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Lutheran Confessional Heritage and Key Issues in Theology Today

Carl E. Braaten

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Supply-Side Theology

According to Reaganomics, taxes should be cut to encourage savings and investment, thereby strengthening productivity or the "supply-side" of the economy. No one really knows whether that will work, and many fear that the benefits will not fully trickle down to those on the lowest end of the economic scale. But *Currents* believes that politicians should not have all the good slogans. What we need is supply-side *theology!*

Carl E. Braaten holds that Lutherans supply to church and world a key hermeneutical insight. Lutherans exist in order to reform the church in terms of the doctrine of justification. That contribution makes us a crucial part of the church catholic and not just another sect. A challenge to Lutheranism today also comes from the crumbling world of modern science and post-enlightenment scholarship. Survival may depend on how well we can articulate our Lutheran treasure so that it can be heard as good news again. In helping to create something new in world history, Lutherans may find themselves transformed.

The ideal marriage — husband and wife together, he at work, she at home, kids growing up — that ideal is practiced by seven percent of us. **Carolyn Lorenz Utech** and **David A. Utech** see the new shape of marriage where both spouses work as a challenging necessity and an opportunity for the church to serve as a helping agency. They outline the problems connected with family planning, child care, money, household drudgery, career priorities, and the use of time, and then suggest specific ways in which local congregations can make life for two-career marriages more wholesome.

God has supplied us all with minds though Lutherans at times have almost wished otherwise. The "whore reason" and "rationalism" have provided the context for much reflection on the intellectual life. **David W. Lotz,** however, provides an apology for the mind in a Reformation sermon he preached a couple of years

back. The intellect was important from the start in Lutheranism because of the emphasis on Bible study and the university setting of its early years. The mind was affirmed by Luther to order our affairs and to investigate the world. While reason, like many other faculties, was rejected insofar as our justification is concerned, Luther could also praise it as a divine creation and an estimable gift. May God supply us with thoughtful believers!

Contemporary Lutherans are probably rather condescending when it comes to their attitude toward the birth control debate among Roman Catholics. **Ronald Modras** gives us an insight into the views of John Paul II and his apparently hard-line position. Vatican II made an important shift by basing a number of its moral judgments on personalist principles (the dignity of the human person) rather than on the natural law tradition. These insights are relevant to many areas of sexuality: do we norm our behavior by "nature" or law, or by the way it expresses responsibility toward other persons? The present pope has defended opposition to birth control by trying to integrate *Humanae Vitae* with his personalist theology. Readers will probably agree with him that all aspects of an act must be good for it to be considered moral, and that all questions of sex revolve around the question of human dignity. Perhaps even the pope will conclude in time that his personalist theology would suggest a more flexible position on birth control.

Cyril M. Wismar reports on the Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue. The unity we seek has already been rather fully given to these two churches though its recommendations are not well known or widely discussed. Perhaps this essay will encourage us to practice eucharistic hospitality, to recognize one another's ministries, and to clarify the apostolic succession of Lutheran bishops.

The trouble with alcoholics (and the rest of us) is that they (we) try to repress the fact that they (we) are not in control. Alcoholics Anonymous helps alcoholics to see the failure of self-reliance, to

trust in God as the ultimate source of control, and to "clean house" by practicing spiritual principles. **John W. Ribar** weaves his theological reflections around the figure of Jean Sibelius and the hymn "Be Still My Soul."

Carol Lois Haywood tells how the community of faith needs to reject the alienating effects of the class system in the name of its common Creator and Lord. Physical, dirty work is often not as valued as intellectual work in our society, and the demeaning attitude is present in the church as well. How does your congregation relate to its blue-collar gifts?

The prophet Joel is famous for the day of Yahweh he announced and his promise of the spirit. **James A. Rimbach** continues our series on the prophets by showing how this late prophet dealt with continuity and change, with obedience and worship, and with God's fidelity and freedom.

David A. Preisinger offers a poem, or folk song, based on the first lesson for the 20th Sunday after Pentecost, which falls this year on October 25. Feel free to duplicate it for use in your worship.

Supply-side economy is supposed to whip inflation eventually, but supply-side theology will meet your demands right now. This issue, naturally, is worth saving; its contents are our investment in your productive life and ministry. These days old actors become presidents and bad actors become editors. But not all editors are bad actors.

Yours, from the Supply-Side,

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

The Lutheran Confessional Heritage and Key Issues in Theology Today

Carl E. Braaten

Professor of Systematic Theology, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Our topic, "The Lutheran Confessional Heritage and Key Issues in Theology Today," links two sets of things that exist in a relation of deep crisis. This crisis is part of the wider hermeneutical problem with which theology is engaged in a life-and-death struggle, namely, how to relate Christianity to modernity. If we limit our discussion to the relevance of our confessional heritage to 20th century theology, we should keep in mind that we are presupposing somehow a broad theory of hermeneutical understanding. It applies to how we can hear a word from the past and bear witness to it in the present, how we can share a living tradition and pass it on, and how we can build on foundations that others have laid in a way that is intellectually rigorous, morally honest, religiously meaningful, and Christianly faithful.

Confessional Factor

While it is true that the whole concept of "confessional writings" is a feature peculiar to the Lutheran heritage, the confessional factor itself is given in the basic act of faith, and is thus at work in every theology that claims to be Christian. Every body of Christians "believes, teaches, and confesses" some definite things in response to the way the Word of God has addressed them. The root of the confessional factor in Christian faith is the confession: "Jesus Christ"; "Jesus is Lord"; "Jesus is the Savior"; and the list of titles confessed by faith could be extended. This confessional datum is most clearly seen in the baptismal formulae and eucharistic hymns that make up the most primitive creeds of Christianity.

But *what* is confessed in the setting *before God in worship* is the very same substance that the church declares *before the world in witness.* That world may be secular or religious, and the form of that witness may be kerygmatic, didactic, apologetic, or polemic. The classical trinitarian and christological definitions of the ecumenical creeds interweave many of these elements. Since our Lutheran confessional writings affirm these creeds and materially presuppose their contents, it follows that historically we are committed to a "dogmatic" interpretation of the Christian faith. In the nineteenth century it became common to say (especially among those in the Marburg school, linking the likes of Herrmann and Harnack, the spiritual fathers of Bultmann) that dogma is a specifically Catholic notion which entered Christianity by the intellectualizing process of Hellenization, a notion which regrettably was not fully overcome by the Protestant Reformation. In the twentieth century Lutheran theologians recognize that there is something both right and wrong in such an assessment. It is true that there is a specifically Roman Catholic concept of dogma as revealed truth, *dogmata revelata,* infallibly guaranteed by an authoritarian teaching



office. The Küng affair should remind us all that this heteronomous authority is alive and doing well in Roman Catholicism. However, it would be wrong for Lutherans to throw out dogma, to throw out the baby with the bath. The Heidelberg periodical, *Kerygma und Dogma,* captures in its very title the interconnectedness of the evangelical (kerygmatic) and catholic (dogmatic) poles of Christian theology. Paul Tillich aimed at the same comprehensive vision in calling for both Protestant principle and Catholic substance.

My point so far is that we cannot sustain a strong confessional principle, against the backdrop of a weak sense of dogma. Our Lutheran confessions presuppose the Catholic dogmas. I hold to a kind of "domino theory" here. If Lutheran confessionalism establishes itself independently of Catholic dogmatic consensus, we have nothing but the making of a new sect. Sometimes I fear Protestant autonomy as much as I do Catholic heteronomy. Basically, however, the true intent of the Lutheran confessional heritage is to settle for nothing less than a theonomous vision of a church with an evangelical heart beating in a catholic body. We are, by origin and by present self-understanding, evangelical catholics.

The Lutheran confessional heritage stands for a concrete and specific witness to the gospel, continuous with the catholic dogmatic consensus, and in response to a new set of questions posed at a particular time in the church's history. The Lutheran Confessions speak on a vast variety of subjects, but what they essentially constitute, in addition to the classical dogmas, is a new definition of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, undergirded by the christological presuppositions required to carry this burden, and rounded off with the soteriological implications that exhibit its meaning.

The purpose of our confessional proposal is to serve the whole church by referring it to the gospel of God's monergism in the gift of salvation. This gospel is summarized in terms of justification by grace alone, through faith alone apart from the law, and solely on account of Jesus Christ. The entire significance of the Lutheran dogmatic proposal lies in the meaning of the "solas." This cannot be ecumenically tolerated as a Lutheran peculiarity, as one denominational dish in a world's fair of ecclesiastical specialties, along with papal authority, episcopal succession, presbyteral polity, congregational autonomy, liturgical formalism, methodistic moralism, or charismatic spirituality. With the omission of the "solas" the gospel itself is betrayed, not only our Lutheran gospel, but the one and only gospel on which the one church and all its members are radically dependent. If the *raison d'etre* of Lutheranism is not oriented to the ongoing reform of the church catholic in terms of the article of justification by faith alone apart from

the law, then it seems to me that Lutheranism, in establishing itself as a separate church, using the confessional writings as its chief source of theology, has indeed forfeited the marks of the church for those of a sect.

Hermeneutical Factor

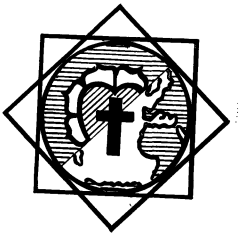
The heart of the Lutheran confession, justification by faith alone, is essentially a hermeneutical proposal. Our claim is that justification is the key for the right interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, revealing the truth of God's reconciling activity in Jesus Christ for the world's salvation. The article of justification is the criterion that decides what makes Christianity Christian. Luther put it thusly: "Therefore we must carefully teach the article of justification, as I have often insisted, for it is the summary of all the other articles of our faith, and if it is right, then all the others will be right" (WA 40 I, 444). In recent times Hans Iwand reaffirmed Luther's claim: "If we remove the article of justification from its central place, then we will be scarcely in a position any longer to know why we are and should remain evangelical Christians. Then we may as well surrender the purity of the gospel and settle instead for the unity of the church" (H. Iwand, *Glaubensgerechtigkeit nach Luthers Lehre,* 1951, p. 6).

Justification by faith alone would not be the article by which the church stands or falls if it were just one among many in a book of doctrines. The current Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialog on justification, I am told, has made use of Robert W. Jenson's proposal to speak of justification as a meta-linguistic formula. It is that doctrine which controls the meaning of the whole and all its parts. Sad to say, justification lost its central hermeneutical standing in the post-reformation periods of Orthodoxy, Pietism, Enlightenmnet, and nineteenth-century Protestantism. Some of the correct formulae were retained, as in Lutheran Orthodoxy, but justification was treated as simply one of the steps in the *ordo salutis.* With the exception of Martin Kahler, justification never became the constructive principle of dogmatics, and its standing in contemporary Protestant theology is far from the intent of our confessional heritage to use justification as a tool in the decision for true doctrine and true proclamation.

The question we face as Lutherans today is whether we will continue to propose the dogma of justification to the whole church as the true interpretation of the gospel, and thus exist as a confessing movement for the universal church, or prefer to become a Protestant sect, competing with other denominations for our share of the religious market.

Historical Challenge

Our confessional boat seems to have sprung a leak at both ends — fore and aft. Hans Küng, speaking as a truly



Catholic theologian, despite what the Pope may think, wrote in his masterful work on Karl Barth's doctrine of justification, "The doctrine of justification is *not* the central dogma of Christianity." His point is that the Reformation doctrine of justification is one doctrine within the fulness of Catholic tradition, one bead on a string of doctrines clasped together by the positive authority of the ecclesiastical office. Therefore, his demonstration that Barth's doctrine agrees fundamentally with the doctrine of Trent was intended only to remove the last obstacle to the reunion of the evangelical church with the Roman Catholic Church. The irony is that Küng is now the victim of his own logic.

The Roman Catholic rejection of justification as the central datum of Scripture has been reinforced by many schools of biblical theology, which view the Pauline doctrine of justification as a subsidiary theme, a "minor crater," as Schweitzer said, not only in the New Testament as a whole, but also in the Pauline corpus of writings. This would make our confessional *sola fide* out of sync with our *sola scriptura.* Several years ago we enjoyed here at LSTC a classic encounter between the positions of Krister Stendahl and Ernst Käsemann on the meaning of Paul's doctrine of the righteousness of God. It became clear that the historical-exegetical base of the Lutheran doctrine of justification has crumbled even among some Lutheran biblical theologians. Not only is the justification theme, in their view, not central in Paul, but it has also suffered distortion by the allegedly "introspective conscience of the West" in the line from Augustine to Luther.

To a large extent the focus of both historical scholarship and theological interest has shifted from the "righteousness of God" in Paul's theology to the "kingdom of God" in Jesus' message. With respect to the *starting point* of Christology, many today do not begin with Paul's teaching about justification by faith but with Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God. We would want to argue, however, that it is mistaken to place justification and kingdom of God in opposition to each other. Paul's message of the righteousness of God was not discontinuous with the eschatological message of Jesus. The justification of the sinner and the godless in Paul's theology flows from the righteousness of God, which for both Jesus and Paul is a predicate of the power and dominion of God's oncoming kingdom. None can enter into the kingdom of God except they come equipped with a righteousness not their own, but conferred from above. The righteousness that counts in the kingdom can only be received as a gift.

The idea of the kingdom of God was the chief theological category of the Social Gospel movement and is currently a leading concept in the liberationist model of salvation. Both the older and the newer theologies of the kingdom have shown a distinct tendency to

operate with a synergistic paradigm of salvation: the right combination of divine grace and human praxis will work together to bring about the kingdom. The critical meta-theological function of the article of justification can help coordinate the construction of a new theology of the kingdom of God on a monergistic model.

The question we face as Lutherans today is whether we can still claim, in face of our current knowledge of Christian origins, that the message of justification is the true summary of the gospel we hear from Scripture. Can we still plug the leak in the aft of our confessional boat, or have we already jumped into our sectarian life boats?

Contemporary Challenge

And what about the leak at the other end — at the fore where our boat plows ahead into the rough waves of contemporary culture? Our confessional position assumes that the message of justification touches the human condition at the point of its greatest need. What justification points to is supposedly to embody the concern of every person, whether the farmer at the plow, the artisan in the shop, the scholar in the study, or a lawyer pleading a case in court. The need to which justification refers is existentially perennial and universal. Unfortunately, that is not commonly acknowledged to be the case in most schools of contemporary theology. If it is true that we have now entered an epoch which has evolved beyond the need for the central thrust of the Reformation, then the reason for the schism in the Western Church may no longer be valid. Then the schism is nothing but tragic, for the clear assumption of our confessional position is that the message of justification provides the right and true answer to the inescapable religious question of every person in every age and in every culture. Why continue the schism, if the Lutheran Confessions have exhausted themselves answering Martin Luther's question — a question supposedly aroused by an inflicted over-active introspective conscience?

Lutherans give the rest of the ecumenical world the impression of having had their confidence shaken upon entering the modern world. Who can forget the Helsinki fiasco of 1963, when Lutherans from around the world expressed serious doubt whether the message of justification is relevant to the so-called "modern man"? This question of the relevance of justification is as important as its biblical basis. The question of the standing or falling of the church is linked to the past source of the gospel as well as the present situation in which the preaching of the Word takes place. At Helsinki Lutherans issued a proclamation which stated: "The man of today no longer asks, 'How can I find a gracious God?' His question is more radical, more elementary: he asks about God as such, 'Where is God?' He suffers not from God's wrath, but from the impression of



his absence; not from sin, but from the meaninglessness of his own experience; he asks not about a gracious God, but whether God really exists." Karl Barth seems to have anticipated this Lutheran farce when he wrote in his *Church Dogmatics* a decade before: "Of all the superficial catchwords of our age, surely one of the most superficial is that, whereas 16th century man was concerned about the grace of God, modern man is much more radically concerned about God himself and as such."

Is it really true that the question of the existence of God can be so clearly separated from the question of the grace of God, and is it really the deeper question? This is a question we cannot answer here, since we are not so much composing an apology for justification as we are raising the question, from various angles, whether Lutheranism has not moved from protest to schism to sect since its own grasp of justification has slipped. If the *raison d'etre* of the Lutheran confessing movement no longer has any relevance to the questions of human existence today, and yet Lutheranism persists in keeping its separate identity as an ecclesiastical phenomenon, the word for just such a phenomenon is "sect." The burden of proof is now on Lutheranism to show cause why it should not be classified as a sect, if the originating claim of its existence as a confessing movement for the sake of the church catholic is no longer the perpetuating dynamic of its ongoing separation from the Roman Catholic Church. If what made us separate is no longer what keeps us separate, then we ought to realize that we are in a precarious situation.

My personal conviction is that the contemporary situation still calls for a radical and comprehensive doctrine of justification by grace alone as this is defined by the Confessions. Justification is still an essential control-formula of dogmatics for the sake of the true and right proclamation of the gospel, and this route is still our best hope for realizing the unity of the church. What I am asserting seems to me to formulate an essential minimum condition of the theological legitimacy of continuing the Lutheran confessing movement. Anything less than this condemns the movement to the role of a sect unworthy of our support.

Challenge of the Future

Our confessional identity is still in a position to meet the historical challenge of Christian *origins* as well as the contemporary challenge of *meaning*. We can, therefore, legitimate the ongoing mission of the Lutheran confessing movement — to reform and renew the whole church by the criterion of justification *(sola gratia, sola fide, sola Christi)*. This possibility can be documented by the works of numerous contemporary theologians (Barth, Bultmann, Gogarten, Ebeling, Käsemann, Stuhlmacher, Nygren, Aulen, Tillich, Iwand, Trilhaas,

Dantine, and many others), including a current crop of American Lutheran theologians.

This working hypothesis may fail, however, to meet the challenge of the future, whose forces could bury us all in the rubble of history. The chief creative efforts of Lutheran theologians since the Enlightenment have contributed to a positive correlation of Christianity with the modern world. From the time of the Enlightenment Lutherans have done their most creative work in the closest relation to the developing culture of modernity. Although some Lutherans in Europe and America have tried to ignore or deny that relation, shivering defensively in their confessionalistic ghettoes, others have been in the vanguard of welcoming and accommodating the achievements of modern culture. However, there are many voices today prophesying the beginning of the end of the Enlightenment. What contribution our confessional heritage might make in the midst of our changing cultural world remains completely hidden. The list of giants I mentioned a moment ago already have their names etched on tombstones, or at least have made some plans for retirement. We are yet in the situation of presiding over the synthesis of Christianity and modernity that took its shape from the Enlightenment. This is why the philosophies of Kant and Hegel continue to exercise so much influence in present-day theology. The whole system of Wolfhart Pannenberg may be remembered in future history as the closing of an era, not the opening of a new one. It still moves, as we all do, within the basic horizons opened up by the Enlightenment, moving forward in turn from one new method of science to another, from *natural* science, to *historical* science, and lastly to *social* science. Pannenberg's most recent major work, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science,* charts the manner in which theology can establish the truth and the meaning of Christianity within the universe of modern science and scholarship. However, it is just this universe of meaning which may now be crumbling, and along with it everything which is bound to its chances of survival. Christianity in the West is profoundly committed to the scientific, technological, industrial, and social dreams generated out of the post-Enlightenment era. This is most conspicuous in the evangelical groups that link their fundamentalist biblicism to the most advanced electronic techniques.

There are signs of disintegration of the cultural world that trusted in the omnicompetence of science, unending technological progress, and ever-widening circles of people to enjoy an abundant supply of consumer goods. Many are now saying that the scientific form of consciousness is not the only one that puts us in touch with reality out there; that technology has progressed to the point of producing the means to destroy all civilization; that the consumer goods are being unevenly distributed between the



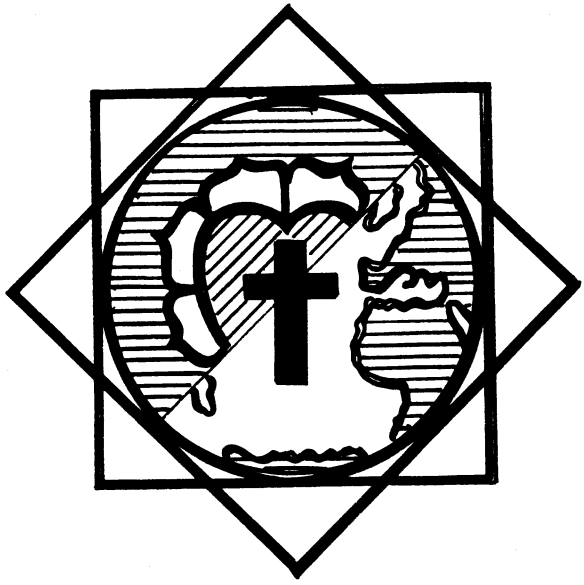
haves and the have-nots, and that our liberal-democratic-capitalist system has proven itself as incapable of coping with this menacing problem as any of its rivals.

The question we face is whether our confessional tradition can be a beacon of hope when all around us the foundations of our post-Enlightenment culture seem to be shaking. There is no mythos or logos or ethos that seems to possess any power to grasp either the masses or the leaders of Western culture. The older, enthusiastic belief in providence or progress has yielded to a defensive mentality of hanging on and shoring up in face of our enemies. But who are the enemies? The tragedy is that we keep looking for the enemy aggressors out there, whereas in truth our nemesis is being generated out of the very structures of science, technology, industrial development, rational thought and autonomous freedom that we have explicitly trusted would in time build a more blessed universal culture. As in the biblical story of creation and fall, sin arises from within as the corruption of something good.

Now, if we are heading into stormy weather, our cherished forms collapsing, our ideals and ideologies deeply suspect as masks covering our own self-interests, our very life threatened by the destruction of our natural environment and nuclear insanity, then what kind of confession can conceivably sustain us in just such a cultural holocaust? Just what kind of a faith will be meaningful when the modes of existence we have been able to take for granted are beginning to vanish, when the eternal verities built into the nature of things no longer supply the meanings by which people live? We will then be plunged into a time when, stripped of all the "gods" of our Western culture, we will perhaps again need a small Catechism, one that speaks of a faith that is very much *sola* — all other systems of hope having failed us. Just such a test in the fire and judgment of God's history will prove whether our confessional heritage points to what is essential in biblical faith, or stands merely as a monument to a Christian sectarian movement that lived in Northern Europe and America during the second half of the second millennium C.E. Only such a test will purge away all the sectarian slag extraneous to the pure metal of the gospel, and that now stands in the way of the unity of the church. If Christianity will manage to survive the demise of our cultural epoch, it will be because the power of its own revealed truth will succeed in confirming itself in the midst of the turbulent transitions from this epoch to the next. Our confessional commitment entails a thrust toward the future, providing at least a particular point of departure for theology continuous with the meaning of the gospel of God's justification by which the church lives or dies. As the church moves into a new wilderness, however apocalyptic in kind, we have a compass to help us know something about our whereabouts and

the direction in which we are going. There may be no maps yet to chart our way, but we will not be adrift without an orientation.

Along the way we may expect to see a kind of Hegelian *Aufhebung* of what is now called Lutheranism, which originated as a confessing movement, developed into a denomination, at least here in the United States, with many characteristics of a sect, and will hopefully culminate in a new unified ecclesial reality prepared by the trials of history to live by faith alone and resume, perhaps as a vastly diminished minority, the purpose of its election as God's diaspora people announcing and symbolizing his plan of salvation for the world.



Facing Up to Two Career Marriages

Carolyn Lorenz Utech and David A. Utech

Carolyn holds an M.S.W. degree and is a social worker with children, parents, and medical staff at Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago. Dave holds his Ph.D. and works as a psychologist with children, parents and staff in public and parochial schools in Evanston, Illinois. They have three children, aged eight to thirteen, and are members of Grace Lutheran Church in Evanston.

Andy Hardy's mother didn't work outside the home. When Robert Young portrayed "Father Knows Best," he was not only all-wise, he provided all the income for the family while his wife prepared dinner and met him at the door. June Cleaver, in "Leave It to Beaver," seemed to keep things running smoothly at home while wearing high heels and a spotless apron. Even today the myth is perpetuated as TV commercials for soap, floor products, and food preparation depict smiling (but rather brainless) females doing housework to the admiring glances of the income-producing men in their lives.

The realities of the 1980s, however, are quite different from the movie and TV role models we grew up with a generation or more ago. The 1950s "model" family, a husband who works for pay plus a wife who works at home while raising the couple's 2.8 children, has almost disappeared. National statistics now indicate that only 7% of American homes now fit that old model, while 62% of all mothers of school-age children work for pay outside the home.[1] Before the close of this century, it is anticipated that an even greater percentage of marriages will have both partners employed outside of the home. Schools already have seen the effects of this social change in the decreased PTA participation by women due to daytime employment.

The average age of first marriages has gone up during the 1970s as more people delayed getting married. Many of those new couples anticipate each partner will continue in a career, rejecting the old model of male-provider and female-homemaker. Role distinctions are becoming blurred, and some individuals feel threatened by uncertainty or what is perceived to be encroachment. ("What do you mean, he wants to be a nurse?")

We were asked to discuss the concerns of two-career marriages with participants at the 1980 Institute of the Lutheran Human Relations Association of America. In response to our questionnaires, and in open forum discussions, we found that Christian couples encounter several different problems as they try to meet each other's needs while both are gainfully employed. They also stated that the church has been of little assistance in solving these problems, and they had some ideas about how the church can be more helpful.

The new realities which two-career couples must face include decisions about:

whether to begin a family at all;
the responsibilities of child care;
handling of income and expenses;
allocating housework drudgery;
keeping the different needs of two jobs off a collision course;
finding time to simply enjoy one another.

"Shall we have children?"

[1] David Cohen, "Child care needs." *Chicago Tribune,* February 1, 1981.

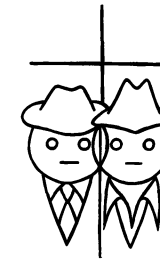
Such a question was virtually unknown a few generations ago. A rural society placed a premium on children for the work their extra hands could produce. Large families were considered blessed, especially since unpredictable diseases could wipe out several children at a time. Even if families wished to remain small, birth control methods were unreliable.

When we chose to have our first child, it was not a particularly difficult decision. Those were still the days when we assumed a great deal. We assumed we would have children; we assumed a mother should stay home with a baby; we assumed we could live on one income. But these assumptions are no longer valid for increasing numbers of couples.

It is hard for couples to decide not to have children. The historical precedents and assumptions, as well as current pressures from well-meaning friends and would-be grandparents, are not easy to withstand. Questions arise as to motives. "Are we just being selfish? How can you deny yourselves the pleasures of parenthood? Am I really prepared to be a parent?" Under any circumstances, couples find it hard to sort out their feelings in this intensely personal area. When the demands of two careers must also be balanced, the situation becomes enormously complicated. Couples recognize that child-bearing is an irreversible process, and that children do not always seem to be blessings. In our work, we see many parents who are overwhelmed, disillusioned, and worn out by their progeny. Knowing that children's emotional, physical, and intellectual needs demand time and energy, some couples doubt if they have the ability or desire to become parents.

Child-bearing often has direct costs on the woman's career. Even a brief maternity leave may mean that she sacrifices pay, opportunity for advancement, on-the-job experience, and seniority. On the other hand, some men are beginning to see value in serving as a nurturant person, but feel trapped and locked-in to a career which may not allow them to practice such a role. In either case, the decision about having children may result in considerable conflict for the individuals and their relationship.

Comments from participants at the LHRAA Institute suggested that the organized church could be more helpful to couples confronting this dilemma. When congregations assume that families automatically include children, child-less couples tend to feel neglected. The persistent use of parent-child terminology reinforces the stereotyped image of the mother/father/children family. Perhaps a greater emphasis on the husband/wife imagery as applied to Christ and the church would be useful. The church should be openly supportive of a variety of family life-styles, including singles and single parents, as well as working couples and "traditional" family units. Opportunities to



learn from new role models and to discuss the issue of whether to raise a family should be provided by the church and its agencies.

"How will we arrange for care of the children?"

We are fortunate that Dave's work schedule largely coincides with the children's school calendar. Nevertheless, it is still an issue with which we have struggled and which we continue to find exasperating. Quality day care is a commodity earnestly sought by many parents, but it is unfortunately still a rarity. Schools, park districts, and other community agencies are now joining private enterprise in organizing high quality day care programs. (In our community, the school district organized an after-school day care program after a second grade child died at home because the working parents had not found adequate care for him.) A persistent comment from the LHRAA participants we talked to was that parishes need to make their facilities more available as sites for day care or after school activities. Church-related colleges might also enlarge their programs in early childhood education in order to provide staff members for such centers. Church meetings and conferences should include children's programs, which are more than merely dropping off all the kids in a large room with a kindly grandparent or willing teenager. Such programs would be designed to meet the emotional needs of the smaller members of Christ's body with age-appropriate activities. LHRAA has developed an excellent model that other church organizations could emulate.

Parents from two-career marriages frequently find, once a form of child care is found, that the real rub comes when the children get sick. A psychologist friend once described himself sitting down with his wife and two-year old child and deciding that the only reasonable solution was "The kid simply will not get sick." Of course, the child did get sick, despite the father's fantasies to the contrary, leading him to conclude, "Denial can be a powerful defense mechanism, but reality will ultimately break through."

Our kids have a bad habit of not checking our schedules before becoming ill. It's not easy to weigh rationally the separate demands of patients who are waiting at the hospital, a meeting involving parents and teachers and principals, and a child with a 102° fever. Only the persons involved can really resolve the problems presented by such a situation. One factor which may help is the realization that *parenting* includes taking care of children, and staying home with a sick youngster means being a father (or mother), not a babysitter, for that child.

Few employers will openly acknowledge a child's illness as a legitimate excuse for employee absence. Churches need to raise the awareness of employers and be supportive of workers so that sick

leave can be used when a child or spouse requires care while convalescing. The assumption that only mothers can take care of sick children needs to be challenged by the church. Perhaps male pastors could rearrange their schedule in order to be at home with a sick child. What a model for the congregation that might be!

"Who spends? Who saves? Who must consult with whom before spending how much? What does it mean when one spouse earns substantially more than the other?"

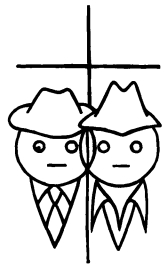
Issues about finances have traditionally been the basis for serious marital discord. Misunderstandings about money often permeate other aspects of marriage, creating conflicts about child-rearing, sex and outside interests. The addition of a second income is no guarantee that a family will find improvement in their interpersonal relationships. In fact, things may become even more complicated. Moreover, many families do not *choose* to be dual-career families but are forced into it by economic necessity. They may experience guilt for being unable to survive on a single income or for "neglecting" the home and family. They may feel trapped in a life-style they do not want.

Money equates with power in our society, and couples with two jobs may need help in recognizing the potential conflicts which can result from two incomes. Communication skills need to be improved so the feelings can be dealt with constructively and openly while grappling with these concerns.

When we asked, "What is the church doing to help?", we usually heard, "Nothing." Some even felt the church loads on extra problems by assuming that a larger share of money can be put in the offering envelope. Some suggested remedies included church-sponsored seminars on investment and prudent money management, and programs to assist couples' communication skills. They stressed the need for churches to be good examples of priority-setters. Is the primary budgetary concern the maintenance of buildings and the status quo, or is money used to spread the Good News, care for the needy, and enhance the quality of life?

Parenthetically, on our survey most of the individuals who expressed concern about money indicated that they are members of racial minorities. This seems to suggest that those who have the least access to the benefits of our society have been the most seriously affected by the unrelenting pressures of inflation. If this is true, what does a primarily white church have to say to these people to help them? And what does the church have to say in the name of justice to a society in which this happens?

"Housework is thankless, repetitive work which I wish could be allocated more equitably," said one woman who attended the LHRAA Institute.



Despite the trend for women to enter the economic workplace, their duties at home have remained fairly constant. Studies show that the wife has not traded the apron for the briefcase, she has simply adopted both. While feminists deplore the situation, it seems to be a current fact of life.[2]

We often hear young men saying that when they marry they want their wives to have a career. But probe beneath the belief in equal opportunity, and even equal pay, and there frequently appears to be little recognition that such an arrangement may also put demands on the man. A recent study noted some interesting class differences in expectations and actions regarding work and family.

In the study, middle-class men indicated that they feel very guilty because they enjoyed their work, worked hard at it, and yet felt that they should give more attention to their families. Working-class men, by contrast, felt much less guilt, explaining that women should do housework and men should participate in the factory and in sports. However, despite the verbalized concern, middle-class men actually performed less housework and childcare than their apparently more sexist working-class counterparts.[3]

This is a role-threatening situation for both males and females. Frequently, we hear employed women complain about having to do the housework; but then they say that their husbands and children do not do the job adequately. (This is usually enthusiastically admitted by the husband and children.) If families are not given the opportunity to push dust around, they will always assume that it is "Mother's job." Thus willingness to try new activities needs to be accompanied by patience and tolerance.

Some of the solutions to the housework dilemma suggested by the workshop participants were changes in expectations about what a "clean" house really means, reliance on labor-saving devices, allocation of discretionary income toward weekly cleaning services, or meals eaten out of the home. In addition, they thought that churches might provide forums for discussion of these concerns, so that couples could brainstorm together to find mutually acceptable solutions.

"How can you even consider a job offer in Duluth when you know I might be getting a promotion here?"

The issue of career priorities is a new one for most couples. There are few role models to look to, and couples find themselves alone as they wrestle with such questions. It's hard not to feel threatened, envious, scared, and angry when a spouse's career is leading to bigger and better things. The relationship

[2] Jessie Bernard, "The good-provider role: Its rise and fall." *American Psychologist*, 1981, *36* (1), 1-12.

[3] David Cohen, "British psychologists focus on unemployment." *APA Monitor*, 1981, *12* (2), 6, 41.

needs to be strong in order to cope with apparent competition. Some couples advocate taking turns. "First you get to go to school, then I get to go after that position in Houston." But real life has a way of being more complicated than this, and opportunities sometimes present themselves inconveniently. Decisions are made which later may be regretted.

A sensitive husband tells us that his wife did not obtain further education to advance her career, because they both thought it would take too much of her time away from the family. Now they have moved and she cannot get a job because she does not have the necessary educational credentials. She is filled with regret and he is burdened with guilt.

Most couples that we know who have confronted this problem suggest that careful planning and goal-setting is necessary before even trying to sort out the pros and cons of any particular opportunity. There ought to be some notion of which goals are important for the couple, and what kinds of accommodations or concessions are really possible for each.

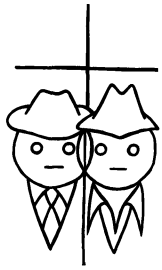
Can the church help? Maybe not with specific decision-making, but certainly in terms of being supportive of couples as they try to determine priorities and set goals. It might be helpful for church-related family service agencies or local clusters of parishes to develop a series of seminars or discussion groups. In these, couples could talk together about their problems and possible solutions, using a professional facilitator to focus the group. Problem-solving and listening skills can be taught and shared and role-played in the caring atmosphere of the church.

"Every morning we hurry."

We hurry to eat and dress and rinse the breakfast dishes so the cat won't track jelly around the house and make sure the kids have milk money and try to review the day's schedule and all leave on time. And every evening we hurry — hurry to make dinner and determine who has homework and who has practiced his instrument and must we do laundry and apologize for working overtime and try to eat before the children start to moan and someone has to leave for an evening meeting. Yet relationships take time to cultivate; they do not thrive on hurried dinners or a shared half-hour watching the 10 o'clock news.

In our workshop, time was far and away the most pressing problem. Over and over, concerns were raised about the lack of time to devote to one another and the family when both spouses are working. A lawyer who is married to a pastor finds that their work schedules rarely coincide. She has many evening meetings and the Sunday service; he does the majority of his work on weekdays. Each is torn by career demands and marital needs.

In discussing possible solutions, the words "priorities" and "schedules" and "intentional" kept coming up. Those



who struggle to find the time to devote to the marriage related how they had to decide together just which things must take priority and how to schedule activities so that time can be spent intentionally with one another. One woman said, "Lock the bedroom door, and plan dinner out at least once a month."

Without some kind of forethought, we seem to fritter away our time on activities which keep us apart — conferences, meetings, laundry, or whatever. We need to bring ourselves together sometimes by committing an afternoon or an evening to each other and our relationship. However, the common complaint was, "We don't even have time to discuss what our priorities are." As one person said, "Our time together is so rare and so precious, I just want to enjoy it. I don't want to use it to discuss solving problems." Yet we know that this is not a way to handle the things we care about.

This winter we have discussed what seeds we will plant in our garden this spring. Somehow, setting priorities of squash over carrots wasn't too painful and will certainly make us happier with our fall crops. Yet setting marital priorities is different. They involve who we are in our deepest sense of being. I do not fear loss of my identity if I give up green beans for peas, but I may have to really examine who I am and who I want to be when we prioritize the time-consuming parts of our lives and our marriage.

How can the church help in this area? Primarily, there are two ways. First is the previously mentioned idea of facilitating problem-solving for couples. The church cannot give answers; what works for one couple may not work for another. But the local congregation can provide meeting places and professional facilitators and maybe even locate various role models to aid couples in decision-making.

The second way for the church to help couples stems from a complaint that we heard many times. "The church breaks up families with its demands on our time." Pastors and lay persons alike expressed concern that the meetings and activities which are centered around church actually result in splitting couples apart rather than strengthening their relationships. Someone suggested that the "committed" church member is called upon to serve on more and more committees, coordinate more activities, and still be a model family member.

Facing up to this concern may involve an exercise in problem-solving that congregations will find difficult. There are, however, alternatives to the typical congregational organization. One night a week could be set aside for meetings when each person can participate in his or her interest, thereby leaving other nights for the family to spend together. Or less active church members could be enthusiastically recruited so that more of the "church work" is spread around and doesn't fall on a few faithful families.

The congregation's organizations could be carefully evaluated. Are meetings held because they are necessary or because they are scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month? Are meetings time-limited or open-ended? Are organizations meeting a need or fulfilling a tradition?

Most important, the congregation could provide some opportunities for couples to spend time together, rediscovering their commitment to each other in the context of the larger family of God. One workshop participant said, "The church should enable people to be ministers in what they do and in their families and *give* them time at church to worship and find renewal." Thinking of time as a gift rather than a limit may be the starting point on setting new priorities for couples and for parishes.

Conclusion

The two-career marriage is not the only problem confronting the church today. Other life-style issues such as singleness, homosexuality, the changing roles of women, divorce, children's rights, and aging also present problems for the church. It is safe to assume that the concerns of two-career marriages will be with our society for a long time. We look forward to the creative solutions which are sure to come, since change can be exciting as well as painful! And we envision the church as a helping agency in the process of redefining our roles and working through our problems.

As a couple who has opted for two careers within one marriage, we find that we have grown together while dealing with the stresses of our choice. The added income has been delightful, and our weakness for theater-going has been indulged. Personal fulfillment through satisfying work has been a joy for each of us. Our children have become responsible individuals who contribute to a somewhat clean home and care for us even as we nurture them. We have discovered abilities we never dreamed we had.

Yes, our lives are hectic at times. An emergency at the hospital may require Carolyn to work late, but the reward of being able to help in crisis adds depth to our relationship and provides a role-model for the children. Dave attends yet another evening meeting, but the ensuing discussion when he returns makes us laugh or cry or resolve to work for change. And when life seems to overwhelm us with too many demands and not enough strokes, we pray together for forgiveness and peace.

The blessing and the curse of a two-career marriage seem to be that you can't take anything for granted. It keeps us on our toes — but that seems to be a good position for dancing. The music may be new, but we enjoy the dance.

Reformation and Reason: A Sermon for the Festival of the Reformation

David W. Lotz

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Christian faith is not a wall erected to shut out the world. It is a window on the whole of human reality. The Christian church is not an intellectual ghetto. It is the community of the faithful who love the Lord their God with all their heart and soul *and mind*. Christian discipleship is not a sacrifice of the intellect, a case of the blind following the blind. It is a continuing in the words of our Lord to the end that we come to know his liberating *truth*.

These are essential components of the Christian religion which we are all too prone to forget or overlook or obscure. One of the grave dangers attending our faith and life is that we will permit it to degenerate into sentimentalism — a religion of the heart without the head; or into moralism — a religion of deed without comprehension of the creed; or into aestheticism — a religion where beauty takes precedence over truth, where what the eye beholds (such as exquisite stained-glass windows) or what the ear hears (such as the majestic music of Buxtehude and Bach) is considered far more important than what the mind acknowledges to be true.

Christian faith, to be sure, is to be exercised in simplicity of heart. Such simplicity, however, is not simplemindedness. Our Lord Jesus Christ invites us to entrust ourselves to his heavenly Father and ours with childlike confidence, but we are not told to be childish in thought or behavior. St. Paul asserts that we are saved through the foolishness of preaching, through that word of the cross which is folly to the self-righteous, but St. Paul does not say, thank God, that one must be a fool either to preach or to hear the gospel.

Now some of you may be saying to yourselves, "What does all this have to do with the Lutheran Reformation, whose anniversary we observe today? Here we've just finished a rousing rendition of 'A Mighty Fortress' — all geared up, as it were, for an old fashioned *Luther über alles* sermon — and the preacher hasn't said a single word about Luther or the Reformation, but has launched out into the deep of rather abstract reflections."

Nevertheless, first impressions to the contrary, I *have* been talking, at least indirectly, about Luther and the Reformation. For it is precisely the Lutheran Reformation, along with Holy Scripture itself, that permits me to speak as I have about Christian faith and life as an affair of the mind, of the human reason and intellect, no less than of the heart and the will and the five senses.

The Lutheran Reformation, let it be recalled, was the work of a doctor of theology and university professor. Martin Luther was an academic, a biblical scholar, a Christian intellectual. The birthplace of the Reformation was an institution of higher learning, namely, the university of Wittenberg, where Luther labored and lectured on Holy Scripture for over thirty years. This same university was the training center for thousands of

preachers and pastors. In the forty years between 1520 and 1560 over 16,000 students matriculated at Wittenberg. Many of these students formed the vanguard for the dissemination and spread of the reformers' evangelical message throughout European Christendom and beyond.

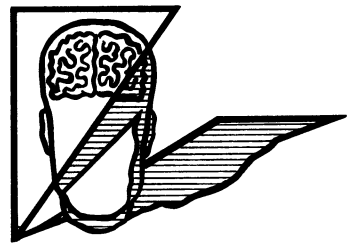
The Reformation, moreover, enlisted the support of some of the best minds in the sixteenth century, including not only churchmen and theologians but also artists such as the painter Albrecht Dürer and the poet Hans Sachs. And while the Reformation was by no means limited to a small group of intellectuals, it could not have gotten off the ground, humanly speaking, without the indispensable support of a community of scholars known as the Christian humanists.

These are facts about the Lutheran Reformation which are commonplace to historians. Yet they are commonly left out of account in popular presentations of the Reformation, and in sermons and addresses which commemorate the Reformation. In order to bring these neglected facts to the fore, and to underscore their significance for our Christian faith and life, I propose to consider what we may call the theme of "Reformation and reason."

1) In the first place, we can link Luther's Reformation with human reason — with the disciplined life of the mind — because it was so intimately bound up with arduous intellectual labor, especially with the rigorous, scientific study of the Bible.

I suspect that many persons fail to grasp this fact because they have an image of Luther as a kind of sixteenth-century Billy Graham, a Bible-thumping itinerant evangelist embarked on a massive "crusade for Christ." That simply isn't so. To be sure, Luther was a preacher of great power and wide influence. He frequently occupied the pulpit of the Wittenberg parish church and preached, on an average, three or four times a week throughout his career. Luther's chief vocation, however, was that of Professor of Sacred Scripture in Wittenberg university. He occupied this position from 1512, when at age 29 he received his doctor's degree in theology, until his death at age 63 in 1546. During these thirty-four years he lectured at least twice weekly on the books of the Bible, especially the Old Testament. Luther the church reformer is inconceivable except in his role as Luther the university professor, the skilled biblical interpreter.

It was in this capacity that he experienced what today is often called his "evangelical breakthrough," that is, his discovery of the Bible's heart and center: the liberating message that, wonder of wonders, the righteous God freely accepts the unrighteous and the ungodly for Christ's sake through faith alone. This breakthrough, however, did not transpire in an intellectual vacuum. It did not occur in a single moment, in one blinding flash of illumination and insight. It was a result, rather, of the most



intensive, painstaking study of Scripture over many years as Luther faithfully carried out his office as a theological professor.

We should note in this connection that Luther also made use of the best scholarly tools of his own age and of the Christian past. By the standards of his own time he was what we would call a "scientific" biblical scholar. Luther also taught himself Hebrew and Greek in order to interpret the Bible on the basis of its original languages. He insisted, therefore, that theological students and candidates for the holy ministry be trained in biblical languages. "Let us be sure of this," he warned, "we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. [They] are the sheath in which the sword of the Spirit is contained." Thus Luther did not disparage the life of the mind. Far from it! His career is a foremost example of rigorous scholarship in the service of the gospel.

2) Reformation and reason are linked, in the second place, by the intimate, indissoluble connection between Luther's reform activity and the university setting in which he lived out his days.

What we now call "the Lutheran Reformation of the Sixteenth Century" actually began as a local movement within Wittenberg university. In one sense, of course, the Reformation began in the depths of Luther's soul as he wrestled with the meaning of Holy Scripture, especially with the words "the righteousness of God" which he encountered again and again in the Psalms and in St. Paul's epistles. Yet Luther did not stand alone, in splendid isolation. (Too much is made of Luther the "solitary monk.") By early 1517 — months before he posted his famous Ninety-Five Theses — Luther could rejoice that virtually the whole of the Wittenberg faculty shared his basic perspective on the proper curriculum for theological study. Most of his colleagues agreed with him that intensive study of the Bible and of the old church fathers should replace the traditional study of the medieval scholastic theologians and the philosophy of Aristotle. In this sense the Reformation had its origins in a revolutionary reform of university education.

Here one should also call to mind the invaluable services of Luther's brilliant colleague and co-worker, Philip Melanchthon. Today we remember Melanchthon chiefly as the author of the Augsburg Confession and the Apology to the Augsburg Confession. In his own time he was numbered among the brightest lights in the intellectual firmament of Christian humanism, second only to the illustrious Erasmus of Rotterdam, the prince of humanists. Owing to his pioneering work in establishing secondary schools throughout Germany, and in reorganizing the German universities, Melanchthon was honored already in his lifetime with the title "Preceptor of Germany."

Clearly a man of great intellect and wide learning, Melanchthon had received

his B.A. degree at age 14, his M.A. at 16. In August of 1518 he was called to Wittenberg as professor of Greek. He was then only 21 years old — "beardless Philip" as Luther affectionately dubbed him. In his famous inaugural address of 29 August 1518, entitled "On Improving the Studies of Youth," Master Philip declared: "With the [Holy] Spirit as our guide and with the accompaniment of a cultivation of the liberal arts, we may then proceed to sacred studies. . . . In our hands we have Homer; we also have the Epistle of Paul to Titus."

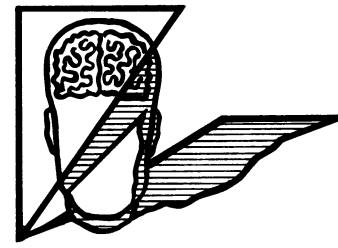
Thus Melanchthon joined together, without hesitation, the study of holy letters and humane letters, of sacred theology and the liberal arts. He joined together, without compunction, the pagan poet Homer and the Christian apostle Paul, considering them both indispensable to the science of God and man. One might say that Melanchthon showed great confidence in the powers of human reason to attain truth. One would more properly say, however, that he showed supreme confidence in the God who is reason's Creator and Preserver. Hence he could view the loftiest attainments of the mind — the entire heritage of human culture — as part and parcel of God's good design for his spiritual creation.

3) This leads to the third and, no doubt, the most important connection between Reformation and reason. Luther and Melanchthon both taught that our reason is God's good gift which we are to cherish, nurture, and employ to its fullest extent in ordering the affairs of our communal life and in investigating the world around us.

Now it is also true that Luther said many harsh, even shocking things about human reason, calling it "the devil's whore" among other vile names. Yet in these cases Luther used the word "reason" in a very special and limited way. Here he was referring to what he called "the legal way of thinking" about God's relationship to sinful humanity. That is, "reason" in this legal sense assumes that God's justice is equivalent to human justice, that God judges us by the same standards by which we judge ourselves and one another.

We commonly say that justice is rendering to each person what is due each person, so that the good person, the law-abider, is rewarded, while the evildoer, the law-breaker, is punished. Applied to God, this familiar concept of justice would mean that God is our debtor, bound to reward us for our good deeds and to punish us for our misdeeds. But Martin Luther, the earnest professor of Scripture, discovered that before the God who searches the heart — before the God who knows all the secret corners and crevices of our hidden lives — not one of us can lay claim to any intrinsic goodness, holiness, righteousness.

The sober truth is that we have utterly failed to live up to the demands of God's holy law: we do not love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and



mind, nor do we truly love our neighbors as ourselves. In a word, we are guilty. Measured by the exacting standard of heavenly justice, we have dirty hands and crooked hearts. Therefore we cannot presume to stand in the presence of the righteous God. Above all we cannot stand there in the name of that vaunted self-righteousness which turns out to be only self-deception and blasphemy against God.

Hence our "reason" — our whole legalistic way of picturing our relationship to God — must be repudiated for the sake of the gospel. For the unheard-of truth of the Christian message is that merciful God acquits and accepts us, the unholy and the ungodly, out of pure fatherly goodness for Christ's sake, "without any merit or worthiness" on our part.

In this particular context, therefore, in this all-important matter of our justification before God, Luther rejected human reason as a perversion of the gospel. Yet the same Luther could also say that in its own proper sphere — in the affairs of daily life, in the ordering of society, in matters of human justice, in the province of science and technology — reason is a veritable god, a divine creation, an occasion for high delight and heartfelt praise. Even so, in his explanation to the first article of the Apostles' Creed, Luther confesses: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that he has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still preserves them. . . ."

It is at this point, I think, that the theme "Reformation and reason" touches us most directly, because at this point we have most often surrendered or compromised the heritage of the Lutheran reformers.

I do not doubt that most of us are good "second article" Christians, that our piety is truly Christ-centered and properly focused on God's great redemptive deeds in the birth, suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. But our understanding of God's work as Creator is often weak and underdeveloped.

Time and again we fail to appreciate the awesome truth that the same God who created heaven and earth is the God who has made me and all my members, including my mind and intellect whereby I can at least begin to comprehend the heavens above me and the earth beneath me — whereby the whole of worldly reality, from the realm of the atom to the recesses of space, is opened up to my belief-ful understanding.

How timid, and halting, and even fearful we are in talking about our God-given powers of mind and intellect — as if Christian faith required us to take off our heads, and not merely our hats, when we enter a church.

How often we are content to treat our Christian faith as a retreat or refuge from rigorous thought and strenuous mental labor — as if Christianity were the religion of the weakminded and soft-

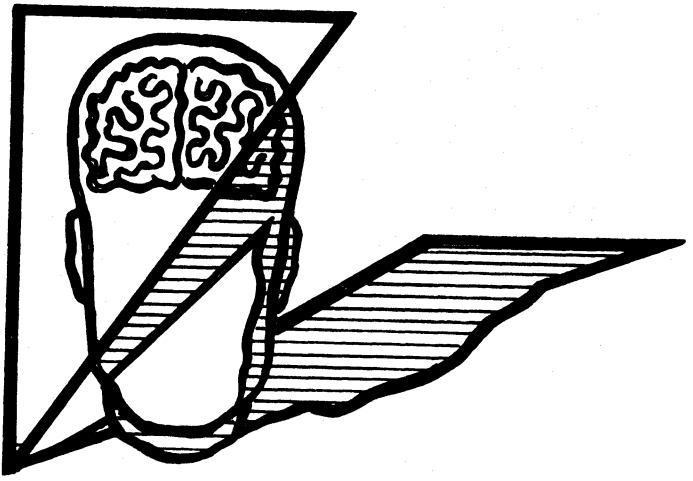
headed, as if authentic Christian existence could only be lived from the neck down.

How often we allow our non-Christian neighbors to conclude that the Christian religion is an invitation to intellectual poverty and an exercise in pious mumbo-jumbo — as if our faith were not in fact the vehicle for a penetrating insight into the entire masterplan of creation.

The Lutheran reformers were more bold, venturesome, and visionary than we typically are. Although they realized that human reason and rationality also had its dark side — its demonic potential, its temptations to overweening pride, even its denials of God the almighty Creator of heaven and earth — *nevertheless,* they never lost sight of reason's status as a divine creation and inestimable gift.

They were not rationalists, worshippers of reason. They were Christian intellectuals, worshippers of reason's Creator and Lord. They did not live to serve the mind; yet they cultivated the life of the mind in the service of God, church, and society. They were, in short, disciplined thinkers and thoughtful believers.

In all these respects they set an example for our common Christian life. Today we remember their example with gratitude. Please God, we will also make their example our own and even so enter more fully into this grand heritage of the Reformation.



Birth Control, Personalism, and the Pope

Ronald Modras

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Roman Catholics are often accused of being obsessed with the subject of sexuality. Pope John Paul II has not helped to refute the allegation. On the contrary, press reports of his speeches and statements and last year's Synod of Bishops in Rome seem rather to confirm suspicion that Catholic church leaders, including the Pope, have an exaggerated preoccupation with sex.

If Catholic laity sometimes feels this way, Lutheran laity and clergy have a right to be equally puzzled. The Pope is no stranger to the human condition. He demonstrates obvious understanding and concern for people's problems. He speaks and writes eloquently on divine mercy and compassion. Yet he appears intransigent on questions of sexual morality like birth control. Is it his Polish background? Is the Pope simply an uncompromising traditionalist? Why does he talk so much about sexuality?

The key to these questions is not the Pope's Polish heritage, but his personal philosophy. He does not espouse tradition uncritically; he is too much a thinker for that. And if he appears to speak often about sexuality, it is because his addresses at his Wednesday audiences were drawn from an unpublished manuscript he had been working on before becoming Pope. Karol Wojtyla has given considerable thought to sexuality in his role as an ethician. He has approached the subject and written on it extensively not only as a churchman but as a personalist philosopher.

Three years ago, on the 10th anniversary of Pope Paul's birth control encyclical, HUMANAE VITAE, Cardinal Wojtyla wrote an article on "The Anthropology of Humanae Vitae." The views expressed in that article provide a valuable insight into the reasons for his apparent intransigence on birth control now as Pope. The background to that article raises the fundamental moral question which Christian theology, Catholic or otherwise, has to confront before addressing any problem regarding sexual ethics: on what basis are sexual acts to be judged as moral or immoral? By an appeal to the laws of nature or on the basis of the dignity of the human person? By the natural law tradition going back to Augustine and Aquinas, or by the more recent philosophy of Christian personalism?

Personalism

Personalism, as a philosophical movement, has taken a number of divergent directions. Its essential, unifying perspective is that persons and personal relations are more basic for understanding reality than abstract ideas like being or nature. It insists that all thought be related to personhood. Precisely this principle was enunciated by Vatican II in the opening chapter of its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes* (G&S). It stated that, "all things on earth should be related to man as their center and

crown" (G&S -12). It described human persons as radically social beings who develop full potential only within human relationships. It rejected the extreme body/soul dualism that exalts the spiritual at the expense of the somatic.

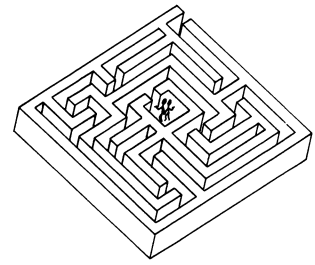
Above all, in the section on marriage and the family, the Pastoral Constitution canonized a personalist approach to sexuality by espousing personalist definitions and principles as the basis for its ethical teaching. A preliminary draft on sexuality and marriage, prepared for the Council, had merely repeated the traditional doctrine that marriage is an institution primarily for the procreation of children on the basis of natural law. Critics of the preliminary draft, like Patriarch Maximos, asked trenchantly, "Is it still permitted to convert laws of biology into moral imperatives?" The draft, with its natural law foundation and formulas, was rejected.

Instead, the Council explicitly made "the dignity of the human person" the basis of its consideration (G&S -46). Marriage was presented in personalist terms as a "community of love," related to the "well-being of the individual and of human and Christian society" (G&S -47). The love of husband and wife was described as "eminently human," involving the good of the whole person, and "uniquely expressed and perfected" through sexual intercourse (G&S -49).

The Council not only adopted a positive view of sexuality, it modified the tradition that made procreation the principal purpose of marriage. Human sexuality does not exist solely for the good of the species, for its characteristics "wonderfully exceed the dispositions of lower forms of life" (G&S -51). While the love of husband and wife is "ordained" toward begetting children, "marriage is not instituted solely for procreation." The other, unitive purposes of marriage, such as the sexual expression of love, tenderness, mutual support, "are not of less account" (G&S -50).

Partnership and parenthood, the unitive and procreative aspects of marriage, are obviously not unconnected. But harmonizing them responsibly is something else. A husband and wife have a right to express their love sexually even when it may be morally imperative for them not to have any more children. To integrate these two aspects of marriage, the Council took a revolutionary turn and adopted a personalist principle as its basis for moral judgment. The morality of sexual intercourse must be determined by "objective standards," and these must be "based on the nature of the human person and his acts" (G&S -51). To avoid any uncertainty as to the exact meaning of the text, the commission that drafted it attached the following explanatory note: "These standards mean the acts are not to be judged solely by their biological aspects but as acts proper to the human person, and the latter is to be fully envisaged in its total reality."

The Council left to Pope Paul, at his



request, the task of confronting the question of specific methods of birth control. But only after it had made a clear break with the categories of the natural law tradition. What theological advisor to the Council, Joseph Ratzinger, now Cardinal Archbishop of Munich, wrote shortly after the Council expresses it well and deserves to be quoted at length:

> There is a decided difference between a total moral statement based on the concept of race and the propagation of the race and on the concept of 'accordance with nature,' and a view which focuses on individual conscience, on the Word of God, and on responsibility toward children, toward the husband or wife, and toward the community of mankind. The context within which conscience operates, the entire atmosphere in which all decision and moral commitment is made, differs radically in these two cases. It is simply not the same, whether a person asks himself if his actions are 'in accord with nature' or whether he must ask whether his actions are responsible actions in view of other persons . . . and whether his actions are responsible in view of the Word of the personal God *(Theological Highlights of Vatican II,* 1966, pp. 167-68.).

A Return to Biologism?

Two and a half years after the conclusion of the Council, Pope Paul signed *Humanae Vitae* (HV), with its fateful insistence that "each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life" (HV -11). The arguments offered for this conclusion spoke not of persons but of biology, functions, and nature: "In relation to the biological processes, responsible parenthood means the knowledge and respect of their functions" (HV -10). Spouses may not practice artificial contraception and thereby "impede the development of natural processes." The rhythm method of periodic continence is licit because it takes into account "the natural rhythms immanent in generative functions" (HV -16).

Among the critics of Pope Paul's encyclical were personalist theologians deeply involved in developing the theology canonized by Vatican II's chapter on marriage and the family. They viewed the encyclical as a retreat to the natural law perspective that identifies God's will with nature and nature with biological processes, a return to biologism. Where the Council speaks of husband and wife being responsible to persons, the encyclical speaks of respect for biological processes. Because the encyclical speaks of "biological laws which pertain to the human person" (HV -10), they viewed it as virtually identifying personalism with biology. For these and other personalist critics, the encyclical appeared unavoidably at odds with the

Council.

Not so, retorted a philosopher archbishop from Poland, with no mean personalist credentials himself. In the wake of the outcry against the encyclical, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla authored a brief article in 1970 on "The Human Person and the Natural Law." The natural law, he insisted, was not understood by Pope Paul as only a biological pattern. The conflict between natural law and personalism is only apparent, not real. In fact, he argued, natural law closely corresponds to man as a person, since, according to the classical definition, a person is "an individual substance of a rational nature."

The charge that HV contradicts the personalism of Vatican II was obviously an indictment that Cardinal Wojtyla took seriously. He answered the charge and defended the encyclical with another article in 1978 on "The Anthropology of the Encyclical *'Humanae Vitae,'* " *(Analecta Cracoviensia).* Published only three years ago, that article gives extensive and in-depth insight into how the Pope views the subject of birth control and why.

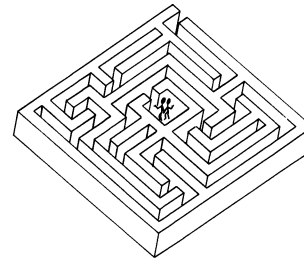
The Anthropology of *Humanae Vitae*

"Ethics is founded on anthropology," Cardinal Wojtyla states at the outset of his article. "The truth about mankind stands at the basis of all principles of human morality." The moral teaching of HV, therefore, rests upon the "truth about humankind." Granted, the anthropology underpinning HV does not receive any formal, systematic treatment in the encyclical, but its "contours" permeate the entire text. The Cardinal draws out those contours and delineates what he calls the encyclical's "anthropological vision."

The context for HV is the "stupendous progress" being made in technology today. By ever increasing his domination over the forces of nature, *homo oeconomicus* or *homo technicus* runs the risk of becoming alienated from his humanity. That humanity, writes the Cardinal, is "unchangeably" constituted in man as a subject of morality, *homo ethicus,* the man of conscience. *Homo ethicus* is irreplaceable. He cannot be exchanged for the subordinate functions implied by *homo oeconomicus* or *homo technicus.* Contemporary man runs the risk of becoming alienated from his humanity without even realizing it. And so, "humbly but decisively," HV reminds us of the "integral vision of man."

Birth control for Karol Wojtyla is not a peripheral issue of secondary importance. He views it as a matter of the utmost consequence. "It might seem strange to some," he writes,

> that an answer to one concrete question in the field of marital ethics can possess such powerful anthropological implications, that it can turn out to be the field for



such a struggle concerning the dignity and meaning of humanity itself. But the analysis of the encyclical HV seems to convince us of this. Particularly when we take into consideration not only its text but also its context.

HV was not merely a document, it was an event. "It seems that the deepest dimension of this event should be recognized to be the disagreement and struggle about man himself, about the dignity and meaning of humanity."

The Cardinal admits in his article that HV rarely uses the word "person." It usually speaks of "man" or "love," so that one might conclude that the encyclical is "humanistic." But it is difficult to understand its humanism as anything else than personalist.

The Cardinal flatly denies the charge that HV represents a biologism that exalts biological processes at the expense of all other aspects of human life. The encyclical, he maintains, posits as a basic condition for an integral vision of man the principle of totality, that is to say, the necessity of seeing man from more than partial perspectives, whether biological, psychological, demographic, or sociological (HV -7). Even though the encyclical seldom uses the word "person," we should not doubt that it thinks of humanity as persons and the self-giving of husband and wife in the same way as Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution does; as a mutual self-giving of persons. "The reality of the person has become the key to unlocking many humanistic problems and many ethical dimensions in our day." Foremost among them are marriage and the family.

Whereas personalism highlights the wholeness and integrity of the human person, dualism emphasizes that we have a dual nature, both animal and rational, sensible and spiritual. Cardinal Wojtyla concedes that "both the dualist and personalist ways of thinking about man are present in HV, with the dualist tradition perhaps standing out more clearly in the text itself. The second tradition, the personalist, is rather found as an implication of many formulations, which grow out of the first." This is especially the case, he admits, in those sections dealing with responsible parenthood. The encyclical insists, regarding responsible parenthood, that it is not allowed to sever arbitrarily the inseperable connections between the unitive and procreative meanings of sexual relations. For Karol Wojtyla, this is a personalist postulate, demanding that a husband and wife live their lives together in "truth."

There is a tendency, as HV itself points out, to address the whole problematic of birth control from one or another partial aspect, such as biology, psychology, demography, or sociology (HV -7). One cannot deny that each of these aspects enriches the total consideration. "At the same time," the Cardinal writes, "no one of these can substitute for the whole, or take its place. We

would then be falling into the error of absolutizing an aspect, which is bad for anthropology and even worse for ethics."

The encyclical reminds us of certain inviolable limits to the power we have over our bodies and their natural functions. "The respect due to the body," continues the Cardinal, "and in particular its functions connected to procreation, functions based on the total somatic specific of sexuality — is respect for humanity, for the personal dignity of man and woman." It is personal dignity which creates those "inviolable" limits. "To think and act correctly, we cannot hold on to some partial aspect suggested by some particular science, pointing to the efficacy of some 'technique.' We must constantly strive to unite those aspects into an integral vision of man as a personal subject."

The Cardinal concludes his article by connecting human dignity with self-control. "A man becomes himself, becomes a person through self-control, for this self-control enters into the integral definition of his freedom." There can be no authentic self-giving without self-possession and self-control. Only those who possess themselves can give themselves freely, as persons conscious of their dignity. This holds not only for Christian married couples but all human beings. The anthropology of HV arises from a vision of faith, long human reflection, and a history of constant seeking after the "truth" about humankind.

Holistic Ethics and Human Dignity

This article, authored by Pope John Paul some three years ago, might appear at first as just another rendition of an old song, only in a newer, more modern arrangement. Certainly the Pope's personalist philosophy does not lead him to the same conclusions reached by other philosophers and theologians of a personalist stamp. But neither is it simply a matter of attempting to dress up an outdated natural law argument against artificial birth control with lots of language about dignity and personhood.

It seems virtually impossible to exaggerate the importance that Pope John Paul attributes to the issue of artificial contraception. The Pope has a habit of going to the bottom of things. "Foundation" and "basis" are favorite words of his, cropping up regularly in his philosophy. His statement, made during his U.S. visit, that Christian unity requires accord in matters of morality as well as doctrine, arises out of his conviction that Christian morals are closely connected to doctrine, particularly to the area of Christian anthropology.

Pope John Paul may undoubtedly be accused of overstatement when he describes artificial birth control as involving "a struggle concerning the dignity and meaning of humanity itself." One is hard pressed to provide the kind of empirical evidence that our contemporaries, including Roman Catholics, have come

to expect for such claims. An argument against artificial birth control cannot simply appeal to authority, tradition, or "accordance with nature," if it is to be based on personalist principles. As Cardinal Ratzinger wrote in the passage cited above, "It is simply not the same, whether a person asks himself if his actions are 'in accord with nature' or whether he must ask whether his actions are responsible actions in view of other persons."

If one assumes the personalist stance of Vatican II, one has to confront personalist questions like: Is sexual intercourse with artificial contraceptives always degrading to human dignity? Is this particular kind of technological intervention dehumanizing in all instances? Does artificial birth control dishonor personhood without exception? Pope John Paul does not see a conflict between a natural law approach to sexual morality and one that is personalist. Perhaps the deeper question then is how do we define "nature" with respect to human beings? Does it embrace human relationships as well as physical functions? Do Christian ethics look primarily to human relationships or to actions in the abstract?

Pope John Paul's admonition against *homo oeconomicus* and *homo technicus* becoming alienated from his humanity is a warning well-taken. It has been and deserves to be repeated. At the same time, the contribution of technology in liberating human beings from servile, sometimes even brutish existences deserves to be acknowledged as well. And the brutal facts of economics often need to be accepted as much as those of nature. The laws of one sometimes appear as inexorable as the other. It can be irresponsible and immoral for a married couple to ignore them.

Pope John Paul does not ask couples to ignore their economic situation, however. He calls for an "integral vision" of the human person, based on the principle of totality, taking into account all the perspectives mentioned in Pope Paul's encyclical; biology, psychology, demography, and sociology (HV -7). Certainly related aspects like health and economics can be added to the list. The Pope could not be more personalist or holistic in his approach when he insists that we see the human person from more than partial perspectives. That means more than the biological as well. No more than the other partial aspects can biology be the only or overriding consideration. In the words of the Pope's article, "no one of these can substitute for the whole, or take its place. We would then be falling into the error of absolutizing an aspect, which is bad for anthropology and even worse for ethics."

Conclusion

The Pope takes a holistic approach not only in anthropology but in ethics as well. He seems to be insisting that Christian married couples adhere to the classic

moral maxim, *bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quocumque defectu.* According to that principle, all aspects must be good for an act to be morally good; a moral defect in any of its aspects renders an act morally evil.

The Pope's call to an "integral vision" of the human person is a call to an absolute ideal wherein all values from all aspects (biological, psychological, demographic, sociological, and others) are realized. The Church, indeed all contemporary — especially Western — society, needs to hear the challenge of such a moral ideal. But the human condition, finite and fallen, marred by sin, does not always allow the luxury of an ideal situation in which all values are able to be maintained. What should be expected of married couples who look at their marriage from all perspectives and find that one or more values must be sacrificed? Is there an inherent hierarchy among those values and aspects? Does one aspect, biology for example, necessarily always override the others? And, if so, would this not be the "error of absolutizing an aspect," which the Pope rightly criticized in his article? In conflict situations, when there is no way of fulfilling the ideal "integral vision," may conscience determine which value may be sacrificed as the lesser evil? May conscience determine which values from which aspects are more critical in order to act most responsibly toward other persons and the word of a personal God?

Pope John Paul ended his article on birth control with a call to self-possession and self-control. The need for discipline, a sense of duty and asceticism in marriage, has hardly been underscored enough in our me-centered society. At the same time, asceticism is not the same as virtually total abstinence when periodic continence does not allow married couples freedom from the anxiety of conceiving a child they cannot afford. In the Third World birth control is not a matter of selfishness or crass materialism. According to the best scholarship of world demographers, it is a matter of survival.

Is there a way out of the impasse? Is there a way of reconciling and integrating personalism with the natural law tradition of the church? Pope John Paul believes that they can be reconciled. But these pages point out only some of the hard questions that have to be answered before that reconciliation can be declared a fait accompli.

Christian theology could not do better, I believe, than to follow the lead of Pope John Paul in viewing the question of birth control, indeed all questions regarding sexual ethics, as revolving around the issue of human dignity. So long as sexuality is seen holistically, including all human dimensions, consequences as well as anthropology, the Pope could not be more correct.

Lutherans and Episcopalians — A Progress Report

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Fidel Castro has been able to accomplish what Lutherans and Episcopalians in the United States of America, in the British Isles and the Continent have not been able to do in their many years of dialogue. A recent release from the Lutheran Council-USA relates the findings of a recent tour of Cuba made by 18 USA Lutherans. In part, the article stated: "A small Lutheran Church existed in Cuba from 1910. By 1975 only two congregations and no pastors remained. On request of the Lutheran World Federation, the 7,500-member Episcopal Church in Cuba assumed responsibility for the spiritual care of approximately 70 remaining Lutherans." If full ecclesial cooperation between Lutherans and Episcopalians can happen in Cuba, why can't it happen here? Perhaps it can. Under God's blessing it will.

Lutheran-Episcopal dialogues have been in progress both in North America and Europe for better than a decade. It is no secret that most, if not all, of the many inter-church conversations that have been in progress the last 15 years owe their beginnings to Vatican II. When Pope John XXIII directed his bishops to institute dialogues with the "separated brothers," a chain reaction was begun. One such was between Lutherans and Episcopalians.

The first publication that shared dialogical findings of Lutherans and Episcopalians (Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue: A *Progress Report)* was published in 1972. Unfortunately, the good news contained in the little booklet did not receive widespread acclaim or application. Both communions were involved with in-house matters that claimed priority of time and energy. However, a second round of dialogues was instituted. Out of the dialogues have come items for consideration by the parish pastors and congregations affiliated with the Lutheran churches of North America.

Let us begin by noting the achievements reported in "A Progress Report":

I. Recognition of agreement between Lutherans and Episcopalians on the following fundamentals of church life and doctrine:
   A. The primacy and authority of the Holy Scriptures.
   B. The doctrine of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.
   C. Justification by grace through faith as affirmed by both the Lutheran Confessions and the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* and Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion.
   D. The doctrine and practice of Baptism.
   E. Fundamental agreement on the Holy Eucharist, though with some differences in emphasis.

II. Agreement that our two communions have maintained the essential apostolicity of the church as set forth in Summary Statement IV.

III. Subject to consent of the appropriate local authorities:
Commendation of communicants of each communion to the Eucharistic celebrations of the other, including inter-communion between parishes or congregations which — because of proximity, joint community concerns and the like — have developed such a degree of understanding and trust as would make inter-communion an appropriate response to the Gospel.

IV. The creation of such structures as will enable Episcopalians and Lutherans, within their new fellowship, to assume joint responsibility for the proclamation of the Gospel and for an appropriate ministration of the Sacraments:

A. Continuing joint theological study and conversation, at a level similar to that of the conversations just concluded, with such arrangements for broad discussion as will assure influence on the thought and practice of both communions. Topics for these discussions would include:

1. Continuing concentration on the nature of the Gospel and its effective proclamation;
2. Exploration of future common forms of ordered ministry and episcopate, and
3. Close study of such features of the sacramental practices of our respective communions as may obscure or distort their character as Gospel.

B. Participation of consultants from each communion in all deliberations of the other touching sacramental order or confessional status.

There were four recommendations:

A. Intercommunion and Fellowship
(This includes Intercommunion, Joint Worship, Integration of Ministries)

B. Organizational Contacts

C. Ministries and Exchanges Abroad
(This includes Chaplains, Tourists and Travelers, Theological Exchanges)

D. Joint Local Mission and Social Witness
(This includes Shared Facilities and Ministries, Social Witness and Evangelism, Discussion and Dialogue).

It must be obvious to even the least observant that what was suggested about a decade ago by Anglicans and Lutherans has been essentially ignored. There have been exceptions, to be sure. The "Free to Share" undertaking in the State of Michigan is an outstanding exception. There have been events in New England, both in Massachusetts and in Connecticut, that have reflected some of the positive expressions of the initial dialogues. However, the time has come to expand local response.

The **First Recommendation** is that clergy and laity study documents be prepared by Lutherans and Episcopalians. Someone must take the initiative in getting local dialogues into motion. Why can't it be the Lutherans in a given area?

The **Second Recommendation** is to facilitate Eucharistic hospitality. "A celebration of the Lord's Supper in which baptized believers may not participate, suffers from an inner contradiction and from the start, therefore, does not fulfill the purpose for which the Lord established it." The statement on Eucharistic Presence adopted by participants of the Second Round of Dialogue should serve as more than ade-

quate justification for this altar fellowship.

The **Third Recommendation** is that ordained ministers, both female and male, be mutually recognized. It should be clear that this recommendation does not carry with it the notion that clergy from one communion could be called to serve a parish of the other communion. That might be something dearly desired but its time has not yet come.

The **Fourth Recommendation** is that the Episcopalian and Lutheran bodies devise study guides that will popularize the discussion papers that have been delivered at the Lutheran-Episcopal dialogues and at the overseas sessions.

The **Fifth Recommendation** is that serious consideration be given to recognizing the apostolic succession of Lutheran bishops. Of course, the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church support the concept of the episcopal office.

The Lutheran Churches in Finland and Sweden have maintained historic succession. Most recently the bishop in one of our younger churches (Bishop Josiah Kibira of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania) was ordained into episcopal succession. Many of our Episcopalian friends agree that episcopal succession is not of the *esse* of the church. We could exercise good will and good ecclesial practice by recognizing that it is of the *bene esse* of the church.

The **Sixth Recommendation** covers a multitude of practical cooperative expressions of togetherness. In one community (and possibly more) a Lutheran congregation has opened its doors permanently to an Episcopal congregation. They now share a common house of worship and fellowship. While they each conduct their own liturgies, members of either congregation are welcome at both eucharistic tables. They share in religious and educational programs. They carry out programs of social concern jointly.

Each Council/Vestry meeting is a joint meeting for the first hour of business. Ministry to the sick in hospitals and nursing homes is carried on jointly. There are many combinations of joint activity already which should be published as examples of cooperation that would inspire others.

The **Seventh Recommendation** is that there be a third series of Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogues. Since the beginnings of dialogues there have been many changes in the Lutheran scene, and there will be more as the "Call to Lutheran Union" is answered by two-thirds of American Lutheranism. Some new elements have been suggested, e.g. the diaconate. In a proposed Third Series some of the more practical items need to be handled. One of them might be the creation of a common Glossary of Terms. In some instances the two churches use the same words in the same way. In other instances we use the same words to mean different things. Clarification would be helpful as Lutherans and Episcopalians become more and more serious about their future together.

In Luke 5 our Lord's healing of a paralyzed man is recorded. Our Lord's words directed to the paralyzed fellow, who had been lowered through the roof, are significant. First he assured the man of forgiveness. Then he directed him to take up his litter and walk. The divisions in our portions of the body of Christ are things for which forgiveness must be sought and received. Once forgiven of our sectarian illnesses, we may, in the grace he gives, strive for a closer walking together. That is one of the ways that the world will know that Christ and the Father are one. That is the witness the world needs now.

Control, Death and Healing: A Probe of Alcoholism

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Jean Sibelius is probably best known for his tone poem, "Finlandia" (1899), or the popular hymn taken from it, "Be Still, My Soul." Less well known is how much Sibelius enjoyed drinking alcohol till a bout with throat cancer in his mid-40s scared him into abstinence for the next twenty years. Having made it safely into his 60s, he resumed indulging his passion for fine cigars, cognac and gourmet foods till he died in 1957, at 92 years of age.

I am not saying Sibelius was an alcoholic. I don't know that. But the story is engaging to those legions of alcoholics who never quite get over the hope, the dream, the illusion that one day they might drink again, if not with control, then at least with impunity. "The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker. The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death." (From the *Big Book*[1] [hereafter BB], 30).

Why? Why do alcoholics find it so difficult to give up the illusion that one day they may be able to drink normally? Why is it so hard for them to come to grips with the reality of their disease that will never permit them to drink "like other people"? Feeling that any plausible answer is better than no answer, let me suggest that the answer ties into broader and deeper areas of human personality and dynamics, especially into the issues of control, death and healing.

Control

The alcoholics' unwillingness to admit permanent powerlessness over alcohol ties in with their need to prove to themselves and others that they are grown-up, capable of making their own decisions and controlling their own life, "taking care of themselves." It also ties in with their insecurity, their fear that to admit a control problem in one area would undermine their precarious hold on adulthood, their claim to competence and self-confidence, their self-sufficiency and independence. Drinking becomes a Thermopylae behind which one's self-image stretches out virtually defenseless. They need to defend that pass against the enemy hordes of spouse, children, mother or father, or even minister or boss. Why do they pick drinking for a defense? Because that's where the enemy is attacking the self-image. No matter what it is in itself, the point of attack becomes strategic in the battle for independence, adult status, control. When you tell them not to, they need to.

The next question takes us deeper. Why is control such a vital issue? Why do we always need to be winners, displaying the cool calm that comes from knowing we are in control? Is it not, perhaps, the realistic awareness we can't quite repress the way that we are not in control, that life and death are random, that justice, merit and reward are chimera, that there is not necessarily a reason for anything, that our best abilities do not guarantee

well-being, health, life or immortality? There's the final rub, death. We drink to assert our control of life. We assert our control of life to deny death. That ties drinking into the deepest and most powerful of all human urges, survival and the fear of death, and would explain the power and persistence of the alcoholic illusion. "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die" is more than a very ancient expression of mindless hedonism.

The psychologist, Ernest Becker, insists that the *real* dilemma of human life is that we are mortal animals who are *aware* of our mortality.[2] That awareness spawns a number of emotions and traits familiar to alcoholics: 1) fear, especially the fear of death; 2) anxiety or guilt in the face of the mystery beyond; 3) anger or resentment against the unfairness that makes us mortal; 4) denial of death as a coping mechanism, the denial of death and its precursors like aging, imperfection, loss of control. Death, after all, is the ultimate confirmation that we are not in control, not self-sufficient, not omnipotent and going on forever and ever.

Death

According to Becker the human personality or sense of self is formed against the awesome inevitability of death. At the core of our self-concept is the "vital lie" that we are in control, that we can handle whatever comes along, that we don't really need anyone else since we can care for ourselves. That lie is fed us from cradle to grave by people who tell us that if we work hard enough, know enough, know the right people, live in the right place, or pray aright to the right God, we will get what we want: wealth, power, prestige, security, whatever. People feed us what they think we need to make it in this world. But the vital lie is a lie, and death confirms that truth. If I were really in control, I would not give up life, or health, or wealth, or drinking, or anything else.

A.A. has discovered the bankruptcy of self-centeredness, the failure of self-reliance, the "delusion that one can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this world if only he manages well." (BB, 61) Its conclusion is a remarkably clear statement of a hard-won truth: "Self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us." (BB, 64)

The vital lie serves a purpose in holding back the destructive forces that threaten the development of self-concept and self-confidence, the integration of human community and the relationship with the Transcendent. Some of the major religions call these destructive forces "sin." Sin threatens and causes disintegration on three levels, moving from the last to the first, on the ultimate, the penultimate, and the antepenultimate levels. The ultimate disintegration is what Christian theology calls "hell," the eternal, irrevocable separation from the Source of all Life and Goodness. The penultimate effect of sin is the disintegration of death, the separation from family and friends and all the familiar things, the dissolution of life and body, the end of memory, thought and plans.

But the antepenultimate threats to integration are the ones we are most concerned with in this context. We seek to control cancer that disrupts the body, schizophrenia that is personality disintegration, the prejudice that divides our communities, the greed that makes a

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[1] *Alcoholics Anonymous,* 3rd edition (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1976).

[2] *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1963).

shambles of economic justice, and the intolerance that builds walls between people. We work on controlling nature in its destructive inappropriateness. We win some battles while losing the war.

The truth is that win as we will, in the end we will die. How do we deal with that? We can *go on* on the way of denial, cover-up, the "vital lie," acting like we are in control, even offering some proofs and demonstrations: Salk polio vaccine, CAB surgery, statistical prolongation of life, etc. Or we can *give up,* go the way of resignation and fatalism. Or we can *give in* to a higher power, go the way of submission to God, believing that the universe and life make sense even though I do not control them. They make sense because they are in the hands of the One from who all things come, in whom all things ultimately "hang together." This is the path of healing, of pulling together what the destructive forces have wrenched apart. Reconciliation, remission, redemption, restoration, renewal are various names for the healing process, joining together again what has been put asunder. A.A. insists that anyone can be healed of drinking and recover from alcoholism if (he) "trusts in God and cleans house."

Healing

Trust in God represents a radical about-face which replaces self with a higher power as the source of ultimate control, the source of our values and our perspectives, aspirations and actions. Self-reliance is replaced by reliance on a power higher than ourselves whose will for our good is being worked out on the deeper levels of life. Honesty and humility replace the vital lie. We can't go it alone and we don't have to. We have help, a higher power whose ways while sometimes inscrutible are nonetheless sure, loving, caring, aimed at our temporal and eternal well-being.

The path of healing is first of all trust and, then, cleaning house or practicing spiritual principles. The first of these principles is honesty and humility: "Our very first problem is to accept our present circumstances as they are, ourselves as we are, and the people about us as they are. This is to adopt a realistic humility without which no genuine advance can ever begin."[3] The realistic acceptance of self means accepting one's limits, letting go of unrealistic aspirations, preoccupations and pretensions. We are both strong and weak, good at some things, not at others, good and bad in that unique combination that makes us ourselves and not someone else. And we are changing all the time. We are not today the persons we used to be nor will we remain what we are today for long. We are changing and we can work with that, accept it and accept help from God and other people in making a change for the better. We need to be concerned for our own well-being and the well-being of those near and dear to us. That's important. We need to know that we probably do about the best we can with what we've got to work with. We're okay and so are other folks who are struggling just like us. Our own tastes, judgments and ideas deserve careful examination just like anybody else's. Where ours are sound and useful, we ought to hold on. Where others are better, we should try them. We can afford to experiment, grow, change, try things out because we are under the protection of a higher power who wants to see us grow. That truth makes us free.

The second principle is service. The purpose for getting our lives in order is not the good feeling that comes from knowing our lives are in order. The purpose is to make ourselves more useful,

more serviceable.

The third principle is growth, spiritual growth. To let up on the spiritual program of action is to ask for trouble. Alcoholics are never cured of their disease. "What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition." (BB, 85, 60, 14f).

Certainly anybody *may* take the path of healing. We hope they do. But alcoholics *must* take it if they are to recover from their own particular insanity and survive. If alcoholism has brought them to face that choice more honestly and definitively than their non-alcoholic brothers and sisters, they can only conclude that they are among the fortunates whose path leads upward to God — where restless souls find their rest.

Be still, my soul; the Lord is on thy side. . . .
Leave to thy God to order and provide. . . .
Be still, my soul; thy best, thy heavenly Friend. . . .
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

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[3] *The A.A. Way of Life* (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1967), p. 44.

Does Our Theology of Work Need Reworking?

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Recent study of how social class functions in America, especially for the blue-collar or working class, has consequences for parish strategy for mission and social ministry.

There is little dignity in our society for someone who cannot claim occupational success (except for the inherited high standing of the very rich). Identity as an ordinary laborer is often demeaning and alienating.[1] Laborers spend much of their lives conforming to the demands of superiors at the workplace. Limited incomes go for the basic necessities of life; little or nothing remains to express personal tastes. Economic status determines the type and location of their housing.

This harsh reality not only robs people of basic human dignity but it extends to every relationship a worker has,[2] in the neighborhood, in the marketplace, even in one's marriage and with one's children. Many of us think it self-evident that working with one's hands merits a much lower income and fewer job benefits. But is there any other country in the world where occupational choice *restricts* the freedom to exercise personal values in all *other* arenas of life as well? Independence in the U.S.A. is only for those with ability — the ability to do something "better" than wash dishes, mow lawns, mop floors, wash cars.

Public-Private Dichotomies

Someone might object, "A person's job is a public role and need not intrude on one's private world of home, family, and the church." This is the conventional advice on how to cope with low occupational status. One study after another shows, however, that the attitudes prevalent in the public sector invade the domestic and private sectors as well.[3] Mainstream religious denominations are a pertinent example.[4] Lower class persons are attracted to informal kinds of social interaction in the religious community. They have more personal needs that shape their involvement in a religious community. They rate higher on devotional practices than the middle class and desire to integrate religious precepts into everyday life in a way many middle class persons do not. Uncomfortable with the tendency to adopt a corporate style in congregational activities, they are also less apt to express their religious commitment in the ways that have been carried over to it from the business world in the last forty years.

Wherever a cross-section of social status is represented, the specific values of the underclasses are ignored just as they are in the workplace. Until now one's religious community is not a place where all enjoy a common status as creatures of one God. The theoretical equality is often not actualized in the liturgy or politics of congregational life. To counteract this tendency, one could use worship to minister more directly to the workers' need for self esteem. Establishing regular occasions for more intensive community experiences —

even when articulate middle-class officers fail to see the need — will nurture the working class growth in the faith.

Prosperous But Not Content

Workers typically imagine that respect must be "earned." Most of us in fact accept this achievement standard — no matter how much it might contrast with divine words and acts. Craving acknowledgement of individual worth, some blue-collar workers have decided that money may be the best substitute for respect. Thus money and consumerist indulgence become the way of substitute satisfaction. This is an important reason why the industrial unions press for ever-higher wages without apparent regard for the effects on the general economy. Money is a substitute for the ordinary dignity that blue-collar workers lack. Middle-class critics find it hard to sympathize with auto workers or plumbers who get $20 or more an hour. "These are hurting underclasses?" they ask in disbelief.

The message needs to be spread throughout the church that we all are hurt by an individualistic achievement ethic. All of us have innate freedom and dignity no matter what kind of work we do. Is this not what equality before God is all about?

No Work, No Food

A related but separate issue is the strict correlation we make between work and sustenance. Is this consonant with critical reflection on the story of the creation and fall? Is not the demand that we must toil *in order to* eat a fallacious conclusion? The institution of work (tending the garden) preceded the events of the fall. This sequence indicates that work may be a basic *right* of a human being rather than a duty or curse. Work is necessary for fulfillment. This is quite different than seeing work as the source of money or the ticket for purchasing food, shelter, clothing, and medical care.

The separation of public and private lives and their organization around different values relegate religion and theology to the private realm. This compartmentalization adds to the dehumanizing effects of public policy in the treatment of families with occupational skills limited to menial categories. Re-examination of the theology of work and the well-being of people in relation to production and compensation is needed if we are to apply theological categories to a critique of culture.

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[1] Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (New York: Vintage Books/Random, 1973). Other valuable and readable books on this subject would include Studs Terkel, *Working* (Avon: 1972); Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973); Louise Kapp Howe, *Pink Collar Workers* (Putnam: 1977); Barbara Garson, *All the Livelong Day: The Meaning and Demeaning of Routine Work* (New York: Doubleday, 1975); Nancy Seifer, *Absent from the Majority: Working-Class Women in America* (New York: American Jewish Committee, Middle America Pamphlet, 1973).

[2] Lillian Breslow Rubin, *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1976). Other readings in this area worthy of attention include Joseph T. Howell, *Hard Living on Clay Street: Portraits of Blue Collar Families* (Garden City, NY: Anchor/Doubleday, 1973); Mirra Komarovsky, *Blue-Collar Marriage* (New York: Random House, 1967); Tillie Olsen, *Tell me A Riddle* (New York: Dell, 1956).

[3] The relation of the industrial system to schooling practices through class values is documented in Michael Lewis, *Culture of Inequality* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978) and in Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

[4] N.J. Demerath, III, *Social Class in American Protestantism* (New York: Rand McNally, 1965).

The Degradation of Ordinary Tasks

The work of the men and women who cook, serve, clean, construct, and maintain is "dirty" work. Often the only direct exposure middle-class people (with the exception of homemakers) might have had to it is in the temporary process of working one's way through college: soon over, best forgotten, enlightening perhaps but not enduring for experience or identity. The valuations of this work are obvious in the language we use about it: menial, back-breaking, thankless.

Such work involves the use of one's hands, one's back, arms and legs, applied to dust, mud, and garbage, *or* to other people's bodies and hair. Or it means moving equipment, furniture, trucks, supplies, and so forth. It is the "lowest" kind of work, the kind that "anybody" could do. Yet in fact, looked at more closely, it is essential if our way of life is to be clean and ordered, well supplied with food, drink, clean laundry, etc. If these services are not supplied by someone, our basic needs would go unmet; our very survival — our animal survival — would be threatened.

What is the essence of the distinction that assigns such work to *lower* classes? The over-valuation of intellectual work, at the expense of physical work and those who do it, is a bit of cultural arrogance that has gone too far. Physical work will always be necessary, even critical, to ongoing existence.

Present strategy is to make physical workers "invisible." They wear uniforms instead of individual apparel. They slip in and out of our lives unannounced. They are trained to be self-effacing in our presence. We address them on a first-name basis if we know them, but mostly we ignore them and their "lowly" contribution to our well-being. The subsistence level of the wages paid to compensate many of them establishes — and at the same time confirms — our low estimation of their value to economic life.

This same tendency is evident in corporate policy. In general, American business treats blue-collar workers as "spare parts." They are ciphers in grand economic schemes, utterly replaceable and expendable compared to the commitments made to white-collar employees. The abundance of persons willing to do this work for low pay makes them feel less than human. They are an inexhaustible resource to "use up" in profit-making strategies.

Spirit vs. Matter

What could an incarnational theology say about a valuation of spirit over matter? Is not the positive valuation of matter embodied in the term "incarnate" itself? In Jesus Christ we see one who relates the spiritual and material to each other. His existence calls us to believe in the potential for reconciliation of these apparent dichotomies in spite of the persistence of dualistic tendencies in our civilization.

In calling for Christianity and Western culture to stand against "godless and mindless materialism," we may have fostered hostility not only to materialism, but to matter itself. The One who is the creator and redeemer of all nature enables us to restore the material aspect of social life to its proper significance and inherent dignity. Those committed both to religion and society can speak out confidently against the extremely low social value placed on "menial" work and workers.

Blue-Collar Gifts

Working-class people do have special gifts to bring to the task of remaking the earth as a place for all to live and work. Their speech patterns constitute a restricted code of condensed symbols, like liturgical speech itself, and their cultural life is adapted to affirming a common life and collective concerns. Structurally their language engenders a sacramental, participatory sensitivity to actions permeated with nonverbal symbols of *embodiment.*[5] If the abiding symbols of faith in Jesus Christ are to continue to transform and liberate us, sensitivity to embodiment will be sorely needed. Middle-class persons, on the other hand, are comfortable with a growing "bookishness" and "verboseness" in divine liturgy that is gradually replacing power with ethical theory, immediate impact with paper-shuffling. The eroding of the nonverbal and of bodily participation in God's great acts of renewal could have tragic consequences.

The community of faith needs to reject the alienating effects of the class system in the name of our common creator. It should begin with steps to build more inclusive parish ministries that recognize the selfhood of all kinds of people. It should form small sharing groups where new relationships may grow that override class identification. Taking time to solicit information and honest feelings about parishioners' jobs and working conditions has proved quite successful as a start for some pastors. This builds communication and community at the same time.

An even more radical strategy would be to gather people in similar occupations into groups for worship and for reflection together on their vocation and its possibilities. This approach would take the absolute centrality of work to personal identity — true for all classes — with utter seriousness.

The present class-based alienation, like that based on sex or race, is sin and not fate. Faith is the refusal to live with such self-alienation, and the daring to enter into communion with God and our neighbors of every class, looking for liberation, expecting grace.

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[5] Mary T. Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Vintage Books/Random, 1973), p. 50.

Those Lively Prophets — Joel Ben Pethuel

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The preserved words of Joel ben Pethuel[1] tell us nothing in the way of biography. But his message allows us to discern him as a man open to the leading of the Spirit of Yahweh, a conscientious student of his predecessors in the prophetic movement,[2] moved to speak boldly of judgment and hope to a people in miserable plight. Dating his activity is a matter of dispute: the majority of investigators favor a post-Exilic setting, in the late fifth to early fourth centuries. Christian interest in his message is largely and understandably dependent upon citations in the New Testament, particularly those of the Book of Acts in relating the events of Pentecost,[3] but Joel also has intrinsic importance for Jewish and Christian theologies aside from this later use.

Outline

1:1 Superscription/Attribution
1:2-2:17 Report of Devastation and Call to Lament
  1:2-14 An unparalleled plague of locusts and a drought; their widespread effects
  1:15-2:11 The plague prefigures the Day of Yahweh
  2:12-17 Genuine Repentance will remove the threat of the Day of Yahweh
2:18-27 Yahweh's promised abatement of the plague; his restoration of land and its produce
2:28-32 The outpouring of the Spirit will guarantee escape on the Day of Yahweh
3:1-15 Judgment on the nations who have oppressed Israel
3:16-21 The sovereignty and benediction of Yahweh secured for his people

In this brief overview, we will give our attention to the following themes:

a) the relationship between the *unique*
  "Has such a thing happened in your days or in the days of your fathers?" 1:2
  . . . and the *continually pertinent*
  "tell your children of it, and your children another generation" 1:3
b) the relationship between *spiritual ethos*
  "rend your hearts and not your garments" 2:13
  . . . and *cultic practice*
  "sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly" 1:14
c) and the coordination of the themes of God's *faithfulness* and *freedom*
  "for he is gracious and merciful . . . who knows whether he will not turn and repent and leave a blessing behind him" 2:13-14

Continuity and Change

The prophet is stimulated to speak by an unparalleled though not unprecedented drought and plague of locusts. The widespread effects of this tandem disaster touch every aspect of national life. Even cultic practice must cease for lack of the necessary representative agricultural

products:

> "The cereal offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the Lord." 1:9

It is not human hunger and privation that are placed at the apex of this catalogue of tragedies, but the inability to acknowledge the stewardship of the land in the worship of Israel.

The prophet's call in this situation is not first of all the usual "repent" but rather "lament"! The call to lament underlies the severity of the present misery but does not explain its cause. In this there is a decided departure from the more standard prophetic moral indictment of Joel's predecessors.

The particular genius of Joel was his discernment of the present affliction of his people as a prefigurement of a potential disaster far worse: the Day of Yahweh. The hoards of locusts blend in the prophetic eye into the invincible martial advance of those bringing Yahweh's final judgment. Though the prophetic theme of the Day of Yahweh is of clouded origin, some elements in its development are clear enough. Apparently many hoped that the day of Yahweh would be a day of judgment on Israel's enemies and a time of delight and solace for Israel herself. Prophetic theology reshaped this concept into one of decisive judgment on all elements opposed to true Yahwism, including those *within* Israel. To escape on the Day of Yahweh called for identifying with the righteous in life and in cult, together with the recapturing of a spirit of expectation directed to Yahweh's promises and the future.[4]

Private Faith — Public Practice

Joel's preaching links that which is necessarily private and individual with its public and communal expression. In this the prophet announces a goal, which has always been difficult for the community of the pious to achieve. He held that valid cultic practice and a religion of obedience are not exclusive of one another. Right religion includes right worship. This theme is given unforgettable expression in the words:

> "Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." 2:12-13

God Ever Faithful, Ever Free

The prophet protects his approach

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[1] An excellent commentary on the Book of Joel is now available in Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos,* Hermeneia, translated by W. Janzen, S.D. McBride, Jr., and C.A. Muenchow; edited by S. Dean McBride, Jr. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). Originally published as *Dodekapropheton 2. Joel und Amos* (2. durchgesehene Auflage, BKAT XIV/2. Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 1975).

[2] For a listing of Joel's citations of and reflections on earlier prophetic sayings, see Wolff, 10-11. The list demonstrates Joel's familiarity with Amos, Zephaniah, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum and Malachi.

[3] The horizon of Lukan interest is not confined to the "outpouring of the Spirit" as an end in itself, but always explicitly extends to the salvation signalled by it. Compare "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21), or "everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him" (Acts 2:39), both in reference to Joel 2:32. See also Acts 22:16; Romans 10:13; Titus 3:6. For the NT writers, then, the import of the prophecy of Joel was related to the Christian extension of the way of salvation beyond national particularism, and not just to the experience of ecstatic phenomena.

[4] Wolff, 13, 15. He notes that Joel's salvific promise extends beyond restoration to benediction.

from aberration by continuing with a word that protects it from the ever-seductive conclusion that human action could control divine providence:

> "Who knows whether he will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?" 2:14[5]

Joel opposes those who would drive a wedge between doctrine and liturgy, between the priestly and the prophetic, between the cerebral and the communal.

What, ultimately, does Joel want from his audience? He sounds an alert, hopeful that his hearers and readers will learn from one situation a course of action that will benefit them in another. The ominous plague has occurred and passed. The prophetic word declared its import and set out a path that would not only prevent recurrence, but would also introduce hope as the main ingredient of looking to the future. This new orientation is ultimately grounded in the very character of Yahweh:

> "Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and repents of evil." 2:13

This call for return is also appropriate in our own age of present and potential calamity. It is so because Joel also speaks eschatologically by announcing the ultimate divine reckoning that is always active and impinging in our world, but never exhausted in any particular historical event. God's future is always just ahead. The salvific waters of the Spirit continue to be poured from a myriad fonts, and the dire portents are as many as the gifted visionaries. What to do? Lament! Repent! For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in love. Who knows what blessing God may have in store?

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[5] Joel's "Who knows" — which startles many a Bible reader, and is surely meant to — should be compared with the "Maybe" of Amos 5:15; the "Perhaps" of Zeph. 2:3; the lack of presumption expressed by David in 2 Sam. 12:22. See also the expression of Moses in Exodus 32:30, the message of the final chapter of Jonah, and Titus 3:3-7.

A Love Song of Protest

My best friend had a garden fair,
With sun and daily showers;
He turned the soil and planted there
The seeds of lovely flowers.
He hedged it round and placed a gate,
And planted grass and clover;
And as he planned to work and wait,
Weeds took the garden over.

Good Christian folk, what could he do,
To save the garden's beauty?
He did his best with efforts true,
He did the gardener's duty.
But now the garden's filled with weeds,
No flowers there will flourish;
And birds are eating all the seeds,
There's nothing left to nourish.

The gardener is God the Lord,
His people's deeds are flowers;
He feeds them with the living Word,
And sends refreshing showers.
The Lord our God would like to see
Us bless his name and fear it;
He gives us Christ so we will be
Alive with his good Spirit.

One may give money to the church
With every check he cashes;
Yet leave a poor man in the lurch,
To live in dust and ashes.
The Lord our God would like to hear
Our singing and our praying;
But better yet: if we're sincere
In what our lives are saying.

Based on Isaiah 5:1-7;
Pentecost 20 (A)

David A. Preisinger
First Trinity Lutheran Church
Washington, D.C.

Book Reviews

DEUTERONOMY. New Century Bible. By A. D. H. Mayes. Greenwood, South Carolina: Attic Press, 1979. 416 pages. Cloth. $19.50.

Studies in Deuteronomy and the subsequent deuteronomistic movement form one of the fastest growing areas of biblical research, especially in Europe. Consequently, the excellent commentaries of Gerhard von Rad and G. Ernest Wright are rapidly becoming outdated. Mayes is fully aware of the new developments and incorporates them in his own commentary.

The New Century Bible is based on the *RSV* and comes in an easy-to-read page design that makes it a delight to use. The verse-by-verse commentary is a masterpiece of definition and reference, and surely will be welcomed by all students of Deuteronomy. Mayes has combed the periodical literature, reporting it fairly and with appropriate criticism.

His own views of the book's origin, however, are likely to be quite controversial, at least in America. He holds that Josiah's reform was not based on the book of Deuteronomy, but that the core of the book (roughly chaps. 6-25) was composed subsequent to 621, but prior to 598. He holds that the first edition of the deuteronomistic history was written in 598, during the reign of Jehoiakim, with a second edition following during the exile. The original introduction to Deuteronomy, in his view, made no mention of the decalogue and was not shaped by the international treaties (as claimed by Baltzer, McCarthy, and Mendenhall). Treaty influence is evident only in the deuteronomistic history. Like Lothar Perlitt he argues that "covenant" became a predominant theological category only with the deuteronomistic movement, though he argues on the basis of Exod. 24:8 and the Shechem traditions that there was an earlier covenant in Israel. He suggests that Deuteronomy was authored by Levites formerly unconnected to the cult who had become attached to the Jerusalem temple.

These views on the book's origin and his reconstruction of Josiah's reform deserve careful consideration. One should expect, of course that heavy guns will be levelled at his theses by both the right and the left. However those issues are finally resolved, this volume must be ranked very high among English commentaries because of its valuable and up-to-date exposition of the biblical text itself.

Ralph W. Klein
Christ Seminary — Seminex

HOSEA: A NEW TRANSLATION WITH INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY. The Anchor Bible. Volume 24. By Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980. xvii and 701 pages. Cloth. $14.00.

Even the length of this book indicates that the authors have really given up on the goal originally designed for the Anchor Bible — to help the general reader who has no special formal training in biblical studies. That "general reader" is exposed here to an adventuresome and controversial translation and to a complicated type of comparative philology open to serious question.

The positions taken are bold: the book of Hosea does not offer oracular utterances ready for public delivery but material from the actual deliberations of Yahweh in the divine council. Because of the allegedly unfinished character of the book, the authors assert that standard form critical processes do not profit. Much of their survey of previous commentators has a conservative ring — the book of Hosea is essentially the work of a single person and the text is basically sound — but while arguing for the integrity of the book in general and of the words of Judah in particular, their understanding of the text is often wildly at variance with all previous scholarship.

Several novel features characterize their method: an attempt to decide whether passages are poetry or prose by counting how often the definite arti-

cle, the relative pronoun, and the sign of the definite direct object are used; a persistent and relatively successful search for compositional features or rhetorical devices; and a use of grammatical phenomena and comparative lexicography traceable to the Ugaritic texts and other inscriptions. The latter method is perhaps best known through the many works of Mitchell Dahood. Those who have been convinced by Dahood's three volume commentary on the Psalms will find this commentary on Hosea commendable; the rest — probably the vast majority — will raise the same criticisms here that are raised against Dahood: some of the suggestions may be right, but most are improbable either because the comparative Semitic data is not convincing or because the changes seem to violate the integrity of the Hebrew literature itself.

A few examples will have to suffice. Andersen and Freedman claim to have discovered a number of new divine names, e.g., Filth (5:11), the Good One (8:3), Resident of Samaria (10:5), or Supreme God and Only One (11:7), none of which is convincing in my judgment. More significant, perhaps, is their reversal of the meaning of certain verses from the traditional and probably correct understanding. In 1:7, as usually understood, Yahweh promises to save Judah though not via military means, but in this commentary Yahweh says he will *not* save Judah nor deliver it *from* enemy weapons. Most scholars believe that 11:9 is a paradoxical expression of the fantastic grace of Yahweh. Though Yahweh ought to punish Israel as if it were a disobedient child, he decides not to carry out the mandates of his anger because he is God and not man, the Holy One who is, nevertheless, in Israel's midst. Thus God does not follow human rules of retribution, but chooses instead to be graciously among his people even though he as God far transcends them. But Andersen and Freedman argue that if Yahweh were to give special consideration to Ephraim, he would be acting in a human way. Hence their translation of v. 9, dubious enough on merely philological grounds, describes a God who wrestles with his love for Israel only to be trapped by the rules of being God:

"I will certainly act out my burning anger.
I will certainly come back to destroy Ephraim.
For I am a god and not a human.
I, the Holy One, will certainly come into the midst of your city."

There is much that is learned and useful about this book; but, alas, there is also much that is merely novel, and not a little that is clearly wrong.

Ralph W. Klein

ACTS AND THE HISTORY OF EARLIEST CHRISTIANITY. By Martin Hengel. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980. 149 pages. Cloth. $8.95.

Studies of the Book of Acts seem to be turning right. Hengel, Professor of New Testament and Early Judaism at Tübingen, describes Luke as the first Christian historian and declares that "the church down to the present day owes more to his work than theologians are usually wont to allow." Hengel is writing in a context dominated by form critical studies and existentialistic theology.

The "theologians" have had Luke-Acts long enough, and Hengel is one more scholar determined to wrest Luke out of the hands of the theologians and bring him safely into the waiting arms of the historians.

Part One of this study (chapters 1-5) bears the title "History Writing in Antiquity and in Earliest Christianity." In a famous essay of 1923 Karl Ludwig Schmidt, influenced by the "rabid criticism" of Franz Overbeck, argued that the gospels and Acts are completely without parallel in the literature of the ancient world. Asserting that they were not composed on the model of ancient histories or biographies, Schmidt appealed to medieval legends (the life of St. Francis and the story of Dr. Faustus) for analogies. More recent form critics and theologians have focused on ancient romances, novels

and aretalogies as parallels.

Hengel fights for a high evaluation of the historical information in the gospels and Acts. He shows how the ancients wrote history differently from moderns and insists that the gospels and Acts judged by ancient standards are by no means lacking in historical value. Acts is a historical monograph, a specialized history on a limited theme, like ancient histories of individual cities, provinces, sanctuaries or philosophic schools.

The gospels and Acts are narrative and testimony, with the stress falling on narrative. The interests of New Testament writers were historical and not exclusively kerygmatic. Acts very much resembles a Hellenistic Jewish history like Second Maccabees. Furthermore, Hengel thinks Luke the beloved physician and companion of Paul was probably the author of Acts, and so was in a position to know whereof he wrote.

Part Two is a series of five chapters in which Hengel focuses on the expulsion of the Hellenists from Jerusalem, the call of Paul, Peter and the mission to the Gentiles, the breakthrough at Antioch, and the Apostolic Council. Hengel uses Luke's narratives of these crucial events in an effort to understand better the course of Christian history in the 30s and 40s of the first century. He operates critically but he uses Acts as a historical source for the reconstruction of the very earliest decades of the church's existence.

In a brief third section Hengel offers a series of theses on "Historical Methods and the Theological Interpretation of the New Testament." It is remarkable indeed how much we are in the dark about events in the last third of the first century. When the book of Acts ends in the early 60s we are suddenly walking in the shadows because we have no book comparable to Acts on the 70s, 80s and 90s. Hengel seems to be pleading with scholars not to discard Acts (even if they think it is a one-eyed guide) because then we would be plunged into the dark for the years between the resurrection of Jesus and Paul's arrival in Rome. He knows that some make an existentialistic virtue out of historical uncertainty and that others mistake firm historical information for the object of faith. He wants to steer a different course. He is not interested in dogmatic "fideism" or existentialism, nor does he care for an equally dogmatic historical positivism. He wants to own up to what we really do know and do it without feeling guilty of being unscientific or unmodern. And he also wants people, no matter how much we really may know, to place their trust in the undeserved grace of God in the crucified and resurrected one and not in the facticity or historicity of events.

This is one more helpful and provocative book by a prolific (and critically conservative) author to add to a growing shelf of books on Luke, evangelist and historian.

Robert Smith
Christ Seminary — Seminex

GALATIANS/ROMANS. By Frank Stagg. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980. 128 pages. Paper. $4.50.

This is one of a series of Knox Preaching Guides. The author's procedure is to give an account of leading ideas in each of the two letters, Galatians and Romans, pointing out at the same time the homiletical possibilities which emerge from the text. There is approximately one specific sermon suggestion per page, with perhaps a third of them having a few sub-points by way of developing the proposed theme. Sermon titles range all the way from a doctrinal title such as "Jesus Paid It All," to others which have a psychological or wisdom flavor, such as "On Becoming Human." The range of themes is impressively large. In addition, one finds running throughout useful advice as to what kinds of preaching seem to be needed in the present scene.

Obviously, a sermon is a highly personal matter. Still, such suggestions as the author gives here can be useful in getting the preacher started. The author is an acknowledged scholar in his field (New Testament), and his sug-

gestions grow out of responsible exegesis.

One caution: this is not a complete commentary of the kind that would serve as a text for a Bible study or as basic reading in preparation for leading a Bible study. The author treats only such passages as seem to him to provide useful sermon material.

N. Leroy Norquist
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

GALATIANS. By H. P. Hamann. Adelaide, Australia: Lutheran Publishing House, 1976. 96 pages. Paper. $4.95.

This is the first volume in a series of popular commentaries on the Bible *(Chi Rho Commentary Series)* written by members of the Lutheran Church in Australia. It is an auspicious beginning. A popular commentary should first of all present the consensus of scholarship (if possible) on a text, not advance the writer's own novel theories. Hamann scores well here. His comments are meaty, solid, and balanced. He is careful not to go beyond the evidence. Thus he refuses to select either the North or South Galatian theories of original readership, and comments that the exact date of writing cannot be determined. On the other hand he is not afraid to state his opinion firmly. Gal. 4:4 undoubtedly implies, according to Hamann, the preexistence of Jesus, but does not even hint at the virgin birth.

A popular commentary should also give the reader adequate helps. This volume has a map of the eastern Mediterranean world. Three excurses discuss in synthetic fashion areas of complexity and importance: Pauline mysticism (Paul is not a mystic), the teaching on the law (excellent summation), and Paul's mode of Old Testament interpretation (he is a Jew of the first century using prevailing methods of interpretation). Hamann shows himself a good historical critic in these excurses. I wish that he had written a fourth excursus on the Spirit in Galatians and Paul.

A popular commentary should, finally, explain the sense of a text clearly, within the thought patterns of the original writer. Hamann rates high marks exposing the radically sharp contours of Paul's thought. He cites parallels from Paul and illustrative material from the Old Testament in abundance. (I wish his references to early Jewish literature had been as rich, e.g. to the Apocryphal and pseudepigraphic writings, to Qumran, to Josephus, and the like.)

The commentary does not point out the structure of the book in enough detail, nor does Hamann clarify the relation of Galatians 1:11-12 to the structure of the book. He asserts that the major break comes at 5:1, not 5:12, but brings no argumentation forward for it. Hamann also does not make his reader appreciate some of the historical difficulties the book presents. He does not think the relation of Galatians 2:1-10 and the visits of Paul to Jerusalem in Acts important enough to lay out the problem for the reader. The difficulty of correlating the phrase that Paul was unknown by face to the Jerusalem Christians (1:22) is passed over. This has the effect of insulating the reader for whom this commentary is written from some of the serious problems raised by the texts.

The commentary deserves wide distribution also in this country. It would be an excellent guide for a Bible class discussion, for private study, and for pastors to use in sermon preparation. We wish the entire series the good fortune of being up to the standard set by this volume.

Edgar Krentz
Christ Seminary — Seminex

GALATIANS. Hermeneia. By Hans Dieter Betz. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979. 352 pages. Cloth. $27.95.

After all the intensive work on the form of the Pauline letter (and other early letters) in recent years, it is at first almost shocking to hear Betz say that "one of the areas almost entirely

unexplored has been the formal and compositional structure of the letter to the Galatians" (xiv).

He believes that the document is fundamentally an apology set within an epistolary framework (prescript, 1:1-5, and postscript, 6:11-18). The apology consists of exordium or statement of the issue (1:6-11), narratio or recital of the facts in the case (1:12-2:14), propositio or statement of points of agreement and disagreement (2:15-21), probatio or the arguments proper (3:1-4:31), and exhortatio or warnings (5:1-6:10).

As apology the writing presupposes the situation of the court of law: the addressees are the jury, Paul is the defendant, his opponents are the accusers.

In the argument of his case Paul relies in large measure on the formal devices of the ancient art of persuasion. But in addition to being an apology the letter is also "a magical letter." Paul does not simply leave things to be decided by the minds of the Galatians but introduces curse and blessing as instruments of the Spirit. The readers will either read the letter and go free, or they will be remanded to the cosmic prison guarded by the elemental spirits.

Because the rhetoric and theology of the letter are so sophisticated, Betz thinks the Galatians were educated and well-to-do inhabitants of the towns and cities (not rural areas) of the central plateau of Asia Minor. They were not poor or uneducated or rustics but members of the Hellenized and Romanized city population, interested and involved in political, social, cultural and religious emancipation.

The new religion preached by Paul represented enlightenment to them, and Paul may have stressed the notion of freedom so much precisely because he knew how deeply they desired to be truly liberated people.

After a period of initial enthusiasm and exhilarating freedom following the founding of the congregation, the converts experienced problems they could not handle by means of Pauline resources. All the old familiar means of dealing with transgressions (rites and rituals) were swept aside, and there was no set of prescriptions to guide their daily activity.

The Galatians began to listen to Jewish-Christian missionaries who taught that Christian existence occurs within the context of the Jewish Torah covenant. As long as they stand within the Torah covenant, Christ protects them against Beliar, the great Satanic power. That is, they must accept the Torah and circumcision in order to become partakers of the Sinai covenant and so be sons and daughters of God. Paul was said to be leading people from Torah and sonship to the realm of Beliar, turning Christ into a servant of sin. His position was portrayed as worse than merely simplistic or reductionistic.

In his apology Paul defends not just himself but his gospel of uncircumcision. His basic strategy is to defend the gift of the Spirit to the Galatians. His most important argument is the argument of experience: the Galatians (the jury in this case) have received the Spirit and indeed regard themselves as pneumatics. Works of the Torah were no precondition of their reception of the Spirit. He argues also from Scripture and interprets the place of the Torah. Finally, he speaks of the freedom they enjoy as the grant of Christ's Spirit. It represents both gift and task.

In Galatians Paul himself is dealing with the first radical questioning of the Pauline Gospel, and that fact has given Galatians its perennial importance. Betz' commentary is the first in the Hermeneia series to be not a translation of an existing effort but a work produced expressly for Hermeneia, and that gives it a special significance. But no matter when or under what circumstances this commentary had been generated, it would stand as a landmark. The scope and depth of the author's grasp of ancient thought and literature, as attested by the nearly countless references to the sources, is astonishing, as is his probing of Paul's mind.

Robert Smith

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Briefly Noted

Edward W. Goodrick is the author of **Do It Yourself Hebrew and Greek** (Zondervan/Multnomah, $10.95). There are nine lessons for Greek and four for Hebrew; the other nine lessons deal with word study, exegetical method, geography and the like. A cassette tape provides the pronunciation. Goodrick calls this the "low road" approach. The user will not be equipped to translate either language or even do independent exegesis. But if you want to learn the alphabets, use concordances and lexicons, and be guided through rudimentary (and rather conservative) exegesis, this book might just be for you.

Mastering Old Testament Facts is a four-volume series designed to help a person learn basic knowledge about the Old Testament. Volume 3, for example, introduces the student to Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs (John Knox, $4.95). Written by Madeline H. Beck and Lamar Williamson, Jr., the book reflects a sophisticated understanding of the Bible (including form criticism of the Psalms) and uses the PAT system (programmed reading, art and tests), which is ideal for self study by people of high school age or above. Lay educators or people who want to get ready for seminary study may want to work through the whole set.

John Knox Press has recently issued three new volumes in its Biblical Foundations Series designed for students and serious lay readers. Hubert Richards offers a sprightly guide to St. Paul's letters and the controversies which evoked them in **Reading Paul Today** ($4.95). He tells clearly and simply how he sees the issues without cluttering the landscape with references to scholarly debates. Chapters entitled "Jitters in Salonika" and "Thank You, Lydia & Co." introduce Thessalonians and Philippians respectively, with grace and humor. **Reading John's Gospel Today** ($5.95) is the second edition of a work by John Painter, treating introductory matters, the theology of the Gospel, and the interpretation of 1 John. Painter paints his own views though he also notes his differences with older contemporaries like Dodd and Bultmann (less on Brown and Schnackenburg). He pays great attention to Qumran and Judaism of the first century, as well as to primitive Christianity as a whole, the Synoptics and Paul. Harry Mowvley's **Reading the Prophets Today** ($4.95) describes a cross section through prophecy rather than a book-by-book analysis. Sections include: prophetic call and inspiration, proclamation and preservation of the word, the prophets and their religious contemporaries, and prophetic teaching.

Anyone wanting to track down the Luther citations in the Lutheran confessions will be greatly aided by **Martin Luther and the Confessions: A Guide** (Concordia College Bookstore, Hamline & Marshall, St. Paul, MN 55104; $.80). Compiled by Karl Wm. Rutz, this pamphlet provides access, wherever possible, to the Reformer's works in English.

Thornapple Commentaries are a series of paperback reprints from Baker Book House. Recent volumes include **The Book of Nahum,** written by the famed Lutheran Hour Speaker, Walter A. Maier, and first published nine years after his death ($6.95), and **The Gospel According to St. Matthew,** a classic and often highly recommended commentary, from 1915, by Alan Hugh McNeile ($8.95).

Yohanan Aharoni's **The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography** (Westminster) appeared in English (original in Hebrew) in 1967. After extensive description of the land, its roads and boundaries, and the historical sources which geographers use, the book narrates the geographic, political, and social history of Palestine from about 2,000 B.C.E. to the Persian period. Outline maps and discussion of issues like the Levitical cities or the devastating campaign of Shishak are most useful for reading the Bible or for following the discussion of Israel's history in a secondary source. Aharoni

New Reading in Biblical Theology

Luke's Story of Jesus

By O.C. EDWARDS, Jr. Written as a companion volume to Werner Kelber's *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Fortress, $2.95), this book interprets the story line of Luke as the key to the theology of that gospel. Edwards' constant question is not whether what Luke said was accurate historically, but rather what point he was making about Jesus by telling the story the way he did.
$3.95 paper

The Ethos of the Bible

By BIRGER GERHARDSSON. Translated by Stephen Westerholm. The author argues that it is possible to point out those essential characteristics which make up the Bible's basic unity in the midst of its diversity and thus to provide a sketch of the Bible's ethos. Largely historical, this book contributes substantially to the formation of a vital sense of ethos and ethics in harmony with the biblical tradition. $8.95 paper

The Central Message of the New Testament

By JOACHIM JEREMIAS. This work from one of this century's giants of New Testament scholarship, now reissued, makes a strong case for the unity of the New Testament around its "central message" which—proclaimed by the historical Jesus—is to be heard as God's grace towards the unworthy. "Quintessential Jeremias: at once very simple and very profound."—A.M. Hunter, *Scottish Journal of Theology.*
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died in 1976, but his notes have been used by A. F. Rainey to produce a revised and enlarged paperback edition. There are about 70 more pages than before, and the price is also enlarged to $19.95.

J. Barton Payne's **Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy: The Complete Guide to Scriptural Predictions and their Fulfillment** (Baker, $12.95) represents at once a fundamentalistic approach to the Bible and a very broad definition of prediction. 8,352 of the Bible's 31,124 verses are held to be predictive. 89% of the verses in Zephaniah are deemed predictive; and 63% of those in Revelation. Predictions are broken down into oracles, figurative predictions, symbolic predictions, and types. Forty-six predictions of the millennium are listed, and 127 are given for Christ, though some of these are found *only* in the New Testament. This Herculean effort by the late professor of Old Testament at Covenant Theological Seminary is often a misconception of the nature of the Bible, but it richly deserves the title encyclopedia.

Hosea is J. T. E. Renner's contribution to the Chi Rho Commentary Series (Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, $4.95). Directed to laity, the book gives the results of recent scholarly work on the eighth-century prophet without technical terms or unnecessary complications. Hosea has more than its share of difficult verses, but lay people or those who wish to teach them will find the basics here, including even occasional references to critical problems and secondary passages. Renner admits his debt to the work of Hans Walter Wolff in the Hermeneia Series, the best of the technical commentaries.

From out of the past comes an old classic in somewhat revised form: **Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible** (Abingdon, Regular edition, $19.95; Thumb-indexed, $24.95). First published by James Strong in 1894, this concordance is exhaustive in that it lists every word in the King James Version accompanied by a line of context. A numerical reference system refers the reader to appended dictionaries of Hebrew, Aramaic (here still called Chaldee), and Greek. The dictionaries list the word in its original script, provide a phonetic pronunciation guide, a brief definition, and a list of the variety of English words used for this vocable elsewhere in the KJV. Word studies of the original are, therefore, possible via this feature, though **Young's Analytical Concordance** has a clearer system. A brand new feature in this reprint is a 277-page comparison, in tabular form, of key words from the KJV with their translation in the New American Standard Bible, New English Bible, New International Version, Jerusalem Bible, and Revised Standard Version. This addition, however, would seem to be of limited use. Only five verses are cited from Gen. 1, for example, and one verse each from Gen. 2 and 3. Close comparison of modern versions is strongly encouraged (no pun intended), but such comparison can more easily be done by laying two or more Bibles side by side and studying *each* verse for possible variations in style, exegesis, or text. For the New Testament, students limited to English would fare far better with Clinton Morrison's *An Analytical Concordance to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament* (see *CurTM* 8 [1981] p. 62).

Gail Rubin was a young photographer who devoted herself to capturing the land of Israel on film. In **Psalmist with a Camera: Photographs of a Biblical Safari** (Abbeville, $14.95), her shots of plants, animals, eucalyptus bark, geological formations, and the like are accompanied by brief quotations from Scripture and a short description relating the picture to biblical or modern times. Special poignancy is lent to this beautiful volume by the fact that the author-photographer was killed by terrorists in 1978.

A person trying to read major sections of the Hebrew Bible might soon give up because of the drudgery of looking up vocables. Terry A. Armstrong, Douglas L. Busby, and Cyril F. Carr are trying to remedy that situation by assembling **A Reader's Hebrew-**

English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Volume I: **Genesis to Deuteronomy** (Zondervan, $9.95) has just appeared. It lists, verse-by-verse, all words appearing 50 or less times in the Old Testament. In addition the editors provide statistics on the frequency of each word in that book of the Bible and in the entire canon, as well as the page number in the standard lexicon where the word is discussed. An appendix provides an alphabetical list of those words occurring 50 or more times — just in case you've forgotten them.

Many would argue that Frank Moore Cross, Jr. has written the most authoritative introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Entitled **The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies,** the Cross volume was last revised in 1961 and has been out of print for several years. A new Baker reprint ($5.95) remedies this serious problem. Though the text is unchanged, a ten-page supplement to the Preface lists the most important publications of texts and interpretations in the last twenty years.

The New Century Bible is a high quality commentary series based on the RSV. Now Eerdmans is reissuing the series in paperback, with some of the volumes being revised and replaced. Ralph P. Martin's 1976 volume on **Philippians** ($5.95) is the first to appear. In addition to a verse-by-verse exposition, Martin discusses the city of Philippi and the Christian community there, the integrity and authenticity of the letter, Paul's opponents (Judaizers and libertinists who offered perfection and who denied an understanding of the Christian vocation as a commitment to lowliness and suffering), the letter's date and place of composition (22 pages), and its structure.

In the Preface to **Jesus: A Pictorial History of the New Testament** (Seabury, $10.95), Eugen Weiler tells us that his goal is to awaken faith, hope, and love by retelling the story of the Gospels, and to enable meditation, pictures by Erich Lessing were added. Some 75 color, full-page, artistic depictions of Jesus and his life as portrayed by artists and photographs of the landscape of Palestine dominate the book and make it a beautiful gift. The German original was designed for those who are "seeking God," but people at any stage of the faith would treasure this collection.

How should I interpret a biblical text? Douglas Stuart provides one answer to that question in **Old Testament Exegesis: A Primer for Students and Pastors** (Westminster, $7.95). He provides a) a guide for full exegesis; b) a short guide for sermon exegesis (recommending a little over five hours of work for the six steps suggested); and c) a basic bibliography keyed to his full guide. Three things would improve this primer if a second edition is contemplated: a) Stuart should provide an example or two of how *he* would interpret a specific text; this would be especially useful in the guide for sermon exegesis. b) The bibliography, particularly on items like Introductions and Commentaries, needs to be greatly expanded and annotated. He lists the Introductions of Harrison and Kaiser side by side, with no indication that the first is anticritical, the second critical. On commentaries he merely lists the standard series, with no evaluation of the quality of the individual volumes within the series or, again, of their disposition toward historical criticism. c) The author needs to become clear on the critical questions if he is really to help anyone do exegesis. We are only told that the historical-critical method is a subject of great debate and are referred to the books by Edgar Krentz and Gerhard Maier (the latter is said to be properly motivated but inadequately documented). Is exegesis to be critical or not? Under authorship he asks, "Is it possible that material originally written by someone else is now reused, adapted, or incorporated into a larger structure by a later inspired 'writer'?" Thus, he dodges questions like the usefulness of the documentary hypothesis, the existence of a second Isaiah, or the late (and surely correct) dating of Daniel.

Isaiah XXI: A Palimpsest (Cambridge, $29.50) is a study of a difficult text and its language, and of its inter-

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pretation in the ancient versions, medieval Jewish scholars, and modern commentators. A. A. Macintosh, the author of this monograph, opposes the assumption that the pericope addresses a single historical situation. He argues that many of the words and phrases have their origin in the eighth century, but that the oracle as a whole achieved its final form as a prophecy which portrayed the fall of Babylon at the hands of Cyrus in 539 B.C.E. The original is, in a sense, a first draft over which has been written another from two centuries later. The book concludes with a translation and a commentary on the text in both its earlier and later forms.

For a brief treatment of the background, personality, and words of Jeremiah, suitable for lay readers, we recommend James M. Efird, **Jeremiah: Prophet Under Siege** (Judson Press, $4.95). The author provides study questions at the end of every chapter and a five-page chapter suggesting the book's relevance for our time.

Lucas Grollenberg, a Dutch Dominican, has written a controversial critique of Israel, **Palestine Comes First** (SCM, $2.50). Unfortunately, the book is long on criticism (the "notorious Balfour declaration," p. 26; Zionism is an ideology based on discrimination and the continuation of hostility, p. 120) and short on constructive suggestions. A final chapter sounds hopeful — "What Could Be Done?" — but winds up supporting the UN resolution branding Zionism as racism and attributing Holland's being a "victim of Zionist propaganda" to its Protestant (Calvinist) character. Thus what could be done comes down to this sentence at the end of a 139-page book: "I continue to hope for a future Palestine in which a Jewish 'nation' will live with a Palestinian 'nation', both together in a completely secular and democratic confederate state, along the lines of the programme put forward by the left-wing socialists in

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Israel." But as Camp David and its aftermath have shown, the "how" of such an achievement is the real question this chapter should have addressed.

The **Book of Job** (Jewish Publication Society of America, $6.50) is a new translation prepared as part of *Kethubim — The Writings,* the volume that will complete the JPS translation of the Hebrew Bible (The Torah appeared in 1963; The Prophets in 1978). Three members of the seven-man committee of translators (Moshe Greenberg, Jonas C. Greenfield, and Nahum M. Sarna) discuss the theology, the language, and the canonical place and literary structure of the book in introductory essays. Greenberg finds the resolution to Job's dilemma in the divine speeches: "Senseless calamity loses some of its demoralizing effect when morale does not depend entirely on the comprehensibility of the phenomena but, rather, on the conviction that they are pervaded by the presence of God." The Hebrew text is printed alongside the new translation which, as with the rest of this version, is of very high quality.

Gnosis (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, DM 110) is a Festschrift or Jubilee Volume dedicated to Hans Jonas on his 75th birthday. Edited by Barbara Aland, the twenty-one essays, in French, German, and English deal with the central issues connected with gnosticism as well as with more specialized problems. The first eleven essays, dealing with such topics as Gnosticism and Judaism, Greek philosophy, the New Testament, the church fathers, etc., could serve almost as a handbook to gnostic studies. Shortly before his death, Rudolf Bultmann sent greetings to the jubilarian in which he noted that it would have been impossible for him to write his commentaries on John and the Johannine epistles without the insight into gnosticism which Jonas had provided.

Gerhard Friedrich is perhaps best known for his work as successor to Gerhard Kittel in editing the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. On the occasion of his father's 70th birthday, Johannes H. Friedrich has published **Auf das Wort Kommt es an!** (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, DM 110). This hefty volume is a collection of Gerhard Friedrich's major writings on the gospels, the epistles, New Testament theology and lexicography. The title of the book, which is also the title of the last essay, might be paraphrased as, "It all depends on the meaning of the word."

Everyone knows the importance of concordances for biblical studies, but they are just as indispensable for serious study of other ancient texts. Karl Georg Kuhn edited **Konkordanz zu den Qumrantexten** (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, DM 120), that is, a concordance to the sectarian documents commonly known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. D. Barthélemy and O. Rickenbacher have also put us in their debt by

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preparing **Konkordanz zum Hebräischen Sirach** (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, DM 90). While the full text of the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus (=The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach) is preserved only in the Septuagint, large portions of the original Hebrew text have been recovered. This concordance lists all these Hebrew words and correlates them with their equivalents in the Greek and Syriac translations.

The title alone reveals its importance: **Martin Luther in der Mitte seines Lebens** (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, DM 74). This is Heinrich Bornkamm's masterful biography of the middle section of Luther's life, between the Diet of Worms and the Diet of Augsburg. Although the last chapter was not finished when Bornkamm died, his daughter Karin saw this 624-page book through to publication. In this crucial decade of his life, Luther stayed at the Wartburg, guided the growing reformation movement, broke with Erasmus and the left wing of the reformation, took a controversial position in regard to the Peasants War, argued with Zwingli, and laid the groundwork that led to the Augsburg Confession.

In **Planting Churches Cross-Culturally** (Baker, $12.95), David J. Hesselgrave offers a guide for home and foreign missions. He believes that the essential task in a world where three-fourths of all people do not yet believe in Christ is to plant new churches. Such planting, in his view, consists of ten steps: missionaries commissioned, audience contacted, gospel communicated, hearers converted, believers congregated, faith confirmed, leaders consecrated, believers commended, relationships continued, sending churches convened, and more missionaries commissioned. While he offers many helps for evangelistic ministry, the book could profit by a fuller definition of the church's mission (to the whole person, the whole society, the whole world, the whole church).

The prolific Tübingen theologian Jürgen Moltmann writes about hope, anxiety and mysticism in **Experiences of God** (Fortress, $3.95). The first chapter is a confession of faith, which concludes with these words: "I am a Christian for Christ's sake. I found my desolation in him, and found God in my desolation. . . . But whether this means that I am a Christian — that I really do not know, in spite of all the arguments and in spite of all the telling. Neither I nor anyone else can decide. It is in the hands of the one to whom I trust myself."

Consensus in Theology (Westminster, $12.95 Cloth; $4.95 paper) begins with an introduction by editor Leonard Swidler and essays by Hans Küng (Toward a New Consensus in Catholic [and Ecumenical] Theology) and Edward Schillebeeckx (I believe in Jesus of Nazareth: The Christ, the Son of God, the Lord). The bulk of the volume consists of responses to these two controversial theologians by Roman Catholics, Protestants, Episcopalians, Orthodox, Jews, Muslims, and Hindus. It concludes with reviews of their major works and Küng's defense of his staying within the Roman Catholic church.

Hans Huebner's **Das Gesetz bei Paulus** (The Law in Paul; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, DM 44) is a second edition of a recent monograph in the series *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments.* The first two chapters cover selected topics in Galatians and Romans (Abraham, the synod regarding the Gentile mission, the law's function and its fulfillment). A third chapter deals in depth with boasting about oneself, the righteousness of God, and Paul's upholding of the law (Rom. 3:31). Two conclusions: In Galatians Christ is the end of the Mosaic law; in Romans, he is the end of the fleshly misuse of the law.

Now in paperback: Lewis W. Spitz: **The Renaissance and Reformation Movements** (Concordia, two volumes, each $12.95). When this work first appeared as one volume, in 1971, Arthur Carl Piepkorn wrote: "The virtue of this volume is that it does not begin on October 31, 1517, but that it sees the 16th century reformations precisely for what they are, the extensions of the medieval period that went before. Spitz

begins with the Renaissance; describes the medieval church in crisis and the state in transformation. He next zeroes in on Italy, home of the Renaissance, then addresses himself to nascent capitalism, humanism, philosophy, literature, science, painting, sculpture, architecture, and music. . . . With the stage set for the reformatory movements, he takes them up one by one" (conservative Lutheran, the more radical reformation of Zwingli and Calvin, the reformation in Great Britain, the Tridentine reformation). Piepkorn's praise bears repeating: "The parish pastor will find the leisurely reading of this engrossing work a splendid (and eye-opening) refresher."

What might one find in **Classics of Christian Missions** (Broadman, $10.50), a paperback work edited by Francis M. Dubose? 47 essays arranged under 11 headings: the biblical theological basis of missions, mission histories, missionary biographies, mission journals and diaries, missionary letters, mission theory and practice, missionary tracts and sermons, historic missionary conferences, mission encounter with non-Christian religions, historic missionary encyclicals, and voices from the younger churches.

Malcon Barber's **The Trial of the Templars** (Cambridge, $11.95) is a full report on a sad moment in Christian history. The Templars, a military religious order assigned to defend the holy places against the Moslems, became enriched thanks to the Crusades. Late in the thirteenth century they and other Christians were expelled from Palestine, and the Templars' wealth was sought by the beleaguered Philip IV of France. The Templars were tried on charges of heretical crimes, including the denial of Christ and idol worship. Eventually the Pope tried to take over the trial, instructing other European rulers to arrest the Templars. Barber writes to fill in a gap in the history of the middle ages and to speak to "the late twentieth century so many of whose peoples have been, and continue to be, oppressed by regimes which use terror and torture to enforce conformity of thought and action."

When Walter A. Mier died in 1950, it was said that he had preached to more people than anyone else in history. His pioneering radio achievements on The Lutheran Hour were chronicled, in 1963, by his son, Paul L. Maier, in **A Man Spoke, A World Listened.** Concordia has now reissued this account ($12.95) and matched it with a collection of his writings: **The Best of Walter A. Maier** ($9.95). The writings, also edited by son Paul, range from aphorisms ("on chewing gum in public"; "on modernism"), to predictions (World War II predicted already in 1921; America would not go communist; also bloopers: No state of Israel would ever exist, predicted in 1923; "Hitler's repudiation of communistic atheism and his unqualified insistence upon a return of the German nation to the God of its father is [sic] one of the most hopeful signs in the reconstruction of Germany," 1933), to essays and editorials of various sorts, and to, of course and especially, sermons and other devotional material.

Preaching Through the Year (Knox, $6.50), by David Steel, a minister of the Church of Scotland, outlines themes and emphases for any who want to preach in accord with the pericopes of the church year. Scottish preachers have been acclaimed for their skill in expository preaching ever since their experience of their reformation through the work of John Knox. Richard L. Greaves has now published a series of essays on Knox, **Theology and Revolutions in the Scottish Reformation** (Eerdmans, $10.95). Authority, ecclesiology, the sacraments, and the political, social, and ecumenical dimensions of the Christian community comprise the concerns discussed in 11 essays, all of which have previously been published in periodicals. Known for his fierce attacks on female rulers, Knox's ire against people like Mary Tudor was motivated more by their catholicism than their gender. During the last 13 years of his life he realized the futility of attacking female rulers on the grounds of the inferiority of their sex.

Moshe Pearlman is a great popularizer and his **Digging Up the Bible** (William Morrow and Co., $19.95) will not disappoint his fans. He reviews the last two centuries of Palestinian archaeology by telling the stories of Robinson, Petrie (who discovered the secret of pottery dating), Starkey, Wilson and Warren (early explorers of Jerusalem), Kitchener (19th century cartographer), Clermont-Ganneau (who recovered the Moabite stone after it had been hacked to pieces), Reisner, Kenyon, Albright (who put ceramic chronology on a firm basis), Sukenik, Yadin (military general, dazzling excavator of Masada and Hazor and now a member of the Israeli cabinet), Mazar, Dever and Lance.

There's little doubt that Walter Wink is onto *something* in his **Transforming Bible Study** (Abingdon, $6.50). Biblical scholarship has been too much concerned with the analytical and logical and not enough with the synthetic and imaginative functions of the brain. His paradigm for group Bible study is laudable for its attempt to transform people. Yet one cannot escape the suspicion that his attempts to employ the synthetic and the imaginative short circuit an understanding of what the biblical author was "really trying to say" or that his supposedly impartial questions as leader tilt the discussion very much toward a particular theological and political ideology. In any case, to become a leader of this kind of Jungian Bible study would require far more than reading a short book, and so he appends his own address and that of the Guild for Psychological Studies in San Francisco, in case one wants to sign up for seminars or workshops.

Ralph W. Klein

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