JUNE 1982
VOLUME 9
NUMBER 3

CURRENTS in theology and mission

The Predestinarian Controversy One Hundred Years Later

Edward Busch

CONTENTS

Page

Editorial: Life is a Supermarket 129

The Predestinarian Controversy
One Hundred Years Later 132
Edward Busch

The Ambiguity of History:
Help from (the Maker of) Heaven and Earth 149
Kosuke Koyama

Why Inflation Hurts:
Some Psychological and Theological Perspectives. 157
Thomas E. Ludwig and David G. Myers

How Can People Under Thirty be Taught Law/Gospel Theology? 167
Robert Conrad

Prophets in Conflict –
Who Speaks for God? 174
James A. Rimbach

Books Worth Discussing 178

Book Reviews. 184

Briefly Noted 192

Calligraphy and artwork by Netsie Griffith

STAFF

Editor: Ralph W. Klein
Assistant Editor: Donna L. Herzfeldt
Homiletics Editor: George W. Hoyer
Circulation Manager: Kristina M. Ferber
Editorial Board: Wesley A. Bartels, Thelda Bertram, Ronald Fels, Marcus Lohrmann, Ronald Modras, Arthur E. Otto, H. Douglas Rathjen, John H. Tietjen.

Printed in U.S.A.

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

CURRENTS is indexed in Elenchus, IZBW, NTA, OTA, Religious Index I (formerly IRPL), Religious and Theological Abstracts, and Theologische Literaturzeitung.

(ISSN: 0098-2113)

Life is a Supermarket

I grew up in a town that was so small that a conversation on the phone was bugged by all members of the party line. The postmaster discussed arriving penny postcards with the patrons, and Gorey's Grocery was no supermarket. Those were simple, loving, lovely days and ways, but the last 30 years have been spent in metropolitan America — complex, conflicted, exciting, outrageous in the choices it offers and demands of its citizens. My geographical shift from village to city signals a shift all of us have made, from simplicity to complexity, from parochialism to ecumenism, from "Yes" or "No" to "It all depends." The supermarket and its many proferred choices — 450 kinds of generic products alone — is the paradigm of life in the late twentieth century.

A century ago controversy over the doctrine of election racked major segments of American Lutheranism. **Edward Busch** reviews the issues back then and shows how election "in view of faith," a formulation once used by almost all Lutherans in criticism of Calvin, became a source of bitter division. In 1881, the controversy peaked when the Ohio Synod charged Missouri with false doctrine and broke fellowship. The article recounts how Missouri changed its position on election, how the debate was used to foster division long after the real theological disagreements had been laid to rest, and how the notion that agreement on all doctrines was necessary for church fellowship came into being. Irony of ironies, in 1981 Missouri broke fellowship with the ALC, the heirs of Ohio, and accused them of false doctrine. Arguments about the reasons for God's miraculous choice of people caused people to choose up sides. We live with the painful fallout from those choices.

Kosuke Koyama grew up in an animistic culture where help came from the gods of heaven and earth. Now, as a Christian, he confesses the God who made heaven and earth. His earlier gods did not foster encounter or confrontation; they were part of a world which was naturally partly good and partly bad. He values his earlier

experience, yet recognizes that monotheism eventually brings us to a breaking point. Our biblical heritage teaches that visible kings often mean the dethronement of the invisible God, and that the invisible God expects high ethical standards. What does it mean that militarism is renounced in Koyama's cultural homeland while it flourishes in a land whose citizens find their help in a God who made heaven and earth? Can we learn from the faith of others?

Inflation hurts, but **Thomas E. Ludwig** and **David G. Myers** write that the complaints about it among middle and upper class people are exaggerated. (The authors would be the first to admit that the poor in our land are devastated by inflation and that current cures for inflation rest heavily on the unemployment of the poor.) Middle-class economic self-dissatisfaction, however, often results from rising expectations or comparing ourselves to others, not from real poverty. The authors call for a redefinition of happiness in terms other than growth of income or possessions. Real success would mean that our labors would be valued intrinsically, not just monetarily.

We all pass through stages of growth, also in our faith. **Robert Conrad** surveys James Fowler's work on faith development, both in an article and in an extensive review of one of Fowler's recent works. Conrad shows that most people under 30 are probably incapable of understanding the dialectic of law/gospel theology. (Now you know why confirmation classes turn pastors gray.) Conrad believes that use of the proper educational process may accelerate the attainment of the crucial stage five in faith development. His own proposal, which uses creative conflict, is clearly spelled out for those who want to improve their educational process.

Both true prophets and false prophets were simply called "prophets" in ancient Israel. **James A. Rimbach** continues our series on "Those Lively Prophets" by outlining the criteria used to sort out the true from the false. There was a compatibility between the

claim to speak for Yahweh and the call to repent. We too recognize the voice of God, especially in those women and men who remind us of the inescapable connection between faith and life, and who proclaim a God who liberates us from our sinful past and for a life that seeks justice in all of society.

Life is a supermarket of choices, between true and false doctrines, true and false faiths, true and false prophets, and between good and bad economic and educational systems. We hope that these essays will help you to choose wisely, but also, perhaps, to learn and profit from the wares left on the shelves. God chose an Abraham and Sarah, but he also chose a Samson and a Mary Magdalene. Sometimes people who are different from us or who state things differently from us complicate and enhance our choices.

Sorry about that Dean Kelley.*

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

*His book, *Why Conservative Churches are Growing,* argued that those churches grow which are made up of homogeneous people, who have clear-cut (and conservative) opinions on the controverted topics of the day.

The Predestinarian Controversy 100 Years Later

Edward Busch

LaVerne, California

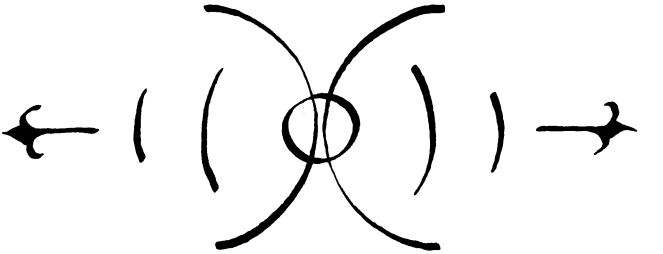
History is full of ironies. Take the history of the Lutheran churches in America, for instance. Recently the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod voted to break with the American Lutheran Church after about a decade of pulpit and altar fellowship. It did this because it felt that the ALC had departed from "pure doctrine," which made fellowship impossible. What has gone virtually unnoticed is that 100 years ago, in 1881, it was the Ohio Synod (an antecedent body of the ALC) which broke with Missouri after about a decade of fellowship, because it was convinced that *Missouri* taught false doctrine. This anniversary might be a curious footnote in the sad litany of church controversies over the centuries were it not for the fact that what happened in 1881 has affected the course of American Lutheranism ever since. In fact, one can find the direct roots of Missouri's present isolation in what happened 100 years ago.

The Doctrine

That controversy was over the doctrine of predestination, or conversion and election. The general understanding of these ideas among Lutherans in the middle of the nineteenth century might be summarized by Heinrich Schmid, whose *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* was in wide use in America. Schmid was a professor at Erlangen who wrote this book in German in 1843. It was translated by Charles Hay and Henry Jacobs in 1985, and was generally given high praise from theological leaders in all the major American Lutheran churches at the time, including C.F.W. Walther of the Missouri Synod.[1] Of predestination Schmid wrote that it is the purpose of God "to save through the merits of Christ the definite number of those whose right treatment of the offered grace God had foreseen."[2] This he substantiated by quotations from various Lutheran dogmaticians of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Indeed, F. A. Schmidt, perhaps the principal opponent of Missouri's "error," devoted 250 pages to quotations and commentary from these same orthodox Lutheran Fathers along the same lines. What Schmid wrote, then, was practically the unanimous opinion of orthodox Lutheran theology. Let me give a few quotations:

> Predestination and election by grace is the eternal decree of God, declaring that He will save those persons who are penitent and believe in Christ, the Savior and only Redeemer of the world. (Jacob Andreae, 1528-1590)[3]

> Since, however, Christ's merit is found in man only through faith, we teach that election took place in view of the merit of Christ apprehended by faith. We say, therefore, that those all and those alone were elected of God from eternity unto salvation, of whom He fore-



saw that by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit and through the ministration of the Gospel they would truly believe in Christ the Redeemer and persevere to the end of life. (John Gerhard, 1582-1637)[4]

Everyone who will perseveringly believe in Christ to the end of life, will certainly be saved, and, therefore, shall be elected and be written in the book of life. (John Quenstedt, 1617-1685)[5]

Predestination or election in the stricter sense is that eternal decree of God, by which God in His infinite mercy determined to give eternal salvation to all those, and only to those, of whom He foresaw that they would believe in Christ till the end. (John Baier, 1647-1695)[6]

Predestination is an act of the consequent divine will, by which God . . . ordained to the obtaining eternal salvation . . . those whom he foresaw would believe in Christ to the end. (David Hollaz, 1648-1713)[7]

With these quotations in mind, it is not surprising that those who considered themselves true Lutherans around the middle of the nineteenth century would have taken the same position. Indeed, prior to the 1870s, the Missouri Synod taught the same way. For instance Wilhelm Sihler, who had helped organize the Synod in 1847, wrote: "Predestination is that act of God in which . . . He determined . . . to save eternally, for Christ's sake and for the praise of His glorious grace, all those whose persevering faith in Christ He has foreseen."[8] Ottomar Fuerbringer, who was also a founding father of the Missouri Synod, wrote: "It rests upon the eternal purpose

[1] C.F.W. Walther, Letter of 4/22/75, published in Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Ev. Lutheran Church* [Addenda], trans. by Charles Hay & Henry Jacobs (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1876), p. 9.

[2] Schmid, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

[3] F. A. Schmidt, "Intuitu Fidei," in *The Error of Modern Missouri: its inception, development, and refutation,* edited by George H. Schodde (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1897), p. 206 from Andreae's disputation on predestination of 1574, thesis 10. (Schmidt's translation)

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 434f, from Gerhard's *Loc. de El.* #161. (Schmidt's translation)

[5] Schmid, *op. cit.*, p. 308, from Quenstedt's *Theol. Didactico-Polemica,* III, 18. (Schmid's translation)

[6] F. W. Stellhorn, "The Present Controversy on Predestination: A Contribution to Its History and Proper Estimate," in *The Error of Modern Missouri,* p. 167, from Baier's *Comp. Theol, pos.,* III, xii. (Stellhorn's translation)

[7] Schmid, *op. cit.*, p. 308, from Hollaz's *Examen Theol. Acromaticae,* 604. (Schmid's translation)

[8] Stellhorn, *op. cit.*, p. 54, quoting Wilhelm Sihler, "Nineteen theses on the doctrine of the eternal foreordination and the merciful election unto eternal life," *Lehre und Wehre,* I (1855), p. 234. (Stellhorn's translation)

of God to predestinate those who were foreseen in their persevering faith."[9] Dieterich's *Exposition of the Catechism,* widely used in the Synod and adapted by Walther himself, said, "Election is that act of God by which he determined according to the purpose of His will, out of pure grace and mercy in Christ, to save all those who shall perseveringly believe in Christ."[10] Even Walther, the foremost theologian in Missouri, evidently taught the same thing, according to class notes taken by students. In explaining the difference between Lutherans and Calvinists, the notes said, "Those of Dort [Calvinists] say: Election is not in foresight of faith, but unto faith."[11] In other words, the Lutheran position would be "in foresight of faith" as the earlier dogmaticians had said.

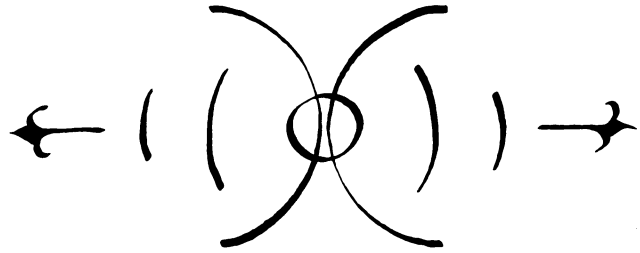
Up to about the 1870s the general understanding of election among "conservative, orthodox" Lutherans would have been something like this: God wants to save all, but the Bible indicates that he also has predestined only a certain number for salvation. In order to refute the Calvinist's answer to this paradox, election and God's foreknowledge of those saved in the end were made synonymous. Thus, election became only another way of saying that God intends to save believers in Christ. Salvation is not by God's arbitrary selection, without the need for response on the individual's part, but by faith in Christ. Election became little more than another way of saying that God offers salvation to those who trust Christ to the end of life. This sidestepped the passages that talked about God "choosing" us from others already in eternity.

The understanding also depended more on the seventeenth and eighteenth century domaticians than on the normative *Formula of Concord* and actually represented a change from it. What that document said, for instance, was:

> God's eternal election . . . not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but by God's gracious will and pleasure in Christ Jesus it is also a cause which creates, effects, helps, and furthers our salvation and whatever pertains to it. . . . In this his eternal counsel, purpose, and ordinance God has not only prepared salvation in general, but he has also graciously considered and elected to salvation each and every individual among the elect who are to be saved through Christ, and also ordained that in the manner just recounted he wills by his grace, gifts, and effective working to bring them to salvation and to help, further, strengthen, and preserve them to this end.[12]

The Controversy

This is the background for the controversy which climaxed in 1881. What brought it about was that Walther evidently was changing his mind. Although he dates this as early as 1852,[13] he didn't



make any real issue of it until around 1868. In fact, as I've indicated, he even went along with the generally held position in his lectures, in his editorial capacity, and in recommendations of books which included the "old" Lutheran teaching. Even as late as 1872 in an article in *Lehre und Wehre* about Sigmund Fritschel's criticism of something on election presented at a district convention, Walther said:

> Our Synod therefore confesses most emphatically, that the theologians of our Church also in the 17th century have presented the right doctrine of predestination and have maintained the same against the Calvinists. One thing only does she criticize in the form of presentation of this point on the part of those men; the expression, God has elected "in view of faith" is an infelicitous term.[14]

The controversy flared into the open in 1877. In that year Walther presented a paper at the Western District convention on predestination. Actually, he had been leading discussions at these conventions since 1873 on the general theme: "Only through the doctrine of the Lutheran Church is God alone given all glory, an irrefutable proof that its doctrine is the only true one." His 1877 topic was on the thesis:

> The Lutheran Church teaches that it is "false and wrong when men teach that the cause of our election is not only the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ, but that there is also within us a cause of God's election on account of which God has elected us unto eternal life," whether it be the work or piety of man, the proper use by man of the means of grace, man's self-determination, man's desire and prayer, man's non-resistance, or man's faith.[15]

That last phrase was like a red flag to

---

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 58, quoting Ottomar Fuerbringer, "Concerning the Doctrine of Election and Several matters thereto Pertaining," *Lehre und Wehre,* II (1856), p. 329. (Stellhorn's translation)

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 64, quoting Dieterich's *Exposition of the Catechsim,* Q. 321 (Stellhorn's translation)

[11] H. A. Allwardt, "Appendix" in *The Error of Modern Missouri,* p. 779.

[12] *The Formula of Concord,* Sol. Decl., XI, 4, edited by Theodore Tappert, *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959).

[13] Letter, C. F. W. Walther to Ulrich Koren, Feb. 19, 1880. *Walther Speaks to the Church,* edited by Carl Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia Publ. House, 1973), p. 43. Allwardt says it was in 1868, cf. Allwardt, *op. cit.,* p. 782.

[14] Walther, in *Lehre und Wehre,* XVIII (1872), pp. 131; quoted and translated by Allwardt, *op. cit.,* p. 786.

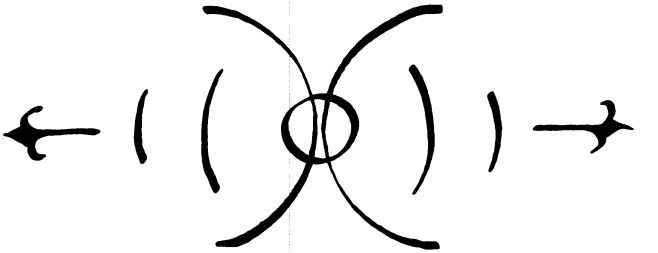
[15] Walther, "In its Teaching of Election, too, the Evangelical Lutheran Church Gives God Alone the Glory." An English translation of the crucial Thesis III of this 1877 paper is given in *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America 1840-1880,* edited by Theodore Tappert (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 166ff.

the other Lutherans. The concept of "in view of faith," or *intuitu fidei,* that God elected people in view of their final faith, had originally been developed to safeguard the idea (against the Calvinists) that God sincerely used the means of grace to bring people to faith in Christ. Faith obviously was necessary before any "elect" could be saved. So the nineteenth century knee-jerk reaction to any challenge to *intuitu fidei,* to anything that sounded as if faith wasn't necessary, was to call that challenge "Calvinistic." And when Walther and Missouri insisted that they were indeed Lutherans, the charge was changed to "Crypto-Calvinists," suggesting that Missourians were Calvinistic wolves in Lutheran sheep's clothing.

The principal critics of Walther and Missouri were F. A. Schmidt, F. W. Stellhorn, Matthias Loy, and H. A. Allwardt. They insisted that Missouri had deviated from the "old" Lutheran theology of the orthodox period, and even from Missouri's past position — which was all true, at least to a point. As a result there were many discussions and debates between pro-Walther representatives and their opponents, which not only included members of other synods in the Synodical Conference, but also many from Missouri itself.

Finally, the Missouri convention in May, 1881 adopted 13 Theses by Walther which summarized his teachings on election and made them the official synodical position. Briefly, they reiterated that God desires to save all, that Jesus died to redeem all, and that God uses the means of grace with the sincere intention of bringing all to repentance and faith; and they condemned opposite views said to be held by Calvinists. Furthermore, the theses insisted that those who are lost are lost through their own fault, and not because God didn't want to save them. Then they stated that election is not the same as foreknowledge, that it is not just God's universal purpose to save all, that it only involves those who are finally saved, and that it is not a mere decree of God to save all who believed to the end. The theses also maintained that God is moved to choose the elect by grace and the merits of Christ, and not by anything God foresees in humans, and so our certainty must always be in the promise of grace.[16] And then to make things crystal clear, the Synod directed its delegates to the next Synodical Conference convention in 1882 "not to sit together and deliberate with such as have publicly decried us as Calvinists. . . . not to recognize any synod which as a synod has raised the same accusation of Calvinism against us."[17]

Now the other synods, especially the Ohio and the Norwegian synods, of the Synodical Conference, had to take a stand. Ohio adopted its own theses which defended the *intuitu fidei* understanding of election, and then voted to withdraw from the conference.[18] As much as anything this was because it refused to send delegates knowing that



they would be refused recognition from Missouri and its allies, the clear majority at the convention. The Norwegian Synod had a different situation to deal with. Norway had not been involved in the German theological battles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In fact, the *Formula of Concord,* the only part of the Lutheran confessions to deal with predestination, was not even a part of their confessional literature. But they were drawn into the battle because one of the chief participants in the controversy was Prof. F. A. Schmidt. He had been a student and colleague of Walther, teaching at St. Louis for a while as a member of the Norwegian Synod. In 1878 he had challenged Walther and, through a periodical he then began to publish, soon was at the center of the controversy. He was elected as a Norwegian delegate to the 1883 Synodical Conference convention, so rather than face a confrontation about his credentials, the Norwegians withdrew from the conference, although maintaining fellowship until 1914.

So, for all practical purposes the dream of a united conservative Lutheran church that had had its first step towards realization in the Synodical Conference in 1872 had become a nightmare of furious, vituperative divisions in 1881. One can easily get the impression from literature of the time that the issues were simple and clear cut. But as is usually the case, this controversy was a complex combination of personality, theology, and inflamed tempers.

Schmidt was accused of changing his own position to attack Walther because he felt that Walther had blocked his appointment to succeed him at Concordia Seminary.[19] The Ohio Synod had long felt uneasy with Missouri's bigness. Besides the theological tensions, there was also the concern in Ohio that the Synodical Conference (which Missouri dominated) would push for the merging of seminaries and the realignment of all the synods along state lines, thus reducing Ohio's power and increasing Missouri's. C. C. Hein, later first president of the ALC, suggested in 1917 that the controversy was something staged in print by theological leaders, and did not represent the views of the majority of the

---

[16] The full text of these theses is given in *Moving Frontiers,* edited by Carl Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1964), pp. 272ff.

[17] J. T. Mueller, "The Predestinarian Controversy," in *Ebenezer,* edited by W.H.T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publ. House, 1922), p. 410.

[18] Ohio's "Four Theses" are found in *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America,* Richard C. Wolf, editor (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 203f.

[19] Meyer, *op. cit.,* quotes Chr. Hochstetter, *Die Geschichte des Evangelisch-lutherischen Missouri-Synode in Nord-Amerika, und ihrer Lehrkämpke von der sächsischen Auswanderung im Jahre 1838 an bis zum Jahre 1884* (Dresden: H. J. Naumann, 1885), p. 355 on p. 271; Allwardt, *op. cit.,* denies this, p. 798.

members of any of the synods involved.[20]

Theological words and phrases were used in abundance, but not always with the same meaning. As a result, there were charges and countercharges, but not much real communication. Let me give some examples.

Ohio emphasized God's foreknowledge of final faith, and so took Missouri's position as suggesting that man could be saved whether he believed or not, or that man was saved by God's irresistable grace and not man's faith. Missouri emphasized God's predestination as a cause of faith and salvation, and so took Ohio's emphasis on faith as suggesting that there was something in man that prompted God to save him. But Missouri never said that faith was unnecessary or God's grace irresistable, and Ohio never denied man's total inability to take even the first step to faith.

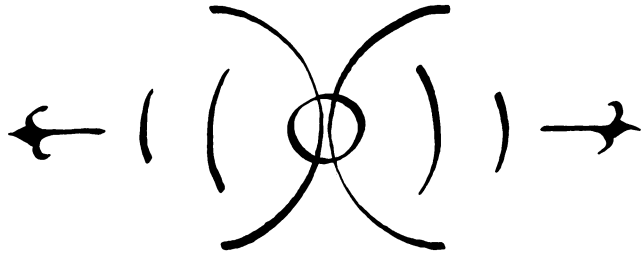
Ohio, because its arguments were taken from the seventeenth and eighteenth century theologians against Calvinism's double predestination, thought Missouri was talking about something arbitrary when it emphasized predestination. Missouri, because its arguments were against synergism, following the sixteenth century confessions, thought that Ohio's *intuitu fidei* position taught a basic difference in people as the reason God chose some to be saved. But Missouri did deny election to damnation, and Ohio did affirm *sola gratia.*[21]

Thus there was hardly any agreement on just what the issues really were. No wonder that tempers got so hot. Tens of thousands of pages of polemic were produced, which did little except intensify the hard feelings. One only has to read any of the writings on either side during this period and be overwhelmed by the animosity between the "opponents."

Church Fellowship

In this context it is easy to see how church fellowship became another major issue. The Missouri delegates to the 1882 Synodical Conference convention were told not to recognize as "brothers in Christ" anyone who had called Missouri Calvinistic. In 1888 Francis Pieper presented five theses on church unity to the conference convention, and they were adopted. The first thesis reads: "By 'unity in faith' we understand agreement in *all* articles of Christian *doctrine* revealed in the Holy Scriptures."[22] Attempts at resolving the issues after Walther's death led to a series of "Free Conferences" from 1903 to 1906. Participants came as individuals, not as representatives of churches. Missouri vigorously insisted on this format, since it felt that here, too, it would be improper to meet as churches while there was still official disagreement. These conferences not only failed in their purpose, but became so violent that the concept of "Prayer Fellowship" was developed in Missouri, which said that it was wrong to even pray with those not in complete doctrinal agreement.[23]

The present isolation of Missouri,



which insists on total agreement on all doctrines and practices before there can be church relations, was refined and hardened as a result of the controversy of 1881. In the literature of this period on both sides we find statements that show people felt their "opponents" words were not to be taken at face value. Compromise on terminology was taken as a sign of hypocrisy or insincerity. It was as if each side felt a need to win, to have their point of view adopted to the last word as the only possibly correct one. At any rate, it can be said that along with disgreement over particular doctrines, the 1881 controversy also had to do with the question of what was necessary for church fellowship.[24]

The New Situation

The resignations of the Ohio and Norwegian Synods from the Synodical Conference brought about a time of realignment. Ohio and the Iowa synods had had disagreements in the past, but now found themselves with a common opponent, the Missouri Synod. So it was natural that this new relationship would be explored. As early as 1886 overtures were made by Ohio to Iowa for discussions. These produced the Michigan City Theses in 1893[25] and the Toledo Theses in 1907.[26] These contacts were mutually beneficial. Ohio contributed a strong theological dimension, while Iowa's "Open Question" position influenced Ohio to look again at what was necessary for church fellowship. "Open Question"[27] was Iowa's way of saying that doctrines not explicitly stated in the

[20] Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 290ff, quotes Hein's presidential address to the Ohio Synod's Western District, printed as *The Lutheran Church of the United States in the Jubilee Year 1917* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1917), pp. 6-9.

[21] For summaries of the issues from various points of view, see Charles P. Krauth in Tappert, *Confessional Theology,* pp. 223; Mueller, *op. cit.*, pp. 409; Meyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 205f; and Abdel Ross Wentz, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America,* revised edition (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), pp. 205.

[22] Francis Pieper, Synodical Conference, *Proceedings, 1888,* p. 6, quoted in Meyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 285f.

[23] Theodore Graebner, *Prayer Fellowship* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, n.d.), p. 23; Graebner, "The Burden of Infallibility," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly,* XXXVIII (July, 1965), p. 91; Graebner, "The Cloak of the Cleric," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly,* XLIV (Feb., 1971), p. 4. These last two were first written in 1948 and 1950 and circulated privately.

[24] Jacobs said that the controversy "was the direct result of Missouri's denial of the existence of 'open questions' within the Luthern church." Henry E. Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1893), p. 502.

[25] Wolf, *op. cit.*, pp. 213ff.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 216ff.

[27] As early as 1867, Iowa had adopted nine theses on "What is essential to church unity?" Thesis V had said: "The unity of the church is truly a fundamental unity but not an absolute one, because it relates to the essential basic doctrines, not to all less important matters." Wolf, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

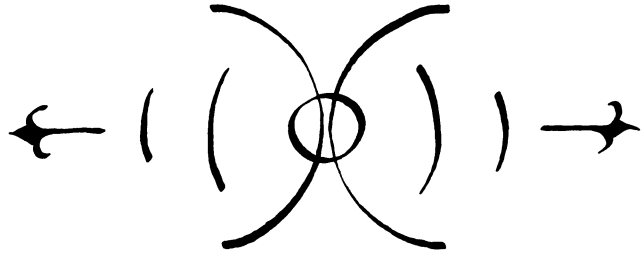
Lutheran Confessions were not divisive of church fellowship. Up to this time the Synodical Conference (and Ohio) had rejected this idea, insisting on the more rigid approach mentioned above. But perhaps it had become obvious from the controversy that it was not possible, or at least not worth it, to agree on every interpretation of doctrine. So Ohio and Iowa agreed in the Toledo Theses that only complete agreement on fundamental doctrines (that is, those confessionally defined) was necessary for church fellowship.[28] This made it possible for them to establish fellowship in 1918, to be followed by merging into the first American Lutheran Church in 1930, along with the Buffalo Synod.

The Norwegians went through a time of disruption because of the controversy, but in the end it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Although Schmidt had been one of Walther's chief antagonists, a large part of the Norwegian Synod agreed with Missouri on the predestination issue. As has been mentioned, the Norwegians left the Synodical Conference only because they didn't want Missouri to challenge Schmidt as a delegate. In a sense, they left to preserve peace both within their own ranks and within the conference.[29]

But Schmidt continued to campaign against Missouri, and in 1886 led a third of the Norwegians into a new body called, "The Anti-Missourian Brotherhood." If you had any questions about the mood of the times, that name should answer them. But this group was not formed in as negative a spirit as the name implies. It was against Missouri and its stand on election, but it was also against Missouri's rigid exclusiveness. And it had a positive purpose, too: to unite all Norwegians into one church. So in 1890 it joined with several smaller groups to form the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, and this body took the initiative to bring the other Norwegian churches together. Finally in 1917 the Norwegian Lutheran Church was formed (later called the Evangelical Lutheran Church) out of the Norwegian Synod, the United church, and the Hauge Synod, a smaller pietistic group.

How this came about demonstrates the different approaches to church fellowship of Missouri and the Norwegians. Both the "election in view of faith" and the "election to faith" positions were held among these various groups. Many years of discussion were spent trying to resolve the differences. Finally in 1914 a committee worked out a series of doctrinal statements called the Madison Agreement, or in Norwegian, *Opgjoer.* They were refined in 1916, with the tacit blessing of the St. Louis faculty. They were remarkable statements as far as Lutheran union documents go. The crucial part on election says:

> Since it is well known that in presenting the doctrine of election two forms of doctrine have been used, both of which have won acceptance and recognition within



the orthodox Lutheran Church; Some, in accordance with the it, include under the doctrine of election the whole order of salvation of the elect from the call to the glorification . . . and teach an election "unto salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." While others . . . with recognized teachers of the church, define election more specifically as the decree concerning the final glorification, with faith and perseverance wrought by the Holy Spirit as its necessary presupposition, and teach that "God has appointed all those to eternal life who He from eternity has foreseen would accept the offered grace, believe in Christ and remain constant in this faith unto the end;" and since neither of these two forms of doctrine, thus presented, contradicts any doctrine revealed in the Word of God, but does full justice to the order of salvation as presented in the Word of God and the confessions of the church; We find that this should not be cause for schism within the Church or disturb that unity of the spirit in the bond of peace which God wills should prevail among us.[30]

Thus both explanations of the doctrine were declared acceptable as long as certain basic ideas were safeguarded, even though the two positions were different, and even contradictory. In other words, the Norwegians did not insist on just one way, but said that the differences were not divisive of church fellowship. The reason behind this was not doctrinal laxity, but the strong desire by all the Norwegians to find a way to be one church. Of course, this did not satisfy all the Norwegians, and a small group split off to form the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1918. This group, which joined the Synodical Conference in 1920, is now known as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The Madison Agreement caused the Synodical Conference to dissolve fellowship with the majority of Norwegians in 1917. When the ELS joined the conference it was able to apply pressure on the other members from then on to "mark and avoid" any church organization that had any relations with other Norwegians.

---

[28] "Complete agreement in all nonfundamental doctrines cannot be attained here on earth, but is nevertheless the goal after which to strive." Toledo Theses, IV, 4, quoted in Wolf, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

[29] Yivisaker of the ELS also gave a language reason for the Norwegian's departure. "It was argued, that since the language of the Conference was German, the suspicion and confusion of the laity were the more easily aroused because they were not able to follow the doctrinal discussions which were then at their height." S. C. Yivisaker, "The Missouri Synod and the Norwegians," *Ebenezer*, p. 267.

[30] Wolf, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

So when Missouri and the ALC decided that they had doctrinal agreement in 1938, the ELS vehemently objected. The following appeared in the minutes of a meeting between Missouri and ELS representatives:

> The Norwegian brethren objected to point b. as non-scriptural, though it could not be misunderstood if it had been written by Missourians; but the A.L.C. men could not be trusted, because there is reason to believe that they wanted to satisfy also their affiliates (the Norwegian "Merger" and the Augustana Synod).[31]

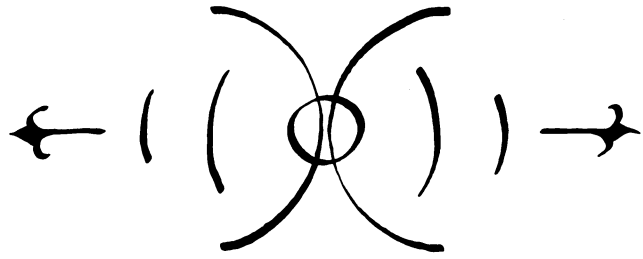
This prejudice came out of their reactions to the Madison Agreement, and led the ELS to emphasize two objections to Missouri's 1938 action: 1) anything arrived at by a committee is not adequate; 2) any group affiliated with the other Norwegians in any way must of necessity be heterodox. So S. C. Ylvisaker wrote in 1940:

> [We] argue that it was neither wise nor right in the case of church bodies which had been in serious doctrinal disagreement to seek to establish agreement through committees meeting in closed sessions. We were convinced that this was one of the wholesome lessons our synod had learned from our experiences of 1912-1917. . . . Nor can we be blamed greatly for feeling the slight in the next step of these negotiations, the announcement to the world, without any further consultation with us, your brethren, of final doctrinal agreement with the same American Lutheran Church; for, after all, this synod had for many years been in league with those who had opposed our synod on doctrinal grounds.[32]

This opposition from within the Synodical Conference to any fellowship with the ALC stemmed to a large degree from the unresolved controversies of the 1880s and their aftermath. Long after the predestination issue itself was settled, both the Wisconsin and the little Norwegian synods still continued to mention it as a reason why these other groups could not be trusted.[33] It would be an oversimplification to say that this controversy was the only reason they resisted any relations with the ALC or the ELC, but the bitterness of that earlier debate certainly made it more difficult.

Many in the Missouri Synod felt the same way. One example has to do with Missouri's rejection of the "Intersynodical Theses" of 1928. These were statements drawn up by representatives of the Buffalo, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin synods. Most of the document, 80 paragraphs out of 113, dealt with conversion and election.

It separated predestination from God's universal plan of salvation. It said that faith was a result, not a presupposition, of election. It clarified the distinction between God's foreknowledge and election. It insisted that man cannot con-



tribute anything to his conversion. It denied that man can somehow lessen his resistance to God's grace, while also denying that God's grace is irresistible. It denied double predestination. It stated that God's elective grace is not some secret arbitrary grace different from what God offers in the Gospel. It accepted a particular, individual election, besides God's general desire to save all. It declared that Christians can and should be sure of their election, through the promises of the Gospel. And it clarified the proper meaning of *intuitu fidei* in a separate section of 12 paragraphs, and suggested that it might be better not to use the term.[34]

Missouri's position seemed to have been accepted by the intersynodical representatives, and the areas where it had been suspect were now clarified.[35] No wonder there was hope that these theses would end the controversy and begin the process of reunion. But an Examining Committee set up to critique the theses for Missouri's 1929 convention blasted them. It recommended rejection by the convention. Their report said:

> All chapters and a number of paragraphs are inadequate. At times they do not touch upon the point of controversy; at times they are so phrased that both parties can find in them their own opinion; at times they incline more to the position of our opponents than to our own.[36]

It appeared that Missouri not only wanted everything to be stated completely its way, but also wanted Ohio to admit that it had been wrong. Furthermore, it also raised the "guilt by association" question that the ELS was to use:

> By entering into a closer relationship with the adherents of the Norwegian *Opgjoer,* the opponents have given evidence that they do

---

[31] "Minutes of the Conference of the Representatives of the Venerable Norwegian Synod and the Committee on Lutheran Union of the Synod of Missouri, at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Feb. 16-17, 1938," p. 1. Concordia Historical Institute, Arndt file.

[32] S. C. Ylvisaker, "At Meeting of Union Committees (Missouri Synod and Norwegian Synod) Chicago, Jan. 12 and 13, 1940," pp. 1f. Concordia Historical Institute, Arndt file.

[33] For instance, the 1956 convention of the Synodical Conference still listed Grace, Conversion, and Election among the points at issue that were "still disturbing the unity of spirit within the Synodical Conference." Wolf, *op. cit.,* p. 443.

[34] *Doctrinal Declarations* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1957).

[35] Certainly the Ohio delegation saw the Theses as a victory for Missouri. Several of its representatives asked that a minority report be included, which read in part: "We cannot admit that our Lutheran Church for the entire period of three hundred years did not possess the right doctrine of election, or of the predestination unto adoption of children." In other words, they saw the Theses as a repudiation of the position of Lutheran orthodoxy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. *Doctrinal Declarations,* p. 42.

[36] Wolf, *op. cit.,* p. 370.

not hold our position in the doctrines of conversion and election.[37]

The Synod accepted the committee's recommendation and then set up a new committee to draw up its own new theses, this time "beginning with the *status controversiae*, . . . to present the doctrine of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions in the shortest, most simple manner."[38]

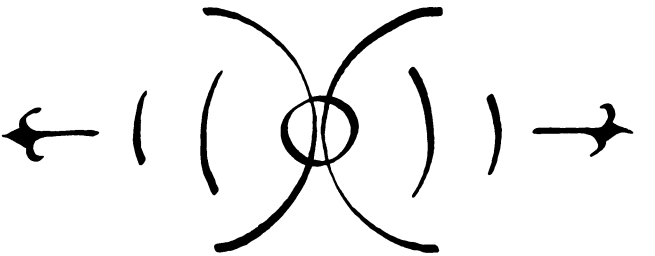
As you can imagine, this was all greeted with dismay and even disgust on the part of those other Lutherans who had worked so long to satisfy Missouri. C. C. Hein of the ALC wrote to P. E. Kretzmann of the Missouri Synod in 1933:

> We have made one earnest, sincere and conscious attempt to get together with Missouri. We have utterly failed, and I for my part do not believe that there is any use in having further conferences. . . . I am frank to say that I am so disgusted with the spirit that manifested itself in these resolutions [of the 1929 Missouri convention] that to this day I have not as yet read the new series of theses which were published in the *Concordia Theological Monthly* of May, 1931, and adopted by your synod in 1932.[39] ["A Brief Statement;" see below]

The Brief Statement

The result of the Synod's resolution was "A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Ev. Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States." It was almost entirely the work of Francis Pieper, who had been the president of the synod and of the St. Louis Seminary. Its largest sections had to do with conversion and election. This would have been all right if Pieper had taken into account the progress that had been made in resolving the issues during the previous two decades. But he chose to combine several of his earlier writings; two from 1893, one from 1897, and one from 1922. Thus the Brief Statement was more a rehash of the earlier polemics. It did not contain any direct refutations of the Intersynodical Theses, and references to current issues were short additions to earlier statements.[40] What this did was to perpetuate the controversy and the polemical mood within Missouri and the Synodical Conference when everyone else in American Lutheranism had, for all practical purposes, conceded that Missouri had won the debate.

So the issue of conversion and election was made a major part of the Brief Statement, and eventually of the fellowship discussion between Missouri and the ALC from 1935 to 1938, even though the controversy should have been over. But ALC representatives accommodated themselves to Missouri's concerns, and in their companion document to the Brief Statement, the "Declaration," they said, "that which Scripture and Confession call eternal election or predestina-



tion unto the adoption of children did not take place *intuitu fidei.*"[41] This explicitly repudiated the earlier use of the phrase at the end of the last century taken by Ohio and the Norwegians.

When the ALC and the Missouri conventions in 1938 adopted the Declaration, along with the Brief Statement, they officially ended the controversy over predestination. The ELS and the Wisconsin Synod were not satisfied, and many members of Missouri would continue to agitate about the issue through such journals as *The Confessional Lutheran.* But that agitation eventually subsided. Thus whereas the Intersynodical Theses had 80 paragraphs on the subject, and the Brief Statement and Declaration together had 16, the "Common Confession, I" adopted by both groups in 1950 as a basis for fellowship, had only 2.

Church Fellowship

But one last aspect of the controversy lingered on, and that had to do with the issue of church fellowship. Prior to 1881 all of the members of the Synodical Conference insisted that there had to be complete agreement on *all* "doctrines". That was why the fight was so fierce. It was either truth or error and there was no middle ground. As the federating bodies had said when they founded the conference:

> This unity of spirit in regard to strict adherence to doctrine and . . . opposition to all deviations from it represents the distinctiveness of our ecclesiastical point of view and of the consequent task to which, by the grace of God we consider ourselves called.[42]

But after the 1881 split when Ohio began to discuss the "open question" issue with Iowa, it began to accept the idea that absolute, total agreement on everything was neither possible nor always necessary. True, there was still an insistence on "doctrinal unity," or else the ALC would not have participated in the various attempts to develop a common doctrinal statement with Missouri. But it did not mean the same thing by "doctrinal unity" as Missouri did. For instance, when Kretzmann had suggested in an article in 1933 that certain minor points of interpretation had to be settled, the ALC editorially replied: "We also are not of the opinion that agreement in all questions is essential for

---

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] Letter, C. C. Hein to P. E. Kretzmann, Feb. 22, 1933, Archives of the American Lutheran Church, Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, Missouri Synod file.

[40] For a complete study of this, see Carl S. Meyer, "The Historical Background of 'A Brief Statement.'" *Concordia Theological Monthly,* XXXII (July, 1961), 403-428; (Aug., 1961) 466-482; (Sept., 1961), 526-542.

[41] *Doctrinal Declarations,* p. 62.

[42] Wolf, *op. cit.,* p. 189.

unity in faith, for example the question of marriage to one's sister-in-law and the baptism of John."[43]

The Norwegians had also accepted the idea of "complete agreement" prior to 1881, or at least until they found it to be an impossible and church-dividing task. The Madison Agreement left no question that at least from that point on, the Norwegians were ready for church fellowship on a basis short of total unanimity. So when the American Lutheran Conference was formed in 1930, the Minneapolis Theses of 1925 were the basis of its fellowship arrangements, and it said:

> Church fellowship, that is, mutual recognition, altar and pulpit fellowship, . . . presupposed unanimity in the pure doctrine of the *Gospel* and of the confession of the same in word and deed.[44] (emphasis added)

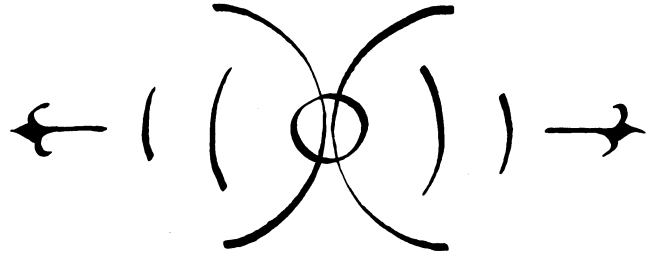
That statement, along with the statement in the *Augsburg Confession* that "it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word" [45] were referred to when the Norwegians and others joined with the ALC to form the present ALC in 1960.

The Missouri Synod never went through these merger experiences. In addition, because of doctrinal, cultural, historical, linguistic, and political factors it has maintained the concept that it alone has the correct understanding of truth. Thus the one issue that has dominated all the others from the time that Missouri told its delegates not to sit with others in the Synodical Conference who had called Missouri "Calvinists" has really been "the nature and basis of church fellowship." Missouri alone has continued to regard "unionism" as the cardinal sin. The only way that sin could be prevented would be if there were no spiritual contacts or relationships with others whatsoever or if those who wished to have fellowship agreed on *all* doctrines and practices. The past 100 years have shown that what Missouri means by that is "agreement according to Missouri's interpretations." Martin Sommer, seminary professor, wrote:

> If two work the same problem and both get the *right* answer, both will also get the *same* answer, they need not try to harmonize their answers afterward. Just so all those who teach the truth will agree with others who teach the truth without trying to agree. The truth is one and always agrees with itself. The truth never contradicts the truth.[46] (emphasis in original)

The only flaw in this position is, who decides what is the right answer if two groups arrive at different ones?

So there has been a steady stream of "doctrines" which Missouri has said were divisive of fellowship — predestination, conversion, the analogy of faith, prayer fellowship, Boy Scouts, engage-



ment, the Lodges, women's ordination, the historical critical method — but even if agreement was achieved, unity never happened. That's because there has also been a basic disagreement on what is needed for fellowship. Graebner saw this in 1935 when he wrote, "The difference [between the Lutheran churches] is in the definition of Christian fellowship."[47] And now in the 1980s "the nature and basis of fellowship" is listed as one of the crucial diffferences between Missouri and the ALC which necessitated the break in fellowship. In Missouri's report on those differences, a statement prepared by the ALC is listed as Appendix A. There it says:

> It is the mark of totalitarianism in both religion and politics to insist on monolithic understanding, to suppress dissent, to discredit premises which undergird the lives of others, to protect constituents from other points of view, to entrust guidance to an oligarchy, and to be fearful of revision. When A.L.C. teachers use language patterns suggesting that repentance encompasses the whole of life, that means ruling not only moral infidelity but doctrinal inflexibility. A.L.C. people are not seeking thereby to destroy the truth; they only want to say that all human formulations have a tentativeness within them. They do not want Christian doctrine to become the occasion for idolatry. Our trust is in God, not in human formulations about Him.[48]

Sad to say, there is nothing in Missouri's report to refute this statement of the ALC's perception of Missouri's attitude.

So the heritage of the predestinarian controversy persists 100 years after it split the Synodical Conference and separated conservative Lutheranism. It's not a centennial any should want to celebrate. Controversies in the church never are. In point of time or scope though, there have been other controversies longer in duration or more widespread. And fortunately the doctrinal issues have been resolved, or at least forgotten. But the bitterness and separation the predestination controversy engendered was continued. There was a time in 1969 when it looked like that too was disappearing, along with the insistence that Lutheran churches should not recognize each other unless there was complete agreement,

---

[43] 'Vereinigung mit der U.L.C.?" *Kirchenblatt,* 77 (Aug. 25, 1934), p. 3.

[44] Wolf, *op. cit.,* p. 341.

[45] *Augsburg Confession,* VII, Tappert edition, p. 32.

[46] [Martin] S[ommer], "Lutheran Unity," *The Lutheran Witness,* LII (Dec. 19, 1933), 427.

[47] Theodore Graebner, *The Problem of Lutheran Union and Other Essays* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1935), p. 102.

[48] "Appendix A Toward Understanding One Another," Feb. 29, 1980, *The American Lutheran Church and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod A Statement of Doctrinal Differences* (n.p., 1980), p. 22.

not only on Christ, not only on the Lutheran Confessions, but also on every difference of opinion on every Bible passage, church practice, or hermeneutical principle. In the fellowship resolution that year, all that was said in establishing relations between the ALC and Missouri was that proper unity according to Article VII of the Augsburg Confession had been found. So,

> Recognizing that because of our sinfulness and human frailities there remain imperfections in faith and understanding of the riches of God's grace, as well as failings in life and practice consistent with the Gospel, we pledge ourselves to draw these and all other problems affecting our relationships into the perspective of God's grace as revealed in the divine Word and deal with them within that framework. We pledge ourselves always to have a tender regard for each other's consciences and to stand by each other in mutual sympathy and understanding, forbearance and love.[49]

Now more again has been demanded, on Missouri's terms. Because of this, fellowship has been broken. The churches involved are not only back where they were in 1969; they are back where they were in 1881, with one calling the other heterodox and breaking off fraternal relations. Pray God, the final issue left over from that earlier fight, the church fellowship issue, can be resolved before the second centennial of this controversy is observed.

---

[49] The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, *Proceedings of the Forty-eighth Convention* (Denver, CO, 1969), p. 98.

The Ambiguity of History: Help from the Maker of Heaven and Earth

Kosuke Koyama

Union Theological Seminary, New York, New York

I lift up my eyes to the hills
From whence does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord
who made heaven and earth.
(Psalms 121:1,2)

The Gods of East and West

I lived in New Zealand for six years where our small house sat on a sunny green hill called Opoho in the southern city of Dunedin. The North East Valley was spread out below us. From our windows we looked out on the hills to the east, the north, and the west, and we witnessed sunrise and sunset in the beautiful clean air country. On the hills we could see sheep, seemingly stationary white dots. They increased in September and October.

Look up to the hills. This is what people have been doing over the centuries in Japan. Hills surround villages. The spirits of the ancestors reside on the hills and watch over their descendants in the village below. The "gods of the hills" *(yama no kami)* come down to the villages in spring time to become "gods of the paddy fields" *(ta no kami)* and to protect the growth of rice until they return to the hills in autumn. These gods commute between the hills and the villages below.

Now I live in Manhattan, New York. Looking up I see tall buildings; I do not see white dots that increase in September and October. How can I say "From whence does my help come" as I look up to these buildings that prevent the sunshine from reaching me? I do not think of the departed spirits of the ancestors, for they are not in the tops of the World Trade Center or the Empire State Building. Distanced from the spirits of the ancestors, I feel lonely. I see thousands of people milling around me, all kinds of people with all kinds of languages. It is good to be among people. Yet I miss the "gods of the hills" who become "gods of the paddy fields." I miss those commuting gods.

I dislike these high-rise square boxes because they are made of steel and concrete, and my native gods do not like steel and concrete. They like black soil and moisture, for they are barefooted gods. If they would wear shoes they would lose touch with the black soil and cease to be a symbol for fertility and prosperity. They also do not like these vertical planes — anything vertical is alarming. An escalator would be preferable to an elevator, but even that device is too mechanical, too technical for them.

Tokyo today appears to be very much like New York, as far as tall buildings are concerned. But the "theology" of commuting gods is still to be found in Japanese cultural expressions. Japanese do not speak of "encounter" or "confrontation." Instead of propositions and statements, there are words of reception and sending off. The Japanese are a ceremonial, not a philosophical people. Truth is found in the human experience

of receiving and sending others. My people receive and send off the commuting gods, who, in turn, come and greet their people.

The commuting gods are not absolutistic or cut off from human life. For the Japanese no morality, religion, philosophy, or ideology is absolute. Japanese animism rejects absolutism as the following quotation makes clear:

> I do not yet understand the meaning of the term, *kami.* Speaking in general, however, it may be said that *kami* signifies, in the first place, the deities of heaven and earth that appear in the ancient records and also the spirits of the shrines where they are worshipped. It is hardly necessary to say that it includes human beings. It also includes such objects as birds, beasts, trees, plants, seas, mountains and so forth. (eighteenth century Japanese scholar Motoori Norinaga)

My native gods do not say,

> You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourselves a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (Exod. 20:3,4)

My native gods do not say,

> Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, do not spare them, but kill both men and women, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. (1 Sam. 15:3)

My native gods do not say,

> Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (Eph. 2:12)

As I lift up my eyes and think of my native gods and my culture, I feel relaxed. No one will come and threaten me. These part-time gods give me an easy-going feeling. They do not push me to ask why there are evils in the world created by a good God. The world is naturally partly good and partly bad. I can find a place for myself in this arrangement.

The Character of God the Maker

Recently I attended a Christian worship service in New York in which this liturgy was said:

> Leader: In the beginning was God.
> In the beginning was the source of all that is.
> In the beginning God was yearning.
>
> All: God, moaning,
> God, laboring,
> God, giving birth,
> God, rejoicing,
> And God loved what was



created.
And God said, "It is
good."

Leader: Then God, knowing that
all that is good is shared,
Held the Earth tenderly
in her arms.
God yearned for relation-
ship.
God longed to share the
good earth,
And humanity was born
in the yearning of God.
We were born to share
the Earth.

I said to myself: my gods would feel comfortable with this God. The personality of this God is different from the God I encounter in the Bible. I used to read such lines in the Hindu religious and philosophical literature. In this liturgy the God of cosmos rather than the God of history is presented! I remembered a powerful sentence from R. H. Niebuhr's *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture:*

> Radical monotheism dethrones all absolutes short of the principle of being itself. At the same time it reverences every relative existent. Its two great mottoes are: "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before me" and "Whatever is, is good." (p. 37)

Perhaps people in the West are feeling psychological weariness from the pressure of radical monotheism. Perhaps they would like to say, "Whatever is, is good" without saying, "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before me." Is not this the position which my ancestral gods represent?

When I became a Christian I made the move from the help that comes from "heaven and earth" to that which comes from "the Lord who made heaven and earth." I was persuaded that the totality of heaven and earth — cosmological salvation — though beautiful and peaceful, is not enough for my "help", that I must come to the *creator* of heaven and earth, who gives meaning to heaven and earth. Yet I must confess that I did not experience a decisive moment of discontinuity in this process. My basic theological orientation, consciously and unconsciously, has taken the form of looking at "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before me" *through* the message of "whatever is, is good." I have difficulty with Eph. 2:12. I find it very difficult to accept that when we are separated from Christ — what does this mean? — we are "without God in the world." The New English Bible translates the passage: "Your world was a world without hope and without God." Is such a world possible?

My Christian life has been lived with a sense of belonging to the Lord who *made* heaven and earth, but simultaneously I experience the help that comes to me *from* heaven and earth. I wish I could say, simply and forcefully, that I have

become increasingly aware of the help that comes from heaven and earth as I grow into the knowledge of the Lord who made heaven and earth. Many Christians would completely reject the idea of the "help from heaven and earth" as pagan. In my case it is not so.

I know an old woman who spent most of her life as a devout adherent of the Japanese cult of the fox, *Oinari-san.* This merit-making, quick-rewarding faith is one of the most popular beliefs in Japan. It came into being as an amalgamation of a Shinto god, *Ukanomitama no kami,* and a Hindu deity. Association between the fox and the Hindu deity was the reason that the image of the fox plays such a prominent role in the cult. The old woman became Christian in her early seventies, without knowing that the change would entail giving up the fox cult. The day finally came, however, when she was convinced that she should reject her old faith, and she decided to remove the *Oinari* temple she had built on her property. She prepared a small boat, placed the temple on it, took it to the open sea, and gently pushed it off into the waves. Since she was grateful for the spiritual help she had received all these years, she watched the boat disappear into the sea with reverence and gratitude. When I remember her story I am deeply moved.

If the totality of heaven and earth is like the fox cult, the breaking point will eventually come for one who enters the Christian faith. But I can think of a totality of nature which does not become a cult. Nature can be as ambiguous as religion. It can be both enslaving and emancipating. The emancipating power of nature is possible apart from the knowledge of "the Lord who made heaven and earth," and it is also possible with this knowledge. We can also make either an enslaving or an emancipating message out of "My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth."

> A god is that to which we look for all good and where we resort for help in every time of need. To have a god is simply to trust and believe in one with our whole heart. The confidence and faith of the heart make both God and an idol. If your faith and confidence are right, then likewise your God is the true God. (Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism,* "The First Commandment")

The Invisible Ethical God

It is possible that the people whose help comes from heaven and earth may practice more the mind of the Lord who made heaven and earth than the people who believe that their help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. It is possible that Buddhist ethic and practice has demonstrated more the mind of the biblical God than has Christian ethic and practice. It is possible that the people of a culture of nature can be more merciful towards their neighbors than



the people of a monotheistic culture. History defies all our neat, that is to say, self-righteous, formulations. Systematic theology must be confronted by the disturbing ambiguity of history.

As long as we maintain the view that those who say that their help comes from heaven and earth are inferior, misguided, blind, and pagan, and that we who believe in the Lord who made heaven and earth are superior, educated, insightful, and Christian, we have a neat formula which is unwarrantedly pleasing to us. But the biblical message and the historical record challenge such an egocentric optimism.

Two passages from the Bible document what I see as the biblical view on self-righteous theology:

> For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. (Deut. 10:17)

> For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit. (Luke 6:43)

God is not partial and takes no bribe. This is the biblical way to destroy our self-glorifying view that God is somehow always on our side. This view reflects the psychology of the "holy war". The only way to check the fanaticism of holy war is to educate people that they cannot bribe God. The words of Jesus admonish us to see people, culture, and religion by their fruit, "for each tree is known by its own fruit." If Christianity bears spoiled fruit and Buddhism a good edible fruit, then we are asked to judge the two religions accordingly. God is not partial and he takes no bribe!

Radical monotheism dethrones all absolutes short of the principle of being itself! Japanese people have no religious and cultural tools to appreciate this within their own history of spirituality, yet they experienced it in 1945. In contrast, while the United States has the religious and philosophical tools to appreciate dethronement of the absolutes, America, as a nation, has not experienced it. The power of the American military dethroned the absolute authority of the Japanese emperor and his army of divine soldiers. Who among the Japanese in the 1920s and 1930s would have dreamed that such a dethroning was possible?

The coronation of a new emperor in Japan is done in accordance with a mystery rite in which the new emperor is introduced to the Spirit of Cereal. It is believed that the Sun Goddess, from whom the imperial line is descended, gave the seeds of the cereals to the new rulers of the nation. By becoming acquainted with the Spirit of Cereal, the new emperor affirms that his unique personage goes back to the era of divinity. Since the Spirit of Cereal is female, the emperor must be male. This duality has played a significant role throughout the centuries. The ceremony culminates in the rite called *Daijosai,* in

which the union of the emperor and the Spirit of Cereal takes place. It is too bad that this ancient ceremony was radically ideologized and exploited to produce ultranationalism and fascism. But the rite of enthronement itself does not pose a threat to humanity or to civilization. The Japanese rite of enthronement takes place within the perimeter of "the help that comes from heaven and earth."

Compare this with a biblical view of enthronement:

> Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations!" But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to govern us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, "Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me for being king over them." (1 Sam. 8:4-7)

In the East enthronement is a cosmological event. The emperor, as priest, becomes the *axis mundi.* In him communication between heaven and earth will be carried out to insure the perfect functioning of the cosmos, without flood, drought, or earthquake. The Japanese *Daijosai* rite is a part of this cosmological metaphysics. The purpose of the rite is to insure the abundant harvest of cereals throughout the nation and for the duration of the reign of the new emperor.

The story of Samuel suggests a different world of thought. Here human enthronement requires that God be dethroned. The common concept of kingship which all the nations accept is challenged.

In the tradition of Israel God is invisible. Why is it difficult to dethrone an invisible God? It took a nationwide turmoil to dethrone the Shah of Iran in 1979. It took a devastating defeat to depose Hitler.

It is exactly at this point that Israel's lasting contribution to humanity is made. Israel told the world a grave secret of history. When the invisible king is rejected, the visible king becomes a tyrant. It took the whole history of Israel to validate this hidden, inner connection between the invisible God and history. The history of Israel which we meet in the Bible is a symbol — a suffering symbol — that reveals this secret to the world. In order to make this connection a part of its national awareness, Israel had to go through great suffering.

The invisibility of God in Israel is different from the invisibility of the gods in Japan. For Israel the invisibility of God and the ethical character of God are united. For Japan the invisibility of God does not appear to have ethical implications. The invisible gods of Japan do not express themselves in words such as these written in the Book of Jeremiah:



> Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing, and does not give him his wages; who says, "I will build myself a great house with spacious upper rooms," and cuts out windows for it, paneling it with vermilion. Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? says the Lord. (22:13-16)

To take care of the cause of the poor and needy is to know the God of Israel. The visible "great house with spacious upper rooms" is dramatically opposed to the knowledge of the invisible ethical God. Similarly, Jesus remarked:

> But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matt. 6:3,4)

The precise connection between the rejection of the invisible ethical God and the rise of destructive kings in the visible world is not self-evident. This bridge is built of theological stones. The rejection of the ethical God can take place in two different historical situations: a willful rejection, as in Nazi Germany, and an ignorant rejection, as in imperial Japan

Japanese culture and religion developed at a distance from the influence of Israel. Instead of the words of the invisible, ethical God, Japan has a mythology. Exploited by political ambition in the 30s and 40s this mythology was made to speak harsh ideological language of the chauvinistic language of the imperial throne "coeternal with the heavens and the earth." In doing this, Japan unknowingly rejected the invisible, ethical God.

Willful rejection can happen only within the monotheistic zone of Judaeo-Christian-Islamic cultures, the home of the invisible, ethical God. A special kind of "theology" is required in this zone to dethrone God. Thus there arose in Germany during World War II a group of people called "German Christians." They developed a pseudo-theology that rejected the invisible ethical God, making it possible for them to support Hitler *and* his policy towards the Jews. Today the voice of American Christians who would defend Christian civilization with nuclear bombs is an illustration of the same kind of theology. Japan does not have the kind of theology that willfully dethrones God. Japan's dethronement of God is an ignorant act.

(Un)righteous Nations

Whether a nation has been under the influence of the tradition of Israel or not, the fact of idolatry, even if it is not recognized as idolatry, will bring destruction

upon that nation. Whether or not we have a theological system that condemns human arrogance, imperial arrogance will eventually destroy itself. The inner connection between the rejection of the invisible ethical God and national destruction does not require our philosophical and religious understanding of it. On the other hand, it is possible that a nation that is not under the historical influence of Christianity can perform, also unknowingly, the will of the biblical God better than the Christian nations do. It is not the "Christian" United States, but the "pagan" Japan that has been struggling to uphold a constitution that opposes war.

These observations indicate that the comparison of the people who say "my help comes from heaven and earth" and the people who say "my help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth" does not necessarily favor the Judaeo-Christian tradition. We need to ask why it is that the current rise of militarism, which threatens the whole world with annihilation, is a product of the culture which finds its help in the creator God rather than the culture fascinated by the totality of nature. Why is this so? I cannot answer.

The ambiguity of history defies all of our neat understanding of it. Yet there is something in history that intimates, as I see it, the mysterious connection between the rejection of the invisible, ethical God and the self-destruction of nations.

What does the Lord — the Maker of heaven and earth — require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

Why Inflation Hurts: Some Psychological and Theological Perspectives

Thomas E. Ludwig and David G. Myers

The authors are on the psychology faculty at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. This essay is adapted from ***Inflation, Poortalk, and the Gospel*** *(Judson Press, 1981), which they co-authored with philosopher Merold Westphal and economist Robin Klay.*

Everyone knows that inflation hurts. It doesn't take an economist to recognize that dollars buy less, or an accountant to realize that fixed pensions are causing economic havoc for the elderly poor. But inflation also has a less obvious psychological impact. Consider this pair of facts: 1) People at all income levels except the top think that just 10% to 20% more income would bring more happiness.[1] 2) Even with our recent loss in buying power, the average American today enjoys a real disposable income (corrected for inflation and taxes) that is 50% higher than in the 1950s.[2] We have more cars, more color television sets, and more of all the outward signs of wealth than ever before. Since we believe that money increases happiness and since we do in fact have more money today, we must be happier, right?

Wrong. Americans today are no more likely than those of the 1950s to report feeling happy and satisfied with their lives. In 1957, for example, 35% reported themselves "very happy." By 1980, when our affluence had increased more than 50%, how many now declared themselves "very happy"? Only 33%![3] While Americans' affluence has risen dramatically, their happiness has not. In fact, if we listen closely to the middle-class conversations around us, it appears that discontent has multiplied.

As people's spending outstrips their incomes, they feel and proclaim that they are underpaid, defeated by inflation and taxes, and incapable of affording their family needs. Workers complain that they cannot make ends meet on their inadequate salaries. Friends grouse to one another about rising costs and find bittersweet pleasure in itemizing everything they cannot afford. People living in lavish homes bemoan the cost of trivial items. To paraphrase Sir Winston Churchill, it seems that never have so many people been so unthankful for so much. We've coined a word for this commiserating: *poortalk.*[4]

Complaints from those at the bottom of the economic ladder are certainly justified, but why all the poortalk from middle-class folk? Why hasn't the growth of our prosperity been matched by an increase in our satisfaction with life? At one level of explanation, several psychological principles combine to make us feel worse about our lot in life than is necessary.

---

[1] B. Strumpel, "Economic Life-Styles, Values, and Subjective Welfare," *Economic Means for Human Needs,* ed., B. Strumpel (Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, Univ. of Michigan, 1976).

[2] *Statistical Abstract of the United States.* Washington, D.C. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980. Earlier data from the 1950, 1960, and 1970 editions.

[3] Data from T. W. Smith of the National Opinion Research Center.

[4] D. Myers & T. Ludwig, "Let's Cut the Poortalk," *Saturday Review,* Oct. 16, 1978, pp. 24-25. See also T. Ludwig and D. Myers, "How Christians Can Cope with Inflation," *Christian Century,* May 30, 1979, pp. 609-613.

Rising Expectations

The first principle is the *adaptation-level* phenomenon. Although research on this topic is relatively recent, the idea dates back to the ancient Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. The basic point is that success and failure, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, are relative to our prior experience. If our achievements fall below the neutral point defined by our prior experience, we feel dissatisfied and frustrated. If our achievements rise above those expectations, we experience success and satisfaction.

If, however, the improvements persist, we adapt to them. Our experience is recalibrated so that the color TV that was formerly positive and pleasure-producing becomes merely neutral, and what was formerly neutral becomes negative. Psychologists Philip Brickman and Donald Campbell have noted that this principle, which is well grounded in research, predicts that humanity will never create a social paradise on earth. Even if we would come close to it, our utopia would soon be subject to reassessment so that we would again feel sometimes pleased, sometimes deprived, and sometimes neutral. Increased material goods, leisure time, or social prestige will give pleasure only initially. "Even as we contemplate our satisfaction with a given accomplishment, the satisfaction fades," note Brickman and Campbell, "to be replaced finally by a new indifference and a new level of striving."[5]

This is why, despite the increase in real income during the past several decades, the average American today reports no greater feeling of general happiness and satisfaction than was the case 20 years ago. "Poverty," said Plato, "consists not in the decrease of one's possessions, but in the increase of one's greed."

A recent study of state lottery winners also illustrates the principle.[6] Researchers at Northwestern University found that people felt good about winning the lottery. They typically said that it was one of the best things ever to happen to them. Yet their reported happiness did not increase. In fact, everyday activities like reading or eating breakfast became less pleasurable. It seemed that winning the lottery was such a high point that life's ordinary pleasures paled by comparison. The point is clear: if we seek life satisfaction through material achievement, we will need a continually expanding level of affluence to maintain our old level of contentment.

Comparing Ourselves to Others

Whereas the adaptation-level phenomenon is rooted in changes in our own experience across time, the *relative-deprivation principle* is rooted in our comparisons with other people. The basic point is that success and failure, happiness and discontent, are also relative to what we observe others like ourselves experiencing. If our rewards surpass those received by comparable others, we are



happy and contented; if our rewards fall below those received by our peers, we are indignant. A salary raise for a city's police officers will temporarily increase their morale, but it may deflate that of the firefighters.

This principle is not new. Karl Marx wrote:

> A house may be large or small; as long as the surrounding houses are equally small, it satisfies all social demands for a dwelling. But let a palace arise beside the little house, and it shrinks from a little house into a hut.[7]

Pieter Sorokin, a sociologist in the early 1900s, argued that "poverty or wealth of a man is measured, not by what he has at present, but by what others have."[8]

The relative-deprivation phenomenon has been supported by laboratory research and national surveys. In one survey of worker satisfaction, the workers in the deteriorated factory that had the worst pay and working conditions measured in the survey were not all that dissatisfied with their jobs. Conversely, workers in the best-paying factory were not as satisfied as expected. The researchers concluded that "it appeared that the constant exposure to the very high level [of affluence] that existed in this plant and community caused workers to shift the frame of reference against which they evaluated their [own] pay."[9] On a broader scale, Brickman and Campbell have suggested that Castro "may have raised the psychic well-being of the Cubans simply by getting rid of the rich tourists who came in numbers sufficient to constitute a very unfavorable comparison group."[10] If so, then Castro made a serious mistake by allowing exiles in the U.S. to return for family visits in 1979. The well-dressed, affluent exiles carrying color television sets as gifts may have generated enough relative deprivation to help spark the 1980 wave of refugees.

Evaluating Ourselves

Two additional phenomena fuel the relative-deprivation experience. Recent psychological research has devoted considerable attention to a *self-serving bias*[11]

---

[5] P. Brickman & D. Campbell, "Hedonic Relativism and Planning the Good Society," *Adaptation-Level Theory,* ed., M. Appley (New York: Academic Press, 1971), p. 287.

[6] P. Brickman, D. Coates, & R. Janoff-Bulman, "Lottery Winners and Accident Victims: Is Happiness Relative?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 36 (1978): 917-927.

[7] Quoted in F. Crosby, "A Model of Egoistic Relative Deprivation," *Psychological Review* 83 (1976), p. 85.

[8] Quoted in F. Crosby, *op. cit.,* p. 85.

[9] P. Smith, L. Kendall, & C. Hulin, *The Measurement of Satisfaction in Work and Retirement* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969). Quoted in Crosby, *op. cit.*

[10] P. Brickman & D. Campbell, *op. cit.,* p. 296.

[11] For a review of this concept, see D. Myers, *The Inflated Self: Human Illusions and the Biblical Call to Hope* (New York: Seabury, 1980).

in our view of reality. It is popularly believed that most of us suffer from the "I'm not O.K. — you're O.K." problem of low self-esteem. As comedian Groucho Marx put it, "I'd never join any club that would accept a person like me." But the evidence now indicates that William Saroyan was much closer to the truth: "Every man is a good man in a bad world — as he himself knows."

Time and again, experiments have revealed that we take credit for our positive behaviors — "I donated money because I am a generous person" — while we blame our negative behaviors on external circumstances — "It wasn't my fault. I yelled at you because of what you did." Likewise, after working on a problem, people generally accept credit if successful (attributing the achievement to their ability and effort), yet attribute failure to such external factors as bad luck or the problem's inherent "impossibility." Something or someone is always to blame. In experiments that require two people to cooperate in order to make money, most individuals blame their partner when the couple fails to cooperate. This illustrates a tendency evident in that first recorded excuse: "The woman you gave me . . ."

These findings are complemented by research which consistently reveals that, on a variety of dimensions, most people see themselves as better than average. For example, most see themselves as more ethical than their peers and as less prejudiced than others in their communities. Most citizens view themselves as more concerned than their neighbors about assuring clean air and water and consuming less electricity. Most students rate themselves above average in leadership ability and athletic ability. Most workers see themselves as more competent and committed than the average worker.

The human tendency to see oneself as more deserving than others is surely a source of much discontent. When a company or an institution awards merit salary raises, at least half the employees will receive only an average raise or less. Since few see themselves as average or below, many will feel that an injustice has been done. The shortest line of all would be composed of those who feel they are overpaid.

The resentment that accompanies high inflation — even in times when wage increases keep pace with prices — partly reflects the self-serving bias. Economist George Katona observed that people tend to perceive their wage increases as the reward for their talent and effort, and thus they see price increases as cheating them of gains which are rightfully theirs.[12]

The dissatisfactions bred by self-serving pride are compounded by another psychological phenomenon, *upward comparisons.* Laboratory experiments indicate that when people are given the opportunity to compare themselves with various other people, they generally choose to measure themselves against



those whose performance or rewards have been superior rather than inferior to their own.

It seems that when climbing the ladder of social status, people look up, not down; their attention is focused on where they are going, not on from where they have come. Psychologists have found no upper bounds for the rising aspirations embodied in these principles. The ladder seems infinite, so unless we renounce the climb, we will be forever comparing ourselves with others above us. We are like rats on a treadmill, requiring an ever-increasing level of income and social status just to feel neutral.

The Problem Goes Deeper

The preceding psychological analysis of inflation's impact helps explain our emotional trauma, but a piece of the puzzle is still missing. When pressed to explain why these psychological phenomena are so widespread, the psychologist can only answer: "Because they are part of human nature." But *why* are they part of human nature? One answer to this question is theological, for the psychological mechanisms mentioned above reflect the sins of greed *(pleonexia)* and arrogant pride *(hubris)*.

Our grasping greediness makes us want to collect possessions as a way of monopolizing the resources that God has distributed among people. As Philip Slater says, "Possession is a way of ensuring access to whatever it is that we want to enjoy — and therefore preventing others from having access to it. . . Ownership is a way of grasping and clinging to something we're afraid will be taken away from us."[13] The greed that makes us pile up possessions is really a demonstration of our "unfaith," our lack of trust in God's ability to take care of our needs.

In addition, our pride tells us that what we have is ours, because we've earned it. Our pride even makes us want to deny that God has created us, that he has called us into being, and that we are his creatures. Both of these sins are really idolatry; *pleonexia* leads us to worship our possessions rather than God, and *hubris* leads us to worship ourselves as masters of our destiny.

Thus, the economic commiserating we hear all around us is therefore at once both a psychological and a spiritual problem. Perhaps the emotional upheaval brought about by the economic situation is God's judgment on rebellious people. The judgment of God doesn't always come in the form of a calamity such as nuclear war or worldwide depression. Sometimes it takes the form of giving people what they want, giving

---

[12] "Why Do Consumers Fear Inflation?" interview with George Katona in *IRS Newsletter*, Spring, 1979, p. 6 (Institute for Social Research, Univ. of Michigan).

[13] P. Slater, "Wealth Addiction," *Quest*, 1977, pp. 52-56, 108.

them over to their desires, to let them see the emptiness and unfullfillment that results.

So Where Is The Cure?

The place to start is at the root of the problem. We Christians need constantly to be reminded that obsession with an ever-increasing level of income and possessions is idolatry and rebellion against God, and the consequences are deadly serious. Unfortunately, the "more, bigger, quicker, richer" attitude produced by decades of rapidly rising prosperity and amplified by our sins of pride and greed is deeply embedded in our consciousness and expectations, so deeply that a radical transformation is needed. We need a whole new way of thinking and feeling; we need a "new mind." St. Paul did not share our economic problems, but he was aware of the need for radical transformations:

> Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed. Then you will be able to discern the will of God, and to know what is good, acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2 NEB)

What are some steps to "remaking our minds"? The first is to redefine what it means to be happy. Money in the pocket means happiness, while overdue bills means unhappiness. This "money equals happiness" attitude is widely held, and is reinforced by the media.

But does money really bring happiness? If we analyze our present life satisfaction, pinpointing recent changes in wealth or possessions, what will we find? Most of us will discover that past fluctuations in income or material possessions have had only a transient impact on our happiness. "If you love money, you will never be satisfied; if you long to be rich, you will never get all you want. It is useless." (Eccles. 5:10, TEV) It is fitting that the Declaration of Independence specifies only the *pursuit* of happiness as an inalienable right, since our elation over a raise in pay or an unexpected inheritance always fades into neutrality, only to be replaced by a new craving for an even higher level of income and possessions.[14] We're like the child who races after soap bubbles in the wind, only to see each one vanish just as it is grasped.

This is the adaptation-level phenomenon at work, employed in the service of our sinful greed. But just becoming aware of this principle can help us gain mastery over it. Recognizing that our economic "wants" and "needs" are relative to our past experience can help diminish the pain that occurs when those "wants" cannot be afforded. Recognizing our past captivity to our material appetites can help us escape from that slavery now. If we know that our getting that newer home, taking that nicer vacation, owning that larger stereo system, will ultimately leave us no happier than



we are now, we may be freed for greater enjoyment of the pleasures we now have.

As we seek to redefine our happiness not in terms of the growth of our income or possessions, nor in terms of some arbitrary level of material wealth, we would do well to consider what Jesus says about happiness in his Sermon on the Mount.[15] How happy are those who are humble, who are merciful, who are pure in heart, who work for peace. Rather than defining happiness as something reserved for the rich and powerful, Jesus proclaims that happiness belongs in a special way to those who are poor, who mourn, and who suffer for the Gospel. This is not to say that grief, poverty, and pain are in themselves "blessed"; nowhere does the Bible teach a "kick me again, God" masochism. The poor and the mourning are blessed precisely because the obstacles coming between them and God have been removed; the Kingdom is theirs! The rich and powerful are tempted to depend on their own resources, while the poor and suffering acknowledge their dependence on God and are open to his gracious intervention. "Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully!" (Matt. 5:6, TEV)

Not only can we change our attitudes about happiness, we can also redefine what we mean by "success." The American Dream defines success in economic terms, and equating success with wealth is not without justification. Many of the wealthy are reaping the rewards of their competence and hard work. But there have always been equally dedicated individuals whose hard work has not produced economic rewards. As the Preacher of Ecclesiastes states, "Wise men do not always earn a living, intelligent men do not always get rich, and capable men do not always rise to high positions." (Eccles. 9:1, TEV) What makes this a problem is the degree to which our individual feelings of self-worth are intertwined with our notion of success. Economic success somehow gives value and dignity to an otherwise ordinary life. To be rich is to be "somebody"; the wealthy person has "made it" in a way that a poor man never could.

Such thinking illustrates what social psychologists now call "the just world hypothesis."[16] Most people seem to assume that this is a just world, that people deserve what they get. From childhood we learn that rewards come to those who are good and punishments to those who are bad. From this it is but a short leap to assuming (as people in social psychological experiments often do) that those who are rewarded *must* be good and those who are punished also *must*

---

[14] Noted in P. Brickman & D. Campbell, "Hedonic Relativism and Planning the Good Society," *Adaptation-Level Theory*, ed., M. Appley (New York: Academic Press, 1971).

[15] See *Interpreter's Bible* on Matt. 5.

[16] M. Lerner, *The Belief in a Just World* (New York: Plenum Press, 1980).

have deserved their fate. Job's three friends illustrated this "just world" thinking when they argued that his suffering was surely brought on by his own sin. While it's true that effort and wisdom are often rewarded, the just world assumption can also lead people to justify economic injustice, and to mistakenly assume that the wealthy *must* merit their wealth.

Redefining success means placing value on our hard work and achievements, regardless of whether we receive economic rewards. If we can view our labors as intrinsically of value to ourselves, or as contributing to the welfare of others, we may be freed from the need to evaluate our success or lack of it in economic terms. This is not meant to commend a blind tolerance of economic injustice. Rather, we should distinguish carefully between those things that are within our power to change and those that are not. If the source of the perceived injustice is subject to our control, then we should struggle mightily to correct the problem. But if it lies outside our power, we should accept our situation with calmness and equanimity.

Finally, redefining success means placing value on our present economic condition, even if it's not improving. Here a careful choice of comparison groups can help us. We can resist the tendency to measure ourselves against those who are higher on the ladder of success, or who are moving up more rapidly than we are. Instead, we can choose to compare ourselves with those who are less fortunate.

> As Abraham Maslow noted,
>
> All you have to do is go to a hospital and hear all the simple blessings that people never before realized *were* blessings — being able to urinate, to sleep on your side, to be able to swallow, to scratch an itch, etc. Could *exercises* in deprivation educate us faster about all our blessings?[17]

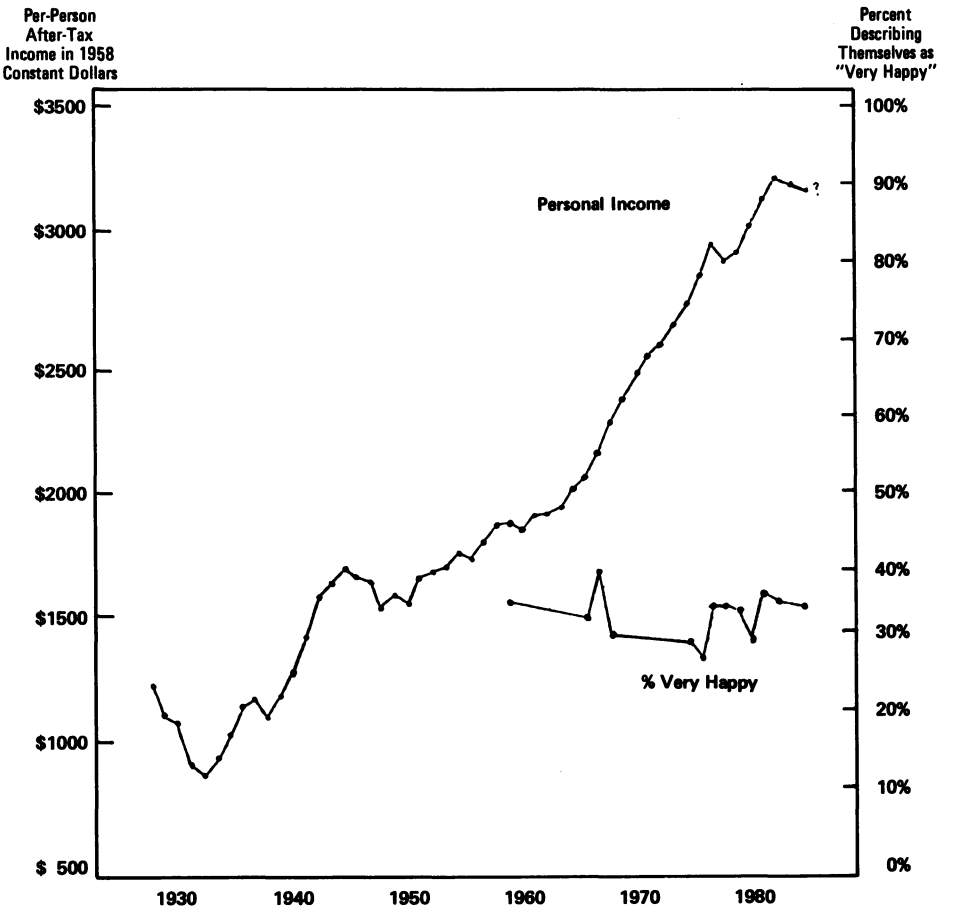
A research team led by Marshall Dermer put University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee women through imaginative exercises in deprivation.[18] After viewing grim depictions of how bad life was in Milwaukee in 1900, or after imagining and writing about various personal tragedies, such as being burned and disfigured, the women expressed increased satisfaction with the quality of their own lives.

Earlier generations were taught to perform such comparisons as a way of "counting one's blessings." Today we can gain the same benefit by means of selective exposure to comparison groups. Our fragile feelings of success are likely to vanish in situations where we are sur-

---

[17] From *Abraham H. Maslow: A Memorial Volume*, ed., B. G. Maslow (Monterey, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 1972).

[18] M. Dermer, S. Cohen, E. Jacobsen, and E. Anderson, "Evaluative Judgments of Aspects of Life as a Function of Vicarious Exposure to Hedonic Extremes," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37* (1979): 247-260.



Does money buy happiness? Money can purchase freedom from certain types of pain. Yet, while buying power has nearly doubled since the 1950s, self-reported happiness has not increased.

(Sources: Historical Statistics of the U.S. and surveys by National Opinion Research Center and the Institute for Social Research.)

rounded by other people's luxury and wealth. Since such settings emphasize the economic connotations of success, we can best nurture a different set of attitudes if we avoid those situations. On the other hand, we can go out of our way to confront true poverty, to drown our relative deprivations in the sea of real deprivation that exists for so many people.

Discovering how relatively small our problems are can make us more sensitive to genuine deprivation. It can give us an appreciation of the extent to which some people's unmet needs — clean water, adequate nutrition, medical care — are things we take for granted. Realizing this will not only sensitize us to the suffering of the truly impoverished; it will also help us develop an attitude of gratitude for what we have. And if we are genuinely grateful, we will be empowered to use our wealth individually and collectively to meet the needs of others.

But we can't just snap our fingers and expect to see radical changes in our attitudes. The process of "remaking our minds" is long and challenging. That's why we need to make a point of finding others who have similar attitudes and values. Seeing them engaged in the same struggle can help reinforce our own efforts, and their successes can serve as models of the changes we have yet to make. The mutual support in a community of concerned Christians can help all of us complete the transformation by not only changing the way we think, but also changing the way we live.

How Can People Under Thirty Be Taught Law/Gospel Theology?

Robert Conrad

Professor of Practical Theology, Christ Seminary — Seminex

James Fowler's research in faith development and his descriptions of the stages of faith have important implications for any Lutheran committed to a Law/Gospel theology (see the review article on Fowler's *Stages of Faith* in this issue). Since Law/Gospel theology most closely resembles a stage five, Conjunctive mode of thinking (as will be demonstrated later in the article), a stage Fowler contends is not reached until mid-life, it would seem improbable that anyone below 30 years of age could think in Law/Gospel terms. However, there are teaching models that afford the possibility of moving toward a stage five mode of thinking and help persons deal with the polarities and ambiguities of life. After an explanation of Fowler's stages of faith and how Law/Gospel theology is similar to a stage five Conjunctive mode of thought, some teaching models are presented that make it possible for young people to think in a Law/Gospel mode.

The Stages of Faith

In order to understand Fowler's stages of faith it is necessary to note that he builds on the pioneering work of Jean Piaget about the way people grow in their ability to think. Passing beyond physical manipulation of the world which characterized their lives as babies, young children move to an imaginative way of dealing with the world. At age seven comes the time of concrete thought, with abstract thought emerging at eleven or twelve. Piaget was also interested in how moral thought developed. He found that the young, imaginative child sees a world alive with forces ready to punish the little wrong-doer. One does right in order to avoid punishment. The child of concrete thought (seven years) is the child of equality. Everything has to be fair. The child who can think abstractly (eleven or twelve) thinks in terms of equality, that is, all factors of the situation must be taken into account in making a moral judgment.[1]

Lawrence Kohlberg of Harvard expanded the work of Piaget into three levels of moral judgment: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. Do people make moral judgments as others around them (conventional), or are they yet unable to do so (preconventional)? Or are they beyond simply thinking as others do (postconventional)? Each of the three levels has two stages. The preconventional level has an early childhood stage of punishment and obedience in which one does right in order not to be punished. The second stage is one in which there is an insistence on fairness and equal treatment. At the conventional level there are the third stage teenagers who do what is expected because they want to be liked and accepted by peers.

---

[1] Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 197-325.

The fourth stage law and order adult does what the social order demands. Postconventional people are principled people. At stage five they uphold the basic rights of people even when that conflicts with the law. The sixth stage is one in which universal ethical principles constitute the guides for ethical decision-making.[2]

James Fowler, a former colleague of Kohlberg's at Harvard, began to investigate development in thinking about self, world, and God. He called it faith development, in contrast to Kohlberg's moral development, and determined that there are six stages of faith development. There is a pre-stage of Undifferentiated Faith in infancy, followed by the first true stage of Intuitive-Projective Faith, typical of the three to seven year old. Imagination and fantasy control thinking about self, world, and God at this stage. The child of seven to twelve has a Mythic-Literal Faith in which the child thinks in terms of literal story.

The third stage is that of Synthetic-Conventional Faith. It is the stage of the adolescent and of many adults. These people believe and think as do the people of the reference group around them. It is a stage of unquestioning, conventional faith. This is followed by a stage in which individuals, no longer content with unquestioned beliefs, construct a meaning system of their own. This rational and logical stage is called Individuative-Reflective Faith. It does not usually begin before seventeen or eighteen, and for a significant number of adults emerges only in the mid-thirties or forties. Some adults never achieve it.

The fifth stage of Conjunctive faith recognizes and embraces the paradoxes of life in creative tension. Age thirty, or mid-life, is a minimal age for this stage since it requires that one know suffering and loss, responsibility and failure, commitment and disappointment. Out of such experience comes the ability to recognize in oneself polarities of good and evil, life and death, community and separateness. It is this stage that most closely resembles Law/Gospel theology.

The final stage is Universalizing Faith. Very few persons attain this stage and Fowler can only point to examples such as Mother Teresa of Calcutta. In stage six the self ceases to be the center of existence and it is immersed in the ultimate in a way that allows self-spending action on behalf of others. The stage six person dwells in the world as a transforming person.[3]

Luther's Law/Gospel Theology

It is possible to describe Luther's experience and resultant theology in terms of Fowler's stages of faith. Although the primary correlation is between a stage five Conjunctive Faith and Luther's theology, Luther's earlier life and theology can be assigned to Fowler's stages three and four.

Luther's early training was in nominalistic theology, a theology that emphasized human ability to refrain from sin and take the first step toward God. Then God would grant grace for people to take the second step to attain the righteousness God demanded. Only then would the full saving grace of Christ be granted. It seems probable to say that Luther's early training and his unquestioning acceptance of this school of thought is similar to a stage three Synthetic-Conventional Faith.

But that did not last long, for Luther questioned the validity of the belief system and began to construct his own faith structure, influenced by the German mystics, Augustine, and the Bible. From the mystics he learned the importance of despair as a part of spiritual

rebirth. From Augustine he learned that we are justified by grace and not by works. Augustine led him back to the Bible and St. Paul. Luther's early lectures on Psalms (1513-15), Romans (1515-16), and Hebrews (1517-18) stated his own early theology. This can be likened to a stage four Individuative-Reflective Faith. But all of this was prelude to Luther's breakthrough in 1518, the time of his greatest theological insight.

Luther was in a continual struggle with God. He felt unworthy of the grace of God since he could not refrain from sin and take the first step. Though he wanted a gracious God, all he found was a judging one. The righteousness which God demands, he suddenly realized, was righteousness which God gives. The Gospel reveals the gift of righteousness and faith receives the gift. As Luther went on to interpret his new-found insight, he recognized and incorporated a number of polarities in his theology. God is one who remains hidden in judgment but reveals himself in grace; one who does his alien work in order to perform his proper work; one who judges through the Law but saves through the Gospel. We are also comprised of opposites. We are at the same time saint and sinner, slave to sin and yet free in the Gospel, actively seeking to save ourselves but saved only by passive acceptance of the Gospel.

Such a dialectical theology correlates well with a stage five Conjunctive Faith described by Fowler. Remembering Fowler has indicated that such a faith-thought pattern rarely occurs before age thirty or mid-life, it would seem improbable that the average confirmation age child, teenager, or seminarian could fully grasp a Law/Gospel theology understood as a dynamic of human experience. They have not lived long enough nor experienced life enough to deal dynamically with all of its polarities and ambiguities.

Models for Helping Law/Gospel Theological Thought

Fowler's thesis might seem to sound the death knell for Lutheran education in parishes and seminaries, at least for those who have not attained a stage five Conjunctive Faith. Rather than wait for the student to age, the educator will attempt to supply a confrontation with the paradoxes and polarities of life, with experiences of suffering and loss, responsibility and failure, commitment and disappointment. The educational process, therefore, will accelerate the attainment of stage five status.

What is needed is a teaching model that sets the stage for such transition and/or for recognition of and dealing with the ambiguities of life. Dialectical theological thought is not a content to be taught; it is rather a process that can be made possible and enhanced. When such thought occurs, it is a transforming experience.

My own Luther research has demonstrated that transforming or imaginative knowing is what best describes what happened in Luther's experience. I found a four-step process of unresolved conflict, resignation in the face of inability to solve this conflict, the experience of a new and creative insight, and the interpretation of the insight to others. To use a teaching model built on this *creative conflict process* teachers must take certain *preparatory* steps. First, they must select a conflict appropriate to the life of

[2] Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development,* Essays on Moral Development, Vol. I (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), pp. 409-412.

[3] James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), pp. 119-213.

the learners. To do this, teachers must be sensitive to the group, allow them to express the conflicts they experience, and listen with an alert ear to what is going on. Sources other than the learners can be used to demonstrate conflicts appropriate to their lives.

Next, the conflict must be stated in terms of simultaneously opposing forces. The conflict must be universal in character, not particular to only one person or a small group of persons. Finally, the conflict must be significant enough to engage the totality of the learner and lead to a feeling of impasse. An example of a statement of conflict can be extracted from one facet of Luther's experience and theology. His free/slave concept can be stated in conflict terms as follows: "I want to be free for others but the need to care for myself often traps me in my own self-centeredness."

After determining a statement of conflict, the teacher should examine the opposing forces in the conflict and determine the way in which they manifest themselves in life. This provides a basis for the questions to be asked later in the group discussion. An examination of the conflict statement based on Luther's theology might include the following observations:

— I want to care for others and their needs because I feel it is my responsibility.

— When I fail to meet the needs of others, I feel guilty about it.

— I also need to care for myself. I often feel guilty for not taking advantage of opportunities.

— Though just caring about myself seems wrong, the need is often so overwhelming that I can't do anything about it.

The next step in teacher preparation is the selection of a medium that incorporates the conflict, one that will serve to bring the conflict forcefully to consciousness in the learners. The medium can be a story, film, recording, current event, or another item. An example of a medium incorporating the sample conflict is the Oklahoma Land Run Story about a young man who was in the race for land when the Oklahoma Territory opened. When a young woman, a stranger to him, falls from her exhausted horse, he stops to help her up, but she jumps on his horse and races to claim the same spot of land that he wanted. After selection of the conflict medium the final step in teacher preparation is the determination of questions that can be asked in order to help the learners become aware of the conflicting forces involved. Questions for the above story are:

— If you were the young man, would you have felt angry or frustrated or helpless or hopeful?

— If you were the young man, would you have run after the young woman and hit her or argued with her or asked her to share the claim?

— Would you have tried to find another claim?

— Would you have sat down and cried?

After the teacher has gone through the four preparatory steps, the teaching-learning session can begin. In the conflict phase the teacher presents the conflict medium and invites questions related to the conflict incorporated in the medium. This permits the learners to make their own statement of the conflict as they understand it. The conflict may

turn out to be somewhat differently stated than the teacher's previous statement but should still be in terms of mutually opposing forces. In exploring the conflict as experienced in the learners' lives, the class will be guided by observations and questions gained in the teacher's preparation:

— Have you often felt the responsibility to help someone else?

— How have you felt when you failed to carry out that responsibility?

— Have you ever regretted that you did not take advantage of opportunities to help yourself?

— Who usually wins out in your life, yourself or others?

Such questions sharpen the conflict in the lives of the learners. Eventually the conflict should also be sharpened so that the learners come face to face with God.

Biblical material is appropriate here. In Matthew 19:16-22, for example, the rich young man asked what good deed he must do to have eternal life. After Jesus told him to keep the commandments, the young man assured him that he had observed all the commandments. Jesus then said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." The young man responded by walking away in sorrow because he had great possessions. Discussion of this incident brings the learner face to face with the demand of God and is an example of what Luther calls the second use of the Law. (What we do or fail to do involves not only ourselves and others but also involves God.) In order to feel the conflict as deeply and sharply as possible, each learner should state the conflict in terms of his or her own life, orally or in writing.

The second phase in the creative conflict teaching-learning model is resignation. The learners should be allowed to interrupt their dealing with the conflict and have some moments of silence or engage in another activity. This allows the conflict to be dealt with at another level of the mind, even if the learners are not consciously struggling with it.

During or after the cessation of conscious struggle the third phase in the model, insight, may occur in the form of a revelation or illumination. The learners may experience a revelation of God as One who forgives, accepts, and frees people from their own enslavement, so that they can be free for others. Of course, the insight may not occur, but that is the risk that the teacher, the group, and the individual must be willing to take.

When the learners indicate they have experienced insights, the teacher provides a context in which the insights can be shared, interpreted, and verified as constructive resolutions to the conflict. In this fourth phase the members of the group help one another test the validity of the insight each has gained from the conflict with which all have struggled. The whole process is outlined in Figure 1.[4]

Another model that allows for the possibility of transformation is the Lutheran Teaching Model of Stephen Schmidt.[5]

---

[4] Robert L. Conrad, "Christian Education and Creative Conflict" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1975). For a related model see James E. Loder, *The Transforming Moment: Understanding Convictional Experience* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), pp. 66-68.

[5] Stephen Schmidt, "Teaching the Faith: On the Edge of the 70's," LEA Monograph Series, Vol. I, No. 1 (River Forest, IL: Lutheran Education Association, 1971).

Teacher Only	Teacher and Learners	Learners Only	Teacher and Learners
a. Selection of conflict appropriate to learners. b. Conflict statement of opposing forces. c. Examination of full dimensions of conflict. d. Selection of medium incorporating the conflict. e. Questions related to conflict medium. (Above the conscious level.)	Step 1 – Conflict Phase a. Presentation of conflict medium. b. Questions that examine conflict medium. c. Agreement on conflict involved in the medium. d. Discussion of conflict in personal life. Sharpen conflict in relation to God.		Step 4 – Interpretation Phase Opportunity for learners to express insight and test validity.
(Below the conscious level.)		Step 2 – Resignation Phase Time for other levels of the mind to deal with conflict. Step 3 – Insight Phase Occurrence of insight, revelation, bi-sociation.	

Figure 1. Creative Conflict Teaching-Learning Model[4]

He bases his model on the Law/Gospel theology of Werner Elert and focuses more on the role of the teacher and the group and less on the internal dynamics of the person than does my creative conflict model.

Finally, Thomas Groome of Boston College has developed a promising Shared Praxis model with five movements. In the first movement the participants are invited to name their own activity concerning the topic under discussion (present action). Secondly, they are invited to reflect on why they do what they do, and what the likely or intended consequences of their actions are (critical reflections). Then the educator, thirdly, presents to the group the Christian Story concerning the topic at hand and the faith response it invites (Story and its Vision). In the fourth movement the participants are invited to appropriate the Story to their lives in a dialectic with their own stories (dialectic between Story and stories). And, finally, there is opportunity to choose a personal faith response for the future (dialectic between Vision and visions).[6]

These models are but a beginning in the exploration of the educational implications of Fowler's stages of faith. There needs to be much more educational exploration and experimentation, as well as more extensive critique of the stages of faith themselves. But enough has been said to show the dynamic possibilities of Christian education today and how Fowler's discovery of stages of faith can transform our understanding of what teaching is all about.

---

[6] Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religous Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), pp. 207-208.



Prophets In Conflict — Who Speaks for God?

James A. Rimbach

Pastor, Concordia Lutheran Church, Pullman, Washington

Every investigation of false prophecy in the Bible begins with the arresting notice that there is no term in the Hebrew language for "false prophet." The Scriptures of the Old Testament simply present us with "prophets" — prophets with variant claims and prophets with variant messages. That is why the question we are investigating is most often not termed a study of *false prophecy* but a study of *prophetic conflict.*

When the voice of a prophet is questioned or his claim denied, it is not commonly said, "He is not a prophet," or "He is a false prophet." Thus, even the false prophets "prophesy"; that is, they proclaim a message that is supposedly divine. The questioned prophecy may be characterized as "lies, vanity, deception, wind," all terms which imply that it is inappropriate, unreliable, and ineffective. It is a modern misunderstanding to dub such prophecy unorthodox, mistaken, or not conforming to a standard of truth. The Greek version of the Old Testament (Septuagint) introduced the term *false prophet* into the text at ten locations, nine of them in Jeremiah. In all cases, the Hebrew word being translated is simply *nabi* ("prophet"). Though this translation does not at all violate the context, it remains tendentious.

Biblical prophecy was the declaration of the divine word in such a manner as to give counsel to people and to direct their decisions in various situations. Although that declaration did at times involve prediction or prognostication, the predictive element is quite minor measured against the total prophetic corpus. To eliminate the predictive element of prophecy is to miss *some* of what the prophets have to say; to restrict prophecy to the predictive is to miss *most* of what they have to say.

Prophecy sought to call people to a decision that would alter the course of personal and national life. The theological word for this is "repentance." Since humankind has always been loathe to repent, prophecy had a minor impact on the course of affairs of the Israelite nation. This is not to diminish its value, but only to note that it did not always accomplish what the prophet and the prophet's God wanted it to do. One factor in this failure was the difficulty of discriminating between prophets.

There is much more to be learned from the failure of prophecy than simply the obstinacy of the hearers. It exposes the depth of the problem of judging prophecy. For the mass of people the question was not "who/what is right" and "who/what is wrong," but "whom do we follow" and "how do we (easily) know?"

The Standard Tests

The Bible itself contains a variety of tests which could be applied to prophecy. Consider Deuteronomy 18:

> The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me (i.e., Moses) from among you, from your brethren, him you shall heed. . . . And I will put my words in his mouth,

and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not give heed to my words which he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. And you may say in your heart, "How may we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?" When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you need not be afraid of him. (vv. 15-22)

In this selection, the prophet is presented as an authoritative person, whose authority derives from the possession of the divine word. The prophet who, by contrast, speaks presumptuously is to be disregarded since what he says is *ineffective:* it does not come to pass. In addition to these criteria dealing with the divine, effective word, Deuteronomy warns its readers to beware of prophets who speak in the name of other gods. The note at the end, "Don't be afraid of him," is a radical discounting of such prophets.

It is commonly assumed that Deuteronomy 13 results from a perceived inadequacy in the stipulations of chapter 18. At any rate, its criteria are divergent:

If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder which he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, "Let us go after other gods," which you have not known, "and let us serve them," you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (vv. 1-3)

The performance of a sign or a wonder does not necessarily authenticate the prophet. Although dreams are depreciated, some biblical prophets do pass on words which came to them in a dream. The heart of the passage seems to be its confessional test. Do not listen to the prophet who says, "Let us go and serve gods which we have not known." In these passages we see two attempts to solve a problem that had its roots in the dynamic living situations of the prophets themselves. These "tests" put into "static" terms something that emerged out of the very ambivalent situations of living prophecy.

What Kind of Message?

If we turn now to objections voiced by one prophet against another, we find a wide variety of statements which can be categorized as message-centered objections and person-centered objections.

False prophets, Jeremiah says, proclaim deception or fraud:

The Lord said to me, "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name; I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds. (Jer. 14:14)

How does one know this? We can only reply in the words of Jeremiah 23:32: "It does not *profit* this people at all!"

The false prophet proclaims the vision of his own mind:

Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel. Prophesy and say to those who prophesy out of

their own minds: "Hear the word of the Lord!" . . . They follow their own foolish spirit, and have seen nothing. (Ezek. 13:1-2)

Here again it is stressed that these prophets only pretend to speak the word of Yahweh. This kind of prophecy is often characterized as saying, "peace, peace" where there is no peace. (Ezek. 13:10; Jer. 6:13,14; 8:11; 14:13; 23:17; 28:2-3, 11; Micah 3:5) Obviously, the situation of the nation calls for repentance or an announcement of God's war against Israel. Ezekiel calls activity of the errant prophets "whitewashing" and daubing of a wall. Jeremiah calls it healing the wound of my people lightly:

Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes; they speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. They say continually to those who despise the word of the Lord, "It shall be well with you," and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say: "No evil shall come to you." (Jer. 23:16-17)

If the "wound" of the people is the result of disobedience to Yahweh's covenant, what is called for is not a word of solace but a stern call to repentance. This is the ultimate statement of a message-centered criterion for judging prophecy.

What Kind of Person Is God's Prophet?

Charges centered on the person of the prophet can be divided into two categories: a) the charge of not having "credentials" and b) the charge of immoral conduct. Jeremiah especially questioned the divine commissioning of those prophets with whom he was in conflict.

I did not send the prophets,
yet they ran.
I did not speak to them,
yet they prophesied (Jer. 23:21)

If again we pose the question, "How did Jeremiah know that?" we may suppose that he deduced it by hearing what such prophets had to say.

By far the bulk of the prophets' complaint against other prophets deals with their morality. They engage in magic (Ezek. 13:17-19), are lovers of money (Micah 3:5, 11; Ezek. 13:19; Jer. 6:13), fail to expose iniquity (Lam. 2:4), and engage in cover-up (Ezek. 13:10; 22:28-31; Jer. 6:13; 8:10). False prophets are insolent and treacherous (Zeph. 3:4), thieves (i.e., they "steal" the oracles of the valid prophet [Jer. 23:30]). Not surprisingly, they persecute and seek the death of the true prophet (I Kgs. 22:24; Jer. 26:7).

It is important to remember that when prophets talk about "immorality, lies and adultery," they are probably speaking about spiritual adultery and infidelity to the covenant, not immoral sexual conduct:

Both prophet and priest are ungodly; even in my house I have found their wickedness . . . they commit adultery and walk in lies; they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his wickedness. (Jer. 23:11-14)

These words echo an ever-recurring theme: prophets are "false" because they have a false message, which does not call for or induce repentance! There is nothing about the person of the prophet, open to the casual observer, which marks him apart from his competitors in the field. His message, however, *is* different.

What Kind of Message?

The valid prophetic declaration of the word proceeds from an inner conviction born of a relationship to the God of Israel. We see this most clearly in

Jeremiah. Prophets do not explain, for the most part, how they "got" the word, but they simply assert that they have it and must declare it. When they refer to their sense of calling, or to various auditory or visionary experiences, these appeals do not set them apart from others making similar claims. In the end the "word" must carry the case. The valid prophetic spokesman is not competing for accuracy in prognostication. What he does is call to repentance. *There is a self-evident compatibility between the claim to speak for Yahweh and the call to repentance.* These are the matters that Yahweh is all about, that the covenant is all about, and that the Scriptures are all about.

The call to repentance, and by this we mean the full call (the recanting of one way and the adoption of an alternate course), accounts for the failure of prophecy as a movement. Humankind is reluctant to repent. Success in prophecy, popularly understood, meant and still often does mean to pronounce that which is non-objectionable.

What were the things that caused a person to become a false prophet? Here are three motivations listed by James L. Crenshaw (*Prophetic Conflict: Its Effect Upon Israelite Religion,* 67-73):

1) The desire for success. "Immersed in election theology, the prophets were few and far between who could distinguish patriotism from the divine will."

2) Deference to the king. Since prophetism to a great degree was institutionalized in Israel, the temptation toward sycophancy was particularly severe. Witness the record of the confrontation between Amos and the priest of Bethel.

3) Surrender to popular theology. "The religion of Israel was made up of a faith characterized by confidence in God's faithfullness, satisfaction with the status quo, defiance, despair, and doubt of God's justice. Add to this an avid openness to syncretism."

A Modern Postscript

Whether today's prophets get their words from ecstatic experiences or merely from one another is difficult for us to determine. The warning, "Judge not," may well be in place. But even those who copiously quote the Scriptures or lace their messages with the vocabulary of the church's dogma may not be true.

Those who speak for God ought to adorn their message with a devout and holy life. Ostentatious, opulent lifestyles or conduct unbecoming a Christian should strike us as incongruous in our prophets. In these personal matters, of course, we often lack the whole story and must guard against judging unfairly or imposing our opinions on others.

We recognize the very voice of God in those women and men who remind us of the inescapable connection between faith and life, who proclaim a God who liberates *from* our sinful past and *for* a life that seeks justice in all of society. Theirs is not a message of "peace, peace." They hand on a message of repentance, addressed first to themselves.

But the true prophet also proclaims heaven's joy over the one sinner who repents. (Luke 15:7, 10) The true prophet's God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin. (Exod. 34:6-7)

Books Worth Discussing:
James W. Fowler. *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning.**

Robert Conrad

Professor of Practical Theology, Christ Seminary — Seminex

James Fowler's work on the "stages of faith" is a significant contribution to our understanding of how people develop in their ability to think about God. It is important to understand that he is more concerned about the "how" of thinking than the "what." In other words, there are stages in the *process* of thinking about God that are distinct from, but related to, the *content* of a person's knowledge of God. This concern with the process of thinking about God is called a structural-developmental approach.

Fowler (F) is indebted to Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. While Piaget mapped the route of the growth of thought, including moral thought, from childhood into adulthood, Kohlberg further developed and refined the stages of moral development. F, however, is not content to stay with a cognitive approach to faith development, but wants to add the dimensions of emotion and imagination. For these dimensions of human development he turns to Erik Erikson, famous for his theory of nuclear crises in the psycho-social development of people. Recent psycho-social research has concentrated on adult development and is reported in the work of Daniel Levinson *(The Seasons of Man's Life)*, Roger Gould *(Transformations)*, and the popular writings of Gail Sheehy *(Passages* and *Pathfinders)*. F wants to incorporate life-cycle changes into his stages of faith, but it is questionable if he accomplishes it. He acknowledges that it is difficult to do since stages of faith-thought do not necessarily progress with age, while the life-cycle changes occur *as* persons age. F's stages of faith-thought rely more heavily on the cognitive dimensions of human experience than on the affective or emotional-imaginal dimensions.

According to F, faith is the way people go about composing self, others, and world in the light of their image of an ultimate environment. Many Christians would say this definition is too broad and inclusive since faith is the product of God's grace given uniquely in Jesus Christ. Some psychologists believe that what he describes as faith is really stages of ego development.

F outlines six stages of faith, preceded by a stage of *Undifferentiated Faith* in infancy. An infant learns whether the world and the beings in it are trustworthy or not and this affects all that follows. The first real stage of faith *(Intuitive-Projective Faith)* is typical of the child from ages three to seven, when the imagination is powerful. Long-lasting images and feelings are characteristic of this stage. The child projects powerful images on the world in order to give it meaning. The danger of this stage is that images of terror and destruction can seriously affect the child.

The second stage is *Mythic-Literal Faith.* It is the faith of the child from seven to about twelve. Having gained

* *San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981. 332 pages. Cloth. $14.95.*

the ability to think in concrete terms rather than only in terms of imagination, the child uses narrative and story to give coherence and meaning to life. Such story is taken literally; the child remains confined to the content of the story. Trapped within the story, the child cannot see greater meaning.

Synthetic-Conventional Faith is the third stage. It occurs during adolescence and may be as far as some people ever go. Here the person becomes aware of the many spheres of life and brings them all together in a synthesis of meaning derived from the group or the authority figures important to the individual. It is a conventional, unquestioning faith. The strength of this stage lies in the formation of a personal system of meaning derived from others around the individual, but the expectations of others can become so internalized that later autonomy of judgment and action is jeopardized.

A fourth stage, *Individuative-Reflective Faith,* may occur in the late teens or early twenties. Here the person questions conventional meanings and begins to construct a meaning system of his or her own. The self is no longer defined by others but is sustained by a new identity defined by the person. Coherence is given to the world by explicit systems of concepts. Symbols are demythologized. The strength of this stage is the capacity for critical reflection on the self and its outlook. The danger is an excessive reliance on critical consciousness and a submersion of all other points of view into one's own world view.

F does not find it easy to define the fifth stage of faith. In *Life Maps* (1978) he called it Paradoxical-Consolidative Faith, a term I prefer to his present *Conjunctive Faith.* What F is trying to describe is a faith that knows and recognizes the ambiguities and polarities of life. What the previous stage sought to clarify and make certain, this stage opens up again to paradox and polarity. It holds opposites together in a conjunctive, creative tension. It takes a lot of living to come to this post-critical stage, and F says it is rare before mid-life. The strength of this stage is the capacity to see the polarities of life and to return to the symbolic as a unifying factor. But the danger is that the recognition of paradox may lead to paralysis of thought and action.

The *Universalizing Faith* of the sixth stage is rare. Here individuals become so immersed in the imperatives of love and justice that the self is lost in spending and being spent for the transformation of human existence. Defying the usual safeguards of human existence, sixth-stage people are few in number. They are our fools or saints or martyrs.

F is convinced that his stages of faith are valid descriptions of an invariant sequence of faith development. All people move through the stages in prescribed order without omitting any stage. He is confident that studies in other cultures will corroborate this as a universal sequence. Progress from one stage to the next is viewed as an improvement, because it expands the capacities of the growing person. The further one moves beyond a Synthetic-Conventional faith (stage three), the more likely one is to exhibit commitment in faith. But he is careful not to call into question the validity of the *context* of faith at any stage. Nevertheless, many people will be tempted to make judgments about other people's stages of faith. They will strive for progress themselves, an ever-present drive in an achievement-oriented society. F has more noble aims: "Perhaps our studies and the accounts of stages of faith this book has offered will enable us to see something of how we can become co-re-

sponsible with God for the quality and extensiveness of faith on earth."

What might this mean? Exegetes who operate only with a critical view of Scriptures are functioning at the fourth stage of Individuative-Reflective Faith, the stage of "demythologization." As exegetes grow in their faith development they will arrive at the fifth stage of Conjunctive Faith, in which there is a renewed appreciation of myth and symbol. Rational concepts are not enough since life and God are not rationally explicable. There is a paradox and polarity in God and in human existence.

A second implication relates to the work of theologians, especially Lutheran theologians. The theology stemming from Luther is a dialectical theology that holds together the polarities of God and Life. Such a theology seems to flow from the fifth stage of Conjunctive or Paradoxical-Consolidative Faith. Since that stage, as F describes it, is rare before mid-life, can a theology of Law and Gospel be understood by anyone before that age?

If F is correct about the need for movement from stage to stage, Christian educators must discover models of teaching-learning that make it possible for persons to move. Although F says little or nothing about what triggers the transition from stage to stage, Christian educators must pay attention to the dynamics of transition and determine ways that make it possible for transitions to take place.

Samuel K. Williams. *Jesus' Death as Saving Event: The Background and Origin of a Concept.**

John D. Lottes
Graduate Student in New Testament Studies, Christ Seminary — Seminex

I feel both challenged and unsettled by Williams' (W) investigation of "Jesus' Death as Saving Event," because the "Background and Origin of (the) Concept" was not the Passover Lamb sacrifice, but had its roots "among Christians who not only spoke Greek but were also thoroughly at home in the Greek-Hellenistic thought world." The concept of a "beneficial effective *human* death for others" is traced by W to 4 Maccabees, which in turn influenced the pre-Pauline Christian tradition at Antioch, but was itself decisively influenced by classical and Hellenistic Greek philosophy, panegyric, and tragic drama.

His dissertation, showing the careful methodology of his mentor Helmut Koester, is based on the solid linguistic observation that, even though one cannot disprove that Jesus interpreted his own death as a salvation event, his original words concerning the salvific nature of his death cannot be recovered in the Eucharistic texts nor in Mark 10:45, which W classes with the other "Son of Man sayings" as creations of the post-Easter Christian community. (p. 212) W's careful scholarship has benefits for the soteriology of the church.

---

* *Harvard Dissertations in Religion, 2. Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1975. 270 pages. Paper. $9.00.*

Abandoned Traditional Presuppositions

W abandons four "revered presuppositions which frequently govern investigations of early Christian soteriology":

1. "that for first century Jews the death of a worthy man could quite naturally have been interpreted in terms of vicarious expiation";

2. "that it would have been an easy step from the sacrificial offering of animals to such an interpretation of human death";

3. "that Isaiah 53 and its doctrines of vicarious suffering exerted widespread and pervasive influence in the early church";

4. "that, in fact, the concept of the vicarious expiatory death of a righteous man was a familiar theologoumenon in first century Judaism."

Key Terms

W takes as his point of departure the term expiation or propitiation from Rom. 3:25, which has a striking parallel in 4 Macc. 17:22, where the deaths of Jewish martyrs who were "righteous" became a ransom for the nation's sin and resulted in a "country purified." (1:11)

Antecedent Parallels

In chapter II, W shows that these concepts have no parallel in earlier accounts of this event concerning the "righteous ones" or "the faithful" in Daniel, the Assumption of Moses, 1 Maccabees, Josephus, or 2 Maccabees. To include Daniel, W must emend Dan. 11:32-35 so that it makes no mention of any "effect" of the death of the faithful.

Chapter III, "Suffering and Death in the Old Testament and Other Jewish Writings," concludes that the background and source of this concept is *not* in pre-70 C.E. Jewish writings — not even in Isaiah 53 nor its later interpreters — not in rabbinic Judaism, and not in Qumran. Instead, Isaiah 53 seems to have been understood as a "prototypical biblical example of the persecution of the righteous man and his vindication by God."

Rather, it is more characteristic of the Greeks than the Hebrews to have a *positive* understanding of the causes and effects of suffering (chapter IV; Postscript, p. 162). It is in Greek literature that the individual obtains a reward (e.g., fame), and the suffering or death of one person — often in defense of principles unrelated to one's own self interest — effects benefits for others. Representative examples are detailed below. W concludes that "whereas the notion of patriotic self-sacrifice is deeply imbued in the Greek mind, it is an understanding of death foreign to the OT and non-Hellenized Jewish literature." W shows, therefore, that the author of 4 Maccabees used *Greek* philosophical concepts in the apologetic service of *Judaism.*

Examples of Greek Sources

W's fresh compilation of evidence from classical Greek and Hellenistic literature is worth summarizing, since these citations give dramatic support to his thesis. Therefore, the following include several influential traditions or noteworthy dramatic portrayals of suffering or death willingly accepted because of higher principles or on behalf of other people:

— *Suffering Educates:* Aeschylus; cf. Plato and Herodotus.

— *Hardship Is Good:* Antisthenes is a prime example along with the general Cynic-Stoic ethical tradition from Antisthenes to Dio Chrysostom.

— *Traditions of the Steadfast Philosopher* are influential: Zeno, Diogenes, Laertius, Philo of Alexandria, Socrates, illustrated by Plato and Epictetus.

— *Glorious Death* is a motivation: Plutarch and Thucydides. Such glorious death was apparently not merely a source of comfort for those who survived but a motivating force for the warrior himself. Euripides shows that the noblest glory of all is to die for the fatherland.

— *Sufferers with a Cause* are exemplified by Prometheus and Antigone. Prometheus became the savior of mankind by giving fire for many arts, by taking the punishment from Zeus for the deed, and by refusing to capitulate. "(T)he central significance of Antigone's death lies in the reasons for which she is willing to die: to win glorious fame, to speak with her life on behalf of religion, and to benefit the dead. In this sense, she dies on behalf of other persons and for the sake of principles more profound by far than her immediate self-interest." (p. 152)

— *Deliberate Self-Sacrifice for the Good of Others* is present in the plays of Euripides. For example, in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis,* the sacrifice of Iphigenia is a willing propitiatory offering to Artemis and "an honorable duty." Contrary to the same scene in Aeschylus and Sophocles, Euripides has moralized the sacrifice by transforming Iphigenia's death into a voluntary offering freely willed.

Relationship to 4 Maccabees: Religious Metaphors

W's clear and careful presentation and textual analysis of a broad range of Jewish and Hellenistic antecedent literature sets the stage for chapter V, "The Death of the Martyrs in 4 Maccabees."

The author of 4 Maccabees affirms that the martyr's deaths were effective and beneficial for the nation. Because of their *endurance* (not their spilled blood), the tyrant Antiochus departed and the fatherland was purified. (1:11; 17:21a) Eleazar's dying prayer in 6:28-29 emphasizes religious terms: "Be merciful to your people — satisfied by our punishment for them. Let my blood serve for their purification and accept my life as ransom for them." The sin of defilement of the land by the army of Antiochus and by the apostasy of the Jews was removed by the instrumental death of the martyrs.

The author of 4 Maccabees, W asserts, *does* draw on the Old Testament (LXX) and its cultic religious terms, but the concept of effective *human* death does not derive *sufficiently* from the OT, although scholars such as E. Lohse attempt to piece together concepts of substitution, intercession, expiation of blood-guilt, suffering servant, and community solidarity, all of which certainly contributed to the author's understanding. Isaiah 53 was not understood in such terms by writers between Second Isaiah and 4 Maccabees.

W is convinced that 4 Maccabees was an edifying address delivered on a day commemorating the death of the martyrs. He concludes that Greek-Hellenistic

ideas — above all the concept of effective, beneficial death for others — were an *essential* catalyst for the interpretation of the martyr's deaths in 4 Maccabees.

Relationship to Jesus' Death as Saving Event

In chapter VI, "The Background, Source and Origin of the Concept of Jesus' Death as Saving Event," W rejects three bases concerning Jesus' death as a vicarious expiatory death:

— *Jesus said so* in, for example, the Eucharistic texts or in Mark 10:45. This model is rejected because Synoptic comparison shows that we cannot recover what Jesus *said* in the Eucharistic texts and because Mk. 10:45 is a created Son of Man saying, even though the possibility that Jesus interpreted his own death as a salvation event cannot be disproved.

— *Primitive Palestinian Christianity said so* (Mk. 10:45; 14:22-25; or 1 Cor. 15:3-5). This second model is rejected, contra J. Jeremias, because the community can be seen to be concerned primarily about the *resurrection* of Jesus (pp. 213-21).

— *The Scriptures said so,* a conscious attempt by early Christianity to find in the Hebrew Scriptures a meaningful explanation of the crucifixion. Jesus' death as saving event was not "discovered" in Is. 53; other OT references, especially The Psalms, do not contain concepts of vicarious or expiatory death. Rather, Christians appealed to Isaiah 53 as scriptural support for a "doctrine" already familiar to them.

The concept of Jesus' death as saving event, W hypothesizes, had as its creative source a tradition of beneficial, effective human death for others. W argues for Antioch as the place where 4 Maccabees was written, between 35 and 40 C.E. 4 Maccabees could have been the "creative source" for Christian interpretation of Jesus' death as saving event. It helped Greek-world people understand Jesus' death as significant in itself, apart from the resurrection.

Soteriologically Speaking

Pre-Pauline Christianity used the Greek ideas of "effective, beneficial human death" in the Hellenistic-Jewish 4 Maccabees as an apologia for the beneficial nature of Jesus' death itself, distinguished from the resurrection.

Why would these pre-Pauline Christians have chosen to interpret the death of Jesus in such cosmic, soteriological overtones? The person of faith can only reply that such a formulation was a Spirit-led reaction to an unprecedented situation of confronting a skeptical Greek thought world with the implications of the Crucifixion, which the Greek mind could not rationalize. (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18ff)

Such a Spirit-led reaction is not new. Throughout biblical history, God's people were confronted with new situations (e.g., Exodus, monarchy, exile) which their existing theology could not adequately explain. Then the writers used metaphors of their contemporary thought world to describe God's "new thing." The Apostle Paul also follows this creative legacy when he, for example, uses the model of the Cynic-Stoic itinerant philosopher to explain his ministry and his teaching in 1 Thessalonians

(his first extant letter!) without resorting to *any* of his "typical" theological formulations of law/promise, sin, or grace in Galatians, 1/2 Corinthians, or Romans! (cf. E. Krentz, "1 Thessalonians: A Document of Roman Hellenism," 1979 SBL Seminar Paper, unpublished)

One need not be startled that Hellenistic sources were the impetus for early Christians to take a fresh look at the Hebrew Scriptures to explain the mystery of God's action in Jesus Christ. Instead, the Christian can rejoice that the Gospel message of "salvation" in Jesus Christ, by the creative action of the Spirit, can be explained in language everyone can understand:

> We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. (Acts 2:11b)

Book Reviews

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, 1939-1949. By Dennis J. Dunn. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977. 267 pages. Cloth. $17.00.

Written by a professor of history at Southwest Texas State University, this monograph details the confrontation between the Roman Catholic Church and communist regimes under Soviet domination. What becomes evident is that the Soviet government, from its inception, looked with animosity upon the church centered in Rome. In part this was due to an antipathy inherited from the Russian Orthodox East, but it was caused primarily by "the ideological baggage of the Bolsheviks": the materialistic worldview which rejected religion as an untenable anachronism and "an exploitative parasite to be expunged."

During World War II the USSR found it strategically advantageous to diminish its militant atheism while soliciting the full support of Orthodox believers for resistance to the German invaders under the banner of Russian nationalism. Lack of pressure from the Western Allies, however, made it unnecessary to make many concessions to Roman Catholics. Although the Vatican did not approve of Nazism, it continually portrayed Communism as the greater menace and formulated its policies in accord with that assumption. The Church's official position was one of neutrality, but in fact it was pro-neutral toward Germany and anti-neutral toward the USSR.

1948 represented a critical turning point. Throughout Eastern Europe a relatively tolerant position on the part of communist authorities changed to one of outright antagonism. Even in Poland an extensive campaign of persecution was inaugurated. Clergy were arrested, church property was confiscated, and attempts were made to secularize the schools. By the 1980s, of course, it had become unmistakably clear that Polish loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church had not been undermined or decreased.

This book is useful to the student of church-state relations in communist-dominated countries both for the factual data and the careful analysis which it contains.

Ralph L. Moellering, Pastor
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

REVIVALISM & SOCIAL REFORM. By Timothy Smith. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980. 269 pages. Paper. $5.95.

Originally published in 1957 by Abingdon Press, Timothy Smith's classic exposition of the cultural impact of pre-Civil War Protestant evangelicalism now appears under the imprint of his own university and with a new afterword and updated bibliography. Nearly a generation of scholarship has not significantly altered Smith's path-breaking analysis of the interrelationship of the great antebellum reform movements and a predominantly urban-based, plain-folk, nonsectarian and holiness-inspired surge of religious enthusiasm.

A host of self-styled "neo-evangelicals," many with an active social agenda, have rediscovered the evangelical alliances Smith detailed and have claimed their vision as their own. Those who proudly wear the label "Moral Majority" likewise look to the revivalist legacy, with its strong millenarian and moralist orientation, for a model of how America's "righteous empire" shall be rebuilt.

How is it that both groups can find a useable past in the revivalist's concern for orthodoxy and orthopraxis? The welcome re-publication of *Revivalism and Social Reform* may help us sort out the legitimate heirs. In the afterword, Smith acknowledges several new directions suggested by more recent research: (1) a wider appreciation of the non-Wesleyan and non-Oberlin perfectionist traditions, (2) a discovery of the centrality given to Scripture as a basis for moral authority by many reformers, and (3) an emphasis upon the importance given to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit among the revivalists.

Milton Sernett
Syracuse University

THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN. By Paul K. Jewett. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980. xi and 148 pages. Paper. $5.95.

Jewett is for it, chiefly because the customary arguments against ordaining women to the order of ministry in the church are so specious.

Isn't there something about the nature of women that preludes them from ministering officially in the church's public worship? No, insists Jewett. Nothing about their biological make-up or their sexual attractiveness to males can logically exclude them.

Virtually every such argument (like Samuel Johnson's eighteenth century quip comparing a woman preaching to a dog walking on its hinder legs: "It's not done well, but you're surprised to find it done at all.") reveals only an outdated chauvenism and an embarrassing lack of clear thinking.

Then perhaps there's something about the nature of the office of the

First Titles in a Major New Series for Laypersons and Study Groups

LIBRARY OF LIVING FAITH

edited by John M. Mulder

The Library of Living Faith provides easy-to-read books for those who think theology is not for them. Recognizing the present diversity in Christian thought, each volume addresses a prime element of the Christian faith. Each presents varying points of view and invites readers to discover more fully what it means to be a Christian with a living faith today. With questions for discussion, the first four volumes are:

THE JOY OF WORSHIP
by Marianne H. Micks

This inspiring work presents worship not just as a Sunday morning ritual, but as the very heart of our daily lives.

BECOMING HUMAN
by Letty M. Russell

Letty Russell focuses on who we are in light of Jesus' own humanity, and how human liberation may be achieved.

LAST THINGS FIRST
by Gayraud S. Wilmore

A revealing study in Christian hope, through discusssions of heaven, hell, judgment, death, and the end of the world. With special insights from the Black religious experience in America.

NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT
by Leonard I. Sweet

This enlightening study examines the power, the divinity, the gifts and the ecstasy of the Spirit.

Each volume, $5.95
Six additional volumes to be announced.

Available from your local bookstore.



The Westminster Press
925 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

ministry that preludes women? Not so, argues Jewett. Even the most sacramental definitions of ordination (namely, that it confers the "indelible character" of priesthood) erroneously assume that females are incapable of receiving such a spiritual gift.

On the contrary, it all depends upon the Spirit as the giver, not upon the qualifications or sexuality of the receiver. Furthermore, the negative arguments confuse the biblical subjection of wives to their husbands with the unbiblical subordination of women to men.

Well, then, how about the argument tht the masculinity of God entails a male order of ministry in the church? After all, God is consistently portrayed as "Father"; the Incarnation occured via the "Son," the man Jesus; and the Holy Spirit, when portrayed in personal rather than neutral terms, is usually a "he".

Once more Jewett insists that all such masculine terminology applies to God only by analogy. There is no essential affinity between maleness and divinity.

That Jesus was a man makes a difference, of course. But the historical and cultural importance of his maleness, and that of his first apostles, does not preclude later ministers from being female.

Equally as interesting as Jewett's refutations are his addenda: "concerning women priests and prophets," "the Holy Spirit as female (?)," "women — apostles and deacons in the New Testament?" "the Vatican decree 'Inter Insigniores,'" "women seminarians," "a theological comment on motherhood," and "sexist language in the hymnal and the Bible."

Regrettably Jewett does not deal directly with such biblical texts as 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 or 1 Timothy 2. These are discussed in his previously published *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).

Chances are, no one opposed to ordaining women will be converted by Jewett's arguments. At best, they will be challenged to formulate their positions more carefully.

However, those who do favor ordaining women will be encouraged both by Jewett's polemics and by his tentative conclusion that women have a right to the order of ministry. In his own words:

> The one thing that is certain is that as the office of ministry is opened not only to those called to be fathers and shepherds to Christ's people, but also to those called to be mothers and shepherdesses, this will enrich rather than impoverish the life of the church. As in the natural family the ideal is to have both a father and a mother, so it is in the spiritual family which is the church (pages 117-118).

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

FAITH AND FREEDOM. By Schubert M. Ogden. New York: Abingdon, 1979. 124 pages. Paper. $3.95

The issue most urgently facing Christians in the decades to come is God. More specifically, the issue is the existential question concerning the ultimate meaning of one's existence. Today this question is most often asked in terms of freedom. Hence, Ogden sees importance in the question, "Can Christian faith in God be so understood that it positively includes the concern for human liberation in this world?"

In attempting to answer the question positively, liberation theologies, while on the right track for what they have succeeded in doing, have faltered in four respects. They typically 1) tend to be rationalizations of positions already taken and not reflections on those positions, 2) focus on the existential meaning of God for us without adequately examining the metaphysical being of God himself, 3) tend to confuse or not adequately distinguish the related but distinct roles of God as Redeemer and Emancipator, 4) have too limited or provincial an understanding of the numerous forms of bon-

DOES YOUR PASTOR HAVE TO PASS THE HAT TO GET A RAISE?

When a minister doesn't come right out and ask for a raise in pay, the church board may assume that the pay arrangement is adequate and/or that the minister is satisfied with it.

They may not realize that the combination of salary, house, car and other allowances can actually add up to an unfairly low compensation package.

Yet, the subject of compensation is one that many ministers are embarrassed to talk about.



They either feel that Providence will take care of them, in which case it seems "presumptuous" to ask the church board for more money.

Or they feel that asking for a raise reveals an unseemly interest in material things—even if their income is demonstrably inadequate by today's inflationary standards.

But the facts are that, through carefully examining tax implications and other factors, a congregation can often upgrade its minister's total compensation package *without* increasing the church's budget.

To encourage more frank and open discussions on this subject—based on facts and figures instead of guesses and hunches—Ministers Life offers a new report on clergy compensation.

It's free, so send the coupon today, or call **1-800-328-6124** (ext. 303). In Minnesota, call (612) 927-7131 (ext. 303).

Please rush me _____ copies of your report on clergy pay.

Rev. ☐ Mr. ☐ Ms. ☐

Name

Address

City State Zip

Birthdate

ML

Mail to: Ministers Life, Dept. J
Ministers Life Building
Minneapolis, MN 55416

CTM 682

dage experienced by men, women, and their fellow creatures.

After raising the challenge of liberation theologies Ogden goes on to attempt to develop a "more adequate theology of liberation." Most thought provoking in his use of process metaphysics in discussing the concept of God as the ground of freedom. Process metaphysics understands all things — including God — to be in a process of creative synthesis or self-creation, synthesizing in a new way data provided by the free self-creations of others. Thus, even God is in part determined by the being of others. And, as well, all things are in part self-creative, so that even God cannot wholly determine the being of something else. The distinguishing attribute of God is that he is related to all things, being determined in part by all things, and determining them all in part. By being in part determined by all things, and thus accepting them completely, all things are synthesized into his own everlasting life and rescued from sin — the rejection of God's acceptance. In this way God functions as Redeemer.

God is Emancipator in that his unique self-creation determines in part the self-creation of all other things by "... establishing such fundamental limits of natural order as allow for a greater possibility of good than evil to be realized through their exercise of freedom." While God's creatures can only witness to his act of redemption, they participate in his cosmic Emancipation at a local level by establishing the local orders (societies and cultures) such that "one can freely determine one's own destiny in solidarity with one's own fellow creatures."

While Ogden does not propose to detail all the implications of his metaphysical understanding of God, that understanding would seem to have some implications. For example, to what sort of status is the Christ event rendered in his thinking? It is mentioned only several times and on those occasions Jesus is viewed as the decisive re-presentor or revealer of "the gift and demand faith in God." While Jesus is indeed that, do not Scripture and Christian tradition understand him to be more than that by calling him Savior? Is there room in Ogden's metaphysic for the Christ event to take on more than a revealing or re-presenting nature, or is he perhaps by implication calling that tradition into question as well?

In sum, Ogden is on target with his concern for relating the Christian faith in God to human liberation. In challenging traditional beliefs about the metaphysical being of God he has raised some questions which are written off by most as too heady or irrelevant to the everyday, lived-out life of the church, when in fact how those questions are answered has some very practical implications.

Mark Brauer
Lutheran Metro Ministry
Cleveland, Ohio

FESTIVAL & JOY. By Eckart Otto and Tim Schramm. Translated by J. L. Blevins. Nashville: Abingdon, 1980. 205 pages. Paper. $7.95.

Eckart Otto, *Privatdozent* in Old Testament at the University of Hamburg, and Tim Schramm, a teacher of New Testament at Hamburg, explore the dynamics of festivity and joy in both testaments. It is their conviction that a sensitivity to the biblical understanding of celebration can bring a profound message of joy to modern men and women. Few would disagree. However, the influence of certain theological presuppositions on the authors' studies should raise some objections on the part of many.

Otto's OT contribution is the better study. Focusing on the Passover, the Matzoth Festival, the Fall Festival, and the Day of Atonement, Otto pays particular attention to the cultic history of these complex traditions, i.e., their pre-Israelite strata and how Israel adopted, transformed and reinterpreted them to express her own confession of Yahweh's saving acts in history. However, the integrity of Israel's festivals is obscured by Otto's understanding of *heilsgeschichte* (salvation history).

Otto stresses that the cultic festival

IMPECCABLE SCHOLARSHIP FROM WESTMINSTER

Now in paperback, a volume in
The Library of Christian Classics—

A SCHOLASTIC MISCELLANY
Anselm to Ockham
edited by
Eugene R. Fairweather



"Balanced and scholarly . . . The first (section) deals primarily with Anselm of Canterbury, the second deals with 'Theologians of the Twelfth Century,' and the third deals with Franciscan thought in 'The Thirteenth Century and After.' The readable translations of Anselm alone would more than justify this book in its entirety."—*Anglican Theological Review*. "An excellent introduction to many aspects of Scholasticism."—Cyril C. Richardson, *Union Seminary Review*. Paper, $11.95

THE ELUSIVE SELF
by Hywel D. Lewis



Providing a critical investigation into the question of personal identity, H. D. Lewis defends the distinction between mental existence, "inner being," and bodily things. As one of the leading philosophers and theologians of this century, Lewis offers a penetrating study of the nature and subject of the philosophy of religion and the problems of contemporary psychology. Paper, $14.95

PROCESS THEOLOGY AS POLITICAL THEOLOGY
by John B. Cobb, Jr.

Here is a perceptive examination of how the addition of new political dimensions to process thought can make it more relevant to public life. Cobb reviews the development of process theology in the history of the Chicago School of thought and analyzes the tenets of major European political theologians. Paper, $11.95
(Price Tentative)



THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY
An Introduction
by Vincent Brümmer

This clear and highly readable introduction to philosophical inquiry demonstrates the importance of the basic tools of conceptual inquiry for systematic theology. Brümmer's analysis of concepts fundamental to our thinking and speaking covers issues of value, meaning, belief, knowledge, existence, fact, and reality. Paper, $16.95



CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN THE MODERN AGE
by Brian Hebblethwaite

This unique introductory work offers a wide-ranging examination of criticism of Christian ethics since the Enlightenment and a positive approach to how these criticisms are met today. Hebblethwaite mounts a probing inquiry into situation ethics and the theology of liberation, the relationship of Christianity to the ethics of other world religions, and the place of ethics in the Christian religion itself. Paper, $6.95

WORSHIP
by John E. Burkhart

Drawing upon biblical, historical, and theological disciplines, as well as upon a variety of liturgical experiences, John Burkhart offers a probing and sometimes provocative look at how and why Christians worship as they do. Of value to all denominations, this "theology of worship" demonstrates how worship must make sense if it is to be effective, responsible, and rewarding. Paper, $8.95

Available from your local bookstore.



THE WESTMINSTER PRESS

925 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107

in Israel "was not just . . . a play, but rather a real drama that produced powerful reality." (p. 40) However, for Otto the joy of salvation in which the Israelite participated was theologically stunted. It was cultic, i.e., for the Israelite only. Otto queries, "how much longer would it take to reach an understanding of salvation that would encompass all men and a festival celebrated that would articulate every creature's sigh?" (p. 45) He allows that the basic elements of such all-encompassing salvation were present in Israel's festivals. However, Israel was not able to relate them in a conclusive way. Otto concludes that this failure "represents the limitations of the Israelitic cult, which could only be transcended in the Christ event." (p. 92) Israel's festival joy, albeit hallowed, was nonetheless hollow.

Schramm extends Otto's line of interpretation into the NT. Regrettably, Schramm relies solely on the obsolete *Kommentar* of Strack and Billerbeck for his portrayal of first-century Judaism in his effort to magnify the NT community's release from outward ritual to an inner life of joy. Consequently, Schramm places Jesus in opposition to an ahistorical construct of Pharisaic Judaism. The resultant picture of a joyless, ritualistic, and legalistic first-century Judaism serves Schramm as a foil to enhance the inner eschatological joy of the NT. Schramm, therefore, aligns himself with a discredited methodology.

Otto's brief sketches of the historical development of Israel's festivals and Schramm's outline of early Christian worship may prove useful to the nonspecialist. Nevertheless, the value of this book is overshawdowed by its pronounced theological and methodological shortcomings.

William A. Hartfelder, Jr.
Hebrew Union College
Cincinnati, Ohio

GALILEE FROM ALEXANDER THE GREAT TO HADRIAN. 323 BCE TO 135 CE: A STUDY OF SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM. By Sean Freyne. Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1980; Notre Dame Ind.,: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980. xviii and 491 pages. Cloth. $27.50.

Galilee. It is a word evoking a myriad of images. Yet, just as the morning mists often blanket the Galilean valleys, so our knowledge of the social, political, and religious life of Galilee in Greco-Roman times is shrouded in the silence of the period's historical sources. Fortunately this silence is not total. Here and there tantalizing voices break through. Sean Freyne, professor of NT Studies at Loyola in New Orleans, has critically investigated the scattered and sparse archaeological, literary, and numismatic sources to provide one of the most comprehensive treatments of Galilean Judaism currently available.

A central question regarding the reconstruction of Galilean Judaism has been how to interrelate and evaluate the little evidence we do possess. Freyne, acknowledging the impact of Hengel's *Judaism and Hellenism* on his study, draws upon the insights of sociology and cultural anthropology to develop his interpretative picture of Galilean Judaism. He admits his answers must remain hypothetical.

Despite the paucity of hard data, scholars have repeated certain generalizations of Galilean life so often that they have become veritable axioms, e.g., Galilee was a hot-bed of revolution; it was thoroughly Hellenized as a result of urbanization; Galileans were Torah-ignorant. Freyne challenges such standard sketches. For example, Freyne rejects the dictum, *pace* Schurer, that the Hasmonean Aristobulus I (104-103 BCE) "judaized" most, if not all, of Galilee in the sense of converting to Judaism Galileans previously unassociated with the Jewish faith. Freyne discusses the inadequacy of extrapolating this view from Josephus' report of Aristobulus' forced circumcision of the Iturean nation. (*AJ* 13:318f.) Instead, Freyne presents a persuasive picture of Galilean peasants whose belief in Yahweh and loyalty to Jerusalem were never totally destroyed. Galilean peasantry remained alienated

EERDMANS
THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL STUDIES

SPRING/SUMMER
•1982•

EERDMANS' HANDBOOK TO THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS
A comprehensive, illustrated guide to the world's religions from man's earliest forms of worship to the present day. Illustrated with more than 200 photographs and includes numerous maps and charts.
Cloth, $21.95, April

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS
The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century
By John R. W. Stott
A major treatment of a critically important area of ministry by world-renowned preacher and scholar John Stott.
Cloth, $12.95, June

THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT AND CHRISTIAN FAITH
By Gabriel Fackre
A systematic, theological assessment of the general outlook and the political, sociological, and ethical position of the Religious Right.
Cloth, $8.95, July

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF RELIGION IN AMERICA, Volume 1
Edited by Edwin S. Gaustad
The first volume of a major two-volume reference work and textbook on the life of religion in America by eminent historian Edwin Gaustad.
Paper, $15.95, August

LIFE AS WORSHIP
Prayer and Praise in Jesus' Name
By Theodore W. Jennings, Jr.
Challenging the popular notion that worship is primarily a matter of exclusive practices, the author, by focusing on prayer and praise, convincingly argues that worship is instead a style of life.
Paper, $5.95, July

SCIENCE AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING
By Donald M. MacKay
A refreshingly clear discussion on the compatibility of science and Christianity which will deepen appreciation for both science—the art of being an effective steward—and Christianity.
Paper, $3.95, April.

COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS (New International Greek Testament Commentary)
By F. F. Bruce
COMMENTARY ON JAMES (New International Greek Testament Commentary)
By Peter Davids
Based on the 1973 UBS Greek Testament, these commentaries are the second and third to be released in this highly acclaimed series which engages major questions of text and interpretation while bearing in mind the needs of the beginning Greek student.
Galatians, Cloth, $14.95t, May
James, Cloth, $13.95t, July

Prices subject to change.

A LIVING HOPE
A Commentary on I & II Peter
By Robert Mounce
A popular commentary aiming primarily to underscore the relevance of this 1st-century text for life in the 20th century.
Paper, $4.95, July

THE FOUR GOSPELS AND ACTS
A Short Introduction
By Harry R. Boer
This popular commentary is a short introduction to the first five books of the New Testament.
Paper, $3.95, July



THE LANGUAGE OF CANAAN AND THE GRAMMAR OF FEMINISM
By Vernard Eller
An intelligent, critical study challenging the use of "non-sexist" language.
Paper, $3.95, May

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH EVIL
By Theodore Plantinga
An ideal textbook for undergraduate and general lay readership which explores the nature of evil and the practical steps needed to cope with it.
Paper, $5.95, April

PREACHING THE NEW TESTAMENT
By A. M. Hunter
A collection of 34 concise (4-5 pages) and thoughtful sermons.
Paper, $4.95, April

THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH
A Reformed Perspective on its Historical Development
By M. Eugene Osterhaven
A comprehensive history of the beliefs of the church from a Reformed perspective.
Paper, $11.95, August

THE THEOLOGY OF SCHLEIERMACHER
By Karl Barth
Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley
A series of lectures by Karl Barth challenging the pillar of 19th-century theological liberalism, Friedrich Schleiermacher.
Cloth, $10.95, August

TYPOS
The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New
By Leonhard Goppelt
An important work which examines the interpretation of Scripture that is characteristic of the New Testament in order to provide a model for contemporary hermeneutics.
Cloth, $13.95, May

SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS WITH THE ADDITION OF THE JOHANNINE PARALLELS
By Albert Huck
Revised by Heinrich Greeven
An indispensable tool for understanding the Synoptic Gospels in their original language.
Cloth, $22.50s, February

THE PROFILE METHOD FOR CLASSIFYING AND EVALUATING MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE
(Studies and Documents)
By Frederick Wisse
A rapid, but reliable method for placing manuscripts in groups, and then evaluating the variant readings of these manuscripts.
Paper, $17.00s, August

THE NEW CENTURY BIBLE COMMENTARY
Forthcoming Releases:
1 AND 2 CHRONICLES
By Hugh G. Williamson Paper, $8.95, May
THE PASTORAL EPISTLES
By Anthony T. Hanson Paper, $6.95, May

Author pictures
Top Row (left to right): Theodore Plantinga, Gabriel Fackre, Edwin Gaustad. *Middle Row:* F. F. Bruce, Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., Leonhard Goppelt, *Bottom Row:* John R. W. Stott, Robert Mounce, Karl Barth.

For more complete descriptions on these and other recent publications, write for a copy of the latest Theologist Catalog. Examination copies of most publications are available to qualified professors.

At your bookstore
227
WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. 49503

from the process of urbanization and the concomitant Hellenization which encircled them during the Ptolemaic, Seleucid and Roman periods. How revolutionary was Galilee? Freyne argues that the predominantly peasant ethos of Galilee fostered quietism! He posits that a root cause of this reality is the proclivity of peasants not to see beyond the horizons of their own villages, although isolated outbursts occurred, the scattered Galilean hamlets did not provide the framework for the large scale insurrection that drew its inspiration from the religious and urban conditions of Jerusalem.

The *halakhah* of Pharisaic Judaism also held little attraction for Freyne's Galilean peasants. Pharisaism was more suited to middle class townspeople. Instead, the holy man (*hasid*) served as the mediator of the divine presence and the bridge between temple holiness and village life. Furthermore, in contrast to the view that Christianity found fertile ground in Galilee, Freyne depicts a Galilean populace largely unaffected by primitive Christianity!

This book provides a thought-provoking examination of the interplay of politics, culture, and religion as they affected Galilee. Freyne's sociological/culture anthropological approach not only offers exciting possibilities for the reevaluation of Galilee during the Second Temple Period, it also serves to remind us that much of our "knowledge" of Greco-Roman Galilee remains *sub judice*.

William A. Hartfelder, Jr.
Hebrew Union College
Cincinnati, Ohio

Briefly Noted

We often forget how much the Bible informs our culture. In **The David Myth in Western Literature** (Purdue University Press, $10.95) editors Raymond-Jean Frontain and Jan Wojcik have collected essays that assess his importance in such disparate times as Reformation England, Puritan America, and modern Israel. They explore the language that has been used about David in poetry, drama, fiction, and sermons, and they show the various roles David plays in our culture: adulterer, epic and folk hero, military leader, poet.

Ronald E. Clements has written the best contemporary English commentary on **Isaiah 1-39** (Eerdmans, $7.95) for the New Century Bible series. Now published in paperback and based on the RSV, this commentary gives clear and concise interpretations, well grounded in current scholarly discussion. Clements holds that there was a major redaction of the book in the time of Josiah. This redaction raised hopes that God would overthrow the Assyrians in the near future. If he is right, the need for a second campaign by Sennacherib (John Bright and others) is obviated. The book of Isaiah received more minor revisions after the destruction of Jerusalem and again in the fifth century (to this time belong the apocalyptic sections in 24-27 and 34-35). The young woman of 7:14 is interpreted as the prophet's wife while 9:2-7, which Clements believes to be authentic, describes a royal accession.

In **Thomas Merton Contemplative Critic** (Harper, $3.95) Henry J. M. Nouwen has penned an introduction to the life and thought of Merton, a Trappist monk, who died in 1968. Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain* brought him international acclaim, and he was investigating Eastern spirituality when he was electrocuted in Bangkok by a defective fan. His social and political critique of the world was based not on public debate but on a contemplative penetration into the heart of God. For Merton the way to relevance was the way of prayer and contemplation.

Jerusalem, City of Jesus (Eerdmans, $29.95) is a gorgeous collection of 156 full-color pictures, 41 maps and figures, and an engaging text that gives detailed, but not overly complicated, reconstructions of what the holy city was like in the first century C.E. The photographs are taken from almost every conceivable angle (including aerial) and highlighted sketch maps help the reader see exactly how

things once stood. There are chapters on roads, geology, valleys, walls, gates, and waters, in addition to accounts of the fortress Antonia (the "Pavement" shown to tourists today comes from the second century C.E.), the temple, the upper room, and the church of the holy sepulchre (situated on the authentic sites of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection). One can learn a great deal just by reading the captions on the photos, or one can lovingly study the city's history by reading one or more chapters at a time. Perfect for the coffee table *and* the pastor's study.

In **Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah** (Scholars Press, $10.50; $7.00 for members of various societies), Israel Yeivin explains with great clarity how to read and understand the masoretic notes and accents printed in Hebrew Bibles, and he provides a historical survey of the development of the Masorah. It needs to be recalled that the Masorah is a series of notes and signs, developed between 500 and 950 C.E., which were used to preserve the text of the Hebrew Bible, and the way it was written, from change.

In a revision of his doctoral thesis, **The Greek Text of Judges: Recensional Developments** (Harvard Semitic Monographs 23; Scholars Press, $15.00; $10.00 for members of various societies), Walter R. Bodine concludes that the original Septuagint (Old Greek) of Judges (translated from the Hebrew in the second century B.C.E.), is best preserved in "Lucianic" manuscripts, and that the text contained in Vaticanus is part of the *kaige* recension (a revision made in the first century C.E.). These conclusions continue important textual refinements made possible by the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Forty-six evangelical scholars, under the editorship of R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, have produced a two-volume **Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament** (Moody, $34.95). The authors sought to be more practical and less exhaustive than the multivolumed sets of the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* and the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. The former appeared in ten volumes, the latter so far in four. The brevity of the *Wordbook*, of course, is sometimes bane, sometimes blessing. The editors claim that the contributors believe in the Bible's truth, which often translates as an anticritical position. One consequence: passages from relatively late book like Leviticus are cited as "very early references." In addition, many of the writers pay inadequate attention to the different ways in which different biblical authors use the same word. Some gleanings from the discussion of "righteousness": the *Wordbook* defines it as "conformity to standards set out in the word of God." Gerhard von Rad, of course, is famous for his persuasive defense of a contrary position, namely, that righteousness means a conformity to the requirements and demands of a given relationship. Tamar's conduct in Gen. 38:26 is usually held to be a parade example of such righteousness, but inexplicably, the *Wordbook* asserts that the Bible does not give total approbation of her actions. Can the following be supported by texts from the Old Testament? "The righteousness of God's heirs of salvation is the righteousness of the Messiah attributed to them by God through faith in the redemptive work of Messiah in which God declares them righteous only because of the grace provided through that redemptive work." (p. 754)

A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament: Romans-Revelation (Zondervan, $17.95) is a translation of Fritz Rienecker's famed *Sprachlichler Schluessel*. This key parses grammatical forms and defines the Greek vocabulary verse by verse, through the second half of the New Testament. Frequent references are made to commentaries, monographs and journal articles. But the central gift of this key is the time it saves in paging through grammars and lexicons. Volume 1, covering Matthew-Acts, has also been published by Zondervan.

"Should I publish in *Currents*?"

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

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

Deadline: July 1, 1982.

"Of course!"

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

Second Class Postage
Paid at
St. Louis, Missouri