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THE IRRESISTIBLE WORD – AMOS

Hans Walter Wolff

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Our Tenth Year!

The excitement of seminary life this year is flavored with special anticipation: Come next summer, students and faculty will become parts of united programs of Lutheran theological education at Chicago, Berkeley, and Austin. **Currents** and **Preaching Helps** will move, too, with George Hoyer continuing to serve as editor of **Preaching Helps** from Berkeley and *yours truly* putting together **Currents** in Chicago. Production and business functions will emanate from the Windy City by late summer, 1983.

All this means new life and new situations for our magazines; it also promises to bring a whole new stable of writers, an expanded constituency, and increased subscriptions. We want to keep the "old friends" among our present subscribers, and we hope to add new perspectives to our theological mix and new friends as regular readers.

Not every "t" is crossed or "i" dotted on our plans yet, but our coming cooperation with colleagues in the new uniting church offers such promise that we wanted to let you be the first to know. We plan to continue to write to and for all Lutherans, including our many avid friends within the Missouri Synod.

Starting off this tenth year (our 52nd issue) is an essay on Amos by **Hans Walter Wolff.** Amos announced an irresistible word from God about the end of history as it had existed hitherto. That impending end brought about a need for self examination since the coming misery resulted from Israel's disregard for God's commandment to love and protect the weak. For Israel and for us the guilt of the present cannot be denied, and the judgment of the future cannot be escaped. Yet for us Christians "cannot" is a bit too strong — a way around the irresistible word goes through the cross of Christ. **Wolff,** who has produced an authoritative commentary on Amos (Fortress, 1975), here demonstrates his considerable pastoral skills and his sensitivities to contemporary issues like leisure-time society and the Third World.

Although our culture conspires against silence, writes **Steven D. Olson,** we need to learn how to experience the presence of the Lord

also in silence. The author's own discovery of silence has helped him cast off the illusion that life will fall apart without verbal crutches. Being silent allows those in our care to feel heard. He suggests how to use silence in pastoral care, worship, and even preaching.

Ronald Modras gives an insider's survey of the change and vitality that characterize contemporary American Catholicism. Roman Catholics still have certain marks of an immigrant church, but Vatican II and many theological developments of the last fifteen years also help to characterize them as a church coming of age. Women's liberation has not led to ordination, but it has revolutionized the make-up of seminary student bodies. Along the way we learn of leading scholars and their critics, leading Roman Catholic periodicals, and of the issues in fundamental and systematic theology, ecumenism, morality, and spirituality that keep our Catholic colleagues occupied and growing.

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to evaluate the electronic church, it seemed good to **Bernhard A. Asen** also to set forth in an orderly, but critical fashion its view of the Kingdom. This article demonstrates many correlations between the TV preachers and Stage Three faith development (James Fowler). Common to both is the acceptance as true of what any legitimate authority teaches and an identity molded by senses of possessing and belonging. What's missing is the view of the Kingdom as a powerful lure. Christ's future calls us to be a part now of his redeeming and restoring work.

Lutheran John Updike is among America's leading novelists, and his three books about Harry (Rabbit) Angstrom chronicle the life and thoughts of a former basketball star passing through his 20's, 30's, and 40's. **Jan Gallagher** finds in this story an elegant theological atmosphere. Updike writes about particular, peculiar and fraudulent individuals, but he also celebrates the holiness of humanity. Like Rabbit, we run from death and search for freedom . . . whose name may be God. **Steve Liechti** shares with us the pain of a related search. From the death of divorce he gropes for life and new beginnings.

Some of the best thinking on mission these days comes from the Latin American church. **Herbert T. Mayer** surveys a number of thought and action programs and he cites crucial ideas from nine recent books. Our Latin American colleagues speak of liberating the oppressors, of effective community, and of the pursuit of justice and charity. Christ needs to be manifested to the poor through the institutions of the church. This review obviously has implications for all who would work with and for the poor also in the United States.

Finally, **Charles Dickson** raises thoughtful questions about the name of the uniting Lutheran church in the United States. Some would call it the American United Lutheran; others the United American, etc. Why, the article asks, should we alone have a church named after an individual, instead of memorializing a form of government, a doctrine, or a regional heritage as others do? If qualified writers from opposing points of view would like to express themselves on this question, we will try to make room for them in future issues.

As we begin our tenth year, we covet as always your suggestions, your criticism, and your own essays. **Currents** is no file cabinet, housing esoteric articles for a scholar's rainy day. Rather, it aims to be a stimulus, resource, and goad for the laity and clergy, women and men, whom we proudly call *our* subscribers.

Here's to the coming ten years!

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

The Irresistible Word (Amos)

by Hans Walter Wolff

69 Heidelberg, Rollossweg 19, West Germany

This essay and studies on Hosea, Micah, Jeremiah, and True and False Prophets will be published by Fortress Press as *Confrontations with Prophets.*

We are inquiring about the unique character of the prophetic word and trying to discover what it has to say to us today. The Old Testament prophets fascinate us for two reasons. For one thing, their attention is quite firmly directed towards the future. They see sinister future events looming over the people of their own present day. But the dangers of the future are what oppress us today, too, more than they ever did earlier generations. How does our view of the future compare with the prophetic one? Secondly, the prophets see the future as inextricably bound up with the present. This means that they move their own contemporary life into the glaring light of the future. The connection between present behavior and future destiny makes us uneasy, too. Can the dialogue with prophecy sharpen the criteria which determine our criticism of our own time? So it is for two reasons that we ask: what is prophecy aiming at?

We are directing our question first of all to the earliest example of a classical prophet in Israel. His name is Amos of Tekoa. With him we are confronting historical sources of the highest quality. Yet, we must not expect a biography. For us his life is completely concealed in his preaching. Even that fact is highly significant. Only in his words do we find a little about his background and his profession. He comes from Tekoa, a village about 11 miles south of Jerusalem and 6 miles south of Bethlehem — a small military outpost belonging to the kingdom of Judah. There Amos had made a good living by raising sheep. We quite suddenly find him appearing as a prophet in the Northern kingdom of Israel, certainly in the capital Samaria and in Bethel, which was an important place of pilgrimage. This was during a period of economic prosperity under Jeroboam II, around 760 B.C.E.

How is it that this man Amos came to be talking about the future and the present? In Amos' case — as in the case of all other Old Testament writing prophets — we have to exclude the oracle techniques which were widespread in the ancient Near East: the interpretation of the stars, the examination of animals' entrails, the casting of lots, and so on. We also have to exclude any intoxicating, ecstatic condition of mind, in which the conscious self is blotted out. For autobiographical accounts have never come down to us from the ecstatics of the Ancient Orient; whereas they are not at all uncommon among Israel's classical prophets. A favorite approach to finding an explanation of prophecy has always been, and still is, to try to discover the impulse to prophetic speech in the prophet's critical analysis of his period, a criticism based on ancient Israel's divine law. Yet, even this is not supported by the traditions which come to us from the classical prophets. The analysis of their own time is not the basis of the prophetic preaching.

The Book of Amos gives a different answer to the question why Amos began



his public proclamation; and it gives this answer in three highly varying contexts.

We find the first at the end of a rhetorical, didactic series of questions with which he defends his behavior to skeptical listeners (3.8): "Since a lion has roared, who will not be afraid? Since the Lord has spoken, who will not prophesy?" The saying is a defense against the suspicion that Amos has come forth with his message of doom to Israel by his own initiative and in his own interests. He encounters this criticism by a cogent proof, following the method used by teachers of wisdom at the time. Every event raises the question: what set it off? The sudden roaring of a lion makes a person tremble with fear; in the same way Yahweh's address compels a person to pass it on. Just as there is no way to avoid fearing a lion there is also no possible way to remain silent when Yahweh's commission descends on one. With this Amos energetically rejected the suspicion that he was talking on his own intiative, or that he had sought a saying from Yahweh or that he had even extorted it, by means of expert oracular procedures. The Word of Yahweh came upon him without his having sought it at all. To his own horror, he saw himself exposed to Yahweh's utterance, unwillingly but also inescapably. Resistance was impossible. Yahweh's Word came as *verbum irresistible.* It was not an inherited office that legitimates him, nor does any social criticism on his own part. He is not motivated by any oracle he has sought for himself, or by any Torah that has been passed on to him. It was a new Word of Yahweh which overpowered him. The Lord has spoken. That is his only answer he gives when asked: why are you talking like this?

Amos undoubtedly means that he has been personally overcome with irresistible force by a new Word. This emerges without any ambiguity at all from the other two textual complexities which legitimate his appearance.

The second presents us with a scene which takes place at the sanctuary at Bethel (7:10-17). We have a contemporary reporter to thank for this incident. The priest Amaziah, who is in charge of the sanctuary, sends a runner to tell King Jeroboam in Samaria: "Amos is instigating insurrection against you in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is no longer able to contain all his words. For thus Amos has said: 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall depart into exile, away from its land'." Thus Amos is denounced as being an agitator who is working for a violent insurrection.

But the report keeps silent on two points of significance. It does not give the reasons which moved Amos to utter the threat of destruction — reasons which Amos himself continually stressed: Yahweh's Word and Israel's injustice. And it does not say who is bringing about the catastrophe; for this is not Amos, as a conspirator, but the God of Israel himself.

The priest knows very well what he has

concealed. That is why he tries to save the man he has accused before the king's decision can arrive: "Visionary, go! Flee away to the land of Judah! Eat bread there! Prophesy there! But never again prophesy at Bethel! For here is the royal sanctuary, here the state temple." What kind of advice is this! It is bursting with respect for both parties. Who is this Amaziah afraid of most, Jeroboam or Amos? He doesn't want to be partly responsible for the prophet's death. So he advises the doomed man to fly. He attempts the impossible. He wants to do right both by the King's prophetic judge (Amos), and by the prophet's kingly judge (Jeroboam) at the same time. By telling Amos to flee he wants to solve the predicament which is more his own than Amos'. Side by side with the distorted picture of the political revolutionary he puts the picture of the religious eccentric: It's only possible to put up with him if he lets himself be controlled, and so protected, by the political order in force.

Amos shatters both these caricatures with a sharp rejoinder: "I am no prophet, nor am I a prophet's disciple. I am rather a livestock breeder and one who slits mulberry figs." If we want to understand this seer, this is the most important negative conclusion we have to come to about him. He does not allow himself to be categorized as a professional political agitator. He is not urged on by any passion of his own, nor by the passion of any party. Least of all does he have to earn his bread as a professional prophet. He has a good income as a livestock breeder and from the fig plantations he owns in addition. It is worth noting how the first classical and canonical prophet stresses that he is a layman. He rejects the official term prophet when it is applied to himself. He does not want to be interpreted in terms of any sociological category, or in the light of any general human need. He shatters Amaziah's "prophet" picture and many others at the same time. This preacher is in no way to be understood by probing his ego. He expressly denies three times the connection between his own self and what he proclaims: I — no prophet! I — no prophet's disciple! I — a livestock breeder! The last category completely covers his own personal needs.

But then how is Amaziah, the prototype of Amos' hearers, supposed to view him? Amos sets over against his threefold "I" in verse 14 a threefold pointer to *Yahweh,* in verse 15f: "But *Yahweh* took me from following the flock, and *Yahweh* said to me: Go, prophesy unto my people Israel! Now therefore hear the word of *Yahweh*!" These are sentences which open all the curtains wide. Anyone who wants to understand Amos has to take Yahweh's compulsive grasp into account; he must see what Amos says as reflecting the invasion, the assault of Yahweh himself and his irresistible Word. Amos can only be understood if we see him as a prophet in spite of himself. Alien though this notion may be for us today, it is an insight which we simply



cannot avoid: any anthropological interpretation of this type of biblical prophet can only be one more in the series of political and psychological caricatures of the Amaziah type. From a scholarly or scientific point of view, the theological category is indispensible. The person who really wants to understand what is happening here has to face up to what is emphasized: "The Lord has spoken." He has spoken by fetching Amos personally away from his flocks. The Lord has spoken — this fact cuts him off from his ordinary everyday job, at least for a time. This sets him aside from other people, and aside from all the prophetic guilds. It turns him into someone unlike anyone else, a personality with a name of his own. This was his legitimation for resisting the reigning king and his official priests. The Word of Yahweh which he could not resist made him irresistible even for Amaziah. Thus the upheaval of God's people was founded on an irresistible Word.

But how are we supposed to conceive of this invasion of the irresistible Word in concrete terms? Amos answers this himself in the third textual complex, which legitimates his behavior. It is the cycle of autobiographical visions in Amos 7:1-8; 8:1-2; 9:1-4. The insights we acquire here move the reader disturbingly. The accounts are as taciturn as possible, and yet they are precise in everything essential. We feel that the reporter is not motivated by any particular love of storytelling. He has been overpowered, and in his extremity he can only tell what is absolutely necessary. These brief sketches are crammed full of facts.

Each of them begins in the same way: "Thus the Lord Yahweh showed me." First of all he has to look at a swarm of grasshoppers. They are stripping the whole country bare at a time when there is no hope of a second harvest anymore. This completely endangers the people's future. Then Amos cries out: "My Lord Yahweh, do forgive! How is Jacob to endure? For he is so small." Thereupon Yahweh withdraws this punishment; but then, in a new vision, Amos has to witness a rain of fire of unheard of extent. It devours the great abyss, the endless waters from which all the springs and sources of the world are fed, so that the last fruitful acre is burnt up by the flood of fire. Once again Amos cries out: "My Lord Yahweh, cease! How is Jacob to endure? For he is so small." In this cry of intercession no one can overlook Amos' solidarity with his people in their deadly danger. After this it is impossible to maintain that his acid words to Israel arise from his own desire for opposition. These first two visions clearly show a man who is profoundly affected, quite unexpectedly and most unwillingly, by his God's will towards judgment. We see how vehemently he resists this divine will on behalf of the threatened people. And he does so in full, wakeful consciousness. This is the very opposite of an ecstatic absorption into the will of God. In his patience, Yahweh is once again shown in

granting a reprieve on the basis of Amos' petition.

But then a third image strikes his eye. A plumb-line is testing a wall, to see if it is still straight and sturdy, or if it ought to be pulled down. Now, for the first time, the vision is soon accompanied by Yahweh's voice: "Amos, what do you see?" In wakeful dialogue with his God, Amos has to learn to put into his own words what is revealed to him. In horrified monosyllables he answers: "A plumb-line." Then comes Yahweh's interpretation: "Hence I am setting a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel. I will no longer benignly pass him by." This third vision has more to say than the first two. It does not merely threaten disaster. It shows that Yahweh's intervention is not directed by arbitrary motives. Its motive is an incorruptible test. It brings the judgment which Amos is no longer able to resist any more.

A fourth vision again compels Amos to put into his own words what he sees: a basket of ripe fruit, the token of harvest. The word *qayiṣ* (ripe fruit) echoes the word *qeṣ* (end): the harvest is the end. Now the test is followed by the judgment: "The end has come for my people Israel. I will no longer benignly pass them by." The fifth vision shows that this is an end which no one will escape.

So Amos has been vanquished by Yahweh in a visionary dialogue which belongs to a heightened state of wakeful consciousness. Here is a totally new Word about the end of Israel's history, which she has brought on herself. Here nothing can be explained in the light of what happened to him against his own will. The decisions of his God have set him in complete isolation. They have an inexorable power of conviction which he is incapable of escaping. Yet the content of what he learns is not at all otherworldly or transcendental. What happens to him is the very opposite of a mystical vision of God or a perception of higher worlds. What has been transmitted to us about Amos frees us completely from any such misunderstanding. What is laid upon Amos applies in quite precise terms to the worldly, historical Israel in the days of Jeroboam and to its evil social and religious conditions. The sayings which he proclaims on the basis of his visions show this forcibly. That is why Amos is able to captivate today's social reformers and revolutionaries.

But we only understand him as a prophet if we accept from him the reference which we cannot overlook, the pointer back to Yahweh's assault, to what his God has revealed to him, to the conviction forced on him by Yahweh's words. Experiences of this kind are not for everyone. They were not for everyone in Amos' day, as Amaziah shows, and they are not for everyone today either. Modern men and women are confused because through the reference to God something totally alien and incalculable enters into our history. But this must not make us fall victim to sociological levelling. It must not make us falsify Amos



into the normal figure of a political analyst of his period, or a social reformer, or a utopian revolutionary. For us, perhaps nothing is more essential than such a witness to the incomparable One, who alone really ushers in the future.

We have met Amos as the witness to an irresistible Word. He makes particularly evident what applies basically to the other Old Testament prophets as well. Jeremiah can cry out in distress to his God: "Thou art stronger than I, and thou has prevailed. I have become a laughing-stock all the day; every one mocks me" (20:7). But the New Testament witnesses to Jesus Christ come from an irresistible call too. Acts 4:20 reports that Peter and John said: "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." And Paul echoes this theme (1 Cor. 9:16ff.): "Necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!"

This faces the church today and all its responsible members with a question: Church, do you know — do your members know — that you owe your existence to an irresistible Word? Members, do you know that? Do we ask the prophets and apostles urgently enough what this word is? Don't we think far too much today about what we could just as well talk in terms of psychological and sociological processes? We rack our brains about what might be of interest for contemporaries? What can we bring up as topics for discussion? We are on the lookout for variety, and at the end of it all we leave our contemporaries and ourselves alone with themselves and ourselves. Instead of all that, what is really laid upon us is to ask about the one thing needful, the thing that was enjoined on prophets and apostles by their Lord. It would seem that we are almost commanded to trim away the diversity from that which we offer in our efforts to please every taste. We must once again become aware of the way the Old and New Testament witnesses thrust deep into our world. The prophetic word, for example, became so important that it had literary consequences, among other things. The collection of prophetic sayings as a literary genre has only existed since Amos. And this means that the irresistible word goes on working as literature as well. *This* is how it wants us to read and accept it. It wants the reader to ask about the irresistible nature of its message, which helps us to the wholeness of life.

What do we find here that is so compulsive? What is it that Amos finds it impossible to be silent about? It is the absolute, fundamental certainty of *the end* of history as it has existed hitherto. This was burnt into him by the fourth vision, of the basket of ripe fruit. This was the terror of the roaring lion which shook his life to its foundations. This is what Amaziah had found unendurable. For this is how Amos interpreted it: "Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall depart into exile away from its land!" For Amos and his people this expulsion from their country is far more

than just some historical misfortune. It means the cancellation of the gift of the land made to them in the early period of their history; and the gift was the seal of Yahweh's goodness and his election. So banishment from the land means the end of salvation history. In the cycle of sayings against the nations, Amos extends the word of judgment first of all to the Aramaeans and Philistines, the Ammonites and Moabites. Just as he calls to this hostile environment, so Yahweh cries to Israel herself in terms that shock and horrify: "I will not revoke it" — namely, the word about the end would stand.

The word about the end brings an indispensible key-word into the biblical message. Amos stimulates us to think in radical and sober terms about the certainty of the end, and to relate this certainty to many things which we think of as being permanent, as a matter of course, as repeatable at will. Amos is able to stimulate our self-reflection when he varies his message about the end and gives it concrete form. He calls out the consequences to the priest Amaziah (7:17): "You yourself shall die on unclean land!" He threatens the women of Samaria (4:2f): "You shall be hauled away with ropes and with harpoons . . . cast off toward Hermon." He uses assonance to claw at the minds of the pilgrims to Gilgal and Bethel, that Gilgal has to go into Gola (into exile) and Bethel (the house of God) will go to the devil. He peppers the word to Samaria's elite with irony. The men who are conscious that they are "the top people" in society, and that they possess "top qualities" will be "at the top of the train of the deported." He picks up theological traditions, too, only to burn them upside down: "You only have I selected out of all the clans of the earth. Therefore I will requite upon you all your transgressions." Elevation must not be made a justification for self-complacency. It is a reason to fear judgment. Amos is able to show the end in radical form in many other ways, too — in the form of a lament for the dead, in the form of an earthquake, or a warlike raid, with hopeless panic. It is always the message of the end which the listener is inexorably forced to face up to.

If we look at the specific forms in which this expressed, what strikes us in the midst of all the variations is a single constant: it is the "I" of Yahweh, who brings about the end. "I will send a fire, I will cut off, I will slay" (1:4f, 7f; 2:2f), "I will turn my hand against them" (1:8), "I will punish" (3:2), "I will smite" (3:15), "I will pass through the midst of you" (5:17), "I will take you into exile" (5:27), "I abhor, I hate, I will deliver up" (6:8),"I am setting a plumb-line, I will never again pass by them" (7:8; 8:2), "I will set my eyes upon them for evil and not for good" (9:4). So what brings about the end in all these different cases? Not Yahweh's absence; on the contrary, Yahweh's absence is the determining factor about



the present. No, it is his undesired but inescapable coming. They do not want it to happen, but they will not be able to stop him. That may be particularly important for us, in a life where God is forgotten. What we have to think about is not the end as such, in all its different forms. What we have to consider is the unexpected vista: to await the Incomparable and Effective God. So Amos 4:12 draws the conclusion: "Precisely because this I am about to do to you, prepare to meet your God, Israel!" The message about the end is therefore precisely the same thing as the message about the inescapable encounter with God. In the tension between the present and the future, we see too little if we only consider ourselves. The connection between present behavior and future destiny takes on a new dimension. The encounter with God is the fundamental element of the irresistible Word. It is an element which finds its new form in the New Testament Word of the Cross of Christ. It is the Word about the end, in which God's judgment is inescapably present.

But this only becomes fully comprehensible when we allow Amos to take us a considerable step further. Amos reiterated with great regularity in his sayings that the cause for the coming end was the injustice of the present. The coming end is a sin-caused end. Amos is definite about the future catastrophe; however he does not think of the future in terms of danger, but rather in terms of guilt. In the end, the One whom men and women encounter is God, whose precepts they have forgotten. So the sober view of the end is above all a demand for self-examination. Amos' examples can stimulate us here.

Why will the war, which no one can prevent, come about (2:13-16)? Because unimportant little people are being treated with increasing contempt, to the point when a a man and his father sleep with the same woman (2:6f.). A misuse of the relationships of dependence leads to the arbitrary infringement of the intimate sphere of young women. A dubious way of life like this leads to a far from dubious end. The reason for the coming misery is to be found in the present disregard of God's commandment to love and protect.

Amos' critique goes far deeper than just measuring external obedience to the commandments as they have been proclaimed. No written commandment has forbidden people to lie on ivory beds, to lounge around on their couches, bawl silly songs to the sound of the lute, or to drink wine straight out of the jugs. But if the style of life of the leading circles of Samaria is dominated by such actions, and if they are not "grieved over the ruin of Joseph", then these same leaders will lead the procession of the deported (6:1-7). Ought we consider here how our own leisure-time society relates to the Third World at this point?

Amos' criticism applies not least to the religious festivities, with their offerings

and their hymns of praise (5:21-24). He condemns them as pleasurable self-indulgence and attempts to gain religious merit. Israel's God does not want to be the recipient of meritorious performances. He will not allow himself to be degraded to the passive status of someone celebrated by others. He wants to remain what he has always been: the active One, who gives his people the living waters of a just life, and leads it to a better righteousness. The worship service ought never be self-service. But that is what is happening here. God's leadership has been forgotten. "Hence I will lead you into exile beyond Damascus" (5:27).

The end is a deserved end, an end brought about by guilt. The Word about guilt is the justification for the irresistible Word about the end. If, according to Amos, the end leads with absolute certainty to the encounter with God in the future, the prophetic criticism of the present is dominated with equal certainty by the God of Israel's unambiguous will. This link between the present and the future exists in God. In the individual case it can undoubtedly correspond to an immanent causality which is open to the examination by reason. But this does not have to be the case. Present and future are more compulsively linked — indeed inextricably so — by the fact that God's people meets the same God in both, present and future alike: here in commandment, there in judgment. Amos has two things to say about this: the guilt of the present cannot be denied, and the judgment of the future cannot be escaped. But by establishing this very fact, he is sinking the pilings for the bridge that leads over to the New Testament. For in the New Testament both statements are presupposed. Without them it is impossible to understand that Jesus Christ should take on himself the guilt we cannot contest and the judgment we cannot escape by ourselves.

But what is new in the New Testament is the third thing: in the midst of the end we bring on ourselves, a new life dawns through the intervention of Jesus Christ. The Book of Amos already suggests that new acts on God's part are to be expected on the other side of judgment. The ruined booth of David is to be rebuilt (9:11f.). The devastation, the degeneration and the dispersion are not the last thing; they are only the penultimate. God's power and grace will grant fruitfulness and peace, and with it a completely new homeland (9:11-15). Unconditional words of hope like these have raised Israel's eyes in the centuries that followed Amos, and have kept them wakeful in expectation of God's new acts.

At least one of the words of Amos himself points beyond the sin-caused end (5:4): "Thus Yahweh has said concerning the house of Israel: Seek me! Then you shall live. Do not seek Bethel! Do not enter into Gilgal! For Gilgal will surely depart into exile, and Bethel will become adversity." For Amos' contem-

poraries to seek Yahweh and to seek the sanctuary were one and the same thing. This identification is to give way to a clear antithesis. For the pilgrimages had become a camouflage for selfishness and contempt of other people. Bethel and Gilgal will collapse in the end which the people have brought on themselves. Life is only to be found with Israel's God himself. "Seek me! Then you shall live." After the death and resurrection of Christ we can hear this call of Amos as an invitation to new life. Yet this call is and remains closely bound up with the message of the deserved end. Let me sum up how, in the light of the New Testament, Amos 5:4 emphasizes the prophet's three essential messages.

1. Be absolutely certain that an end has been appointed for all evil! Nothing shady can last. Reckon with the fact that all injustice, all greed, and all scorn for other people have only death as their future. Can we see that this message about the coming end is also a blessing, even now? "Seek me, *then* you shall live!"

2. Realize that we have brought the threatened end on ourselves! With this accusation Amos helps us to recognize our own involvement in this life marred by failure. Above all, he opens our eyes to see that in the end which we have deserved we shall meet God himself. Under the cross of Christ we experience that no end can ever separate us from the love of God, no kind of trouble — not even death. "Seek me, then you shall *live!*"

3. It is in this light that we can travel the road from the present into the future as reconciled ones, as acquitted felons, those given amnesty from prosecution. We now understand God's exhortation through Amos: "Seek me! Then you *shall* live!" in a new way, as an invitation to the discipleship of Jesus. It permits us to set foot afresh every day on the bridge that leads to the future, in unequivocal admission of guilt, in unambiguous concern for righteousness, in unconditional readiness for reconciliation. "Seek *me,* then you *shall live!*"

We have learned that resistance against the irresistible Word is in vain. It is as vain for us later hearers of that Word, as it once was for Amos. The way around that word goes only through the cross.



Silence: Forming and Transforming Ministry

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"It is speech which distinguishes [us] above the beasts . . . but because it is an advantage to be able to speak, it does not follow that to be able to keep silent is no art, or that it is a humble art. . . . It is a great art to be able to keep silent."
Soren Kierkegaard, **Christian Discourses**

I arrived at the hospital within minutes of hearing that Walter had died. The nurse led me into the room in which Walter, parishioner and kind friend, had waged a battle against the ravages of cancer. Opening the curtain surrounding his bed, I beheld the image of death: stark, arrogant, ugly. His body was frail and ashen. His eyes, partially open, his frozen, contorted posture, spoke of the painful struggle he had just lost. The sounds of that struggle, of respirators and heart monitors, had stopped. All was now silent.

I heard Margaret, his wife of forty years, enter behind me. I felt tense and inadequate as she stood beside me, gazing at her beloved husband. My first impulse was to speak, to say something, perhaps a verse from scripture or a prayer — anything — to make it all better, to rob the "last enemy" of its brutal impact. I wanted to control what was happening. At that instant, Margaret took my hand, checking my need to *say something.* We stood there, each with private thoughts, but drawn ever so close in that silence.

Hands joined, we experienced Walter's death in so profound a silence that words would have been an intrusion. Several years have passed since Walter died. I am thankful that Margaret took me by the hand and led me to experience the silence of her husband's death and the presence of our Lord in that silence.

Resisting

"A life without a lonely place . . . without a quiet center, easily becomes destructive."
Henri Nouwen,
Out of Solitude

We live and minister in a world that shuns silence. "Most modern life, writes Morton Kelly, is a studied attempt to avoid ever being alone."[1] For many in our culture, the day begins with the sounds of a disc jockey or "all news radio." Uncomfortable with quiet, we find ourselves turning on our radio, television, or stereo as soon as we walk into the house. We rush off to work,

[1] Morton, T. Kelsey, *Encounter With God* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1972), p. 181.



merged with the car radio, while those on foot sport the headgear of a Sony Walkman.

Our days are crowded with noise and talk. There are meetings, phone calls, and lunch at McDonalds with Muzak in the background! We rush home to dinner and the evening news and carry on simultaneous conversations with a spouse and child. Our evenings are crammed with meetings, visits, consultations. We drop off to sleep, too tired to dream, forestalling even any night-time encounter with silence. Our culture conspires against silence, and we are often co-conspirators.

As if this weren't enough, we ministers deal with the special pitfalls which hamper us from allowing silence in our interactions with people. Some parishioners ascribe to their minister attributes appropriate only to the Lord. They see us as omnipotent, omniscient, untiring, bionic, and without blemish. We are seen as having all the answers. Our pathological need to fulfill such grandiose and messianic expectations leads us astray. In some cases, the marriage of their messianic expectations and our messianic needs lasts for many years. In other cases, ministers, crushed by this life style, become depressed[2] or leave the ministry for good.

A second pitfall derives from our greatest treasure and asset — the Word. We are people of the Word, who confess its power and use it as a tool of our trade. Our training in the Word has been steeped in words — words of sermons, lectures, commentaries, discussion groups, and mammoth volumes of theology.

We are expected to repeat words in liturgies, sermons, prayers, openings, closings, speeches, reports, and advice. Ministers are expected to have the last word at their fingertips. We often fill the air with too many words, speaking long after the listener has lost interest. To allow *silence* to enter into our relationships with those in our care conflicts with our need to speak, to rescue, to control, to make it right. We try to be everything people expect us to be.

One way out of this compulsive, success-oriented dilemma, is to find the way inward, re-ordering our lives and ministries around a "quiet center," where silence becomes the context for our words.

Seeking

"To pray is not to hear oneself speak, but it is to be silent, and to remain silent, to wait, until the man who prays hears God."

Soren Kierkegaard,
Christian Discourses

"Most of the time," writes Kelsey,

[2] Dwight W. Cumbee, "Depression As An Ecclesiogenic Neurosis," *The Journal of Pastoral Care,* XXXIV (December, 1980), 257-259.

"we go spinning along like a top, without wondering where the momentum comes from. The function of silence is to slow the mechanism down so that it can be rewound and started out again on a new course. This is a process of slowing the ego down, of letting self-centeredness fade out so that the larger self can take over and be moved by God's grace."[3]

In the early years of my ministry, I encountered the writings of Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, the Desert Fathers, and other writings on silence. I felt challenged to re-order my success-oriented ministry and, indeed, my entire life, around silence and prayer. Even with the help of a spiritual director, I quickly discovered that seeking silence is no easy matter. Above all, getting into the process of silent prayer takes time.

Silence contains many layers. Initially, silence confronts us with the noise and conflict of our inner self. Without the crutches of work or of noise, our illusions are laid bare and our confusions assail us. On the first leg of the journey inward, we come face-to-face with all that our busyness has masked: feelings of inadequacy, anger, boredom, emptiness, loneliness, despair — the powerful and seductive voices of our unfaith.

Our first attempts to use silence are filled with distractions and the compulsion to find an easier way. As the journey progresses, the inner noise begins to subside. We begin to re-define our identities as persons and ministers and become aware of the gifts and limitations that have been given to us. As we re-define our self before God, we are enabled to begin to let go of our false self with all our grandiosity.

Silence and meditation help transform us from doers into catalysts for God's grace. In silence, we learn "that the healing words we speak are not just our own, but are given to us, that the love we express is a part of a greater love, and that the new life we bring forth is not a property to cling to but a gift to be received."[4] In silence we learn to be patient with the Lord, with ourselves, with those in our care.

As we approach the inner depths of silence, often after a journey of several years, we become able to listen. This meditative listening becomes the prelude to the listening we will do during the entire day. Doing is transformed into allowing. We listen where we used to speak. In the depths of silence, we become aware that we are being listened to. A dialogue is established, and we become more fully aware of the presence of God.

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[3] Morton T. Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence: A Guide to Christian Meditation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), p. 100.

[4] Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1974), p. 22.



To seek the Lord in the depths of silence is like dying. When we actually die, we cease doing and planning, we give up our possessions and entrust them to the care of the Other. In silence we learn to be alone and to cast off the delusion that life will fall apart without our crutches. The mature person is able to be alone and quiet. The effort to turn inward in silence leads toward a healthy detachment. The minister who can be alone and stand alone can give and receive love without any strings attached.

Claiming

"Those who love God should attempt to preserve or create an atmosphere in which He can be found."

Thomas Merton
The Sign of Jonas

The first step in claiming silence is to find a quiet place, devoid of distractions, noise, conversation, or vestiges of our work. Some report that they are able to be silent and meditate when driving (!) or walking alone. I would suggest a room devoid of much sensory stimulation.

Having found a place, we now allow ourselves to become quiet. Quieting the body can take time. After a particularly tense or anxious day, we discover that the different parts of the body quiet at different paces. Our task here is to concentrate, to fix our gaze upon an object, and to tell the tension-filled parts of our body to relax. Repetitive actions such as drumming or recitation of a mantra may help in quieting the body and mind.

Once quieted, we begin to encounter the outer strata of silence. It is to be expected that the early silences will present us with distractions, daydreams, feelings of anger, boredom, depression or even panic. Too much should not be expected at first.

The novice may choose to begin silent times by reading and repeating or meditating on a verse of scripture; by repeating the "Jesus Prayer" (Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have Mercy on Me."); or simply by sitting in quiet, concentrating on a religious object or a single thought.[5]

Allowing

". . . the important thing is not to live for contemplation but to live for God."

Thomas Merton,
The Sign of Jonas

Silence is not an end in itself. Having claimed silence for ourselves, we are enabled to allow our personal silences to transform our ministry.

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[5] A more complete introduction to the practice of silence and meditation is to be found in the Kelsey volume, N. 3 above. I would also recommend: Mark Link, You: *Prayer for Beginners and Those Who Have Forgotten How* Niles, Illinois: Argus Communications, 1976), 156pp.

In Pastoral Care

We ministers are called upon each day to intervene in the lives of people in trouble. As life becomes more complex and their problems more baffling, we intervene with words of comfort, words of prayer, and words of advice. We speak words from God. Words from the depths of our experience. Sometimes our words build bridges to truth. They connect the broken-hearted with the Lord. Such words heal and convey God's grace. Other times, our words mask our own anxiety. They are spoken to diffuse the horror or discomfort of the moment.

To withhold our words at times of crisis and to allow the experience simply to unfold takes great courage, courage born in silence. Silence as a pastoral intervention allows the crisis to unfold and paves the way for healing and the speaking, in time, of the "ultimate" word. Silence creates a container for the anguish of the person or family in our presence. It demonstrates to them that we are not afraid of what is happening but that we stand with them in their trouble.

Sometimes the pain our parishioners carry is mute or "pre-verbal." Silence allows this pain to enter the pastoral relationship. Some months ago, a shy, Hispanic girl, ten years of age, came into my office, brought by her teacher. She said she wanted to talk to me, but she sat for most of an hour silent. As we indulged in small talk about school, friends, and hobbies, I could see pain behind her eyes. Her visits became weekly, many of them with protracted silences. Early on I formed a "silent hypothesis" about her pain (she seldom mentioned her father), but remained silent for fear of losing her trust. After six months of visits, marked by small talk and silences, her glistening eyes one day gave way to sobs, as she fell on the floor, convulsed in tears that seemed to issue from her center. I went to her and held her, not saying a word. It was only then that she could begin to speak of some three years of sexual abuse by her father and of the fear of what he'd do if she "told." In months of silence, a trusting relationship had been established that facilitated the emergence of the child's mute pain.

Being silent in our acts of pastoral care and counseling allows those in our care to feel heard. To patiently listen, without being unduly intrusive, is to convey God's grace in a powerful way. How many people today believe that anyone is truly and patiently listening to them? Non-intrusive listening is one of the greatest expressions of pastoral love that we can extend to those in our care.

In Worship

New workship materials, such as the **Lutheran Book of Worship,** have provided for moments of silence for reflection in the Holy Eucharist and in other rites. Many congregations resist these



silences. Some services are designed to avoid moments of silence, filling these spaces with words or additional music.

The worship leader who seeks to create silences with the congregation is bound to meet strong resistance initially. Questions such as "Did you forget something?" or "Did you lose your place?" are not uncommon. In time, however, benefits are to be experienced. In gently leading our people to use silence to reflect on the lessons and the words of the homily, we create a dialogical, reflective, and meditative experience. To allow for silence in worship is to say that we are not at worship to do something. We are not there to beat the clock! Silence allows the words we speak to sink in. For many people, it is the only time in the week when they have time to think!

Apart from Sunday worship, pastors and lay ministers may begin to allow for silences in devotions at meetings, in prayer with individuals or families, in Bible classes, and in such occasional services as the funeral rite. If our members sense that silence is transforming us and our ministry, they may allow themselves to be similary transformed.

In Preaching

Silence may be used, creatively, at the beginning of homilies. Some years ago I began an Advent sermon on the theme waiting/longing by simply standing in the pulpit for some three or four minutes, in complete silence, not doing anything. Finally, after what seemed an unbearable period of time (and noting the anxiety on the faces of my hearers), I broke the silence by saying: "I don't like waiting either!" Parishioners remember that Advent sermon to this day.

Silence is also effective at the end of a homily, inviting the hearer to reflect on what has been said. Here, again, we don't just move onto the "next thing." We allow, instead, the words of the preacher to reverberate against the hearer, stimulating thought and response. The hearer is transformed from a passive-observer to more of a participant in the homily as an event. Silences are also effective within the homily. The greatest preachers I have heard have been those who knew how to allow silences following important points in sermons. These silences add power to the words we speak.

Conclusion

I spent some years reading about silence before ever taking "the plunge." Ultimately, the re-ordering of my day and work around the still point of solitude came as the result of a direct challenge from someone I admired.

As a young man I used to go to listen to the late Fulton Sheen whenever he would be preaching. On one occasion, I asked him where he thought his power to

proclaim the gospel came from. He related to me that every day since his ordination into the priesthood some fifty years earlier he had spent one hour in silence "in the presence of my Eucharistic Lord." (The only day he "missed" was the day he fell asleep in a church in Belgium!) "The power is born in silence," he said, challenging me to do the same.

I took his challenge and discovered in a new and wonderful way that "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30:15).

I Too Shall Bloom

The summer has been long and heavy.
My soul is ready to rest from
turmoil, upheaval, and pain.
An end to a decade is here.

Earlier I thought I was embarking
to better future, security, career improvement,
and was turned around by the unmasking
of many wounds, issues, shortcomings.

An evaluation of our marriage
found us at different values,
different perspectives, different wants
and on different roads.

This bond is bondage . . .
This relationship — mechanical
like robots following predetermined
plannings and programs.

Do we continue to pretend
for the sake of our son?
What shall we do?
Can we please everyone?

The marriage relationship has died,
its official termination soon.
The emotional alliance has crumbled
The end of our decade together.

Some call this time of year fall
so forenamed for just this occasion, I'm sure . . .
The season of growing things ends . . .
to rest and to prepare for another day.

I'm reminded of another "fall"
where Adam and Eve's
relationship to God
came to a near impasse.

Thank God he did not leave them there,
in their nakedness, cold and despair;
As he promised them a new Spring,
So I can hope that I too shall bloom!

As for our son, our mutual love
and commitment remains.
We shall strive to provide for him
so that he can bloom too!

—Steve Liechti
Claremore, OK

An Immigrant Church Coming of Age: The Present Situation of Catholic Theology In The U.S.A.

Ronald Modras

Director of the Corporate Ministry Program, St. Louis University

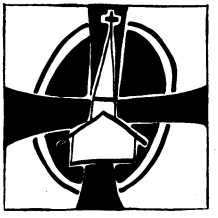
In the last 15 years, the Roman Catholic Church in the United States has witnessed the most productive and creative explosion of theological energy and achievement in its entire history. At the same time that the Roman Catholic church was undergoing revolutionary changes world-wide and American society was experiencing traumatic social and political upheavals, Catholics in the U.S. made a dramatic passage all their own. Both as Americans and Catholics, they began to come of age. The same can be said for their theology. Catholic theologians have begun to grow out of a timid dependence upon parental figures, whether the Vatican, bishops, or European theology, and come self-assuredly to claim and receive the respect of their peers, the American and international scholarly community.

Only selected highlights of these developments can be described here, but even these will suffice to indicate the peculiarly American traits of Catholic theology in the U.S.

Before Vatican II

American Catholics are an ethnic group, American Catholicism an immigrant church. From 1820 to 1920, over nine million Catholics migrated to these shores, not intellectuals or tradesmen, but peasants mostly, poorly educated, many illiterate, fleeing hunger, poverty, and oppression. They came into a culture that was alien and antipathetic to Catholics. The Anti-Catholicism of the dominant Protestant culture led to the creation of Catholic ghettos, a defensive Catholic sub-culture, and the largest private school system in history. At the hands of a "brick and mortar" clergy, Catholic elementary schools proliferated, staffed by orders of religious women, many with only a modicum of formal education themselves. Seminaries proliferated as well, usually in remote locations where there were fewer hazards to piety. By 1900, there were 60 Catholic colleges and 7 universities, almost all small and feebly endowed, seeing themselves as centers for disseminating a wisdom and knowledge already possessed rather than as centers for investigation and research.

U.S. Catholics are still an immigrant church. As late as the 1970s, though most were American born, 40% have at least one foreign-born parent, 80% at least one foreign-born grandparent. Most came from disadvantaged working-class families, for whom survival did not permit the luxury of higher education. Little wonder then that U.S. Catholics have not been known for scholarship. Only after World War II, as Catholics began to experience the "American dream" of economic success, was higher education a realistic possibility. Today the grandchildren of Catholic peasants have caught up to and surpassed the national average in college attendance and begun to enter the fields of academia and scholarly research.



Most Catholic theology before Vatican II was imported from Europe. Whatever was American-grown was largely apologetic, defending Catholicism to Protestant critics doubtful that good Catholics could be good Americans. Catholics have traditionally been loyal in the extreme to both the papacy and to American principles. From the very beginning they believed in democracy as the future form of all civilized government and saw the American church as a model for the universal church. But Rome did not always see things the American way. U.S. Catholics had participated in a World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893; two years later, future participation in such enterprises was forbidden by the Vatican. A further shock came in 1899, when Pope Leo XIII (**Testem Benevolentiae**) condemned "Americanism," for the "suspicion that there are some among you who conceive of and desire a church in America different from that which is in the rest of the world." The censure was a rebuke to some very American ideas like religious liberty, separation of church and state, Christian humanism, cooperation with other religious bodies, the Church's responsibility and mission to social, economic, and political life, and the compatibility of Catholicism with the modern age.

The condemnation of "Americanism" and then of Modernism (1907) put a sharp halt to creative theological thinking in America. Fear of innovation hovered over seminaries and episcopal residences. Not until the 1950's did the liturgical movement begin to spread in the U.S., thanks to the efforts of the Benedictines at St. John's Abbey (V. Michel, G. Diekmann). Only then, fifty years after **Testem Benevolentiae,** were the ideas and ideals of Americanism championed again, now by American Jesuits Gustav Weigel and John Courtney Murray. Weigel broke ground in ecclesiology and ecumenism and exemplified the willingness to judge other Christian traditions and theologians in their best light. Murray suffered official silencing for his writing on religious liberty and separation of church and state. Both lived to see their ideas exonerated and canonized at the second Vatican Council.

Since Vatican II

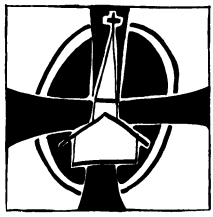
One cannot hope to understand theology in the U.S. without considering the social and historical circumstances of the last 20 years. The upheavals of the post-conciliar church were deeper and more disturbing for Americans than for many other Catholics. One should not forget that the pontificate of John XXIII coincided with the presidency of John Kennedy. Catholics left behind their subculture and the Counter-Reformation at the same time, entering simultaneously into the American mainstream and the age of ecumenism. The second Vatican Council occasioned not evolutions but revolutions, as Catholicism moved from

patriarchalism to lay participation in the life and ministry of the church, from defensiveness to dialogue with other churches and the secular world. At the same time the Council confirmed biblical scholars in their freedom to use the historical-critical method in interpreting Scripture. This served as an encouragement to other theologians to interpret Catholic dogmas and moral teachings according to the same historical-critical canons of exegesis.

Liturgical reform created tensions between those who resisted change of any kind and those who welcomed renewal (by far the majority, some 75%). But the series of changes, at regular intervals from 1963 to the end of the decade, prompted a habit of critical thinking among Catholics. Questions of what else will be changed led to questions of what else should be changed. For the first time Catholics were beginning to think critically about their church at the same time Americans generally began to think critically about their country. The civil rights movement swelled along with mounting criticism of U.S. involvement in Viet Nam.

The 1960's became a decade of demonstrations and dissent, as American Catholics began saying No for the first time to both their President and their Pope. The turbulence of the times is demonstrated by the fact that in the same year, 1968, Martin Luther King and Senator Robert Kennedy were assassinated, the Democratic national convention in Chicago was disrupted by rioting in the streets, and Pope Paul VI issued **Humanae Vitae.** No event since the Council has been more fateful for U.S. Catholics than this encyclical on artificial contraception. The subsequent dissent of some 600 U.S. theologians pales in comparison to the dissent of 85% of American Catholics with this official church teaching. Studies indicate that while thousands of U.S. Catholics left the church after **Humanae Vitae,** the majority chose to remain but ignore it. There emerged a large group of "communal Catholics" (A. Greeley), disinterested in the church as an institution but committed to Catholicism as worldview and system of sacraments and symbols with which to encounter life.

The 60s took their toll on the ranks of priests and sisters, who were unaccustomed to the freedom of thinking critically for themselves. The pendulum swing from defensiveness to massive self-criticism allowed the eruption of a seething latent discontent. Since 1967, more than 10,000 priests resigned the active ministry in the U.S., and more than 50,000 sisters left religious life. One reason for the greater exodus of religious women was the movement in the 1950s for teaching sisters to go on to higher studies and receive graduate degrees. Their advanced education enabled them to leave religious life and move more easily into skilled jobs and respected professions.



The 1970s were in many ways a reaction to the 60s. Burned out and disenchanted with institutions, American youth gave up activism for interiority. Interest in Eastern mysticism, transcendental meditation, yoga, and Zen became national phenomena. Ignatian retreats and books on spirituality increased in popularity and the charismatic movement grew from a small circle at Duquesne University (1967) to a worldwide network with over 3,000 prayer groups in North America alone.

One activist movement showing little sign of decline is that for women's liberation. Since the publication of **The Feminine Mystique** by Betty Friedan (1963), a new feminist awareness has heightened, and increasing numbers of Americans have become determined to redress the discrimination that casts women into subordinate roles. The movement, though global, is especially strong in the U.S., where more and more Catholics, religious and lay, are determined that women will achieve parity with men in the church as well as in secular society. In seeking greater participation of women in policy-making positions in all fields and at all levels, the women's movement has focused attention on the almost total exclusion of women from preaching, liturgy, and governing in the church.

Theological Infrastructure

Few institutions in the U.S. have changed so radically in the wake of Vatican II as Catholic seminaries. In comparison to 1965, when 8,885 seminarians studied theology in 133 schools, the number of seminarians in 1979 had declined by over half to 4,327, and Catholic theologates declined to 54. In order to survive, many seminaries began the strategy of moving to cities and forming a cluster or consortium of 3 or more schools (Catholic and Protestant), pooling common resources (faculty, libraries), in some instances even granting a common degree. Major clusters of theological schools now exist in Berkeley, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C. These institutions, as well as other Catholic seminaries, have also opened their doors to students other than future priests, including women. In 1973 there were 395 women entering Catholic schools of theology (7.2% of the student body); in 1977 there were 997 (16.5%); in 1982 more than 1,600. This does not include the growing numbers of Catholic women and laymen studying at Protestant divinity schools. Catholics already constitute the largest single denomination at Harvard, Chicago, and Andover-Newton.

The admission of religious women and laity into the student bodies of American (and European) theologates has increasingly meant their appearance as full-ranking professors of theology, especially on university faculties, but at seminaries as well.

Catholic scholars in theology and related disciplines have long been organ-

ized into a variety of scholarly and *professional associations:*

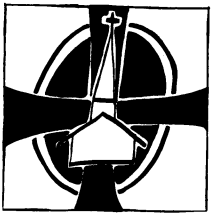
The Catholic Biblical Association was founded in 1936 to do a new English translation of the Bible. Since that time its members have produced two translations and a major biblical commentary, **The Jerome Biblical Commentary.** It stimulates research, publishes a quarterly, and recently completed a study on "The Role of Women in Early Christianity."

The Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA) has served since 1946 to foster effective theological education and to promote research into contemporary problems. It provides a forum for exchange of views for theologians among themselves and with scholars from other disciplines. It has sponsored research teams on hospital ethics, pastoral ministry to the divorced and remarried, the renewed sacrament of penance, human sexuality, ecumenism, and the status of women in the church. After an unbroken history of priest leadership, two of its recent presidents have been a religious brother and a religious woman.

The Canon Law Society of America, founded in 1939, has exercised particularly strong influence since Vatican II. It has sponsored research teams on issues like due process in canonical procedures; renewal of religious life; selection of bishops; the status of women; juridicial procedures in matrimonial tribunals; the revision of canon law; and the fiscal accountability of the church's leadership. Its aim is the ideal that the church's life and structure exemplify justice, collegial solidarity, and respect for human rights.

The College Theology Society, originally founded in 1953 as the Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine, mirrors the changes of recent years. While promoting theological education, especially at the undergraduate level, its members now also number non-Catholics as well as theologians at non-Catholic schools. Religious studies is coming to be seen as a bona fide academic pursuit on U.S. secular campuses. It aims not to foster doctrinal orthodoxy or personal commitment so much as to understand the phenomenon of religion and the meanings which religious groups draw from their scriptures and symbols.

A variety of Catholic periodicals continue to publish theology of both an academic and pastoral nature. Articles of a professional and technical nature appear in the **Catholic Biblical Quarterly,** the **Jurist, Theological Studies,** and **Worship.** The **Journal of Ecumenical Studies** publishes articles pertaining to Christian unity and world religions. **Theology Digest** performs the unique service of printing summaries and abstracts of foreign articles in English. **Chicago Studies** publishes articles in theology on the more popular level, as does the **Bible Today** in scripture. Similar articles in theology appear in the Jesuit weekly, **America.** Its counterpart, **Commonweal,** a journal of Catholic lay opinion in religion, politics, and the arts, has been



called the most significant lay enterprise in American Catholicism. Similarly lay-edited and controlled is **Cross Currents,** a theological quarterly, and the **National Catholic Reporter,** a national weekly which often prints articles of a popular theological nature. Of more recent vintage is **Origins,** a most valuable documentary service containing statements by the Pope, bishops, theologians and other leading figures speaking out on religious issues. Another useful documentary service has been **The Pope Speaks.**

Achievements

Biblical scholarship, as much as any U.S. Catholic theological endeavor, has won deserved international recognition. Collaborative efforts have produced not only the **Jerome Biblical Commentary** (1968), but also, in conjunction with Protestant and Jewish scholars, the **Anchor Bible Series.** Americans R. Brown, J. Fitzmyer, G. MacRae, and J. L. McKenzie rank among the premiere Catholic exegetes in the world. Yet it must be admitted that, for a variety of reasons, U.S. Catholic biblical scholars have been wary and somewhat hesitant to relate biblical criticism to sensitive doctrinal issues like christology and ecclesiology. One reason is the lack of a first-class Catholic graduate biblical school in the U.S.; no Catholic university can match the best Protestant schools in scripture. Also, many Catholic biblical scholars devote considerable time to the vital pastoral task of high-level popularization (R. Murphy, B. Vawter, *et. al.*). Exegetes, furthermore, like other theologians in the U.S., have been put on the defensive by attacks of ultra-conservatives. No one less than Raymond Brown, distinguished for his work on the Johannine literature and infancy narratives, has had to ward off "right-wing vigilantes," as he called them, "who pretend to be able to speak for Catholicism when they attack every new idea." He has justly charged the "archconservative Catholic press with usurping the authority of the magisterium." Fundamentalists within the American church continue today to raise strident voices and freely level charges of heresy against responsible scholars.

In *fundamental theology* significant contributions have been made by Avery Dulles and David Tracy. Dulles has written extensively on the theology of revelation, the historical nature and limitations of dogma, and ecclesiology. His description of the church in terms of models (institutions; community, sacrament; herald; servant) has proved most helpful in dealing with post-conciliar tensions arising from differing ecclesiologies. Writing in theological pluralism and methodology, Tracy reveals the influence of his mentor, Bernard Lonergan, but even more that of currents and questions especially alive on this continent: process philosophy (Whitehead, Hartshorne), process theology (S. Ogden), Anglo-American language

analysis, and the commitment to modernity (L. Gilkey). Tracy sees Christian texts as affirming the secular faith in the "ultimate significance" of our lives here and now. In 1975, 18 theologians, Catholic and Protestant, including Dulles, issued the so-called "Hartford Statement," which criticized "an apparent loss of a sense of the transcendent" manifest in much contemporary thought.

In *systematic theology,* special attention has been focused understandably on the priesthood and ministry, ecumenism, and the relationship between theology and the magisterium. The exodus of clergy prompted the bishops in 1967 to authorize Catholic scholars to do a complete study of the life and ministry of priests in the U.S. from the perspectives of history, psychology, sociology, and theology. Bernard Cooke, originally named to head the theological study was replaced when he left the active ministry and was laicized; he later completed his research and published his encyclopedic **Ministry to Word and Sacrament** (1976), a history and theology of ministry in terms of formation of community, word, service, judgment, and sacraments.

Singularly important developments in ecumenism on both the doctrinal and practical levels have been achieved by the bilateral consultations between Catholic and Protestant theologians officially designated by their respective churches. The most productive of these has been the Lutheran-Catholic consultation, whose research papers and joint statements have been published in the series **Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue.** After acknowledging substantial agreement between the two traditions on the Nicene Creed (1965), Baptism (1966), and the Eucharist as real presence and sacrifice (1967), the Catholic participants affirmed that there was "no persuasive reason to deny the possibility of the Roman Catholic church recognizing the validity" of Lutheran ministry (1970). On the Petrine ministry, Lutheran participants recognized the papacy as "the single most notable representative of this ministry to the church universal" (1974). On teaching authority and infallibility, both sides agreed on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the faithful transmission of the gospel but disagreed on the means whereby this is achieved (1978).

Regarding Christianity and other world religions, considerable interest is being generated in Eastern mysticism and religious experience, especially in California (e.g. R. Panikkar on Hinduism). And Jewish-Christian studies have flourished in the U.S. as almost nowhere else, thanks greatly to the commitment of a variety of Catholic theologians (J. Oesterreicher, E. Flannery, J. Pawlikowski, R. Ruether, J. Sheerin, L. Swidler, E. Fisher). As Jewish theologians look at the Talmud's teaching on the Noachic covenant between God and all humanity, Christian scholars confront the relationship of the covenants, the Pharisaic in-

fluence on Jesus, anti-semitism in the New Testament, modern Judaism, and the state of Israel — all in the light of the flames of Auschwitz, those theological implications are also beginning to be explored.

Special mention is also due to the dissemination of Latin American liberation theology by the Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) and the Maryknoll Missionary Society, its magazine, and its publishing house, Orbis Books.

If there is anything corresponding to liberation theology in North America, it is feminist theology. Various associations of women are working within the church to overcome sexism. While some feminist theologians (e.g. M. Daly) see Christianity as hoplelessly biased and oppressive, mainstream Catholic feminists refuse to identify revelation with the tradition of male domination. On the issue of women's ordination, a 1978 taskforce of the CTSA concluded that the arguments thus far do not justify the exclusion of women from ordination to pastoral office. The number of prominent women theologians (S. Butler, A. Carr, A. Cunningham, M. Farley, E. Schüssler-Fiorenza, J. Massyngberde Ford, M. Hellwig, R. Ruether, *et. al.*) is growing, and they are beginning to make themselves heard. One can be sure that they do not constitute a passing phase on either the American or Roman Catholic landscape.

The dominant characteristic of *moral theology* in the U.S., both Catholic and Protestant, is its concern with practical, pastoral problems: social justice, sex and marriage, abortion, bioethics, and the fundamental issue of moral norms. In the past, Catholic moralists were largely given to an "ecclesiastical positivism," which accepted magisterium pronouncements uncritically. More recently, they have increasingly espoused a personalism which gives less attention to the physical act-in-itself and more attention to the total good of the acting person. This new approach often finds itself at odds with tradition, as it gives greater prominence to "due proportion" and "commensurate reason" for positing a double effect.

Among the most respected Catholic moralists in the U.S. are: C. Curran, for his innovative theology of conflict and compromise; J. Dedek and P. Keane, for sexual ethics; D. Maguire, for his analysis of the moral choice; R. McCormick, author of the influential survey and analysis, "Notes on Moral Theology" in **Theological Studies** each year; J. Noonan, for his work on abortion and his massive history of **Contraception** (1965); W. Reich, editor of the outstanding 4 vol. ecumenical, inter-disciplinary **Encyclopedia of Bioethics** (1978). Noteworthy, too, is the 1977 CTSA study, **Human Sexuality** (A. Kosnik *et. al.*), for changing the **status quaestionis** for sexual ethics in this country. Describing sexuality as a divine gift and a call to creative and integrative maturity and relationships, it offers a list of values conducive to moral decision on

the basis of the dignity of the human person. Criticized by the Vatican's doctrinal congregation for its departure from tradition (especially from the concept of negative moral absolutes), it was also hailed for its attempt to translate that tradition and to revive from it the time-honored Catholic principle of probablism.

It is obvious from the foregoing that, even though Catholic theology in the U.S. does not boast one or two major stars, it does not need to be embarrassed. It has produced a host of creative, hard-working women and men, dedicated to the church and to the theological disciplines, willing to assume the rigor and responsibility of their task. Although their collective, pastoral, ecumenical efforts may be critical at times of certain Catholic traditions, especially in areas like feminism, sexual ethics, and ministry, theirs is a loyal and loving criticism. Certainly there are problems facing Catholic theology in the U.S. Fewer vocations will tempt seminary faculties to lower standards and bishops to restrict priests being permitted to go on to advanced theological studies. This may well allow greater numbers of laity and religious women to assume leadership in the field. There is an anti-intellectualist tradition among American Catholic clergy (higher or lower) and a fundamentalist movement afoot at the onset of the 80s. Some theologians may be bruised in the crush. But the 60s are not likely to be forgotten. American Catholicism is coming of age, growing out of both infantile conformism and adolescent rebellion. Vatican II ushered in a new age for Catholic theology in the U.S. In the words of American novelist Thomas Wolfe: you can't go home again.

Few areas in theology have become as popular and have sold as many books as *spirituality*. Thomas Merton's influence continues. His autobiography reintroduced and legitimized using the word "I" in religious inquiry. Also noteworthy is the series **The Classics of Western Spirituality** (Paulist Press) and the Institute for Cistercian studies at Western Michigan University. Especially appealing to American readers have been the conjunction of spirituality with: psychology (H. Nouwen); myth (J. Donne); the arts (M. Fox); and political action (D. Day, D. and P. Berrigan). Likewise popular have been works on Jesuit spirituality (J. Futrell), the theology of religious life (A. Van Kaam, T. O'Meara), and Eastern Christian mysticism and prayer (G. Maloney, M.B. Pennington).

The Electronic Church: Its Vision of the Kingdom

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First an admission. — Much to the chagrin of family and friends who may be around the house on Sunday evenings, I regularly watch on TV what is known as the electronic church. "Why," I am asked, "do you listen to that stuff?" Could it be that I am reminded of my youth when my parents insisted on watching Lawrence Welk every Sunday evening? — Beautiful costumes, shining faces, sculptured hair, elaborate sets, and the good old-time music. Or do I watch because I'm provided a few good laughs? "Join us on our Hong Kong tour. It'll be a spiritual experience and you can buy things there cheap."

I admit that I am sometimes amused by what I see and hear. But I am more often amazed. I am amazed that an estimated 130 million people a week listen to religious programs.[1] Jim Baker (PTL) and Jerry Falwell (Old-Time Gospel Hour) take in more than $1 million a week, and the dozen leading ministries take in more than $600 million a year.[2]

The method Pat Robertson (700 Club) uses to raise his share ($47 million) of that $600 million revolves around what Robertson calls "Kingdom Principles." These principles include telethons, mail campaigns, "words of knowledge" (miracles), and unceasing prayer. Robertson feels "we're on the threshold of the final assault to get the gospel out. Your involvement is crucial. . . ."[3] The implied "involvement" is a gift of $25, $50, $100, or "whatever you can do. . . ." According to Rex Humbard ($25 million):

> When you give, you receive. When you give . . . you receive the blessings of our program every week in your home. And then by giving you are also putting your faith in action. So you can trust God for your needs to be met.[4]

Criticism of the electronic church's financial dealings has been widespread over the past several years. John Killinger accuses Falwell's Old-Time Gospel Hour ($46 million) of taking "money from widows and children, promising the blessings of God. It is the blessings of God you take from them, only to build an empire. . . ."[5]

Norman Lear's concern is not so much financial as the fact that he doesn't "want a narrow band of people controlling American politics or what's on television."[6]

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[1] Editorial, "Making the most of the Electronic Church," *Christianity Today* 25:3 (February 6, 1981), 14.

[2] Dick Dabney, "God's Own Network," *Harpers* 261:1563 (August, 1980), 40.

[3] Pat Robertson. Form letter, June 16, 1980.

[4] Rex Humbard, Form letter, October, 1980.

[5] As quoted in a reprinted article by Robert Scheer, "The Rev. Jerry Falwell: The Prophet of 'Worldly Methods'," *The Los Angeles Times* (Wednesday, March 4, 1981), 3.

[6] As quoted by Ben Stein, "Norman Lear vs. the Moral Majority: The War to Clean Up TV," *Saturday Review* (February, 1981), 23.

Other criticisms range from "artificial friendliness" and "glossy personalism"[7] to downright mismanagement.[8]

Questions concerning the electronic church's methods, management, and politics will no doubt continue to be asked. But there is a larger and more serious question: What is the electronic church's vision of the Kingdom of God? It has one, but is it a vision of wholeness, openness, and the future?

II

James Fowler claims that God's Kingdom is an eschatological reality which comes to us *from* the future as the unifying power *of* the future.[9] "We are called," says Fowler, "to point to the futurity of God and the coming Kingdom as the universal, shared future of all being."[10]

One does not, of course, come to such a vision of the Kingdom overnight. It is a matter of growth in faith. At every stage in the life of faith this vision of the Kingdom should exert "the powerful force of a *lure.*"[11] The vision is blurred or dimmed, however, when faith loses its dynamic forward movement; when people become stuck or "arrested" in a particular faith stage.

Time and space will not permit an extensive description and explication of Fowler's faith stages.[12] One stage, however, may prove helpful in shedding some light on the electronic church's vision of the Kingdom: Stage Three — Synthetic/Conventional.

An individual or group in Stage Three faith meets life's crises largely by synthesizing and interiorizing the many claims made upon them by others. Authority and authority figures are of prime importance. Coherence and meaning is mediated largely by persons or institutions that are "guardians of truth." Thus, what any "legitimate" authority teaches is

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[7] Michael Barton, "What A Friend They Have in Jesus," *The Christian Century* (September 19, 1979), 888.

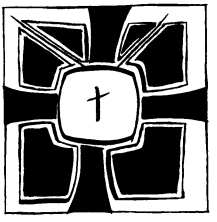
[8] See Jerry Sholes, *Give Me That Prime Time Religion* (Tulsa, Oklahoma Book Publishing Co., 1979). Sholes' book is an expose of the Oral Robert Evangelistic Association.

[9] James Fowler, "Stage Six and the Kingdom of God," *Religious Education* 75:3 (May-June, 1980), 241.

[10] Ibid., 245.

[11] Ibid., 248.

[12] James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981). This is Fowler's latest explication of his faith development theory. Descriptions of the individual stages can also be found in James Fowler and Sam Keen, *Life Maps: Conversations on the Journey of Faith.* Edited by Jerome Berryman. (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1978) and James Fowler, "Stages in Faith: The Structural Developmental Approach" in *Values and Moral Development.* Edited by Thomas C. Hennessy, S.J. (Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1976), 173-211.



true and demands loyalty. Feelings take precedence over conceptual reasoning.

People in Stage Three find their role in society by trying to discover how they fit into the system supported by their group. The bounds of social awareness (ability to identify with other groups and people) include all groups with which one is associated. The result is that people in Stage Three relate in rather stereotypical and prejudicial ways to other groups whose experiences, values, and beliefs are different. Though identification with individuals beyond one's group does exist, it is limited. Identity derives primarily from *belonging* (family, ethnic groups, etc.) and/or *possessing* (respectability, competence, children, etc.).

Stage Three faith makes only limited use of abstractions, is able to live with large areas of mystery and unanswered questions, and tends to defer to authority for the answers to life's pressing problems. Faith, then, is *derivative* in Stage Three.

> By appropriating mainly *vicarious* solutions to life's besetting tensions, and by screening out a fair amount of dissonant data, this stage of faith can provide powerful sustenance and a basis for decisive initiatives and action in life. But it has little way other than denial or oversimplifying assimilation to meet and take account of world-views and life-styles different than its own.[13]

III

When one sets this description of Stage Three faith alongside the electronic church's literature some interesting correspondences emerge. It is clear, for example, that many of the electronic church's brightest lights consider themselves "guardians of truth." Almost singlehandedly they assume responsibility for building God's Kingdom and "getting the truth out." James Robison says, "I took on the awesome responsibility of reaching the people of this country with the word that unless we do something NOW about the shape America is in, there may not be another chance."[14] Ernest Angley is described by one of his associates as "the most dedicated man of God that I have ever met. When he tells you that he has no life of his own, I can truthfully say that this is true . . . He certainly is a modern day Paul. . . ."[15] According to Rex Humbard, "Souls are at stake. I believe it is God's will for us to broadcast the gospel on TV . . . If we fail, there will be those in your community who will miss God and have to face an eternity without Christ."[16]

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[13] Fowler, "Stages in Faith," *Values and Moral Development*, 197.

[14] James Robison. Form letter, October 10, 1980.

[15] Lou Spangler. Undated form letter from Ernest Angley Ministries.

[16] Rex Humbard. Form letter, August, 1980.

One need only listen to the electronic church or read some of its literature to realize that feelings take precedence over conceptual reasoning. Fund raising letters are replete with emotional appeals: "It is time for us to tremble and shake for our lost loved ones;"[17] "My soul is burdened and crying out within me."[18] One of the more impassioned pleas comes again from James Robison: "I should have come to you, someone who loves me, with the whole truth. Instead, I've neglected God, my wife, my children — and nearly killed myself trying to raise money from new sources."[19]

When we turn to the electronic church's bounds of social awareness we find that it is primarily confined to those who share the same values and beliefs. Belonging is vital. Great emphasis is placed on "the family of God" and God as "friend," "comforter," "guide." Rex Humbard says: "Our families provide the security and sense of belonging that each and every one of us needs . . . And this is why I began a very special family several years ago . . . called the Prayer Key Family."[20]

Jerry Falwell's "Faith Partners" include those who are for a strong national defense, the capitalistic system, literal interpretation of the Bible, and traditional family, and opposed to homosexuality, abortion, and premarital sex. Identification with those who do not share these precise values is, at best, limited. Falwell and his "partners" firmly believe in "America first" and that nuclear war with Russia will occur. "The Russians will attack on horseback first, with wooden spears, because those are weapons mentioned in the Bible. Only after that onslaught has failed will they resort to nuclear weapons."[21]

James Robison is convinced that "America has been great in the past because it honored God. But in too many areas we now fail to honor God. For this we must immediately repent or be destroyed."[22]

When asked why they support the electronic church's various ministries people will often respond by saying that its ministers speak with authority and know their Bibles well. Jack Van Empe, for example, hardly speaks a sentence without quoting chapter and verse.

Through the power and authority exerted by the electronic church and its leaders the solutions to life's crises and the world's problems are appropriated vicariously.

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[17] Ernest Angley. Undated form letter.

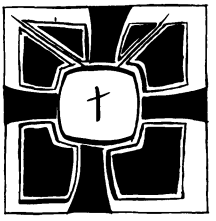
[18] Ibid.

[19] James Robison. Form letter, August 8, 1980.

[20] Rex Humbard. Form letter, July, 1980.

[21] Robert Scheer, *Los Angeles Times*, 5.

[22] James Robison. Form letter, October 10, 1980.



IV

The vision of the Kingdom that emerges from applying Fowler's Stage Three faith description to the electronic church is inadequate. This does not mean that the electronic church's vision is totally wrong, but its results, as one critic notes, are short term:

> The media may be able to prepare the ground by influencing attitudes and values, by making people aware. In a few rare cases, they may even be able to plant a seed or two. But the media's built-in limitations make it almost impossible to nurture those individual seeds into flower.[23]

Furthermore, Fowler reminds us that each stage along the way toward faith maturity is grace-*ful*.[24]

The problem lies in the fact that the electronic church seems "arrested" in its development. It proclaims its vision of the Kingdom as *the* vision and in doing so the futurity of God's Kingdom loses its "powerful force of a lure." The electronic church's Kingdom vision is not one of openness to the future.

Growth in faith means moving toward the recognition that not everyone is "like us"; that it is important to take seriously the perspectives of other groups. Authority has its place but growth in faith involves the validation of authority through one's own internal processes and not because it's easier to accept someone else's solutions to individual and world problems. The futurity of God's Kingdom includes a quality of openness towards others and the world, including those who do not share our economic, political, or even religious values and beliefs. A dynamic growth in faith means becoming more and more aware that the human family is broken and fragmented and that the pain of division is real and it is now. If we are faithful to the futurity of God's Kingdom, we will be constantly in the process of transformation — born again, and again . . .

Far too often people in "mainstream" church's Kingdom vision. How? Developmentalists would say through "cognitive dissonance" or "disequilibrium". More simply put: By prompting people to think; by causing them to reflect, ask questions, and evaluate the electronic they are subscribing to its vision of the Kingdom in ever-increasing numbers. To say, "that's not what we believe," or "all they're after is money" will no longer suffice. People must become aware of the inadequacy of the electronic church's Kingdom vision. How? Developmentalists would say through "cognitive dissonance" or "disequilibrium". More simply put: By promoting people to think; by causing them to reflect, ask

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[23] James A. Taylor, "No Miracles from the Media," *The Christian Century* (May 30, 1979) 614-615.

[24] Fowler, "Stages in Faith," *Values and Moral Development*, 191.

questions, and evaluate the electronic church's message of the Kingdom. For example, part of the electronic church's kingdom message is that people should be able to point to a specific, sudden moment when the Spirit seizes them, when their lives are dramatically changed. Time and again Ben Kinchlow, Pat Robertson's co-host on the 700 Club, announces that callers have been suddenly converted, their lives turned around in an instant. Certainly such dramatic conversions can and do occur. It is possible to point to a specific day or hour of personal conversion. But is this the only way? Can it not also occur gradually over an extended period of time?

The electronic church places great emphasis on Pentecost, but was not that event only a beginning? Did the disciples remain in Pentecost's exalted state? Did they try to reproduce it?

God's Kingdom is indeed spoken of as something sudden and immediate (Lk. 7:20-21) but is it not also compared to seed that gradually grows and matures (Mk 4:30-32, 26-29)?

A very practical step toward increasing awareness is to confront head-on the electronic church's preoccupation with the apocalyptic conflict between good and evil. It is no secret that the Book of Revelation is the electronic church's "canon within a canon". Rather than tell people it is a difficult book to interpret, why not show them by teaching it?

The extent to which we understand apocalyptic generally and Revelation specifically depends on how open we are to studying the dramatic conflict between good and evil as presented in myth and symbol. Despite repeated attempts at clarification it is still unclear to many that myth does not equal falsehood. For some, even to mention the word in a Bible class would be unthinkable. But one of the elements of apocalyptic is its mythological character. The events which myth describe have their own reality, flow of events, and patterns of behavior.[25] Such elements need to be taught and discussed if we are to help people see the inadequacy of the electronic church's Kingdom vision.

The apocalyptic conflict between good and evil is enormously attractive. The electronic church, however, places greater emphasis on the evil than the good. We are attracted to life's dark side and the electronic church knows it. Though vehemently opposed to it, evil stands center stage on almost every show. Experts on crime, prostitution, child pornography, military strategy, astrology, and black magic repeatedly remind viewers how the world is being carried to hell by the secular humanists.

The prominent place evil assumes in the stories broadcast by the electronic church indulges our need for

[25] Stanley Brice Frost, "Apocalyptic and History" in *The Bible and its Literary Milieu* edited by John Maier and Vincent Tollers (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), 40.

this strange form of 'beauty' without granting us an enabling vision.[26]

The struggle between good and evil is real. But is it wrong to hope for a better world only when all evil is conquered? Could the electronic church's apocalyptic vision become an excuse for doing nothing or worse, a self-fulfilling prophecy?

The lure of the Kingdom is ultimately toward a "new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1). But Revelation's apocalyptic vision not only looks toward the distant future but enables us to live creatively and confidently in the present.

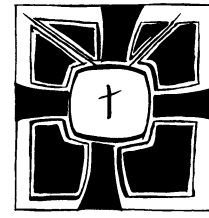
> The human vocation is to lean into God's promised future for us and for all being. It is to be part of the reconciling, redeeming and restoring work which goes on wherever the Kingdom of God is breaking in. It is to be part of the suffering rule of God, to oppose those structures of life which block and deny the future of persons and being in God. The human vocation in response to the coming Kingdom of God is to live so as to honor — in others and in oneself — the futurity grounded in the promises of the faithful, sovereign God.[27]

Faith, truth, authority, belonging, family,and identity are not laughing matters. They are at the heart of the Judeo-Christian tradition. But they are so within the vision of the futurity of God's Kingdom, not the kingdom of the electronic church.

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[26] Dennis Ford, "The Electronic Church's Aesthetic of Evil," *The Christian Century* (October 28, 1981), 1097.

[27] Fowler, "Stage Six and the Kingdom of God," 245.



Inside Updike's *Rabbit* Trilogy

Jan Gallagher

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Every ten years John Updike sends out a Rabbit book. They are, if nothing else, a chronicle of the decades, since current events provide the background for the motions of Harry Angstrom, the protagonist of all three novels. ("Rabbit" is a nickname left over from high school basketball days.) **Rabbit, Run** (Fawcett, 1960) takes place in the Eisenhower era, when the Mouseketeers ruled the waves. One of the motifs of **Rabbit Redux** (Knopf, 1971) is the first moon landing. Most recently, **Rabbit Is Rich** (Knopf, 1981) manages to evoke nostalgia for times just gone by, when gas lines were back and Skylab was falling.

The news, in Updike's almost obsessively detailed style, is the counterpoint to the small events and conversations which are the stuff of the Rabbit novels. One of the reasons these books are of interest to theologically inclined readers is that Updike has given us in Rabbit Angstrom a portrait of one particular and, in some ways, peculiar human being — an unreflective, almost un-self-conscious human being at that. Since particular and peculiar human beings are the objects of our ministry, the rare opportunity to see how one ticks must be grabbed when it presents itself. Though some of the themes of these novels include death, God, sex, guilt, forgiveness, love, dreams, and human ambiguity, Updike explores them not through weighty dissertations but by means of the musings of his particular and peculiar character. Updike's passion for the particular can have its attractions for those of us who confess an incarnational faith but tend to let -osophies and -ologies bear more weight than the world and its inhabitants, in whose circumstances and peculiarities God is revealed.

Harry Angstrom is no Incarnationalist. "I do feel, I guess, that somehow behind all this . . . there's something that wants me to find it," he confesses in **Rabbit, Run.** (p. 107) We might call that something freedom, space, the opportunity to become something other than the hometown basketball hero who never left home. Rabbit might call it something like God. If so, Rabbit's God is decidedly transcendent — and decidedly elusive. When Harry leaves his wife Janice, he gets his first and only chance to escape Mt. Judge, PA, but he only gets as far as the next town. He returns after Janice, on a drunk, has accidentally drowned their baby daughter in the bathtub. "He thinks how easy it was, yet in all His strength God did nothing. Just that little rubber stopper to lift." (230) Rabbit is not the blaming sort, though. He blames neither Janice nor himself, nor even God. In spite of the chaos caused by his leaps into that unknown something he seeks, Rabbit retains a certain delight in himself that we might almost call innocence.

Rabbit Redux is indeed Rabbit done over again, but with more polemic than in the other two novels. This time the space Rabbit craves is virtually forced upon him in his own home. Janice hav-

ing left, Rabbit and his thirteen-year-old son, Nelson, find themselves playing host to Jill, a young runaway, and Skeeter, who thinks of himself as the new black messiah and who works on the jingoistic prejudices Rabbit has substituted for the freedom he thought he wanted. Rabbit seems to find in Skeeter a guide to that unknown something he has been looking for, but the black man is more caricature than character. This is an angry novel, and a weaker one for having left behind the particular in favor of generalizations.

In these first two novels Rabbit still prays, mostly on buses, to this God he rarely thinks about and does not understand. More often than not his prayers include the word, "Forgive." Janice drowns their baby; her family blames Harry. She goes off with another man, and again blames Harry. Jill dies when the Angstrom house burns down, and though it was Skeeter who was in the house and could have rescued her, Harry again gets the blame. Harry neither accepts the blame nor tries to pawn it off on anyone else; his public-transport prayers for forgiveness seem to acknowledge a basic human guilt which that "something out there" Harry seeks could do something about if only Harry could find it.

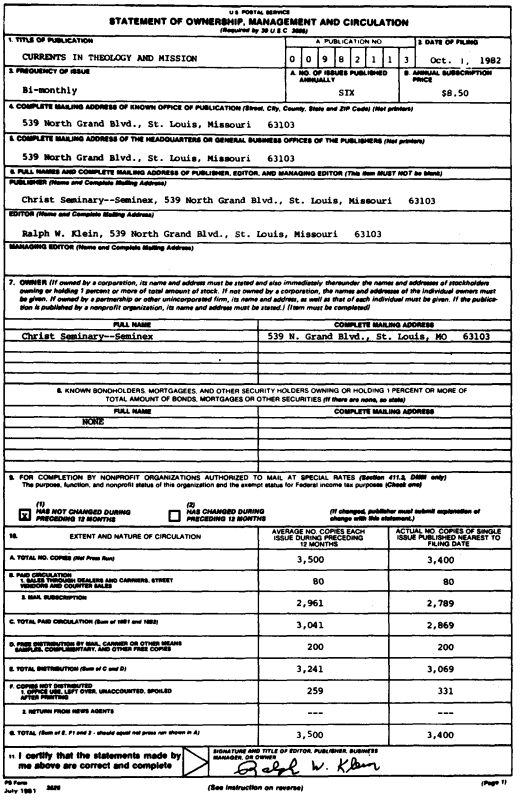
By 1979, with **Rabbit Is Rich,** Harry has pretty much forgotten about God, guilt, and his quest for freedom. "He doesn't want to think about the invisible anyway, every time in his life he's made a move toward it somebody has gotten killed." (p. 162) The space he wanted is his not through outward motion, but through an "inner dwindling." Now when Rabbit runs he is jogging up and down the streets of Mt. Judge in an effort to force his forty-six-year-old body to keep him alive a little longer. Harry has discovered mortality. "The dead, Jesus. They were multiplying, and they look up begging you to join them, promising it is all right, it is very soft down here." (p. 9) Paradoxically, this acquaintance with death has renewed Harry's joy in living, as he finds that death has its antidotes: sex (with his own wife for a change) and money, as his guarantee of stability and comfort. On the other side, hastening the process of decay, is his son Nelson, who has returned from college with a pregnant fiancee and wants to work at the Toyota lot which in these days of gasoline shortage has made Rabbit rich. Nelson, with his whining blame and his penchant for smashing up cars, is a threat to his father. Besides representing Harry's mortality, Nelson reminds him of his own sense of being trapped when he was twenty-two. " 'I just don't like seeing you caught,' he blurts out to Nelson. 'You're too much me.' " (p. 208)

The fact that Harry spends less time thinking about abstractions like guilt and God (abstract by Harry's definition, that is), and more about facts of life like death, sex and Nelson, is part of what makes **Rabbit Is Rich** the richest and most valuable theologically of the three novels. In rediscovering his enthusiasm for the particular, Updike has honed his rococo style to new clarity. Descriptions, like a delicious bottle-by-bottle survey of a friend's bathroom that is a perfect commentary upon the American way of life, sickness and sex, help us discover by the end of the novel a sort of holiness about human artifacts, human sex, human life. Yet every new discovery, every new love, every new step toward "the invisible" holds its own ambiguity. It is in his knowledge of death that Rabbit discovers joy in life; it is in his discovery that inside another person is "a void, a pure black box, a casket of perfect

nothingness'' (417) that he finds a measure of freedom he has been seeking all along. This is not quite irony, but rather a celebration of the ambiguity of being human and the knowledge that there never have been any easy answers. The final lines of the novel hammer it home: Harry holds Nelson's child for the first time and thinks, ''Fortune's hostage, heart's desire, a granddaughter. His. Another nail in his coffin. His.'' (p. 467)

A last footnote: professional clergy and people who work with them will find the Episcopal priests of **Rabbit, Run** and **Rabbit Is Rich** alone worth the price of the books. Updike's clergy tend to be wickedly, hilariously fraudulent — yet carefully enough portrayed that we can see shadows of our own fraudulence in them.

Fraudulent clergy, fraudulent used-car salesmen, fraudulent wives: our fraudulence is just another part of what it means to be particular and peculiar human beings. It is the holiness of humanity that Updike celebrates. We are all unintentionally funny at times, and all of us unintentionally holy, perhaps even at the same time. We struggle with guilt; we run from death; we search for freedom, whose Name just might be God. We do it all in a world like the one Updike draws, a world of Burger Havens and country clubs and potted plants in late afternoon sunshine. As theology the Rabbit books leave much to be desired; they are not meant to be theology. As an atmosphere in which to begin theology, they are mostly elegant.



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The Poor and the Church
A Review Article

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Many church leaders affirm that the most significant mission thinking and acting today is taking place in Latin America. The purpose of this review article is to extract some thought and action programs from the various books on Latin America that are listed and briefly characterized at the end of this article. It is hoped that readers will find their minds challenged and informed by some of this material and that they, in turn, will challenge and inform the minds of others. No attempt will be made to signal to the reader whether a specific thought is characteristic of other Latin American theologians or is peculiar only to the writer who is credited as being its source.

The primary goal of mission in Latin America is that Christ be clearly manifested to people in and through the institutions of the church (de Santa Anna, 3,101). A reform is needed because "many elements of the language, liturgies, song, message and the interpretation of Christianty have become obsolete and irrelevant for our changing societies" (ibid). The primary manifestation of the irrelevance of most institutions of the church is in the attitudes that so many people of the church have toward the poor. By and large, "the Church does not recognize itself in the poor, and the poor do not recognize Christ in the Church . . . The Church which is not the Church of the poor puts in serious jeopardy its churchly character. Therefore this becomes an ecclesiological criterion" (ibid).

Another fundamental goal is that all Christians be sensitized to the needs of others. While God makes clear his own predilection for the poor, it is necessary to stress that all classes must hear the call to be converted to the needs of all others (Barreiro, viif). "It is the duty of the rich to show solidarity with the poor" (de Santa Anna, 1, 98). However, in the history of the church this solidarity has been destroyed. "The anticipatory memorial of a new earth in which the poor sit down at the same table with God [and the rich] was degraded into a spiritualized 'Mass.' In that spiritualized Mass the dictatorship of the rich 'brethren' over the poor 'brethren' was sublimated, as if it had already been abolished." (Torres, 67) However, the poor could not forget that the God of the masters is not the same God as the God of the poor (ibid, 123).

Another striking goal of church renewal is to liberate the oppressors! The oppressors are the wealthy who use the institutions of the Church both to protect their position and to deny to themselves that they are oppressive sinners. "It is the poor themselves with their presence and participation in the body of Christ, with their problems and struggles, who make possible the transformation of ecclesiastical institutions . . . This kind of situation, the pilgrimage of the people of God through history, is opening ways of freedom to all humanity" (de Santa Anna, 3, 68). As church institutions change, the wealthy are forced

out of the prison in which they did not realize that they were imprisoned. The poor are setting the rich free to be the Church. "[T]he outcasts, the poor and the orphans saw the Christian faith as the source of a new humanizing influence and the foundation of a human community" (de Santa Anna, 3, 104).

All church renewal and mission must begin with a new appropriation and understanding of the Word of God. This will happen best as the poor take "possession" (evangelically) of the gospel, of which they are literally, by divine right, the owners" (Barreiro, 66). First of all, there must be an indispendable conversion to the Word of God as God's *praxis* in history for the salvation of mankind" (de Santa Anna, 3, 140).

The development of effective *koinonia* or fellowship is both a goal of mission and the fundamental strategy of all mission praxis. The advances in technology which dominate urban life apparently will be solved only "by projecting new relationships among humans" (Tonna, 130). "[P]erhaps this is God's strategy: to make necessary, through the momentous problems of the city, the projection of new relationships and linkages that are a prelude to those of the New Jerusalem" (ibid). Because the Christian faith considers love and *koinonia* the ultimate goals of human relationships, it and it alone can make a contribution for something more than just societal structures (de Santa Anna, 3, xxiii). "The Church's mission is . . . to be an anticipation already experienced of that *koinonia* in which the poor will feel at home because all men [sic] will be brothers, of one heart and soul, where no will say that any of the things he possesses are his own, but all have everything in common (cf. Acts 4:32)" (de Santa Anna, 3, 153). The best structural device for developing this kind of *koinonia* is the only way in which the Church can truly be the sign of God's oneness which it was created to be (ibid, 139).

Church renewal is synonymous with an increasingly effective struggle against injustice and oppression. To succeed, church renewal must achieve better organization for liberty and justice, for liberation and acceptance, and for liberation and participation (ibid, 79-81). These three organizational goals correspond exactly to the three fundamental needs and desires of the poor.

To achieve a vast increase in the poor's equal participation in justice, the church must renew and reorganize itself in such ways that it can help society, first, to change all the rules which define [legitimate] economic growth; second, to convince society at large to aim for the greatest possible justice; third, to help especially Christians to realize that the accumulation of riches discredits the testimony of the Gospel; and fourth, to help society eschew a premature solution to the problem of poverty which is not a true solution but only a means to make the problem disappear from our generation (de Santa Anna, 1, 103-106).

Coterminous with the pursuit of justice is the pursuit of charity. Essentially, the members of basic ecclesial communities "seek charity; that is, they want to rediscover what is most central to Christianity and to put the Church back into the life that is lived daily again." Christian charity consists in being humble, in offering unassuming service to each other, in mutual forgiveness, fraternity and the active rejection of violence (Barreiro, 37).

If the Church is to be an active partner in the pursuit of charity and justice, it must overcome the paternalistic attitude that has marked much of its work with the poor in past centuries. This paternalism makes it impossible for poor in-

dustrial workers, poor peasants and "the real poor of Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Middle East and the Pacific . . . [to] find their spiritual home in Christian circles" (de Santa Anna, 3, 65).

A critical problem for Latin American theologians is to define "the poor." Some writers draw on Old Testament descriptions of the *anawim* as the "humiliated, the downtrodden, and the abased," those who have "no opportunity to assert [their] rights to the justice system, because it is in the hands of the unjust, the violent, the powerful" (Barreiro, 14). For some writers, poverty is both a scandalous situation that is insufferable to the justice and mercy of God, while at the same time it is a privileged state for an encounter with God, for receptiveness to God, and for confidence in God (ibid, 48).

The poor are God's favorites. In his message, Jesus preached "an inescapable preference for the poor. The God revealed by Jesus is One who expresses preferential love for the humiliated, oppressed, and marginalized people of history. Christians are always summoned to "evangelize in terms of God's proclaimed preference for the poor and the oppressed" (Torres, 117).

The poor are agents of God's coming judgment (de Santa Anna, 3, 106, 109); they call Christians back to the true reality of life (ibid, 107, 164). To be poor means especially to trust neither yourself nor any of your poor neighbors and friends (Barreiro, 54f). The poor are the oppressed, dependent, marginated [non-] members of society (de Santa Anna, 3, xviii). The "poor" are those "whom society is effectively treating as less than human because they are being used (that is, exploited) for the production of its enjoyments which they do not have, are being left outside the operation of the benefits of society, are being positively driven outside what the more well-off and powerful take for granted" (ibid, 105). The poor are both the victims of history and its primary beneficiaries and, in a sense, thus also the masters of history.

In every society today, the poor are the products of the basic productive systems of that society which are always fueled by the insatiable demands of the West and controlled by the financial power of international conglomerates (Torres, 111). Poverty "represents a sundering both of solidarity [with any and all elements of society] and also of communion with God. Poverty is an expression of sin, that is, of a negation of love . . . Poverty is an evil, a scandalous condition, which in our times has taken on enormous proportions" (de Santa Anna, 1, 102). Moltmann's definition of the poor is quoted with approval: "Christian poverty therefore means the fellowship of the poor and fellowship with the poor — but as a fellowship of the messianic mission and the hope for the Kingdom. In this sense Christian poverty . . . is an expression of love and solidarity with the poor and is a protest against poverty" (de Santa Anna, 3, 74, n. 14).

But there is also the "subversive joy of the poor, who know that they will rejoice tomorrow even though they may be weeping today . . . Their joy subverts a world of oppression. It upsets those exercising domination, denounces the fear of the hesitant, and reveals the love of the God of hope" (Torres, 123). "In Nicaragua, for example, one of the most impressive things is the joy of a people who are fighting unto death to be masters of the country and to construct a just society" (ibid).

Most Latin American theologians insist that a new hermeneutic has emerged, willy-nilly, from this struggle of the poor to become partners in society and sharers

in its justice and benefits. It can be simply described as "an interpretation of the facts . . . in the light of the Word of God and the living faith of the Church" (Barreiro, 3). The repeated emphasis is that the "Gospel can be 'heard' and 'obeyed' only in concrete situations" (ibid, 60). Because the Word of God is something more than the Bible [indeed, it has been defined as "God's *praxis* in history for the salvation of mankind" (de Santa Anna, 3, 140)], it is necessary that Christians live and breathe the Word and refuse to allow any separation to take place between the study of the Word and life itself. This approach to the Bible makes it the liberation document, par excellence (ibid, 165).

When the poor open the Bible, they want "to find there the things of life and in life they want to find the things of the Bible. Understanding the Bible as a critical mirror of reality awakens a sense of inquiry in the people. The Bible is read and studied with the aim of knowing better, from a perspective other than the dominant one, our present reality and also the calls that God addresses to us to participate in changing that reality" (de Santa Anna 3, 72).

The aspect of mission strategy that has probably attracted the most attention outside of Latin America is the development of base ecclesial communities. The genesis of base communities is traced back to the New Testament documents. "It is an incontrovertible fact that the primitive Christian community organized itself in a new way of living in the world, and in this sense attempted to reorganize history in conformity with its faith" (Avila, 55).

These modern small groups, like those described in the New Testament, are essentially groups of poor people who meet around common problems. They read and reflect on the Bible, celebrate and sing hymns and share in all the efforts of the community. All can speak; decisions are always taken jointly and the "outlook and problems of the poor are the parameters in terms of which action is defined" (de Santa Anna, 3, 70). In Brazil alone, there are more than 50,000 of these base communities. One bishop described the base communities as "the primary cell-groups of the entire ecclesial edifice, centers of evangelization and the most important factor in human promotion" (Tonna, 174).

"It seems, therefore, that the contemporary ecclesial phenomenon known as the 'base community' is the privileged place where the conditions for the maturation of the experience of the church are best ensured. . . . The achievements of these small Christian communities in Asia, Latin America, and Africa are impressive achievements that give evidence of being convergent indications of the way in which the Lord is pursuing his plans in human history" (Tonna, 174). An overall description of why base communities are important in Latin America contains the following elements: ". . . the need for more intense interpersonal relationships; for a more vital and less formal practice of religion; for a more efficacious involvement in the life of fellow humans, of the poor, of marginal groups; for an active participation of all members in the life of the group, especially in the decision-making process; for complete equality (and therefore in the elimination of hierarchical formulations); for a spontaneous and direct evangelical life; for a flexibility that bypasses preestablished programming and organization; for listening to the world and its development; for cooperation in secular life; for a paschal, charismatic, prophetic life. . . ." (ibid,

177).

Writers generally report that the base communities originate most frequently and most naturally among the poor and are truly effective only at that level. Small communities are not often found among middle and upper classes, and when they do occur, membership does not significantly alter the moral standards or life patterns of the participants.

These communities are not viewed as extensions of the pastoral office, assuming tasks that pastors cannot or should not carry out. Instead, "they arise in the very process of living out what Christ means for the common masses, of showing how the gratuitous gift of the Kingdom is accepted in their efforts to free themselves from exploitation, defend their rights as poor people and fashion a human society that is free and just" (Torres, 118). "The CEBs are evangelizing cadres that necessarily come together as communities for a task that continually thrusts them beyond themselves, place them there where we meet Christ in our needy fellow humans, the poor. It is there that eschatology is applied to human history" (ibid, 119).

One writer has identified fifteen marks of the base community church to parallel the fifteen marks of the church developed by Robert Bellarmine in 1591. His list reads as follows: A church rooted among the poor and showing itself in base communities is (1) a church of the people of God; (2) a church of the poor and the weak who have been reduced to the subhuman level; (3) a church of the despoiled; (4) a church of lay people; (5) a church as a 'koinonia' of power; (6) a church wholly ministerial; (7) a diaspora church; (8) a church of liberation; (9) a church that sacramentalizes concrete liberations; (10) a church that continues the great tradition; (11) a church in communion with the great church; (12) a church that builds unity on the basis of a mission of liberation; (13) a church with a new concrete embodiment of its universality; (14) a church wholly apostolic; and (15) a church realizing a new style of holiness" (ibid, 134-142).

The eucharistic developments in Latin America, both in the area of theory and in that of practice, are especially noteworthy. The eucharist is described by one writer as "the expression of humanity moving to its destiny" (Avila, 95). Writers urge their readers to recover the political character that the eucharist derived both from its connection with the Passover and from the strong political climate of the Last Supper (A, 5-29). It is to be viewed as a deliberate protest action against injustice and oppression on the part of the celebrants (de Santa Anna, 3, 167-69). The church ought not celebrate the eucharist so long as a significant percentage of her members are guilty of injustice and oppression against the poor. One writer suggests that the motion of the eucharistic life is best described as an ellipse, calling attention to the two poles of eucharistic life. Those two centers can be thought of as Christ and the contemporary Latin American, or as Christ's situation and our situation, or as the biblical word and the word from Latin America or as the paschal deed of Christ and our own liberating deeds, or as all four of these in fruitful interrelation (A, 98f).

The theology that is maturing in Latin America is unquestionably radical. It challenges many of our First World values, beliefs, practices and institutions, both social and ecclesiastical. It is marked by an integrity and spirit that is often lacking in our own theologizing. It is meeting the needs of hundreds of thousands of people who have been

alienated from the established church. It is surely a mistake to attempt to transfer Latin American new theology and practice totally to the American scene. Perhaps it is the poor of our cities and rural areas who alone are equipped to understand, adopt and practice the thought and the action of Latin American Christians.

The following books have provided all the quotations and many of the insights that are contained in this article.

WORSHIP AND POLITICS. By Rafael Avila. Translated from the Spanish by Alan Neely. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981. ix and 124 pages. Paper. $6.95. Excellent discussion of the historical and political character of the Passover and the primitive Eucharist.

BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES: THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE POOR. By Avaro Barreiro. Translated from the Portuguese by Barbara Campbell. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1982. xiii and 82 pages. Paper. $5.95. The author's primary focus is on the poor. CEBs play a secondary role.

GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR: THE CHALLENGE OF THE POOR IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH. By Julio de Santa Anna. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979. 124 pages. Paper. $4.95. (Referred to in the text of this article as No. 1.)

SEPARATION WITHOUT HOPE: THE CHURCH AND THE POOR DURING THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND COLONIAL EXPANSION. Edited by Julio de Santa Anna. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1978. 189 pages. Paper. $8.95. (Not referred to in the text of this article.)

TOWARDS A CHURCH OF THE POOR: THE WORK OF AN ECUMENICAL GROUP ON THE CHURCH AND THE POOR. Edited by Julio de Santa Anna. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979, xxiv and 211 pages. Paper. $8.95. The three books written or edited by Julio de Santa Anna are designed to be a trilogy. They are an excellent starting point for an overview. The second volume is a collection of historical essays of varying quality. Volume 3 is the culmination of years of thinking and acting on the part of a World Council of Churches committee. The frequent references to it in the text of this article indicates the reviewer's high opinion of its integrity and helpfulness.

RICH CHURCH — POOR CHURCH? SOME BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES. By Enzio Gatti. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1974. xi and 127 pages. Hard cover. $4.95. A useful biblical study of the church's vocation to the poor.

A FIFTH GOSPEL: THE EXPERIENCE OF BLACK CHRISTIAN VALUES. By Joseph Healey. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981. xvi and 204 pages. Paper. $7.95. A touching human interest story about a priest and his small group in Tanzania. See the review by Edward H. Schroeder in this journal, Vol. 9, No. 4 (August, 1982), p. 239.

A GOSPEL FOR THE CITIES: A SOCIO-THEOLOGY OF URBAN MINISTRY. By Benjamin Tonna. Translated from the Italian by William E. Jerman. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1982. The most useful and exciting book that I have read recently. It should be helpful to every urban pastor. His suggestions for mission in the city are breath-taking.

THE CHALLENGE OF BASIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES. Edited by Sergio Torres and John Eagleson. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981. xx and 283 pages. Paper. $9.95.

The book is the collection of papers delivered at the International Ecumenical Congress of Theology, held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, from Feb. 20 to Mar. 2, 1980. It is highly and warmly recommended both for those who are looking for an overview of Latin American developments in theology and practice and for those who have become temporarily jaded by too much reading. It is a warmly human book and gives the reader a wrenching sense of being there among the poor.

The Lutheran Name Dilemma

Charles Dickson

Pastor of Shiloh Lutheran Church in Hickory, North Carolina. He also serves as a resource person for the Committee on Ecumenical Affairs of the North Carolina Synod (LCA) and is the author of numerous articles in ecumenical journals.

The birth of any new entity, business, scientific, artistic, or religious seems to conjure up the inevitable problem of giving it a name. Church mergers present an interesting spectrum of struggle on this score with a variety of results. In recent American church history we have incidents in which merger was largely a process of absorption on terms of both numbers and name. The merger of the Evangelical United Brethren (less than one million) with the Methodist Church (more than 8 million) led to a new group known as the United Methodists. In other mergers a totally new name evolved. The Congregationalists and the Evangelical and Reformed church selected the United Church of Christ as its banner. Name changes have, at times, taken ironic twists. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other states tried to divest itself of a localized title only to end up with an even more provincial designation — the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod.

In recognition of American religious pluralism, many churches have deleted ethnic prefixes in an attempt to attract a larger segment of the population. Recent examples of this include the changing of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church to the simple title Orthodox Church in America, and the Norwegian Synod of the Lutheran Church to simply the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Mergers and name changes on the national scene always present special problems, as do changes in hymnals, prayer books and buildings on the local scene. A give and take process in an emotion-

laden atmosphere seems to be an ever-present ingredient of any new ecclesiastical recipe.

The merger of three Lutheran bodies (Lutheran Church in America, American Lutheran Church, and Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches), having a composite membership in excess of 5 million, is scheduled to be consummated about 1988. In addition to the usual problems encountered in designing any new structure, the architects of that merger need to come to grips with a problem even more fundamental than quibbling over prefixes such as American United (Lutheran Church) or United American (Lutheran Church). They need to consider the continued use of the word LUTHERAN itself in identifying their community.

Lutherans are the only major group in Christendom (I am not unaware of the Wesleyan Church) which memorializes one human being's name for its main title. Ironically, in the land of its birth, the "Lutheran" church is called Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Evangelical Church in Germany). The Commission for the New Lutheran Church (CNLC) ought to consider the advisability of such a "new" name in view of the shrinking global village in which we live.

Some churches memorialize a system of government in their names (Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregationalist); others a particular emphasis of doctrine or practice (Baptist, Methodist, Orthodox); others an ecclesiastical universality (Catholic, Church of God, Church of Christ); and still others a regional heritage (Moravians and Anglicans). So again the question: should a group be identified by one human being's name?

To suggest a change is not to diminish the importance of Luther and his work of opening new vistas into the meaning of the gospel for the entire Christian world. History indeed precludes any removal of such recognition. Still, Luther is, at times, also a source of embarrassment in ecumenical dialogue. His unwavering support of the aristocracy in their conflicts with the laboring class, for example, is offensive to those in organized labor who feel that the church is traditionally unsympathetic to their cause. Even more of an embarrassment are his writings against the Jews. Some even view him as a spiritual forefather of the anti-Semitic actions of Hitler. Those of us who are empathetic to labor and have a genuine interest in the Jewish faith are anything but "Lutheran" in our perspective.

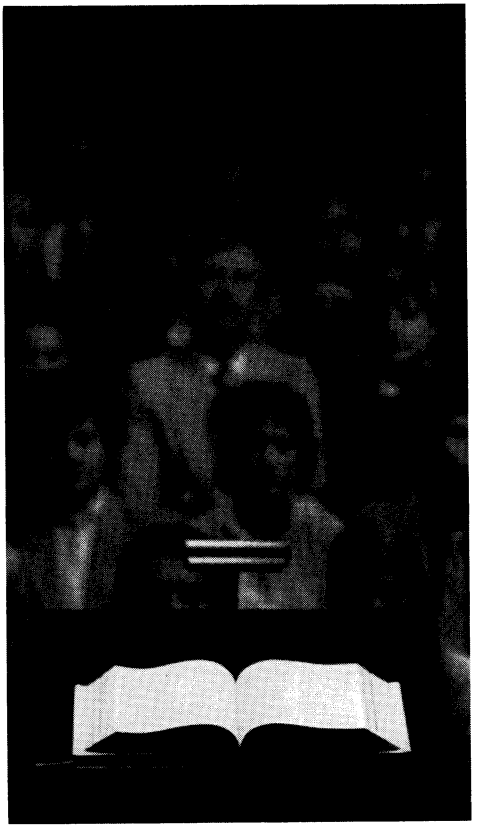
Luther will forever hold a position of great importance in Christian history, not only for those of us who belong to a branch of the church which now bears his name, but, as recent dialogue with Roman Catholics has indicated, for other Christians as well. The question remains: what degree of magnitude should be accorded one person's name?

Raising the question, of course, is easier than answering it. A name like "The Evangelical Church in the United States" would not have the same connotation to fringe "Lutherans" and other Christians as does its German counterpart. How about "The Evangelical Church in the United States (Lutheran)" or "The Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession"? Or does some reader of **Currents** have a better idea that she or he would like to submit in response to this essay?

Regardless of the name chosen, I feel better for having raised the question. When we are aware of the problems involved in calling ourselves Lutheran, even if we finally must, we will all be far more sensitive ecumenically and far more vocal in our confession of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

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Book Reviews

CHRISTIANITY, SOCIAL TOLERANCE, AND HOMOSEXUALITY. GAY PEOPLE IN WESTERN EUROPE FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY. By John Boswell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. xviii and 424 pages. Paper. $9.95.

Conventional wisdom has long maintained that Christianity has been the chief cause of intolerance toward gay people and that the Church has sustained an unrelenting persecution of homosexuals. Yale historian John Boswell set out to rebut this widely held assumption and in doing so captured for himself the 1981 American Book Award for history.

Marshalling evidence from literary as well as historical sources, Boswell arrives at conclusions that contradict more than one common impression. For one, he denies that pre-Christian Roman society was marked by hedonism or moral anarchy. Such views, he holds, result from literature describing sensational rather than typical situations, meant to shock or titillate the Romans themselves. He insists, too, that the Bible was not the only or even the principal source for early Christian sexual ethics. Early Christian misgivings about homosexual behavior, he contends, appealed not to the Bible so much as to the first century Epistle of Barnabas, now regarded as apocryphal but widely accepted as scripture in the early Church.

Among the unrighteous who will not inherit the Kingdom of God according to 1 Cor. 6, 9 are the "malakoi" and "arsenokoitai." The RSV conflates the two words and translates them as "homosexuals." With considerable lexical deftness Boswell argues against this interpretation. The "malakoi" (rendered by Luther as "Weichlinge") are literally "softies" and in a moral sense means licentious or debauched. "Arsenokoitai" (translated by Luther as "Knabenschänder") refers to male prostitutes who service either males or females. As evidence, Boswell cites a vast amount of writing on homoerotic acts in which the word, homosexual does not appear and concludes that the word is rare and ambiguous.

There is only one place in the Bible which clearly prohibits homosexual relations per se, Boswell contends, and that is Leviticus. Given the selectivity with which Christians have relaxed and reinterpreted the levitical code, he rightly suspects that there is something other than religious belief operative when some precepts are selectively used to penalize gay people. Blame for the provenance of the social intolerance of gays is laid to the increase of rural attitudes and outlook in formerly urban centers. In societies characterized by rural culture dominated by kinship, sexual deviance is invariably viewed as dangerous.

Boswell has achieved an imposing work of scholarship, written with fluidity and disarming grace. If there is any criticism one might level, it is that he has occasionally gone beyond the evidence in his conclusions. For example, he argues that Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine came from the provinces, and that their rural views regarding sexual morality were not shared by urban Christians. Boswell is forthright in presenting his material, however, and challenges his readers to come to different conclusions.

In receiving the Melcher Award, this book was cited for its "significant contribution to religious liberation." Church leaders have yet to give any indication of recognizing that this widely heralded work of historical scholarship proves also to be a work of Christian apologetics.

Ronald Modras
St. Louis University

CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN THE MODERN AGE. By Brian Hebblethwaite. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982. 144 pages. Cloth, $6.95; Paper, $3.95.

Since the Enlightenment Christian ethics has not escaped hands-on criticism, nor has that criticism gone unanswered. Beginning with the big blasts from Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Marx and Freud, Hebblethwaite moves to trace the arguments of the 20th century critics, Russell, Kaufmann, Blanshard, Robinson, Flew and Kahl. He then investigates the defense of Christian ethics brought by Kirk, Barth, Bonhoeffer, and Niebuhr to meet the attack.

The last half of the book moves away from individual authors to look at three trends (situation ethics, liberation theology, and Christianity's growing encounter with world religions) and to measure their impact, critical and constructive, for Christian ethics today. Hebblethwaite concludes with his own positive interpretation of Christian ethics. He finds much of the critique to be addressing misunderstandings (e.g., Christianity teaches a reward/punishment ethic, oppresses by foisting alien authority, is individualistic and exclusive). But clearing them away is only half the task. To learn from the critics is to hear the ethical need expressed there, and then to mobilize the "vision and resources sufficient for the realization of the highest possible individual and communal ideal."

Hebblethwaite offers a teleological model using non-Christian resources together with the primary symbol of the imitation of Christ. Central to it is a revelationist Christology "especially the manner in which he trod the way of the Cross." To make the ethics universal, he sacrifices Christ's categorical uniqueness. The nature and grace axiom of Thomas Aquinas is his theological cornerstone.

The Augsburg Confession together with its Apology is one alternate to St. Thomas' proposal and to this updated version thereof.

Edward H. Schroeder
Christ Seminary — Seminex

LUKE'S STORY OF JESUS. By O. C. Edwards, Jr. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981. 96 pages. Paper. $3.95.

For the price you can't beat it as a handy redaction-critical precis of Luke's gospel. Edwards summarizes it section by section, usually comparing it with Mark's or Matthew's renditions, in order to focus on Luke's particular bias and to show the point he was making about Jesus by telling the story the way he did.

Pastors could benefit from reading the book in a single sitting, to give them a vantage point for restudying the text itself. Lay folks will appreciate the absence of in-house jargon and may want to use it as a resource for Bible study groups.

But there's a drawback. When all is said and done, Edwards has not drawn a clear picture of Jesus himself (the old historical Jesus question) nor even a clear picture of Jesus as Luke has sketched him (the newer redaction-critical question).

Nor, for that matter, has he clearly outlined the plot of Luke's story. What is the basic scheme? Where are the conflict, resolution, and denouement? Such story-oriented questions go begging.

These matters could have been developed had Edwards taken into account Charles Talbert's insights into the literary structure of the gospel (*Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts;* Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974). And the whole matter of Luke's portrayal of Jesus would have been helped by recognizing him as the Kyrios Benefactor, as Frederick Danker has suggested (*Luke: Proclamation Commentaries;* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

This is not to deny the value of Edwards' book, but only to point out its limitations. For students who are not acquainted with the redactional study of the Lucan writing, here is a good place to begin.

Mark I. Wegener
Chapel of the Cross Lutheran Church
North Chicago, Illinois

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. Part Two. By Jack Finegan. Boulder: Westview, 1981. 250 pages. Cloth.

In 1969 Jack Finegan published Part One of **The Archaeology of the New Testament,** dealing with "The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church." He has now produced Part Two: "The Mediterranean World of the Early Christian Apostles." Together the two volumes provide an unusual and impressive guide to the study of the NT and the early church. Both are fountains not dripping but absolutely overflowing with information.

The earlier volume began with 180 pages organized geographically, focusing briefly on places associated with John the Baptist (17 pages), and then shifting to the life and ministry of Jesus in Bethlehem, Nazareth, Samaria, Galilee, Decapolis, Caesarea, Jericho, Mount of Olives, Jerusalem and Emmaus. Then the author added an intriguing section on tombs, catacombs, sarcophagi, ossuaries and signs of the cross (181-260).

The book worked very well. It concentrated on a small land, and it was tightly organized and sharply focused. It began by and large in the north and simply moved south. The final section (on tombs) connected neatly with the description of Jerusalem and the places of Jesus' death and resurrection. Everything about the book was designed to help the reader better understand the environment of Jesus' life and ministry.

The new volume is again organized in a primarily geographical fashion. But the geography is that of Paul — with the places of Peter and John thrown in for the sake of completeness. The places are treated in the order familiar from the portrait of Paul's life given in Acts: Beginnings (Tarsus, Damascus, Antioch), First Missionary Journey (Cyprus, Central Asia Minor), Second Journey (Macedonia, Greek World), Third Journey (Western Asia Minor, Miletus, Ephesus and the Seven Cities of the Revelation of John), Shipwreck Journey (Caesarea, Crete, Malta, Sicily, and Italy), Rome (History and Monuments).

That is a tremendous amount of territory to cover — numerous great cities, complex sites boasting countless monuments. How is it possible to write a coherent and readable story about so many places? It is a problem that would tax most circuits to the utmost and probably blow 30 amp fuses, but F. succeeds while making it look easy.

F. comments not only on the structures which the apostles saw in their travels but also on the buildings erected later by pious Christians to commemorate those trips. Usually F. sets the stage by commenting on the spiritual and cultural atmosphere or heritage of each city. For example in the five pages he devotes to Malta he rehearses a number of events in the history of the island from 5000 B.C. down to 1845. Focusing on the geography of the island, buildings, and important events in church history, he offers two maps and a full page photo of St. Paul's Grotto beneath the Church of St. Paul in Medina-Rabat.

The approach is rather elitist, focusing on statues, frescoes, mosaics, art and architecture and hardly mentioning roads, ships, travel and work.

F. is not so much interested in how Paul lived, worked, traveled, ate, dressed, doctored himself or was housed (in private homes, inns and jails) as he is interested in what Paul might have seen and thought at each place and how later generations memorialized the apostles. Does the word "archaeology" properly describe the contents?

F. is of course interested in chronology and very much interested in using chronological studies to support an early date for NT writings and events. So he dates the Fourth Gospel and Epistles in the 50's or early 60's, and thinks John was exiled under Nero rather than Domitian.

The reservations one might express are small potatoes compared with the size and usefulness of F.'s contribution. it is a real help in understanding

Paul's world, diligently researched, lovingly composed.

Robert Smith
Christ Seminary — Seminex

THE OLDEST GOD: ARCHAIC RELIGION YESTERDAY AND TODAY. By Denise Lardner Carmody. Nashville: Abindgon, 1981. 190 pages. Paper. $6.95.

The task Carmody assigns herself is an intriguing one, to introduce archaic religion in its varying contexts: in prehistoric religion, in ancient civilizational religions, in world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam), and in current archaic religions (American Indian, African, and Australian religions). Her research fills the book with illustrations of and insights into the worldview of folk religion. Most appropriate is her concluding challenge that our contemporary secularist mentality is a recent phenomenon and an impoverishing one, for it blunts our sense of and yearning for the mystery of life.

Overall, however, one comes away from this book rather disappointed. The prehistoric section is, in the nature of things, filled with gaps and uncertainties that can be covered only with a succession of "perhaps/likely/surely." Other shortcomings are less excusable, however. Some stem from a definition of archaic religion so imprecise that it can include all religion: "a dealing with the human situation mythically and organically." As a result, much of the book is an almost Frazer-like compilation of anecdote and illustration with minimal sensitivity to historical or geographical context. Over half the discussion of Islam, for example, is given to a minority tradition, Sufism. The line she draws from nonliterate peoples to a view of marriage as a union of kin rather than individuals is misplaced in view of the context of China, one of the most passionately literate of all cultures. The baldest statement of all came on the second to last page — whether it is her conclusion or her underlying presupposition is debatable. "The oldest God is nature — that should be clear by now." Clarity, in terms of precision or persuasion, is not a hallmark of this book. That's too bad, because the original task is still a valid one.

Henry Rowold
Concordia Seminary
Chia Yi, Taiwan

THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY: THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. By James W. Thompson. Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 1982. 184 pages. Paper, $5.50.

Hebrews is itself restless and in motion, tossed to and fro by scholars seeking an enduring place for it, a home and environment where it lodges securely.

Do its images and patterns of thought betray production by a group of converted Jewish priests or by a circle of Christian scholars under the influence of Qumran exegesis or by Apollos or his twin sister educated at the feet of Philo? Who is the author? What lexicon should we use to interpret words and ideas like faith, patience, rest, heaven, promise, sojourning? Should we turn to the OT, Philo, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jewish apocalyptic, wisdom literature, or Paul's letters?

Thompson gathers here a remarkably coherent set of essays most of which have been published separately in journals and other books. Together they constitute a very powerful argument for the conclusion that the author of Hebrews stood in the Alexandrian tradition of using platonic categories in biblical exegesis. The Platonism is defined more closely as Middle Platonism, which combined elements of Platonism, Stoicism and Pythagoreanism. The emphasis on the stability and durability of the heavenly and transcendent world was a major motif of Middle Platonism.

Philosophical elements were used in various ways to interpret biblical faith in Alexandrian Judaism. Philo was

moderate. That is to say that he occupied a kind of middle ground between those who were more thoroughgoing in their use of Platonism and those who were less dependent. The author of Hebrews makes less extensive use of Platonic categories even than Philo and so is closer to the model offered by Aristobulos, for example.

T. has cast a brilliant light on Hebrews and Greek *paideia,* on the eschatology of Hebrews, the ideas of faith and rest, notions of sacrifice in Hebrews and the Hellenistic world. He has extended older discussion of the origins of Hebrews by looking beyond Philo to the large philosophical environment in which both Philo and the author of Hebrews worked.

This is an excellent book, clearly written, and it opens up the possibility of fresh understanding of the underlying argument of Hebrews.

Robert Smith
Christ Seminary — Seminex

(Professor Smith has recently completed a commentary on Hebrews, which will be published by Augsburg Press. — Ed.)

NEW TESTAMENT APOCALYPTIC. By Paul S. Minear. Nashville: Abingdon, 1981. 157 pages. Paper, $6.95.

The central chapters in Minear's book present alternating studies of apocalyptic visions and homiletic exhortations. The titles of chapters 4, 6, 8, 10 contain the word "vision," while the titles of chapters 5, 7, 9 and 11 contain the word "discernment." Both prophet (the Seer of the Apocalypse provides the material of the chapters on vision) and preacher (the authors of 1 Peter, Romans and Hebrews provide the material of the discernment chapters) are inspired figures.

The Seer has the gift of prophecy. The Preacher has the gift of discernment. Understanding the prophets can occur only where the gifts of prophecy and discernment converge. Without this convergence the prophet's words remain obscure, no matter how much incidental illumination of an interesting sort may be contributed by scientific investigation.

Minear shows how much of immediate practical import is present in the Seer's vision, and he shows how shared visions, rooted in the Christian consciousness or subconsciousness of the congregation, empowers the words of the NT preachers.

Minear is unhappy with the view that the NT preachers, such as the writer of Revelation, were crystal-ball gazers or futurologists. They had a message for the present. And he is equally unhappy with the views of modern scientific biblical interpreters who imagine they can understand texts aided only by the tools of cool philology and cooler history. They must share the vision.

This book is the work of an experienced teacher and believing churchman, exercising the gift of knowledge and discernment.

Robert Smith
Christ Seminary — Seminex

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. By Robert A. Guelich. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1982. 451 pages. Cloth. N.P.

The Sermon on the Mount takes up only five pages in a 1300 page Bible, but it occupies great and sweeping expanses in the spiritual landscape. So a large commentary, even one as long as Guelich's 451 pages, cannot be called excessive. How many pages or how many lives would suffice to capture the Sermon?

G. modestly subtitles his work "A Foundation for Understanding." He digs around in the history of interpretation, sifts through a mountain of literature, examines the text and its theology closely, and offers his observations in the hope that others may build on what he has done.

He focuses especially on the Sermon as a text written within a larger literary and social context. Matthew was a member of a Christian community with a strong Jewish background.

His community — and therefore his gospel — fights on two fronts. On the one hand are Jews who refuse to confess Jesus as Messiah and on the other are Jewish-Christian legal rigorists. These latter he identifies as the "false prophets" of 7:15-23. Gentile believers also live in Matthew's community and Matthew exhibits no Jewish-Christian particularism.

G.'s approach is thus moderately literary and sociological, and it is theological: "Above all else the SM makes a christological statement" (27). The SM points to its Speaker as the fulfiller of the OT promise of the coming of the Kingdom of God. So Beatitudes open the Sermon and are its foundation.

In the Beatitudes Jesus blesses those who stand before God empty-handed and approach him as humble seekers in the attitude of prayer. If Beatitudes are the beginning of the Sermon, Prayer is its heart, and God responds by enabling the seekers to live new lives of Righteousness in a new community. The movement is from Promise (Beatitude) through Prayer to New Life (Righteousness).

G. is well aware that some scholars think that the "false prophets" with whom Matthew wrestled were enthusiasts or spiritualizing antinomians, but he rejects that identification — too quickly, I think. If he had allowed it, his commentary would be different in many of its details.

Nevertheless whatever argument one has with G. will be fruitful. His book is an excellent, thought-provoking and indeed powerful contribution to our understanding and appreciation of the SM.

Robert Smith
Christ Seminary — Seminex

SOCIETY AND THE SACRED: TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF CULTURE IN DECLINE. By Langdon Gilkey. New York: Crossroad, 1981. xxi and 170 pages. Cloth. $12.95.

This book is one further step in Gilkey's sustained study of the question of the relevance and integrity of religion/theology in the modern, secular, scientific age. By documenting the integrity of religion to all society, even those societies that deny or repress it, and by illustrating the factors leading to what his subtitle calls the decline of Western culture, G. hopes to turn that decline into a positive transformation of culture.

This book is really a gathering of essays around three related themes: The Sacred and Modern Culture, The Sacred in a Scientific Culture, and The Sacred and Cultural Pluralism. Since the clearest, most helpful section was the second, we will use what space we have here to share some of his comments about science.

G. sees the trend of recent years as a reluctant and painful dethroning of science as the queen of all disciplines. For all its progress and creativity, science has increasingly shown its limits and ambiguities. Its drive to objectify everything has rendered it an abstraction, which in turn has dehumanized life by relegating art, religion, philosophy, and ethics to secondary roles. Nuclear weaponry, the ecological crisis, and the imbalance in the distribution of goods illustrate the moral ambiguities raised by but insolvable by science. Compare also the recent growth of cults in precisely the bastions of the scientific establishment, the university. Given the redefinition of the role of science in our culture, religion must rise to fill the present vacuums and provide the ethical guidance for proper, balanced application of the indisputable benefits of science.

G. is struggling with problems fundamental to culture and to religion. Although the nature of the book results in some repetition and wordiness and in some uneven quality (the essay on Maoism is so dated that one wonders why it was included), G. is always fresh, provocative, and quite positive in his call to the Christian church to reassert its rightful role in society.

Henry Rowold
Concordia Seminary
Chia Yi, Taiwan

AUTHENTIC PREACHING. By Arndt L. Halvorson. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982. 188 pages. Paper. $7.95.

Preaching is described in this book as a very personal process of encounter with the biblical text, the people of the parish, the "world out there," and literature. Halvorson's treatment of the subject may be best characterized as the type of thing one might hear by asking a professor or a learned pastor to what goes into a sermon. It develops few thoughts thoroughly, but gives a tour of one homeletics professor's selection of tools and techniques.

The most helpful advice is suggested by the title: be authentic. People want to know what sort of person we are rather than merely how we preach. Preaching must show forth our humanness, our encounter with God in prayer, and our willingness to be challenged and comforted ourselves with the Word. H. believes that teenagers embody most of the struggles for authenticity that our people go through. They deserve the preacher's attention.

A real drawback is that the author does what he warns preachers not to do: he follows his own stream of consciousness instead of a solid structure. Disparate thoughts, out of place (and often mixed) metaphors, and hyphenated words distract the reader and make for difficult reading. Similar or identical subjects are dealt with in various places in the book in uneven ways.

H., a professor at Luther-Northwestern Seminaries in St. Paul, has given a taste of the blood, sweat and tears of sermon writing. What also came through for me was the importance of clean language and structure. This book lacks both and thus communicates its important message rather poorly.

John R. Seraphine
Grace Lutheran Church
Fremont, OH

THE ETHOS OF THE BIBLE. By Birger Gerhardsson. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981. viii and 152 pages. Paper. $8.50.

True to the New Testament spirit, Gerhardsson deals with relationships and attitudes — the bearing of one's heart, soul and strength — not with sets of moral prescriptions, and the biblical material is allowed to stand with all its rough edges. The interesting and provocative tensions between various traditions within the Bible are respected.

Only the last chapter of the book deals with the Bible as a whole, and even that concentrates almost fully on the New Testament. The other chapters lead up to this summary by focusing on politics and political thinking in post-exilic Judea, the ethos of Jewish theocracy, and early Christian ethos according to Matthew, Paul, and John.

Helpful attention is given throughout to the cultural and religious struggles out of which New Testament ethical thought arose. People were reaching for a solution to the problem of what it means to be the people of God in a world of threatening pluralism. The solution of the first century Jewish theocracy was to emphasize holiness and to put distance between God's people and others. The solution of Jesus, recognized in various ways by the New Testament authors, was to emphasize sacrifice and service.

Perhaps the most original contribution of this book is its interpretation of Matthew. G. sees the parable of the sower as the center of the entire gospel. Matthew is interested in Jesus as the one who brings to the surface existing divisions among people. Those whose hearts have a trustful understanding will bear the fruits of blessedness as Jesus brings the Word of God to them. Jesus is himself like the best soil in the parable. This best soil is characterized as being true to the "Shema" of Israel (Deut. 6:4-5) as interpreted by the rabbis. To love God with the whole heart is to love him undividedly. "With the whole soul" is to be ready to die rather than to renounce

God. Our natural desire for wealth, power, and status should be controlled by our love for God.

It is rather exciting to see themes of the "Shema" shed light on the meaning of so many passages in Matthew including the temptation, the dialog with the rich young man, the crucifixion and the Sermon on the Mount.

This book is timely, well written and well translated, and it contains a rich annotated bibliography. It will make a fine addition to any church or pastoral library.

John R. Seraphine
Grace Lutheran Church
Fremont, OH

THE BIBLE AND HIGHER CRITICISM. By Harry R. Boer. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981. 109 pages. Paper. $3.95.

To people eager to put past battles behind, another book covering familiar ground may not seem particularly inviting. Yet Boer writes for "all who find higher criticism either a personal or a church problem" in order to avoid in his own conservative/orthodox/evangelical tradition the pain and separation he observed in the LCMS.

Though the book is divided into nine chapters, B.'s major concerns can be grouped around three topics. The first is a plea that the same latitude be given scholars who study the Bible as literature (higher criticism) as that given scholars who study the Bible as text (lower criticism). The second begins with a study of various events in parallel Gospel accounts. Boer seeks to demonstrate the impossibility of harmonizing every discrepancy in the accounts, and the need for a definition of infallibility that is not invalidated by such discrepancies but eagerly receives them as part of the Spirit's inspiration and teaching. Boer's third concern deals with the inspiration of the Spirit. As wide as the Spirit's work in creation and history, so wide are the forms and tools the Spirit uses in his work. Whether bringing people to faith or inspiring them to write Scripture, the Spirit uses concrete, historical people. His work is as "congenial to the character of the divine author" as it is "confluent with the mental, emotional, and spiritual processes of the human agents whom the Spirit influenced." That mysterious reality allows and demands the most rigorous use of every human faculty created by God in the study of his Word, and transforms that study into a form of worship of God.

A more positive, reverent, patient plea for the integrity of critical study of Scripture can hardly be imagined. It would make a good focus for discussion for people concerned about these questions.

Henry Rowold
Concordia Seminary
Chia Yi, Taiwan

MAINLINE CHURCHES AND THE EVANGELICALS. By Richard G. Hutcheson, Jr. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981. 180 pages. Paper. $8.95.

Here is a balanced, informative, and extremely helpful descriptive analysis of the challenging crisis confronting mainline ("liberal, ecumenically inclined and socially concerned") denominations in the face of the Neo-Evangelical movement. The author draws on six years experience as Chairperson of the Office of Review and Evaluation of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern Presbyterian) and wide familiarity with the diverse manifestations of evangelical renaissance without and within the mainline churches. Part I provides a brief historical overview of the emergence of the new evangelicals, appropriately noting their efforts to distinguish themselves from their fundamentalist forebears. Part II identifies six crisis points for the mainline churches: loss of youth to groups like Youth for Christ; the growth of parachurch organizations such as those utilizing the "electronic church"; a de-emphasis on evangelism and missions in their classic sense; the Charismatic renewal; lack of growth among mainliners; and

fragmentation and loss of confidence in denominational structures. In Part III, Hutcheson gives us his "Manual for Mainline Ministers: How to Cope with Charismatics and Deal with Dissenters."

Those in the mainline churches are urged "for their own sakes and the sake of the health of the Body [of Christ]" to rise to the challenge of the Neo-Evangelicals in a "positive and affirming way." H. suggests not an all-out battle for control, but a "planned pluralism" with the focus on the local congregation and on denominational efforts to hold to the middle of the spectrum with a combination of classic biblical theology and social activism. He rightly stresses the importance of re-establishing a "secure meaning structure" in contemporary liberal-ecumenical establishments. Too often the mainline reaction to the various movements comprising the Neo-Evengelical renaissance has come "from a lofty pedestal in terms of whether 'approval' can be granted." He suggests that the evangelical challenge *within* mainline Protestantism and the mainline response may be the Holy Spirit at work.

Although the author's personal leanings are much more to those Neo-Evangelicals associated with the Sojourners community than the politically right-wing Moral Majority crowd, there is much to be said for his open and sympathetic portrayal of the whole of the contemporary evangelical movement. I urge every concerned denominational bureaucrat, parish pastor, and active layperson, in and out of the mainline churches, to read this book.

Milt Sernett
Syracuse University

LAY CAREGIVING. By Diane Detweiler-Zapp and William Caveness Dixon. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982, vii and 85 pages. Paper. $3.95.

In this modest volume, a psychotherapist and pastoral counselor share their experience as co-trainers of lay-persons doing caregiving in a church setting. They want to help clergy release the tremendous undeveloped potential for caring in congregations by providing training, coaching, inspiring and undergirding of lay caregivers.

To utilize parishioners in the delivery of pastoral care is to do something radically different. Seminary training and clinical pastoral education are more directed toward the personal development of the pastor as a caregiver as opposed to one who trains and equips others for this ministry. Hence, the first task in implementing a dynamic program of caregiving is for pastor and congregation to overcome often long-standing resistances to involving lay people in pastoral care.

The role of the pastor in the training process is that of "supervisor." He or she sets limits, raises expectations, provides a structure and climate in which learning can be maximized. The pastor helps trainees to develop their own emerging style of caring by a continuous process of assessement and integration of personality strengths and weaknesses and the resources of the individual's faith. The supervisory model reflects the book's emphasis on the pastor's role as the trainer and equipper of the people.

Used alone or in conjunction with a pre-packaged training program (such as the Stephen Series), this volume will serve well as a catalyst for helping parishioners to exercise their priesthood within the congregation.

Steven D. Olson
Blanton-Peale Graduate Institute
New York, New York

A MATERIALIST READING OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK. By Fernando Belo. Tr. Matthew J. O'Connell. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981. xiv and 363 pages. Paper. $12.95.

This commentary on Mark by a Marxist Christian should be widely read in the American church, not necessarily to command agreement, but to excite consideration of both the Gospel and

the dispossessed. Belo demands much of his readers, and no one can accuse him of a popularized wooing of the masses. A short, six-page introduction tells of his search for guides to reading Mark as literature (Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeval) and for an adequate set of Marxist concepts (Louis Althusser and Jacques Derrida). If the names are strange to you, you understand why the book is demanding of its reader. The first major section of the work (pp. 7-33) presents a formal theory on the "mode of production" in 54 theses with comments. It is tough going.

Part II (pp. 35-86) describes the social structure and economic system of Palestine in the first century. As one might expect, the author's sympathies are with the oppressed: the villager, the slave, women, and the like. The role of religious language is examined in this context, as is the role of the Roman overlord. All of this is prelude to the heart of the book, a reading of the text of Mark (pp. 98-232) in the light of structural analysis. After an eight-page summation of his findings on Mark, B. presents the problem of a materialist Ecclesiology. He sees Vatican II as an expression of materialist capitalism, but notes that the class struggle has begun in the revolutionary fringe of the church. B. hopes that the church and Marxism can be joined in our day, as Jew and Gentile were in the first century.

This is a significant book, more significant than its strange code language at first lets one see. It will not let me rest until I have come to terms with it on the basis of the gospel. We are called to test the spirits, also in a book like this that voices the feelings of many in a manner the church cannot ignore. And that means you and me.

Edgar Krentz
Christ Seminary — Seminex

ETHICS FOR THE PROFESSIONS: A Christian Perspective. By Darrell Reeck. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982. 175 pages. Paper. $8.95.

Darrell Reeck, Professor of Religion at the University of Puget Sound, admirably deals with a difficult subject in this book.

The book is divided into three parts: (1) Structure of Professional Ethics; (2) The Contemporary Setting of Professional Ethics; (3) Issues in Professional Ethics. In Part One, the author gives clear and concise definitions of key terms he uses. He also discusses professional organizations and the value or lack of the same of ethics codes and committees. In Part Two, R. discusses professions in a technological era and problems of professionals in large organizations. In Part Three, he takes up issues that arise in dealing with clients; with subordinates, peers, and superiors; with relationships between government and the professions; with professional responsibility in the broader world; and with a future for professional ethics.

The author feels that the magnitude and complexity of such global issues as population, food, nutrition, health, and energy require professionals from a variety of fields and with varying viewpoints to get together to guide ethical reflection and shape judgments. He feels that in today's world the self-interest ethic of egoism is very prevalent in the professions, in political parties, and in corporations, but it is alien to the professional moral theme of "enablement" (defined as "the devotion of professional skills to meeting the needs of client groups and, ultimately, to the common good," p. 39). Under the concepts of "covenant" and "calling," R. suggests that a religious commitment centers one's moral commitment in a grander story that makes a life of enablement possible. Since the subtitle of the book says: "A Christian Perspective," one would expect the author to develop a commitment that is distinctly Christian and not merely religious. From that angle this portion of the book is a disappoint-

ment.

The format of this well-written book follows an orderly progression. Each chapter has a conclusion, references and suggestions for further reading, and some "think more about it" questions. A goodly number of practical illustrations throughout the book help the reader understand the particular ethical dimension being discussed.

Arthur H. Strege
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
Hazelwood, Missouri

CHRIST IN A CHANGING WORLD: TOWARD AN ETHICAL CHRISTOLOGY. By Tom F. Driver. New York: Crossroad, 1981. xi and 183 pages. Cloth. $12.95.

The tragedy of today's church, Driver feels, is that its architecture, liturgy, vocabulary, and theology are so oriented to the past that the new life of Christ is denied both to itself and the suffering world it lives in. To give focus to this issue, Driver goes to the roots and reexamines the church's christology.

His first step is to present three major critiques (of Christ as center, model, and norm; of Christ as once for all; of Biblicism). To consider Christ as the center of life or the unique manifestation of the divine "in a relativistic world . . . is a scandal — erroneous, imperial, and dangerous to humanity." Its ethical outcome is proof: holocausts, prejudice, sexism, racism, oppression.

This leads Driver in his second step to construct a new christology, around a new trinitarian theology (Spirit, God, and Christ), a new sexuality, and a new sense of ritual in the church community. A renewed view of a creative Christ frees the church for ethical service in and to a battered world.

Provocative may be the best word to describe this book. On the positive side, Driver has an easy way of writing, graphic and insightful, and he certainly does not shrink away from touching the heart of theology. On the other hand, he can also be infuriating — in fact, he refers several times to how his views scare himself and shock others. A sampler of shockers: "a sacred canon is a sacred cow;" "the more we make absolute claims about Christ, the more we empty Christ of his meaning;" "the text in the Fourth Gospel which makes Jesus to say 'No one comes to the Father except by me' should be repudiated;" the doctrine of Jesus' virgin birth along with creatio ex nihilo rest upon and lead to a sexist view of life. A more basic problem than shockers, however, is the lack, in a book about Christ, of any clear definition of who/what Christ is ("the changing pattern of our relation to a living God" or "the human form of actual encounters between God and the world"). If there is no clarity in christology, Driver's ambitions and very legitimate vision for an ethical ministry, do not have much basis on which to draw.

Henry Rowold
Concordia Seminary
Chia Yi, Taiwan

THE DYNAMIC WORD. By Karl Paul Donfried. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981. viii and 216 pages. Cloth. $12.95.

Karl Donfried is a Lutheran minister, a professor of the Bible at Smith College, and co-editor with Raymond Brown of **Peter in the New Testament** and **Mary in the New Testament.** In this book he shares with laity and clergy a collection of insights into the major works of the New Testament. Some of the insights are originals, others are ideas made famous by scholars like Ernst Käsemann, Krister Stendahl, and Hans Conzelmann.

The book's title is also its main thesis: that modern biblical scholarship has helped free the Church to hear and proclaim God's dynamic word by showing that the New Testament contains "no passing on of static, rigid principles. . . , but rather a rich comprehension of the centrality of God's revelation in Jesus as the Christ and the application of that event to the actual and changing problems of the first

communities of faith" (page 2).

The book is neither a standard introduction, nor a commentary, but a sampling of this "dynamic actualization" of God's revelation in Christ. The major divisions of the New Testament are treated, but not the pastoral epistles, Hebrews, James and 1 and 2 Peter. One welcome surprise is the contention that Luke's audience is Jewish and not gentile in background.

Any pastor who can unlock the door that will allow lay people access to the rich fruits of modern Biblical scholarship will be doing a great service. D. correctly locates the door, points to the key that unlocks it, and demonstrates how one can turn the key in specific passages.

One part of the job is left undone. A sensitive pastor or lay person will have to struggle harder than D. does to define how the Bible is in any way a unique witness to the unique revelation in Christ.

John R. Seraphine
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ONCE MORE ASTONISHED: THE PARABLES OF JESUS. By Jan Lambrecht. New York: Crossroad, 1981. 245 Pages. Paper. $9.95.

Lambrecht approaches the synoptic parables (he does not deal with the parables of John because of the difference in their nature) from a centrist position. No wooden literalism or plastic skepticism here as the author seeks to probe the recorded parables for the authentic memories of Jesus' words. Why? So that Jesus' parables might come alive in the modern mind and *Once More Astonish* and affect our living.

The parable is a fascinating story which appeals to the hearers, captivates them, and moves them deeply. While other forms of speech might inform us, the parable re-forms. The hearer of a genuine parable is not the same as before hearing that parable. Lambrecht hopes so to inform the reader that re-forming might take place as it originally did when the parable was first spoken by our Lord.

The process of achieving that change in the reader constitutes the second major objective of the book. Lambrecht's methodology is to focus on a few parables and painstakingly work through each one showing how the parable was used by the early church and the evangelist before turning to Jesus' use of the parable. Methodology and process are nearly as important to the author as the stirring of the individual which he hopes will take place when the parable is experienced again today.

There is a roughness and unevenness to the book (the English translation has been revised from the Dutch original by the author), and the objectives are more obvious in some chapters than in others. Despite the unevenness, each chapter is a fine homiletical and exegetical resource. A chapter is devoted to each of four parables (The Good Samaritan, The Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Talents and the Pounds, and the Last Judgment). One chapter is devoted to the parables in Luke 15, another to those in Mark 4, and another to those found elsewhere in Mark. The first chapter is an excellent introduction to current parabolic research as well as essential reading for understanding any of the subsequent chapters.

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CULT AND CONTROVERSY: THE WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARIST OUTSIDE MASS. By Nathan Mitchell, O.S.B. New York: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1982. 460 Pages. Paper. $11.95.

CULT AND CONTROVERSY is the fourth of a series of studies of the reformed rites of the Roman Catholic Church which Pueblo is publishing under the editorship of Aidan Kavanagh. This particular work, by one of Kavanagh's most gifted students,

traces the history of eucharistic worship outside the celebration of the liturgy itself from Justin Martyr through the post-Vatican II liturgical reforms. Four chapters trace the history of this paraliturgical eucharistic cult. Three chapters discuss the forms and rubrics governing Holy Communion and eucharistic worship outside the Mass in the reformed Catholic rites. The final chapter is an assessment of eucharistic devotion from the standpoint of behavioral psychology (especially the work of Erik Erikson) and hermeneutics (especially the work of Paul Ricoeur). The whole is a first-rate piece of work which has nearly exhausted the subject.

There are not many non-Roman Catholics whose eucharistic devotion takes the form of processions with, visits to, and exposition and benediction of the blessed sacrament (although some Lutherans continue to make some of the grandest elevations to be seen anywhere). Why would this book be recommended to such readers? First of all because the seeds of such forms of eucharistic devotion were sown already in the apostolic era when there was a gradual shift away from an emphasis on the community in the covenant meal to an emphasis on the eucharistic elements as vehicles of the presence of Christ. It is natural that there would be a desire to make this presence available to those who were absent from the liturgy, as we see in Justin's *Apology*. Lutherans are confessionally committed to the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the eucharistic food. In this connection Mitchell's telling of the controversies over the real presence in the 9th and 11th centuries is important background for our own position, and it is more dynamic than the discussion of these controversies in Hermann Sasse's **This Is My Body.** But we should also note that the new **Lutheran Book of Worship — Occasional Service Book** will make provision for the administration of Holy Communion to the absent after the liturgy. This may be done by designated lay ministers. In both of these instances Lutherans should be interested in chapters five and six, dealing respectively with Holy Communion outside Mass and special ministers of communion. The second major reason non-Roman Catholics would be interested in this topic is that all Christian worship, being a celebration of the Incarnation, must make provision for the visual. Protestants as well as Roman Catholics have to learn how to shift visual attention from cultic objects to ritual actions. In this connection, Mitchell's last chapter on the primacy of vision in recent behavioral studies is one of the most exciting in the book.

Nathan Mitchell is a teacher and he is concerned to keep his readers with him as he develops his complex argument. This results in frequent summaries and recapitulations. The presentation could have been more streamlined. On the other hand, the translation of many original texts and the references to social-cultural history make the book all the more valuable.

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

SICKNESS AND HEALING. Biblical Encounter Series. By Klaus Seybold and Ulrich B. Mueller. Nashville: Abingdon, 1981. 205 pages. Paper. $7.95.

This new series, already into its eighth book in less than two years, seeks to explore biblical perspectives on contemporary issues. However, as compelling as the subject of the book is, the book is a bit of a letdown.

The first of the book's conclusions reveals the author's frustration: "The biblical writings are not really interested in sickness as such, but rather in the existential experiences associated with sickness." Israel attributed all things, particularly those beyond the ordinary, to Yahweh, both sickness (as curse, warning, discipline, etc.) and its healing. This, in turn, shortcircuited any drive toward medical experimentation on the pattern of the Greeks. Israel's concern (in both testaments)

was less with sickness than with the sick. In fact, the authors suggest that Israel was overall "ignorant of physiological processes." The result of all this is that to bring modern scientifically-put medical questions to the Scriptures is an exercise in futility. Unfortunately, the authors spend too much time substantiating that point. Although they do give a good survey of sickness in biblical literature, and give significant studies of individual sicknesses (leprosy) and sick people (Paul's thorn), we often end up knowing more about what we do not know than what we do know.

Granted that the Scriptures are not a medical treatise, such a lack of data is neither surprising nor threatening. The Scriptures are a book of faith. Yet, aside from the final summary chapter, theological interpretation is scattered and minimal. Implications of the biblical view of sickness and healing for holistic medicine or for the church as a caring community deserved much fuller treatment.

Unfortunately also, the editing of the footnotes slipped up in not noting English translations of works consulted, and, most strangely, in listing G. E. Wright's Biblical Archaeology in its German translation!

As timely as the topic is and as provocative as some comments are, the encounter hoped for just did not come about.

Henry Rowold
Concordia Seminary
Chia Yi, Taiwan

GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR: WEALTH AND POVERTY IN LUKE-ACTS. By Walter E. Pilgrim. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981. 198 pages. Paper. $7.95.

The beauty of this book is that it does not try to exhaust everything that can be said about either wealth/poverty or Luke-Acts, but that it explores only those aspects where these two topics intersect. The resulting study of every relevant pericope provides an understanding of wealth/poverty firmly grounded in Scripture and closely related to both the Gospel and Christian faith.

After two background chapters (the poor in the OT and intertestamental literature, Jesus and the poor), Pilgrim (Pacific Lutheran University) begins the heart of his study, how Luke as redactor deals with wealth/poverty. The first step studies a programmatic pericope, Luke 4:16-30. Following chapters are topical groupings of pericopes, ranging from a call to renunciation of riches (rich young ruler, widow's mite) to understanding the dangers of wealth (rich fool, Lazarus, needle's eye), to proper use of possessions given by God (Zacchaeus). This topical arrangement allows a very even-handed treatment, each aspect getting proper emphasis and context. A chapter follows showing how Luke presents the early church in Acts as a model of the concerns raised in the Gospel. The final chapter, though lacking the freshness of the rest of the book, provides a helpful summary and application to today's church.

Though Pilgrim's step-by-step approach anticipated most of my questions, two did remain. What does Pilgrim feel the overall kerygma of Luke-Acts is? Seemingly not wealth/poverty itself, yet where does it fit in and how does it relate? Two, as sensitively as Pilgrim defines "poor" in social, economic, political, and religious terms, his definition of "rich" as "those who have sufficient and more of the basic needs of life" seems shallow and narrow — especially if Luke-Acts is directed to the rich.

These two questions only emphasize by contrast what a significant book this is, timely, balanced, carefully researched, clearly written. Basically, it is a book less about money and charity than about the nature of the Gospel and the call to radical discipleship of both individual Christians and the church in the face of world hunger, poverty, and oppression. Because of its solid grounding in Scripture, it would make an excellent resource for Bible classes and discussion groups.

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Briefly Noted

The Historical Approach to the Bible. By Howard M. Teeple. (Religion and Ethics Institute, $7.50). Teeple likes the intellectual honesty and self-correcting character of historical critical study, and he provides in this book a snappy history of interpretation and a survey, with examples, of the various historical methods employed in our time. Trouble is, the methodological babe nearly gets tossed out with the bath. He rejects tradition, the Spirit, theology, philosophy, modern life, and sensationalism as guides, but there is a wide gulf to be fixed between those who offered theology as a guide (Barth, Bultmann) and such sensationalists as Hugh Schonfield and John Allegro! T.'s animus against the fundamentalists will probably prevent them from hearing his many accurate insights. Those who want to supplement history with theology, canonical criticism, or modern literary analysis will find his approach narrow. Perhaps his only theology guides him more than he allows: "The most important benefit contributed by the historical approach is that it opens the way for the development of a more mature type of religion" (p. 293).

Prophecy and Ethics: Isaiah and the Ethical Tradition of Israel. By Eryl W. Davies. (JSOT Supplement Series 16, $19.95). The result of this reworked Cambridge dissertation are largely negative: Isaiah's ethical views cannot be credited to a dependency on such specific traditions as the covenant, the law, wisdom circles, or even his predecessor Amos. Through a detailed exegesis of Isa. 1:2-3, 21-26, and 5:8-10, Davies concludes that it is difficult to identify with any certainty the source of the prophet's moral instruction. Rather, the prophet recognized, like many others in Israel, that Yahweh demanded a sense of compassion mixed with humility, honesty, and integrity. These were the virtues in which Yahweh took delight and which were also endorsed by Jesus as well (Matt 22:37-40).

A Reader's Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Volume II. Joshua-2 Kings. Edited by Terry A. Armstrong, Douglas L. Busby, and Cyril F. Carr. (Zondervan, $9.95). Provides the meanings suggested by the Brown-Driver-Briggs lexicon for all words appearing fifty or fewer times. The vocabulary is listed verse by verse with the prayer that this "will make Hebrew reading and Hebrew exegesis more delightful and more common." Right on.

Targum Onkelos to Genesis. By Moses Aberbach and Bernard Grossfeld. (KTAV, $29.50). This Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch originated in Palestine, but was given its final redaction in Babylonia in the third century C.E. It was designed to instruct and edify the masses so that they could understand the Torah readings in the synagogue. Expressions and phrases which were unacceptable to rabbinic orthodoxy were altered or eliminated. This new edition contains the Aramaic text, an English translation, notes explaining all deviations from the Massoretic Text, copious parallel passages from the Talmud and the Midrashim, and references to ancient and more modern commentaries and secondary literature.

The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by Henry Snyder Gehman. (Westminster, Thumb-indexed, $21.95). This is an unchanged reprinting of a classical reference work, last revised in 1970. Among one-volume dictionaries it still has stature, but is surpassed in almost every way by the five-volume **Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible** (first four volumes, 1962; supplementary volume, 1976).

Introduction to the Old Testament. Revised Edition. By J. Alberto Soggin. (Westminster, $27.50). The changes from the first edition of this solid handbook are primarily bibliographic, although an eleven-page addendum provides supplements that need to be inserted here and there. Slight textual revisions appear in the discussion of P,

Micah, Esther, Daniel, Maccabees and Palestinian inscriptions.

Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives. Volume II. Edited by Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis. (Abingdon, $10.95). After two essays on methodology, this paperback contains thirteen literary-critical essays on Old Testament narratives, one on Judith, and three on the New Testament. Conventional biblical scholars will miss the usual questions of history and theology, but they may well be enriched by gaining new insights into how a given work is structured or organized, how changes occur in its characters, and how readers respond to a work. Literary criticism promises to expand aesthetic appreciation of the Bible, and it provides a way to teach the Bible in public education in a non-sectarian way.

A Septuagint Translation Technique in the Book of Job. By Homer Heater, Jr. (Catholic Biblical Association, $4.00). The author discusses numerous examples in which the Greek translator of Job interpolated material from some other part of the Septuagint, usually from within Job itself, into the passage on which he was working.

Egypt and the Holy Land in Historic Photographs. 77 Views by Francis Frith. (Dover Publications, Inc., $6.95). Frith was a pioneer in photography whose collections of pictures from the Near East were published in 1862. The modern editors point out that he had an exuberant command of light and shade and knew how to communicate the solid physicality of monumental architecture. His pictures show many temples and towns in an untouched and romantically ruinous state; some of them have since been tidied up, but others have degenerated further or disappeared from the face of the earth.

Women and Religion in America. Volume 1. **The Nineteenth Century: A Documentary History.** Edited by Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller. (Harper, $10.95). In seven chapters, each including an analytical essay and illustrative documents, seven writers examine the experiences of radical and ethnic minority women in relation to the participation of Anglo-Saxon women. They treat such issues as women in evangelicalism and utopian movements, women in the Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant traditions, the struggle of women to be ordained, and the contributions women made in the nineteenth century to broad areas of social reform.

Analytical Greek New Testament. Edited by Barbara and Timothy Friberg. (Baker, $19.95). This computer-generated grammatical aid prints out the text of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament with an analytical tag beneath each word. In a short time the user will know that VIAA-ZS means Verb, Indicative, Aorist, Active, third person (a surprise symbol), singular. The editors plan a four-volume analytical concordance and an analytical lexicon.

From Chaos to Covenant: Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah. By Robert P. Carroll. (Crossroad/Continuum, $14.95). This monograph is a warm-up for C.'s forthcoming commentary on Jeremiah in the Old Testament Library. He sees the basic tradition as a small collection of poems by Jeremiah and the rest of the book as a development of that tradition by other, primarily deuteronomistic sources. This approach to Jeremiah is gaining wide support, but the present book is guilty of two excesses: 1) a very restricted view of the historical Jeremiah, who is denied even his "Confessions," those magnificent lament-like poems in which the prophet wrestles with God over the requirements and hardships of his call. C. thinks the confessions only illuminate the condition of the community in exile. 2) A negative attitude toward the deuteronomistic achievement. The new covenant is not in his view a brilliant new breakthrough, but only another version of a failed system and a surrendering of the moral element in prophecy. What begins as a book with great promise ends with a note of irresponsible despair: "We have no greater arguments for Jeremiah's

relevance than for the fragments of Heraclitus."

Die Deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremiah 26-45. By Winfried Thiel. (WMANT 52; Neukirchener Verlag, DM 28). This is the second half of T.'s brilliant doctoral dissertation written at the Humboldt University in East Berlin. The first half was published as volume 41 of WMANT in 1973. In addition to specific literary critical work on each of the chapters, T. discusses the character of the great deuteronomistic redaction, its language, its relationship to the Jeremianic tradition, and its main theological points. Item: T. shows that chaps. 36 and 45 are placed as a deuteronomistic envelope around the stories of 37-44. In chap. 36 the king Jehoiakim despised the prophetic word by cutting it to shreds; Baruch gained his life as a prize of war in chap. 45 because he supported Jeremiah and the word. The figures of Jehoiakim and Baruch represent the negative and positive choices set before the people in exile. Item: A passage on Ebedmelech in 39:15-18 relates that he too received his freedom because he trusted in Yahweh *by* seeking the safety of Jeremiah. Someone ought to translate T.'s important work.

The Glory of the Holy Land. By Shlomo S. Gafni; photographs by A. van der Heyden. (Cambridge University Press, $19.95). **The Glory of Jerusalem.** by Shlomo S. Gafni; photographs by A. van der Heyden. (Cambridge University Press, $14.95). Essentially these are picture books tied together with a low-key, non-technical text. The 600 color photos in "Holy Land" and the 350 in "Jerusalem," however, are excellent, and these books will serve to whet the appetite for future pilgrims or to recall the great moments of a bygone trip. "Holy Land" starts in the Sinai desert and moves north over a series of chapters before turning south along the Mediterranean Sea. "Jerusalem" includes representative Jewish, Muslim, and Christian people, many landscapes, details of the architecture (churches, mosques, towers, windows, and alleys), and even the churches of Bethlehem.

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