which God proclaims in each manifestation of reality.

This is obviously not the Paul most of us see when we view the Pauline letters with our current reading glasses. It is Patte's triumph that through his structuralist readings he paints a convincing portrait of Paul the universalist. Patte's Paul is not the predictable, "easy" liberal universalist, but an engaging character from whom twentieth-century Christians might learn much.

Ronald W. Roschke
Peace Lutheran Church
Manhattan, Kansas

THE CHURCH IN THE THEOLOGY OF THE REFORMERS. By Paul D. L. Avis. New Foundations Theological Library. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981. 245 pages. Paper. $11.95.

Paul Avis has provided an excellent and reliable guide to the thought of Lutheran, Calvinist and Anabaptist reformers on three aspects of the life of the church: its essential Christological nature; the nature of its ministry; and its mission. He has read widely in the reformers and in important secondary literature.

In his discussion of the center of the church's life, Avis assumes that for Luther "Word" means Scripture and as a result refers to the Word as the witness to Christ, rather than as another term for the Christ himself. In this way, he loses some of Luther's dynamic understanding of the churchly community as the presence of the risen Christ in the world.

He calls attention to Luther's timid encouragement of small communities in his Preface to the German Mass, but does not stress the missiological implications that accompany this insight. If real Christians sign their names on a list and begin to meet in homes, they are to do this so that the last "wall" between church and the world can be torn down. For that reason, they are to collect for a community chest at each meeting so that they might bring Christ's gracious wholeness to all in need in the neighborhood.

Avis suggests three conclusions. 1. "There is a remarkable agreement among the mainstream Reformers on the essentials of the doctrine of the

Church." 2. We should remember that the ultimate aim of all reformers was to save the church, but to do this they first had to save the gospel, and this was the point of their most vehement arguments with Rome. 3. The reformers were reluctant to reach the conclusion that there was not extensive agreement among them on the doctrine of the church.

He urges leaders of contemporary renewal and reunion efforts in the church to draw on the wisdom and insights of the reformers. His book can help us to do that.

Herbert T. Mayer
Christ Seminary — Seminex

MINISTRY: LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY OF JESUS CHRIST. By Edward Schillebeeckx. New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1981. ix and 165 pages. Cloth. $12.95.

It has been interesting to watch Father Schillebeeckx' research and writing move in an always narrowing circle until he had to come to grips with the issue of priestly authority and leadership in a major volume. In the Foreword, he reminds the reader that he has been watching the issue out of at least one corner of his eye since 1955, but it is good that he has now turned his attention to it fully. Although this book is armed at Roman Catholic circles, it is also rewarding reading for Protestants. It has been my observation over the years that the chief difference between views of priestly authority held by many Roman Catholics and by many Protestants and Lutherans is this: the former base their understanding on a carefully reasoned theological foundation while the latter arrive at similar conclusions based on subconscious needs that they and their people share.

Schillebeeckx begins with New Testament evidences and tells his readers that the central theme of the book is that the mission of every Christian community is to be a servant presence in its neighborhood as an apostolic community in the name of Jesus Christ. Apostolicity, he points out, is a characteristic of the community and not of its leadership. Leadership in the New Testament communities is a service that the members owe each other. "The peculiarity of this ministerial charisma is that the ministers and the whole of the community have the responsibility for keeping the community in its . . . apostolic origin and orientation: the gospel of Jesus the Christ" (p. 13).

The thesis of his book is that legitimate and valid forms of ministry are only those that flow from "theological reflection on new human and cultural situations" (p. 2). Forms of ministry that are based solely upon traditional practice are apt to be illegitimate and invalid because they deny the reality of God's Spirit working to create new answers to new historical conditions.

He develops this central point more fully when he writes: "With a shift in the dominant picture of man and the world, with social and economic changes and a new social and cultural sensibility and set of emotions, a church order which has grown up through history can in fact hinder and obstruct precisely what in earlier times it was intended to ensure: the building up of a Christian community" (p. 75). In Part IV he applies this principle in a critical way to the concepts of celibacy and maleness as they are understood in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Elsewhere he suggests that the true mystery of God's continuing sacramental incarnation is not to be found in an ever deeper and more mysterious understanding of what makes a priest a priest, but rather "in the very lowly and profoundly human affairs of the church as a community and of the priest." Failure to seek the mystery in the community is to change this essential mystery into an ideology that can only destroy the apostolic character of the community.

The book will help every alert reader to improve and deepen his or her understanding of ministry and to develop a deeper understanding of the inseparable connection between community

Theology in Theory and Action...

Views from the Pews
Christian Beliefs and Attitudes

Edited by ROGER A. JOHNSON

This important dialogue between theologians and sociologists responds to the results of a survey on religious beliefs and attitudes conducted among members of the Lutheran Church in America. Distinguished specialists interpret and evaluate the responses of both clergy and laity in relation to their own fields of specialization. $14.95 paper



Christian Worship and Its Cultural Setting
By FRANK C. SENN

This serious inquiry into the relationship between worship and its cultural setting is intended to help pastors, seminarians, and other worship leaders steer a path between cultural capitulation on the one hand and cultural irrelevancy on the other in the ordering and doing of Christian liturgy. $8.95 paper

Faith Passages and Patterns
By THOMAS A. DROEGE

Drawing on both theological and psychological insights, this work provides the reader with a variety of resources for reflection on stages of faith and the nurture of faith in transitions. *(A Lead Book—Group Leader Guide available.)* $3.95 paper

Commentary on the Occasional Services
By PHILIP H. PFATTEICHER

This comprehensive commentary presents the biblical, theological and historical issues involved with each of the services in the 1982 *Occasional Services* book and comments on the practical application and proper use of each rite. $16.95 cloth

At bookstores, dial 1-800-FORTRESS, or write

FORTRESS PRESS
2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia, Pa. 19129

and apostolic mission in which the people, rather than the priest or the eucharist, occupy the central position. A heavy translation and a poor division into paragraphs will get in the way of many readers' enjoyment of the book.

Herbert T. Mayer
Christ Seminary — Seminex

THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY. Translated and edited with an introduction by J. Patout Burns. Philadelphia: Fortress. viii and 130 pages. Paper. $6.95.

This volume is not only an excellent introduction to patristic thought on the nature of the human being, but also a good general introduction to that basic issue which is at the center of much theological investigation today.

Patout has included in this volume long extracts from *Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa, Pelagius, the Canons of the Council of Carthage* (A.D. 418), *Augustine* and the decrees of the *Synod of Orange* (A.D. 529).

Patout's analysis of Augustine's contributions and of the differences between ascetic and Platonic Christian ideas on nature and grace could be made required reading for seminarians, parish pastors and all others who are willing to work hard to grow in the grace that God freely gives.

Herbert T. Mayer
Christ Seminary — Seminex

THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY. Edited and translated with an introduction by Richard A. Norris, Jr. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980. viii and 162 pages. Paper. $6.95.

This is another excellent volume in William Rusch's series Sources of Early Christian Thought. Every patristic course should require students to read two or more of these volumes.

The present volume includes pertinent long sections from Melito, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Athanasius, Apollinaris, Theodore, Nestorius, Cyril of Alexandria and Leo's Tome. It concludes with the Chalcedonian declaration.

The introductory essay provides the reader with a reliable guide to the readings. Perhaps it would have been a more useful guide if Norris had placed more emphasis on Jesus' work rather than concentrating narrowly on Jesus' person. All the fathers whom he quotes have a basic pastoral and soteriological concern and it would have been good if the essay had reflected more accurately this pastoral concern.

Herbert T. Mayer
Christ Seminary — Seminex

HOW TO TALK TO CHRISTIANS ABOUT MONEY. By W. A. Poovey. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982. 128 pages. Paper. $5.50.

"The only joy that some display when the offering is taken is caused by feeling they are one step closer to the end of the service."

So says W. A. Poovey, a retired pastor of the American Lutheran Church, as he addresses a touchy, but crucial, area of the congregation's life: raising money to support its mission and ministry. He does not dilute the topic by baptizing it with the oft-used euphemism "stewardship." Rather, he speaks of the "stewardship of *money.*" Refreshingly direct.

The book is divided into two sections. Part One contains nine chapters on "The Stewardship of Money." Part Two presents ten brief stewardship (of money) talks. Drawing on eighteen years as parish pastor, and another eighteen years as seminary professor, Poovey has a great sense of compassion for people ("Church people are sheep to be cared for, not cows to be milked"), a Gospel-centered, well-grouped approach to Scripture, and a welcome sense of directness, tempered with delightful humor.

Part One addresses the many problems and pitfalls of raising money at the congregational level. Poovey speaks of the hypersensitive "money nerve," and about the temptation to "mute" or "dilute" the message about the church's financial needs. Money can be raised effectively by "stick" or by "carrot," but neither method is Christian, he points out.

Giving must begin with trust in God the Giver: "All money appeals in the church, then, should start at the cross. God gave. Christ died." The strength of that appeal, says Poovey, depends upon how much people appreciate what God has given them in Christ. The answer to Christian giving is not to find more effective motives for giving, but "to increase people's appreciation of what it means to be a Christian." Only then is it possible for them to give with joy. And giving with joy is the point of a Christian's stewardship of money.

This book is ideally suited for use in Bible Class settings. It could serve as a very helpful congregational tool. The stewardship talks (Part Two) are less helpful, but only because they repeat much of what was stated in Part One.

David E. Krause
Christ Seminary — Seminex

ATLAS OF THE BIBLE. Edited by Joseph L. Gardner. Pleasantville, NY: The Reader's Digest Association, 1981. 256 pages. Cloth. $20.50.

It is hard to be less than enthusiastic about this illustrated guide to the Holy Land. Its scholarship is accurate and up-to-date thanks to the contributions of the late Harry Thomas Frank, who was the principal adviser and editorial consultant; its text is clear and precise thanks to the editorial work typical of the *Reader's Digest;* its 300 maps and illustrations are fresh and beautiful.

The book begins with an introduction to the biblical world that shows how people looked and dressed, how the major animals and plants named in the Bible appeared, how they weighed and measured things, and how they developed currency. Popular discussions of cartography and archaeology and four pages of area maps round out the first section.

An historical atlas of biblical times comprises the central and longest section of the book. Based on the research of Frank, this pictorial essay provides the general reader with brief discussions of biblical history, maps marked with arrows to show which way armies or other travelers went, landscape scenes, pictures of relevant archaeological data, models of Jerusalem and Caesarea in the first century, cut-away drawings of the temple and a typical Israelite house — and much more.

The book concludes with a gazeteer (again Frank's work) of 900 place names. There are other, more technical atlases that would be preferred by the professional scholar (see the essay by Edgar Krentz in *Currents* 9 [1982], pp. 48-51), but none that I would recommend more highly for a parish library.

Ralph W. Klein
Christ Seminary — Seminex

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you are moving, please attach your mailing label and send it to CURRENTS IN THEOLOGY AND MISSION, 539 N. Grand Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63103.

PASTE MAILING LABEL HERE

Briefly Noted

Exploring Churches. By Paul and Tessa Clowney. (Eerdmans, $12.95.) Browse through this book before your next trip to Europe, share it with your building committee, or give it as a coffee table gift. In non-technical fashion it goes through the details of church construction, defining common terms and puzzlers, like "diaperwork" (repeated patterns of squares) and "quoins" (dressed stones at the corner of a building). Its history of church building begins with the first Christians and ends with the Crystal Cathedral of Robert Schuller. Lots of drawings and four-color pictures!

Situation and Theology: Old Testament Interpretations of the Syro-Ephraimite War. By Michael E. W. Thompson. (The Almond Press, $12.95.) In 734 B.C.E. the Northern king Pekah and the Syrian king Rezin invaded Judah and attempted to force it into an anti-Assyrian coalition. T. argues that the reason behind this war was the need to reduce the tribute monies imposed by the Assyrian empire. Most of this monograph, however, is devoted to the wide-ranging theological interpretations of this war in Isaiah, Hosea, 2 Kings, and 2 Chronicles. It was in the historical context of this war that Isaiah delivered the famous Immanuel sign, which pointed to destruction by Assyria for all three Syro-Palestinian nations. Shortly after the war Isaiah announced the coming of an ideal king who would rule over a reunited Israel as a most wonderful of counsellors. The biblical writers also used this war to criticize Israel's lack of trust and royal cultic iniquity.

Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and other Essays. Ed. Tomoo Ishida. (Eisenbrauns, $35.00.) Seventeen papers delivered at an international Old Testament convention in Japan are published in this volume. Fifteen deal specifically with the period of David and Solomon (the literature of the period, the royal religion and ideology, political problems, and various aspects of Israelite society). The other two essays update our knowledge of Ebla and of medicine in biblical times.

Holy Bible. The New King James Version. (Thomas Nelson, available in a variety of bindings and prices.) The scholars who worked on this revision tried to keep the linguistic structure of the KJV while updating the language. Unfortunately, they decided to stick with the Byzantine text of the New Testament which has been generally recognized as inferior since the 19th century. It was only a mistaken loyalty to the KJV, for example, that dictated retention of the doxology to the Lord's prayer in Matt. 6:13, the longer ending of Mark, the longer (Matthean) form of the Lord's prayer in Luke 11:3-4, and the Comma Johanneum in 1 John 5:7-8 (first added to the Greek New Testament by Erasmus in the 16th century!). Pronouns referring to God are capitalized, leading to dubious interpretations of the messianic passages and the Servant poems in the Old Testament. The Hebrew prophets are presented in poetic form — as they should be — though there is still a voice crying in the wilderness (Isa 40:3) whereas a correct poetic analysis requires that the words "in the wilderness" tell where the way of the Lord is to be prepared. Since the Hebrew language usually only implies the linking verb (is, are, was, etc.) the NKJV italicizes these verbs to indicate that they were not in the original. This practice inevitably emphasizes the very words it is trying to denote as secondary. The claim that the NKJV retains every verse of the original translation is simply wrong. The intention of such advertising is to downgrade other modern versions which omit a few verses not contained in the best New Testament manuscripts. But NKJV drops the entire apocrypha which *was* commonly printed in the KJV until the 19th century.

Focusing on early Christianity and Judaism...

Faith and Piety in Early Judaism

Texts and Documents

By GEORGE W.E. NICKELSBURG and MICHAEL E. STONE. The two centuries before and the century after the birth of Jesus were crucial to the development of Judaism and Christianity. In this first topically arranged collection of texts and documents, two of the world's foremost authorities on the subject show the Judaism of that period to be remarkable not only as a fertile seedbed for later developments but also as a vital religion of profound creativity and rich diversity. $19.95 cloth

Jewish and Christian Self-Definition

Volume Three: Self-Definition in the Greco-Roman World

Edited by BEN F. MEYER and E.P. SANDERS. Each of the essays in this book is an expert answer to its own question about the dynamics of ancient philosophical, professional, and religious institutions. Contributors: Walter Burkert, John Rist, Abraham J. Malherbe, John M. Dillon, Heinrich von Staden, Tran tam Tinh, Howard Clark Kee, Albert Henrichs, Hans Dieter Betz, G.W. Bowersock. $24.95 cloth

The Prophets

Volume I: The Assyrian Age

By KLAUS KOCH. Translated by Margaret Kohl. This first of two volumes (*The Babylonian Age* is in preparation) portrays the literary prophets of the Assyrian era and examines the methods and categories of their individual prophetic argumentation. $10.95 paper

Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel

The Coming Triumph of God

By J. CHRISTIAAN BEKER. "Beker has recaptured the meaning of hope. . . .Preaching will come to life and Bible study take on new vigor for all who walk through Paul's Letters with Beker as a guide."—David Allan Hubbard. $6.95 paper

Paul's Faith and the Power of the Gospel

A Structural Introduction to Pauline Letters

By DANIEL PATTE. Through a novel literary approach Professor Patte makes an original contribution to Pauline studies while leading the reader to better understand the power of the gospel, its relation to Judaism, and Paul's interpersonal view of faith. $21.95 kivar

At bookstores, call 800-FORTRESS or write

FORTRESS PRESS

2900 Queen Lane
Philadelphia, Pa. 19129

"Should I publish in *Currents*?"

The December issue of *Currents* will again feature a series of pieces to enhance the observance of Advent and Christmas. We are looking for original hymns or poems; brief descriptions of liturgical or devotional ideas; short essays on unusual aspects of Advent and Christmas. For each Advent/Christmas hymn, poem, or "idea" published in the December issue, we will extend your subscription one year!

Send your materials to: Dr. Ralph W. Klein, Editor, *Currents in Theology and Mission;* 539 North Grand; St. Louis, Missouri 63103.

DEADLINE: JULY 1, 1983

CURRENTS IN THEOLOGY
AND MISSION
539 N. Grand Blvd.
St. Louis, Mo. 63103

Second Class Postage
Paid at
St. Louis, Missouri