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LUTHERAN UNION

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Making it a Priority

When the judicatories of the AELC, ALC, and LCA meet sometime before July of this year, delegates will be asked to complete an opinion poll on whether they favor an organic union of the three churches, and if so, to indicate their ideal shape for that union. By the same deadline, congregations, lay people, and pastors — individually or as groups — are to make their own decisions on union and are to help define the mission of the united church or indicate the shape that it could take. The Committee on Lutheran Unity will then, on the basis of this input, prepare a single resolution to be voted on by each of the three church bodies in their 1982 conventions.

The challenges facing Lutheran churches in the 80s are awesome; evangelism, nurture, worship, racism and sexism, higher education, world peace, energy conservation, inflation and family growth (the first list that emerged from my typewriter). But coping with these challenges will not be impeded by efforts for Lutheran union. On the contrary, a high priority on Lutheran union would facilitate a successful passage through this decade. Why?

Lutheran union would drastically reduce competition and duplication. It would remove the scandal our division causes to the world (our altar and pulpit fellowship may make us feel united, but folks on the outside wonder why Lutherans come in so many brands). Judicatory administration — synods and districts — would become more manageable, less competitive and less redundant (why should Lutheran congregations in the same city work through three different administrative structures?). Separate clergy rosters hinder the creative and effective use of ministers. Our relations with churches in other countries — or in this country! — would be simplified (no longer would others have to deal with three church bodies each with its own style, personnel, and red tape). Seminaries (and other institutions of higher learning) would be better used (all the seminaries except one now hug the Mississippi or are farther

East; consolidation and/or redeployment are long overdue). Lutheran union allows for regional differences in style, mission, and shape, while tying the regions together into one church with a common vision and a unified responsibility for mission to the whole world. (These "advantages" were gleaned from a "Set of Notes" recently prepared by Elwyn Ewald.)

Because we deem it so high a priority, we have asked a member of each of the three uniting churches (realized eschatology?) to give a picture of what this new church might be like.

Kenneth C. Senft notes that a clear focus on our mission will move us rapidly toward union. From a vision of our ministry will come the will to design an appropriate structure. He calls attention to the changing nature of our society, to those in it who are rootless and feel helpless, and to the challenges offered to the church world-wide. To minister in such a society and world requires that the strength of all three Lutheran bodies be united, working as one. The new church must include the great diversities in our world and speak for justice to the government and the other structures of society. He opts for a continent-wide church that will overcome the dangers of sectionalism and regionalism.

C. Thomas Spitz concedes that institutional union does not necessarily produce a higher level of unity, but he holds that unity and the church's mission will strongly complement each other. The plan for Lutheran union must acknowledge diverse ways of living and serving. His prognosis is paradoxical: the new national church will not be solely derivative from delegation of power by congregations, *and* nothing is real unless it's local. He proposes nine criteria for the new church and suggests that organization will flow from them. The testing ground for the union, in whatever shape, will come in the daily activities and attitudes of local parishes.

Two terms from the prophet Zechariah, grace and union, shape the discussion by **Walter Wietzke.** He frankly assesses the stance of

all the major Lutheran bodies in the U.S.A., whether they are participating in the current merger talks or not. In his view Lutheran union is a necessity in order to be faithful to God today. Yesterday's controversies cannot forever be the agenda. Of the four options listed by the Committee on Lutheran Unity he argues for the fourth, which envisions a fully united church with strong central authority. Though the Wisconsin and Missouri synods have declined the call for Lutheran union, the new, uniting church should, nevertheless, set a place at the table for them in hope.

Richard Lischer changes the subject by discussing the relationship between systematic theology and preaching. Theology makes preaching hard by driving the preacher back to the core of the faith and by helping the preacher discard subchristian ideas. Preaching helps theology overcome its objectification into formulas and moves it into praise. The Christian movement was born in preaching, and preaching is theology in its final form. The mystery of preaching is the moment when all that we are about in theology comes to expression. His rich, often quotable lines are must reading for all who preach each week and all who listen.

Structuralism represents a new beginning in exegesis, and, as they say, "Every beginning is hard." **Ronald W. Roschke** provides a primer for this rapidly growing discipline by digesting for us a recent handbook on it. Since the method presupposes a knowledge of modern linguistics and uses a highly technical vocabulary, all of us need all the help we can get before we can understand, or dare to criticize and evaluate, this phenomenon. Let two of the author's questions fortify and fire you for the task of learning something about structuralism: "Is it worth the church's effort to discover a means by which its Scriptures are placed in dialogue with current fields of investigation in science, mathematics and humanities? Is it worth the church's effort to acquire tools which replace our anxious fears that we are no longer relevant with the conviction that the

Word stands as Creator of our own self-understanding?'' Is that enough to make structuralism a priority for you?

Martin Marty once called the ecumenical movement the great new fact of our era, and Lutheran union is a small but important facet of that movement. Some see a divided Lutheranism now and settle for asking why. I see the Lord's proferred gift of union early in this decade and ask: ''Why not?''

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

A CALL TO LUTHERAN UNION NOW

We affirm the unity of the church and believe that the whole Lutheran family is called upon to manifest that oneness publicly and joyfully before God and the world.

Therefore, we, the undersigned – seminary presidents and deans and colleagues in theological education – voice the conviction that the union of Lutheran churches in the United States at this time is not an option to be considered but an action to be taken.

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Executive Director, Council for Lutheran Theological Education in the Northeast

Executive Director, Division for Theological Education and Ministry, The ALC

Madison, Wisconsin
January 31, 1981

Convergence in Mission = Union

Kenneth C. Senft

Executive Director, Division for Mission in North America, The Lutheran Church in America, New York, NY

People in the church require forms and organization if they are to engage in ministry and service in the world. Structures are required to facilitate participating in the mission that is God's. The form of the structure can give expression to fractures and brokenness or it can give expression, however inadequately, to unity and wholeness.

In the three Lutheran churches considering structural unity, we are a people who confess that this is God's world — all of the world — to the far reaches of the globe and into the intensities of the world's society. We believe that God has created people to be in community in this world.

We are a people who confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and that in our baptism we are given a new identity. We find out who we are because in his grace we have come to know *whose* we are! We believe that in our redemption we are called to be together in a community of faith.

We are a people who confess that the Spirit gives us vision about God's mission and creates within us the courage to witness, the love to serve and the will to deal justly with each other.

The Spirit enlightens and calls us into a mission together and the mission is God's. In that mission God gives us the experience of what it means to live in community. The experience in the community of faith with God and with each other, in spirit and in mission, makes the reality of *union* in ministry an inescapable result.

It seems inevitable that a people who share a land, a common confession, and a common experience in a community of faith will in God's time find themselves converging in their participating in mission.

Lutheran Heritage

The churches have a similar yet different heritage. The similarity for all Lutherans is the North European heritage. The difference is in the region of North Europe from which the heritage stems. It may suggest that there are dangers in other forms of regionalism as well. Gratitude for our history and thanksgiving for those who formed and organized our life together in Lutheran churches in North America cannot be overstated. However, there are times when our life together as a community of faith with a common confession will need to take new forms and new shapes. New forms and new shapes of our life together may be required for a church that views mission from a global perspective and sees itself as a community of faith where *no one is left out* regardless of heritage.

Three Lutheran churches with a common confession of faith and with a similar though different heritage are seriously discussing unity. They will need to move to merger — union. The ministries that stem from a common confession and a shared participation in the mission that is God's bring us together.

While planning is necessary and design for structure is important, too much stress on structure and form could restrict our progress toward union. On the other hand, a long look at a common future in ministry *together* rather than *separately* could move us rapidly to the decision to unite in fact. From the vision of the ministry that is possible together will spring the will to design the structure that can most effectively facilitate the mission.

Pluralistic Society

The churches will need to keep in perspective the changing society in North America and the global implications of the decisions made in any part of the world's society.

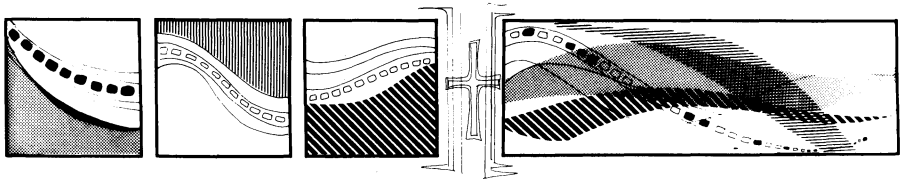
North America is feeling the effect of a new pluralism. Major large cities in North America are pluralistic in terms of cultural and ethnic/racial heritage. Large numbers of recent arrivals, many "undocumented," are populating vast regions of the continent. Early conclusions from the recent U.S. census are producing some revealing results.

Asian and Hispanic populations are increasing in large numbers. Population centers of black persons are changing. We have witnessed that change in many of the cities in the northeastern quadrant of the United States particularly, and in other areas as well. Small towns and rural communities in some areas are becoming near ghost towns and the rural population is declining. In other small towns and some rural areas the population is increasing. In both, the changes represent trauma for some, opportunity for others, near-oppression for some and exploitation for others. At the very least there is unrest among the people.

There is unrest because many feel helpless. The nature of and the need for cities have changed because of the massive advances in communication and transportation, with much of the planning for cities based on the communication and transportation needs of another era. The urban planners in secular society have let us down.

The rural and small town area people feel the invasion of industry and the leaving of industry. Firmly established roots are torn up to follow employment or to make room for new employees. Decisions about the use of land or the abandonment of industrial settings are made in remote corporate headquarters, in fewer and fewer instances are the planning decisions made in the government offices of elected officials accountable to the electorate.

The result is that population changes cause hostility even when they occur because of new opportunity, technological growth and the search for new resources — human and natural. The result can be restlessness for the active and helplessness for the docile victims — yet so much of it is done in the name of progress! Population changes and shifts are characteristics of the society



now and probably will be so in the coming years. Such a changing society will require a vision for ministry that is inclusive. It will demand all of the resources of the present three church bodies but with the added strength of being united and working as one!

Inclusive Ministry

A ministry that is inclusive will mean that we are willing to witness with the outreach of the Gospel among all the diversities of people. The church's doors must be open to others unlike those who are already inside. A church committed to such an inclusive ministry has an opportunity to engage in conversation and invitation almost everywhere. A conscious effort must be made to break through our past practices and some less than holy traditions of reaching out only to those people who are like us and are by heritage "one of us." Most of us will agree with that, but it requires more than agreement. Such change requires an effort of will based in a theology of creation and redemption.

A ministry that is inclusive will mean that we as a church live and act our way into that practice. It will mean undergirding of congregations in changed neighborhoods, whether the neighborhood is the inner city or the changing town and country. It means sending pastor developers into selected communities made up of persons different from a majority of our present membership as a church. It means ministry in places on the North American continent and in the Caribbean among black people, among people who are Hispanic, among people of Asian and Native American heritage. We can do so without engaging in denominational competition because the opportunities for outreach with the Gospel are so great and so numerous.

The results — under God's grace — may well be an emerging new constituency for this new Lutheran Church in formation. At the same time we will be ministering among those people who have been by history and tradition and heritage the past and present constituency of the Lutheran churches. Such a ministry that is inclusive will need to be not only an issue and a concern, but a practice of a new merged church, as we gather communities of faith, as we provide support to all of our congregations in the many diverse communities of this continent.

A ministry that is inclusive means a serving church. As in all service ministries, direct meeting of need on the one hand and urging government and other publics to be accountable for the meeting of needs of people on the other hand are two sides of the same effort; inclusiveness in the ministries of service.

The society in North America and the world in 1981 is subject to the implications of global change. The decisions made in one land can seriously affect the life of people living on the other side of the globe. Terrorist activity in one sec-

tion of the world sets in motion reaction or response in other parts of the world. Along the line people are affected. The church as a community of faith is global in its outreach and global in its concern. Is it too much to expect that among its concerns would be the goal of world community? Such vision and such concern will require a vision in ministry that is global. It will demand all of the resources of the present three church bodies but with the added strength of being united and working as one!

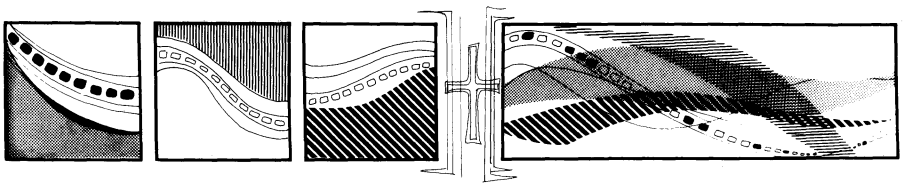
All of us face important questions about whether, how, and with what force we use the policies we have already adopted on issues of race, church and state, sex, marriage and the family, world community, economic justice, human rights and religious liberty for the purposes of advocating justice in North America and the world. These are important questions because other groups within the Christian family, some with force and power at their disposal, are entering into the arena of politics. It is important for us to understand the differences between lobbying for self-interest and advocating for equity and legitimate human need. We need to be careful that we do not become obsessed with a fear of confrontation or become unwilling to advocate for the legitimate needs of the poor. We will need to work toward the elimination of the dehumanizing effects of racism, whether it is in the subtle forms of legislation or executive order in the United States, or in the policies of apartheid in South Africa.

We have developed ways to speak on the basis of a policy that is theologically informed, pastorally concerned, and arrived at in representative debate and action. A united and merged church will need to remain on such a course in order to act with the moral authority required of a church that is engaged in ministry in the world. It will be an important principle for us to continue to grow in our understanding that human needs and the priorities for human fulfillment are not always consistent with a nation's or a community of nations' priorities for progress or even perceived security. In such situations the church will need to speak with the moral authority which is at the heart of our calling as a church.

Lutheran Agenda

These then, are some of the implications for ministry in the context of North America and the world.

A Lutheran church in the future, drawing its life from three Lutheran churches with a common confession and similar (though slightly different) heritage, will find renewed life and new strength in its *oneness.* Congregations living interdependently within one church body in one city can find new vision and added strength to engage in mutually supportive ministries reaching out from within one church. Metropolitan and area judicatories (synods or



districts) can discuss new forms of corporate ministries in support of congregational and pastoral ministries and develop new opportunities to minister among the institutions in society with greater strength, influence and compassion.

All of what has been said in this brief article can be said about a church whose structure may be designed internally in a variety of ways. I submit, however, that if this new Lutheran Church is to give itself in ministries of outreach in North America

— to function as a church in ministry with a global perspective;
— to be inclusive in mission among the diversities of people and with the diversities of ministry;
— to be a church that speaks for those who seek justice with the moral authority in its vocation as a church

then this newly-formed Lutheran Church will need to be a church that is nationwide or continent-wide with an understanding of ministry that is global. Within such a church there will need to be the opportunity to *overcome* sectionalism and regionalism. Strength for outreach in mission will depend much upon the vision and the will of this new church to be mutually supportive and to give full expression to the interdependent nature of its life.

May this new and strengthened church come into being *soon* and may its vision be great enough to encompass the mission in which this new church will be called to participate in the world. The mission itself is God's.

Toward Oneness in Life and Mission — A Vision of Lutheran Unity

C. Thomas Spitz
Ecumenical Officer, Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, Manhasset, NY

"Believers, especially believers within the same theological tradition, naturally move in the direction of . . . a more discernable . . . oneness in the world." So says the current study booklet on *Lutheran Unity*. And it makes sense, also out of recent history. That's one of the major reasons there is an AELC. These people feel that the present leadership of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod actively opposes the letter and spirit of the opening sentences of this paragraph.

Lutherans are called upon to exhibit and practice more openly an already existent unity of faith and spirit. We proclaim the self-same Gospel and celebrate the Sacrament accordingly. We share with other Lutherans the acknowledgement of the Scriptures as sole rule and norm of faith and life, subscription to all of the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the convictions that no further definitions of doctrine — in addition to the historic confessions — are necessary for unity, and a commitment that no other standards or tests will be established apart from the confessions or alongside them. So, what are we doing living separate and often competitive organizational lives?

Unity and acting in unity are gifts of God and not options from which we choose. We are utterly disloyal to the Giver of the Good Gift if we fail to act on areas of agreement just as energetically as on areas of disagreement. Those who continue to be preoccupied with disagreements are missing something God has given to the church.

Some years ago many of us subscribed to the Mission Affirmations (1965) of the LCMS. We agreed that the Lutheran Confessions "are not intended to be a kind of Berlin Wall to stop communications with other Christians," but that "the primary purpose for which they were formed [is] to confess Christ and his Gospel boldly and lovingly to all Christians." If the Confessions which we Lutherans share are thus a responsible tie to all Christians, surely they tie us Lutherans even more closely together. Our common subscription to those Confessions and their particular witness to Christ and his Gospel are both reason enough and basis enough for the consolidation of the Lutheran family.

More than *Institutional* Union

The unity of the Church is, of course, far more important than its institutional or organizational union. We've learned that the hard way in a variety of experiences. Lutherans invested a great deal of time and effort in the 50s and 60s on church union, but there's a good deal of question about how much the cause of unity was advanced. Neighboring congregations still did not work together. Swedes and Germans and Norwegians continued to look at the names of persons elected to national staff positions and kept a head count on which side was winning. We learned each other better, but didn't trust each other or the institu-



tional church any more. Maybe we even trusted the institutional church less. Greater degrees of institutional union did not necessarily produce a higher level of unity.

And what a disappointment it was to discover that the world hadn't really noticed our mergers and didn't really care after all! Even now it is impossible to determine how much positive impact the further uniting of Lutheran churches would have. But it is quite clear that the world sees and understands all too well the many instances of separations, conflict, competition and duplication in the church as it moves out in mission to the world. Such negative witness to the unity of the church violates the mission of the church.

Unity and mission contribute their unique dimension to the nature of the church. Unity and mission are complementary rather than competitive or mutually exclusive objectives. And sooner or later unity, to become functional, must be expressed in some kind of organizational union or consolidation. Such organizational union need not be in the form of conventional old-line mergers, but it must have some form. And the world, as well as the people of the church, ought to be able to see it!

Of course there are other ways in which the unity of the church is made evident. There is the oneness of our confession of Jesus Christ as Lord. There is the oneness of our love for one another and for the whole of God's creation. There is the cohesiveness of our action through cooperative programs and conciliar bodies, and the mutuality of our support for one another. But cooperation is just one important step in the direction of a common life and mission. We are one! Why shouldn't we act like it? And structure ourselves like it?

But what shape might such consolidation, such oneness, take? It should not be necessary to take ten years or more to answer the question. It is possible for the Committee on Lutheran Unity to identify, enable, and — with the endorsement of the churches — to put into use organizational forms and styles which would permit the ALC, AELC, and LCA to say by 1986 that they have achieved consolidation of life and mission, even though that consolidation may not be inclusive of all Lutherans or be fully developed in all places. All of the organizational questions do not have to be answered. They never are. Such a consolidation of Lutheran life in North America should not be seen as a final configuration for Lutherans. Others might yet choose to become part of that consolidated life. On the other hand, such a development should be seen as providing an instrument through which Lutherans may more effectively pursue valid expression of an even broader Christian unity.

Consolidation of Lutheran life and mission should be planned for "all in each place." Unification belongs to all levels of the life of the church — con-

gregational, regional and national. And it is quite possible that the visible, structural or sociological form of a church which is one and not divided may and perhaps should differ at various levels and in different places. Most people, including much of the less visionary church leadership, presuppose a uniform structure for all organizational expressions of the church. It would be better to acknowledge diverse ways of common living and serving. It would be better to identify and encourage forms appropriate to each level and locale of life and mission.

Local Initiative

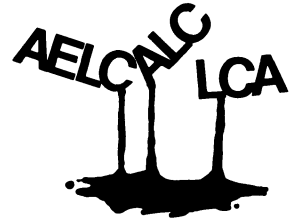
There is a great deal more to unification than structures and programs at regional or national levels. In fact, if union is not alive at the local level, it will have difficulty at other levels.

Under the strong congregational polity which exists in Lutheran church bodies in the United States, it is difficult, if not impossible, to try to impose unification of life and mission — or even more extensive cooperation — on local congregations. There is even reason sometimes to be concerned about the low level of interest with which local congregations and their leaders respond to inquiries about ecumenical activity. But studies reveal that we may not always be asking the right question with regard to that interest. Both laity and clergy respond very positively to working together at the local church level, while at the same time ranking ecumenical activity on the regional and national levels in the lowest fifth of the services provided by church bodies. Out of these studies grows the realization that any shaping of the "form of new church" had better have strong "from bottom up" input.

It will take more than an extensive consultation process for this to happen. Congregations must now, in the process of studying and looking ahead, be shown that they not only may but should plan locally for the consolidation of their life and mission with others. And it is vital that established church body rubrics regarding initiatives in mission, decision-making authority, and money flow be bent or changed to make that possible.

Local initiatives toward Lutheran consolidation have in the past tended to experience brief and shallow lives, most often because they were not grounded and built on parallel steps being taken at the church body level. Meanwhile, church body initiatives often risk becoming isolated from the general life of the church.

"Some form of new church" must include the vision of a united church which is church in its own right, a church with an existence and authority that is not totally or solely derivative from the will and delegation of congregations. At the same time, the shaping of the church both in structure and service must be responsive to and strongly supportive of the consolidation of life and mission at



the local level. This does not preclude strong leadership, or program initiatives in a whole host of areas, or corporate representation to other churches and before government, or prophetic judgment, or collective opinion, or corporate standards for membership and ministry, or shepherding responsibility. It simply reaffirms that "nothing is real until it is local."

Instead of talking about specific structure for "some form of new church," it might be better to talk about the criteria a "new church" should meet. Structure and organization, after all, are under continuing review and change if they are to remain effective. A beginning list of the criteria might include the following:

- United witness before the world to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the power of God for salvation;
- Interdependence of ministries;
- A more inclusive identity and fellowship;
- Enrichment of life and faith by gathering into one the various traditions of the past;
- Mutual acceptance of members, ministers and ministries;
- Responsiveness to human need;
- Quick response to changing situations;
- Capability for cohesive participation in and response to ecumenical dialogue;
- Due authority and responsibility delineated, understood and respected at each level in the life of the church.

It is important to be open to whatever form of organization may evolve. Some directions seem to be indicated, but the final shaping is not at all clear. Nor need it be. *Relationships* are important in the church. Organization only provides for or hinders them.

There seems to be a strong feeling in ALC, AELC and LCA that the pastoral care provided by the church should be close at hand, that those who are called upon to provide it should not be burdened with managerial tasks, and that the responsibility for such pastoral care is better limited to a manageable geographic area or number of ministries. Many apparently feel that this shepherding responsibility can be separated from program management and resources deployment, activities which might be conducted on behalf of units considerably larger both in terms of geographic area and number of ministries served.

There is a distinct value to decentralization in many areas of responsibility and program. But it is equally important to recognize and affirm the need and desirability of living and working within a single, united church body.

It is by no means certain what form a united church might take. And that's not a major problem. The challenge in the months leading to 1982 is one of getting the people to identify the kind of life-style which they want such a united church to encourage, provide, and

facilitate. Most of the people of the churches will be quite happy with whatever form develops from a consultation and consolidation process that genuinely involves the people of the church. But the following are a few of the things it should be possible to achieve:

— Optimum pastoral care and supervision of ministers and ministries;
— Strategic placement, evaluation, and support of ministries;
— Resources distribution, mission and ministry vis-a-vis institutional maintenance;
— Mission and ministry decisions as close as possible to the scene of implementation;
— Ministries interrelated in a continuing way which permits them to address together emergencies and the more difficult questions;
— Representation at each level of the church life to the public, the government, other agencies and churches.

Millions of Lutherans faithfully seek a fuller embodiment of the oneness of the Church. They seek this within Lutheranism and within the full Christian community. They will not be satisfied with fearful or half-hearted efforts. These Lutherans have been caught up in a new spirit of unity born of love, of knowledge, of forebearance yet deep conviction, of faithfulness to the past and openness to the future.

One of the greater tests lies in your parish and mine.



Vision of a House United

Walter R. Wietzke

Division for Theological Education and Ministry, The American Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Committed as I am to homiletics, I shall begin this essay on Lutheran unification with reference to a biblical text, Zechariah 11:4-14:

> 4 Thus said the Lord my God: "Become shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter . . ."
>
> 7 So I became the shepherd of the flock doomed to be slain for those who trafficked in the sheep. And I took two staffs; one I named Grace, the other I named Union. And I tended the sheep.8 In one month I destroyed the three shepherds. But I became impatient with them, and they also detested me.9 So I said, "I will not be your shepherd. What is to die, let it die; what is to be destroyed, let it be destroyed; and let those that are left devour the flesh of one another."10 And I took my staff Grace, and I broke it, annulling the covenant which I had made with all the peoples.11 So it was annulled on that day, and the traffickers in the sheep, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the Lord.12 Then I said to them, "If it seems right to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them." And they weighed out as my wages thirty shekels of silver.13 Then the Lord said to me, "Cast it into the treasury" — the lordly price at which I was paid off by them. So I took the thirty shekels of silver and cast them into the treasury in the house of the Lord.14 Then I broke my second staff Union, annulling the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. (RSV)

It is not my intention to do an exhaustive review of this difficult passage, but only to follow the thrust of the text and some exegetical leads established by Herbert C. Leupold in his commentary on Zechariah. He writes:

> The preceding chapters (9, 10) presented a picture of the victories of Israel and of her complete redemption by the Lord. All of the problems that might have engendered anxious thoughts receive an answer that bespeaks Israel's success and her glory. Such strains of prophecy, however, usually need to be offset by words of warning and counsel, for there is no group in this still sinful nation that is entirely ready for God's favors and blessings, and to whom only good can be prophesied.[1]

I find both text and commentary particulary instructive for a denomination, our Lutheran denomination, whose member church bodies are each to be faulted for assertions of corporate pride and for perpetuating divisive attitudes. As hard as the words are for us to hear, we must hear that ". . . there is no group in this still sinful Lutheran Church

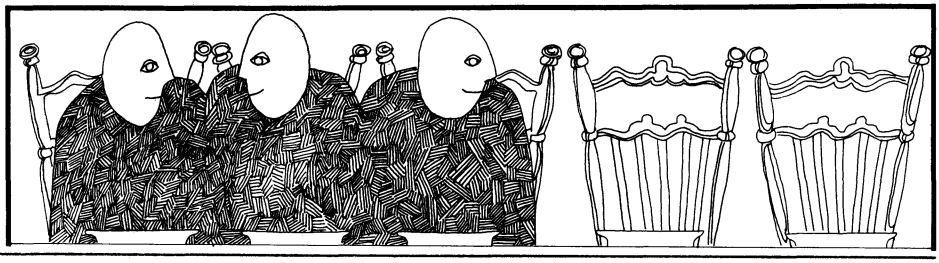
[1] Herbert C. Leupold, *Exposition of Zechariah* (Columbus: Wartburg, 1956), p. 203.

that is entirely ready for God's favors and blessings, and to whom only good can be prophesied." (Leupold, p. 203) Like Israel of old, we have had success and glory. Like her, we too need words of warning and counsel from the Shepherd.

What is the significance of his activity? And what, if any, contemporary inference is there for us? Leupold says,

> The spirit that characterizes the shepherd's activity is . . . indicated by a symbolic act which he performs as he takes these duties upon himself. For he takes two staves — . . . a rod *(shebet)* or club for repelling wild beasts and a crooked staff *(mish'eneth)* for helping the sheep and himself in difficult places. The names that the shepherd gives to the staves shows what purposes he had in mind and what objectives were continually in his hand as he went about his duties. These staves serve to remind him and to show to others what motives actuate him in all his work. These two motives are "grace" and "unity." . . . (They refer) . . . to "the brotherhood between Judah and Israel." Israel could never thrive as long as it was a divided nation. The shepherd purposes to put an end to the harmful division that had for so long proved the bane of Israel's normal growth and development . . . guided by the two motives . . . he went about his shepherd duties . . . (but) the particular features that marked his watchful care must also be abandoned by the shepherd. Therefore, by a symbolic act, he first breaks the staff *grace*. In addition to what was said on v. 7, it is now clear that in this case grace included the favor of the friendly relations existing between "all the peoples" and Israel. In fact, these friendly relations had been guaranteed by nothing less than a "covenant" *(berith)* which God had made with all the peoples. Since the second staff represented unity in the nation as an object to be sought and brought about by God's favor, the breaking of the staff signifies that God will no longer labor in the direction of healing the breach caused by the division of Israel (pp. 210-217).

In the midst of Lutheran separateness, 1981, it is my conviction that we need to be directed by the Shepherd and his staffs of GRACE and UNITY once again. These are his implements, and they are also guiding elements for all faithful under-shepherds. Moreover, among the rank and file church members who constitute three communions, the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, I find the majority extremely sensitive to these elements and wanting to share in a faithful response. This is a critical factor in the cautious optimism which infuses the following paragraphs.



While there is some profit in recalling Israel's undistinguished past, her sad response to GRACE and UNITY, we must realize that these were not only Old Testament impulse factors. They are the magnetic powers of the New Covenant drawing us to an Ephesian and Colossian ecclesiology and to an apocalyptic vision of the City of God. Dividedness is a theological problem in both covenants. Israel could not thrive as long as it was a divided nation, and we cannot thrive as an unassembled, competitive series of Lutheran factions.

I. An Assessment of Principals

Ninety-five percent of United States Lutherans belong to one of five major groups: the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, the Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Smaller groups make up the other five percent. Roughly two-thirds of the Lutherans in America are in the first three groups cited; one-third are in the Missouri and Wisconsin configurations.

A brief comment on the major church bodies may help to assess potential and to identify troublesome areas. While no evaluation is totally objective, one must describe the elements as one sees them. Here is what I see.

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Non-participant)

This is volitionally the most isolated version of Lutheran Christianity. Its brittle hermeneutic and its anxiety regarding possible corruption of doctrinal truth seals it off from any meaningful engagement with the orders of society or with other major Christian groups. It is hard to imagine a learning process in which students hear essentially only those of their own persuasion — but that's Wisconsin. Many members of this synod carry out social amenities in a winsome way in a personal, proximate level, but, ironically, manifest only impersonalism and distance when they function as a corporate body.

The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod (Non-participant)

This powerful, but no longer overpowering, group is still affected by an elitism which is largely fictitious. A president is retiring who came to power through the support of Missouri's Right, but now he appears to be victimized by those who helped enthrone him. Optimists hope for a successor classified "moderate." This translates, as others have said, to civility in conversation. Realistically, we who are party to unification conversations assume that decades will pass with the right guard in key posi-

tions, academically and administratively. What Missouri — and all of us — has to face is the call to repentance for divisive doctrinal formulations and stances. Until that happens it is hard to imagine a new era marked by productivity in relationship with other Lutherans.

The American Lutheran Church (Participant)

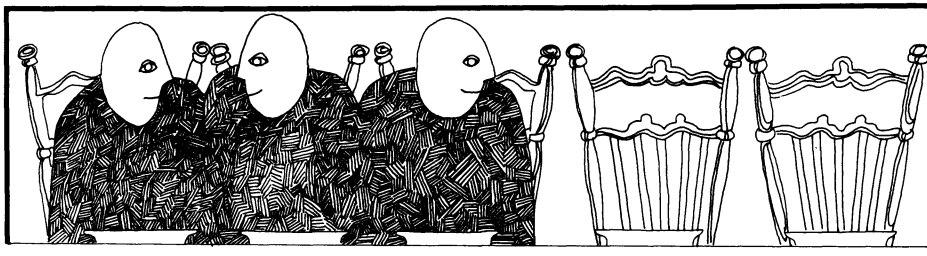
Midwestern in temperament and life style with much of her rootage in rural areas, this church is unduly influenced by pietistic and ethnic considerations. She has yet to make a significant impact on an American culture which is pluralistic. Her ecclesiastical salvation may well emerge from a congregational setting in which farsighted pastors and dedicated lay persons demonstrate a growing progressiveness and inclination to deal with inter-Lutheran and ecumenical concerns. They have exhibited a passion for unification in every one of their national conventions, even those predating the merger of 1960. Among sister Lutheran groups the ALC is sometimes perceived as being somewhat tentative. Her theological and ecclesiological integrity is on the line in the current process.

The Lutheran Church in America (Participant)

Constitutionally this is the group most overtly committed to Lutheran unity, yet it finds itself periodically hamstrung by powerful synod blocs which do not easily jeopardize their spheres of power. Accused by some of being the liberal Lutheran wing and preoccupied with bureaucracy and management techniques, the LCA is theologically more substantive and conservative than detractors claim, and does function with a sense of order. This is the revelation awaiting outside observers. Her leadership qualities will be efficacious correlatively with her ability to handle domineering attitudes in her own eastern synodical groupings.

The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (Participant)

Like Jacob who "claimed the birthright" in less than altruistic circumstances and then had to flee to Laban, these exiles are still struggling with their identity and future. They know they cannot long maintain themselves on a martyr's diet; and though growing in mission spirit, they are in great need of stronger Lutheran family ties. Whatever their errors, or miscalculations, this is the group formerly in Missouri who were the progressives, those who tried to generate better inter-Lutheran relationships in that context. It would be immoral to let them atrophy, though no one should presume that to be their only alternative. They are ready and able partners in a projected merger.



These latter three groups have now initiated a church-wide process which has potential merger/consolidation possibilities. This is not an intramural delicacy, a limited Lutheran luxury to be enjoyed while ignoring greater ecumenical opportunities which lie ahead. It is a necessity! It is needed in order to be faithful to God in terms of current possibilities — and that is always the point at which action is called for. It is needed for the life of each of the participating groups, to strengthen corporate witness and action, to transcend present delimiting factors, to be truly an AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH. It is needed for the sake of Missouri and Wisconsin. They must see that other Lutherans can and will act in concert and that yesterday's controversies cannot forever be the agenda — an agenda which forecloses acceptance of present challenges and protracts decisions to function collegially. This consolidation must be pursued, not to spite Missouri or Wisconsin or to function pejoratively toward them, but rather to honor GRACE and UNION now. Let there be a light in the window, an open door, a place at the table for the others. But we must act now.

Finally, this step in Lutheran unification is a good conditioning step, preparing us for more demanding involvements in the 21st century. We know that denominational families will have to function in a world where wider ecumenical questions and challenges will weigh upon them. But if Lutherans cannot function unitedly now, how will they then?

II. Reactions to the Proposed "Alternatives"

The publication, *Lutheran Unity,* prepared by the Committee on Lutheran Unity of the three church bodies, lists possible types of organizational options for effective mission fulfillment. They are; Three Churches, Non-geographic Entities in One Church, Geographic Entities in One Church, and One Church.

TYPE 1. Three Churches: is simply a retention of the status quo marked by the gratuitous thesis that ". . . churches . . . can effectively fulfill their mission . . . and . . . evidence their unity apart from structural union; the strengths, diversity . . . contribute to effective mission fulfillment; . . . existing expressions . . . (do) not require large-scale reorganization."[2] I deem these suppositions utterly evasive and believe they should be dismissed out-of-hand.

TYPE 2. Non-geographic Entities in One Church: appears to be game-playing with only cosmetic change. In what would be an ancillary operation, the logic is to develop a department for dealing with national and international issues. It makes virtually no demand on existing structures, nor does it really

[2] Committee on Lutheran Unity, *Lutheran Unity: Material for Study, Discussion, and Response,* LCA, ALC, AELC, p. 18.

challenge them. Yet present structures, commitments, and attitudes are to a significant degree the very source of our divided condition and our malaise.

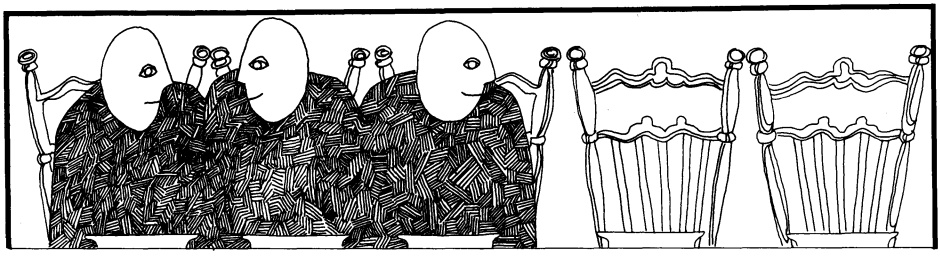
TYPE 3. Geographic Entities in One Church: must be seen as a "broader synodicalism." There is, again, no real power in a central church structure to which such "large geographic entities" are finally accountable. It would be push and shove once more, only on a wider scale. In this scheme one could envision the LCA being given everything up to the Mississippi, the ALC everything between the Mississippi and the Rockies, and the AELC being given the West Coast. If we are talking about a truly American-Lutheran Church, we must transcend past histories and current ethnic and economic class interests. We must learn to live and minister in a pluralistic culture.

TYPE 4. One Church: comes closest to a realistic merger/consolidation in which the essential powers are posited in a national structure; but genuine, relevant powers are residually committed to districts, synods, or regions. There are those who say decentralization is the wave of the future. I think, rather, it is a craze of the present, topping out; and that politically as well as ecclesiastically we have to maintain a balance between central authority and regional rights. For me this type has the greatest potential in which wide areas of negotiation are possible. I believe the people in our constituencies will give positive indication that they want a new church to come into being, and I believe they will mandate the Committee on Lutheran Unity to propose an action which includes these parameters.

The initial question has to be "What is the very best entity we can create from these fractions?" It will be deplorable if the matter degenerates into an ecclesiastical power struggle with "strategies" and "probes" and "counter-measures" and "fall-back positions." If we really believe in our essential unity, we will make polity our servant and will not allow it to be our master. People of good will and unwavering devotion will have to talk, work, dialogue, struggle, and sacrifice together. When that has been done, we all must graciously and unreservedly join in making the chosen polity our covenant for enhancing the mission of Christ's church.

III. An Alert to What Lies Beyond Structure.

Conversations and Negotiations can easily founder on polity matters. But agreement on polity cannot solve everything. A marriage license never guarantees a united family, and a constitution never guarantees a united nation. Yet everyone knows it would be folly to say "Let's not have them!" Form and structure must always be a concern of the church, of the family, of the na-



tion. However, some concerns lie beyond these overt, empiric covenants. A far less tangible — but equally important — reality is "psychological oneness." We must work for a union of hearts, even as we work for a consolidation of form.

But at this point, it is necessary to respond to those who contend "We have psychological oneness," or who insist that we are cooperating well and don't need anything more, or who resist all efforts to establish abiding covenants and work for new church structures. Before ready acceptance is given to these theses, we must test their legitimacy. Is there "psychological oneness," is there "productive cooperation?"

What does the internal and external evidence reveal? Some disarming things, very disarming things. While there are areas of cooperation, there are also unresolved tensions. *Sub rosa* there is disconcert and counter-productive competition. Illustrations?

Church-school curriculum. Instead of one, cooperatively designed, we have several, each costing in excess of one million dollars.

Comity committees. Area representatives jealously guard their turf, blocking expansion of other Lutheran groups.

Institutions — colleges, seminaries, etc. With some schools less than one hundred miles apart, less than a one-hour drive apart, competition ends up diminishing both.

Three shepherds guide these three traditions. Is it unreasonable to ask them, "Are you willing to use the elements of Zechariah's shepherd, GRACE and UNION?" The Lord wanted Israel and Judah together. Does he not want the ALC, LCA, and AELC together? Does he not even anticipate a time when Missouri and Wisconsin will be included, when the ultimate step might be taken in American Lutheranism?

When I consented to write this piece, my intention was to confine myself strictly to the current merger document and its participating principals. *My desire is that they move ahead without any delay, and I hope nothing subverts efforts in that direction.* But the editor requested that I ". . . spell out (my) vision of a united Lutheranism." In light of all that scripture says, I cannot see the ultimate realization of the Shepherd's purpose as long as some sheep are excluded. Therefore, the vision must be described as both penultimate and ultimate. Let us be a people who act resolutely now to establish a new Lutheran church — but let that church set a place at its table — in hope.

Preaching as Theology

Richard Lischer

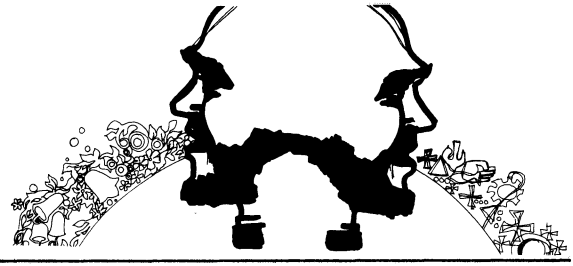
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The Exclusion of Preaching from Theology

Everyone decries the fragmentation of theology but until the pain is great enough, no one does anything about it. Nowhere does this fragmentation impact with greater force and nowhere is the pain felt more deeply than in the church's preaching. Although preaching is central to the life of the church, it has continually struggled against its exclusion from the church's self-reflection, its theology. Augustine wrote the first homiletics, but the early church's greatest theologian defined preaching as a matter of expression and devoted most of *On Christian Doctrine* to discussions of the rules of hermeneutics and rhetoric. *On Christian Doctrine* provided the church with a brilliant text-to-sermon manual from which Christian doctrine was strangely absent. Whether seen as a Christianized rhetoric (as in the influential John Broadus), a plain conduit for the *real* Word of God (as in many Barthian and a few Lutheran theologians), or as an exercise in speech and communication (as in many seminary curricula), preaching suffers a certain theological homelessness. It is forever, as one seminary catalog enumerates with painful clarity, "Preaching *and*" liturgy, literature, liberation, dance. . . . Since its relationship to theology is seldom mentioned, much less seriously analyzed, preaching endures its *de facto* exclusion quietly, without argument.

Before I explore the possibilities of integrating theology and preaching, perhaps we need to darken the picture (our homiletical *malady* step?) by sketching a few of the results of preaching's exclusion from theology. The first is a lack of substance or what Spurgeon called "treacle" and H. H. Farmer, "French lacquer preaching." The preacher may present a charming and literate discourse but, because the speech does not emerge from and rearticulate the organizing principles of the church's life (its theology), because it does not offer the life of God in Christ, it suffers the same fate as the seed sown on rocky soil. But in this case its rootlessness derived from the preacher's rather than the hearer's lack of depth.

The second result is the lack of coherence. If the preacher has mastered Freshman Composition, the message may possess internal coherence, but, externally, the sermon does not look to the rock from which it was hewn. It coheres to nothing. Many involved in theological education have puzzled over the fact that seminaries are producing sophisticated exegetes and simplistic preachers. That too many preachers have stalled at the point of critical theory or technical proficiency is not the fault of exegetical science, although we must note the paucity of Biblical scholars who are willing to take responsibility for proclaiming those texts whose ancient meanings they have uncovered. Gerhard von Rad is an



exception, and his definition of exegesis exceptional:

> Both scientific exegesis and preaching are interpretation. Interpretation is always appropriation of an intellectual content that is being transmitted to us. No understanding at all is possible without some form of inward appropriation. It would be an illusion to think that we could deal with the transmitted intellectual contents as a foundry worker handles molten ore with long-handled ladles — and thus keep them at a distance from ourselves. Moreover, no understanding is possible unless what is to be interpreted is applied to ourselves, unless it touches us existentially. Therefore there is also no fundamental distinction between exegesis and preaching. Preaching, too, is interpretation only in a different form of speech, in a different confrontation.[1]

If coherence is to be achieved, we need not only exegetes who take preaching seriously but preachers who take exegesis seriously, for whom sermon preparation is more than a Saturday's expedition into *The Interpreter's Bible, Proclamation,* or a host of disreputable sermon "services." The coherence we seek, however, lies at a level deeper than the partnership between exegesis and preaching. It springs from the unity and coherence of the Gospel itself.

A third result of preaching's exclusion from theology is preaching's loss of authority. The abuse of true authority always produces an abuse of true obedience. Gerhard Ebeling writes, "Theology is necessary because man is by nature a fanatic."[2] We have so thoroughly confused authority with an authoritarianism based on personal charisma, organizational genius and persuasive public speaking, that responsible Christians hesitate to exercise the authority vested in preaching. The authority of Jesus is a theme which has been usurped by fundamentalist preachers and adopted as the ideology for their empire-building. We think that if we approach preaching in a spirit of dialogue, disclaiming the obligation to move anyone toward anything, the need

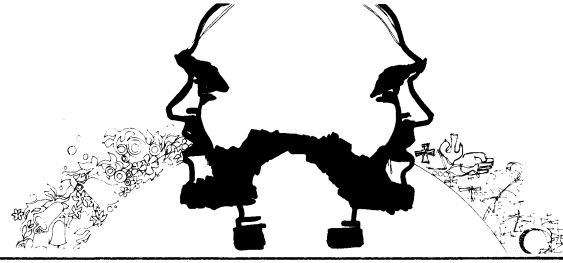
[1] *Biblical Interpretations in Preaching,* trans. John E. Steely, Nashville: Abingdon, 1977, p. 12. In addition to von Rad, several Old Testament scholars have attempted to close the gap between textual study and preaching: Foster McCurley, Jr., *Proclaiming the Promise,* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974; Elizabeth Achtemeier, *The Old Testament and the Proclamation of the Gospel,* Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973; Claus Westermann, ed., *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics,* trans. James Luther Mays, Richmond: John Knox, 1963; among American New Testament scholars the work has just begun: Leander Keck, *The Bible in the Pulpit,* Nashville: Abingdon, 1978; D. Moody Smith, *Interpreting the Gospels for Preaching,* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980; Fred B. Craddock, *Interpreting Biblical Texts: The Gospels,* Nashville: Abingdon, 1980, the first of a multi-volumed series edited by Lloyd Bailey and Victor Furnish.

[2] *Word and Faith,* trans. James W. Leitch, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963, p. 424.

for authority will vanish. But the importance of authority cuts across all forms and styles of discourse because true authority comes from the word of the Gospel as mediated by the church. Jesus' authority as God's servant was such that he cast out demons, raised the dead, forgave sins and commissioned a witnessing church. Who he was and what he did were incorporated into the church's understanding of him and its life and mission. This corporate understanding has, as a whole and in its constitutive elements, become authoritative for proclamation, not in the restrictive sense of dogmatic prohibitions, but in the norming and life-giving power of its original intent. P. T. Forsyth understood the connection between theology and authority when he wrote, "The faith which makes a man a Christian must go on in the preacher to be a theology. He cannot afford to live on in a *fides non formata.* A viscous unreflecting faith is for the preacher a faith without footing and therefore without authority."[3]

The fourth result of preaching's exclusion from theology is the irrelevance of preaching. But first, theology must answer accusations of its own irrelevance. Many church members are bored or amused by the theological fads, the theologies *of*: the death of God, secularity, play, hope, liberation, story, which replace one another faster than fashion styles or Yankee managers. It was theology's perennial faddism which led Barth to compare theology to the universal struggle for existence in which animals furnished with younger teeth and horns do to death those older and weaker than themselves. "The American scholarly scene is one of frenetic decadence with the publication of vast numbers of articles and books which fewer and fewer people read. Most scholars no longer address the lived experience of actual people in the churches or society. Instead they address the current questions of their peers in the professional guild."[4] So why, if theology is so important to the church, are so many pastors and laity bored by it? The answer is simple: Because so much of what has been passing for theology does not draw its life from the Gospel and is therefore utterly incapable of transforming lives or teaching and leading the church.

"Doctrine is life," goes the old Norwegian saying. Only the preacher who is rooted, not buried, in the church's constitutive principles, its theology, will be free to address the concerns of living people. A good preacher, like a good theologian, must take chances. Many schooled in Bonhoeffer and Tillich would agree that the preacher must live on the boundary — but on the boundary of what, between what two spheres of existence? The preacher can strike out into new worlds of thought only if there is a base to which the expedition might return. Then preaching, because it is rooted in those truths which touch humankind at its deepest levels (creation, identity, love, fulfillment, sin,



hope, peace, forgiveness), becomes relevant without losing its soul. By this I do not mean to urge upon preachers a *defensor fidei* complex or a self-conscious embrace of the latest movement, even when that movement may be a return to orthodoxy. The monk who knows he is praying is not praying. The preacher who is convinced of his doctrinal soundness is not doctrinally sound.[5] But one who accepts the doctrines of the church for their truth-value rather than their use-value, thereby returning them their objective and proclamatory nature, may also be taking the first steps toward regaining the ever-elusive *relevance* of preaching.

What Theology Does For Preaching

By theology I mean systematic theology. It strides beyond the arrangement of biblical themes and motifs but stops short of symbolics. Systematic theology includes the church's *dogmata* but, in its dialectical relationship to the world, surpasses dogmatics. It is the most inclusive and all-encompassing of the categories named, but it never represents a closed system or an artifice into which students, like so many mountain climbers or spelunkers, may pick and chip. Systematic theology's openness to the world corresponds with preaching's worldly concerns, yet both arise only from the Gospel and both persist only through the sponsorship of the Church. Their relationship poses questions that must be answered.[6]

Gerhard Ebeling insists: "Theology is necessary in order to make preaching as hard for the preacher as it has to be."[7] Theology monitors the church's proclamation of the Gospel. Indeed, theology only has a job to do because of the nature and task of preaching. If preaching did nothing more than restate the ideas of sacred texts, theology would have nothing to do, and the text-to-sermon manual would speak the final word to preachers. But preachers are charged with proclaiming the *Gospel in* texts, *by means of* texts and *in faithfulness to* texts.

Many theologians have recognized theology's function as mediator between exegesis and preaching. Karl Barth calls theology the church's "self-test" by

[3] *Positive Preaching and Modern Mind,* New York: Armstrong, 1907, p. 200.

[4] Walter Wink, "How I Have Been Snagged by the Seat of My Pants While Reading the Bible," *The Christian Century* (September 24, 1975), 816. Warnings against academic theology severed from pastoral concerns have appeared in sources as diverse as Thomas C. Oden, *Agenda for Theology,* San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979, pp. 22-26, 74-78; E.L. Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel of Christ,* London: SPCK, 1977, pp. 15-16; Henry Mitchell, *The Recovery of Preaching,* New York: Harper & Row, 1977, pp. 6-7.

[5] Robert Browne, *The Ministry of the Word,* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976, p. 34.

[6] I am indebted to the spirit of Paul Tillich's "Introduction" to his *Systematic Theology,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, vol. I, 1951, pp. 28-68.

[7] *Word and Faith,* p. 424.

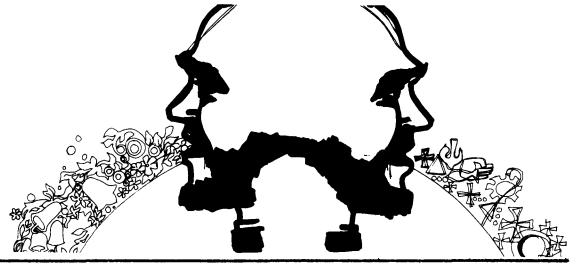
which it measures its language and life. As a reflection on proclamation, theology, as well as the preaching it guides, is judged by a single criterion: its obedience to grace.[8] In the work of Barth's successor, Heinrich Ott, the association of preaching and theology comes closest to absolute identification:

> Dogmatics then may not desire to be anything other than a kind of norm for preaching. As such it may not attempt to change itself into something radically different. In accordance with its essential task, aim and churchly function, it must itself in a certain sense exercise a preaching office. . . . thus dogmatics for its part can only preach, address, persuade. Dogmatics is a preaching to preachers, a pastoral charge of those who find themselves in the difficult, extreme, readily assailable position of having themselves to proclaim the Word of God.[9]

Gerhard Ebeling also assigns a mediatorial position to theology but is more successful than Ott in clarifying the almost exclusive use of theology *for* preaching while maintaining the distinction between the two theological disciplines. Where Ott tends to say "Preaching is theology" *and* "Theology is preaching," Ebeling agrees only to the former while qualifying the latter sentence with these words: "Theology constitutes a science, proclamation constitutes the church."[10] Here preaching, as oral, proclamatory, and existential, radically differentiates itself from reflective theology and defines itself as an event which *happens.*

Theology makes preaching "hard," in Ebeling's word, by driving the preacher back to the core of Christian doctrine. The church has one doctrine, the *doctrina evangelii,* to which other articles are organically joined. Without quibbling over its mandatory and optional elements, we may say that this Gospel always speaks in the indicative mood and offers all that God has done in the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. A theology is made evangelical, said P. T. Forsyth, not by its conclusions but by its principles and measure in which it does justice to the one creative principle of grace.[11] Theology requires the preacher to relate all the articles of the broader Gospel (creation, fall, providence, sanctification, church, eschatology) and all the texts of Scripture to this constitutive core of the Christian faith. This is "hard" because other doctrines, inorganic and unrelated to the Gospel, have elbowed their way into the company of *the* doctrine. In addition to these theological options and opinions the preacher is confronted with ideologies, sentiments and other cultural clutter which all but demand equal time in the pulpit. Theology unceremoniously dumps these and prepares the preacher for more serious and constructive work.

As long as the preacher believes that it



is possible to move directly from text to sermon, the sermon will be awash with unassimilated and unordered Biblical assertions. For the preacher as theologian must discover how, in the words of Philip Melanchthon, "the Gospel opens the door to a correct understanding of the whole Bible."[12] I am not issuing a license for the preacher to ride roughshod over the particularity of texts nor to dogmatize the Bible. I am inviting preachers to understand our task as broader and more demanding than the serial restatement of a pericope's religious ideas. Preaching will ask, "Why, in the context of Scripture, the church's teaching, and the contemporary situation, does this word need to be heard?" Further, it will seek to order the ideas of the text (many of the standard pericopes are a riot of diversified Gospel affirmations) in a way that makes theological sense. How *does* one map a way through providence, election, predestination, justification and resurrection in Romans 8:28-30? What is the relationship between ethics, worship and the humiliation/exaltation of Jesus in Philippians 2:1-11? What can we say of the church in light of Peter's confession in Matthew 16? What does the "veil" of 2 Corinthians 3:13 say about the relationship of the Old and New Testaments? Finally, preaching asks, "How does this text relate to the core of the faith? How does it cohere?" Thus Luther pressed texts, sometimes demanding more than they had to give, that they might *necessitate* Christ.

Practically speaking, this means standing on the publican's side of the temple, lying on the paralytic's mat, being among those taught in the temple — even if the teacher is only a twelve-year old. The preacher who relates everything to the center is exercising the theological and biblical disciplines, certainly, but also the personal. For the preacher is claiming an identity as a baptized member of the community of faith. Such a preacher also takes seriously the needs of the members of the congregation, who have built into their spiritual sensibilities, as a kind of law, the yearning to hear that which necessitates Christ.

Another way theology calls the church back to the Gospel is by telling preachers what the Gospel is not. It is not law. Theology helps the preacher to discard subchristian ideas and to relate Christian

[8] *Church Dogmatics,* I, 1, trans. G.T. Thomson, New York: Scribner's, 1936, pp. 2-3, 56.

[9] *Theology and Preaching,* trans. Harold Knight, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961, p. 23.

[10] *Theology and Proclamation,* trans. John Riches, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966, p. 20.

[11] *Positive Preaching and Modern Mind,* p. 205.

[12] *Apology of the Augsburg Confession,* IV, 2-3. The tension between the particularity of texts and the unity of a dogmatic principle is explored by Hermann Diem, "Der Theologe zwischen Text und Predigt," *Aufgabe der Predigt,* ed. Gert Hummel, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971, pp. 281-282.

ones to their source. It also identifies the Biblical and experiential reality known as law. The preacher's theological task is to distinguish law from promise, not to effect a separation of the two, but to restore their original, Scriptural relationship so that the law may be allowed its intended function — and no more. Paul sets its limits succinctly: "is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not; for if a law had been given which could make alive, then righteousness would indeed be by the law." (Gal. 3:21) It is the proper restoration of this law/gospel dynamic which, more than any other factor, will renew preaching and enrich its pastoral significance.

In the intersection of law and Gospel the hearer is confronted with issues of death and life which transform the sermon into a moment of meaning. It is here at this mathematical point that the sermon takes on eschatological importance. That most sermons do not seem eschatologically important, or even important, is due less to the bullying, hell-and-damnation preaching of judgment than it is to the bully's sneaky little brother: moralism. The theology that lives by the Gospel will never let the preacher set goals for the congregation without also offering the means, the resources, for their attainment. It will never confuse exhortations to faith with faith, Christ-like examples with the living Christ, Jesus the model with Jesus the prototype,[13] or Gospel imperatives with the Gospel indicative. Theology helps preaching keep its grammar straight! It will never preach the Christian virtues without Christ at the core, the center, and when the congregation asks, "To whom shall we turn to become such people?" it will not offer "Jesus Man of Genius" or "The Greatest Possibility Thinker That (sic) Ever Lived."

Moralism, as I said, is sneaky because it associates itself so closely with the truth, even biblical truth. Its chief hermeneutical assumption is an homogenized Bible in which all texts are equally important to the spiritual health of the reader. The Bible becomes a kind of Yellow Pages or religious almanac whose interminable lists of duties and consolations are not infrequently found pasted in Gideon Bibles. To what end? To the end that all bases be covered and every conceivable human dilemma, from acedia to zestlessness, be solved by a perfectly clear scriptural directive. Its aim is not security in Christ but security from Christ and his terrible freedom. Whenever the preacher is tempted to absorb law into Gospel, or preach reliance on something other than God's indicative work, the Lord himself exposes this "other's" ghastly consequences: death in the safe arms of the law.

Implicit in the preacher's task of relating texts to the Gospel and of distinguishing promise from the law is theology's dialogue with the world of the listener. In all stages of sermon preparation and delivery the preacher is probing the mind and milieu of the listener. By



analyzing the situation "out there" the minister is not indulging in culture criticism for its own sake, but is testing the appropriateness and the intelligibility of the Gospel. Not that there is another Gospel, but the core embodies many shapes. Nor do I mean to imply that the preacher can ever set the relationship of culture and church into an easy law/gospel, them/us dialectic, as though one could preach to the cultured despiser in the world without addressing the cultured despiser who lives in me and in the "best" members of my congregation. Theological analysis helps the preacher discover to what extent the "out there" dwells "in here," in preacher and congregation, and colors our perception and expression of the Gospel. Tillich's statement of the relationship between culture and Gospel is by no means that of a simple question and answer. In fact, his formula is frustratingly circular:

> Symbolically speaking, God answers man's questions, and under the impact of God's answers man asks them. Theology formulates the question implied in human existence, and theology formulates the answers implied in divine self-manifestation under the guidance of the questions implied in human existence.[14]

For Tillich theological analysis of culture serves a more integrative role than that of a *preparatio evangelii.* Yet in Tillich theology does not quite preach, for it lacks adequate distance from its audience. In this same vein Ernst Fuchs admonishes: theology does not preach; it prepares for preaching. His warning, it seems to me, applies more to existential philosophy than to theology, but its concern is clear. We must establish a theologically sound preunderstanding of the listener's world before we can preach in it, to it, or against it.[15]

When one analyzes culture in theological terms an old question of sermon-mechanics loses its urgency: Where shall the preacher begin? With the contemporary here-and-now? Or the Biblical then-and-there? When preaching begins with the contemporary situation, it views it through the lens of the eternal Gospel. It is never data or commentary unrelated to the center. When it begins with the Biblical situation, it never offers it as exegetical "background" (as though, in Fosdick's famous quip, people really come to church with a burning interest in the Jebusites), but rather always associates the Biblical situation with contemporary needs. Thus the responsible preacher cannot utilize the religious background of the Athenians, to cite an example in Acts, without speaking of the current manifestations of humankind's

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[13] Helmut Thielicke's distinction in *The Evangelical Faith,* vol. II, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, p. 195.

[14] *Systematic Theology,* I, p. 61.

[15] *Hermeneutik,* Bad Cannstatt: Müllerschön, 1958, p. 99. Cf. Ott, p. 20.

abiding lust for religion. When the preacher projects all history and experience through the eternal prism, the preacher, no, the infinite relevance of the Gospel itself, bridges the distance between the then-and-there and the here-and-now.

What Preaching Does for Theology

To invert Ebeling's good sentence: Preaching is necessary in order to make theology as hard for the theologian as it has to be. Preaching turns theology back to its center, which is the Gospel, and insists upon a Gospel-based budgeting of its resources. Preaching requisitions Christ from theology. It demands formulations which necessitate the cross.

When theology moves toward synthesis with its dialogue partners of other disciplines, preaching recalls for it its character as *theo*-logy, reflection on God. When theology becomes preoccupied with the symmetry of its own system, preaching reminds it of the catastrophic core of judgment and grace which called theology into being. When theology loses interest in the Scripture, preaching continues to wrestle with the word — week-in, week-out. When theology becomes bogged down in words, the preached word continues to witness, in words, to an historical event. When theology looks with pessimism upon the vastness of the hermeneutical arch and the apparent impossibility of genuine understanding, preaching comforts it with the Gospel that creates its own understandings and makes ready its own way. When theology produces unpreachable, that is, non-evangelical words about God, preaching marks them *REFUSED,* and the church momentarily pauses, examines itself and corrects its course.

Preaching is the first and final expression of theology.

It is the first in the sense that the Christian movement was born in preaching. Certainly, the first preaching we encounter and indeed the *only* preaching we will ever encounter is theological. What is the nature of this original theology of the New Testament? Preaching gives a clue. In preaching theology recovers three elements it had at its origin: its kerygmatic impulse, its oral nature, and its character as worship.

The New Testament record has proved to be a proclamation, an anthology of preaching. The Gospel "memoirs," as Justin Martyr called them, strangely omitted the very elements we find indispensible in biography. They contain nothing of Jesus' physical appearance, his early life, schooling, formative influences and vocational decisions. The New Testament says little about his relationship with his parents, less about his siblings, and absolutely nothing about his attitude toward his own sexuality. Nor are we ever made privy to Jesus' thinking. We should have liked four *zoe*graphies, records of his spiritual



development. Instead we are given an exteriorized "narrative of the things which have been accomplished" (Luke 1:1) whose organizing principle is the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ. The New Testament reads as a sermon whose *scopus,* to use a homiletic word, is the Gospel. This is to say the primitive church filtered every datum about Jesus through the experience of resurrection, giving to its literary documents an arrow-like nisus toward death and new life. Hence the forward-looking quality of the Gospel of Mark, for example, actually represents a reading *back* of all the Jesus stories in light of the transforming event of resurrection. This critical rediscovery, made by men who doubted the historical basis of much of the New Testament, has — ironically — provided a key for unlocking the meaning of the New Testament.

What is axiomatic to the Gospels applies also to the epistles and the primary source for our study of the primitive preaching, the book of Acts. Acts presents an outline of Christian preaching. Its distillation of the kerygma has been the subject of scholarly argument since the work of C.H. Dodd appeared in the 1930's. Without becoming embroiled in the debate, we can say that in the book of Acts preaching incorporates assertions about the person, work and future of Jesus, amounting to a theology of Jesus, all of which revolve around the core proclamation of his death and resurrection. Thus we do not ask the pointless question, "Did preaching give rise to theology, or theology to preaching?" for at their source, they were one. At its source preaching was theological and theology was proclamatory.

Theology soon lost its kerygmatic character, as did preaching, and the church endured, indeed sponsored, seasons and seasons of aridity. Church reform invariably meant a return to the Gospel and, as the late Archbishop Brilioth pointed out, every refom movement followed a vanguard of great preaching. To the examples of the Waldenses, Franciscans, Dominicans, Lollards, Bohemian Brethren, Lutherans, Scottish Presbyterians and Methodists, we might add the image of Martin Luther King and his associates marching in the streets, but also preaching from the pulpits of hundreds of churches throughout the South. In our era those theological movements which have sought to recapture the essence of the addressed promise of God, the Gospel, have sprung from a concern for preaching. We need mention only the schools of Barth and Bultmann, represented in this essay by Ott and Ebeling.

But how mischievous to offer preaching as a solution for unkerygmatic theology when preaching is such a well-documented part of the problem! When I suggest that preaching can do something *for* theology, by preaching I do not mean the academic discipline but preaching as the sum total of speakers, listeners and settings throughout the

church, that is, preaching as the ceaseless activity of the church. *That* preaching, by virtue of its name (*euangelizo, kerysso, martyreo*), its original character, and its immediate answerability to the needs of the church, cannot stray as far from the Gospel as academic theology. Preaching's detours and experiments are too costly and their results, in the lives of people, too devastating to tolerate. Thus parish preaching, often unreflectingly and even unwillingly, serves as a guide and corrective for theology.

The second element of its original nature which theology recovers in preaching is its orality. The original proclamatory theology of the church was oral-aural. Our New Testament is a record of oral discourse. Even Paul's epistles bear a none-too-submerged oral quality in their concern to preserve his preached Gospel.[16] And, as Jesus proved, one need not write to be a theologian. Perhaps no one understood the oral nature of the Christian message better than Luther, who somewhere claims that the Gospel "should not be written but screamed" and promulgated a confessional definition of the Gospel which totally bypassed its written character.[17] He held that "it is not at all in keeping with the New Testament to write books on Christian doctrine." Of the apostles he said, "Before they wrote, they first of all preached to the people by word of mouth and converted them, and this was their real apostolic and New Testament work. . . . However, the need to write books was a serious decline and a lack of the Spirit which necessity forced upon us; it is not the real manner of the New Testament."

Surely before preaching reminds theology of its oral possibilities, it needs to set its own house in order. So debased is preaching as an oral event that manuscripts are called sermons, and in some places seminarians are taught to preach by reading their manuscripts. And what we know of the gifted preachers we too often discover via the non-preached word of printed collections of the year's "best" sermons, usually selected according to non-oral, non-homiletical criteria such as academic respectability, poeticality of expression or ecclesiastical reputation. As if the loss of authentic orality — by means of literary manuscript preaching, slide shows, liturgists in leotards and other events — were not bad enough, now many churches are distributing printed copies of the Scriptural lessons for the day, so that when the lector says, "Hear the Word of God," the congregation in a single movement buries its nose in the bulletin. So much more could be said about the oral-aural nature of preaching. But our subject is the oral nature of theology.

I do not suggest that theology try to get along without its books, but I do wish for theology to recognize and appreciate its recessed oral-aural nature which is exercised in the event of preaching and almost nowhere else. Debates and disputations, so long an anvil for

hammering out theological positions, have all but disappeared from the scene, and in America even theology by conversation seems endangered. In Europe the traditional public defense of the doctoral thesis occasions only a gathering of appointed interlocutors with perhaps a relative or two, while in America the "oral" either covers a limited and previously defined set of questions or confirms, as a formality, the examiners' attitude toward the written thesis. Among church judicatories, the post-seminary interviews in which the candidate gives expression to his or her theological position had long been characterized by the rigor of a fraternity (or sorority) initiation — at least until the oversupply of clergy became significant. All of this is to say that, aside from the classroom — a huge exception to be sure — theology has not valued and cultivated its oral nature.

The third contribution preaching makes to theology has to do with the context of worship in which theology originally arose. If the church's original theology was, in large measure, *heard* in events of proclamation, instruction, and worship, may not preaching help theology overcome its objectification into written formulas and books? Concerning the legalese of the Nicaean articles, for example, Frederick Crowe writes, "This is not the language of prayer . . . .Much less is it the joyful proclamation of the good news."[19] Once upon a time theology too was carried out in the spirit of worship. Theologians such as Augustine and Anselm, as well as many theologians of the Eastern tradition, offered their labors to God as sacrifices of adoration; Barth's post-war lectures at Bonn began at 7 A.M. with the singing of a psalm. In the ecclesiastical Latin of the fourth century, *praedicare* means "to praise," "to celebrate."[20] Perhaps preaching, which has retained its place in the context of worship, might communicate this dimension to systematic theology. An intriguing first step has been taken by Geoffrey Wainwright whose recently published *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life* (Oxford University Press) is the only full-blown systematic theology constructed on the basis of the church's liturgical life. We need to be alert to signals here being received that theology is shifting on its foundation of doctrinal propositions and philosophical, psychological, political and biological supports and beginning to seek a footing in the church's own activity of preaching and worship.

Preaching as Theology

Preaching is the final expression of theology. It has been toward preaching that theology has been tending. After the exegete has told us what the text once meant, and the systematician has told us what the text means in its historical, doctrinal and philosophical setting, the preacher, to borrow Ebeling's phrase, executes the text by helping it to speak to a particular time, situation, and people. The majority of Christians encounter theology only in this its final form, preaching.

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[16] Amos N. Wilder, *The Language of the Gospel*, New York: Harper & Row, 1964, p. 39.

[17] *The Smalcald Articles*, Part III, Art. IV.

[18] From the *Church Postil*, "The Gospel for the Festival of the Epiphany," trans. S.P. Hebart, *Luther's Works*, vol. 52, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974, p. 206.

[19] Frederick E. Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word*, New York: Paulist, 1978, p. 53.

[20] Domenico Grasso, *Proclaiming God's Message*, South Bend: Notre Dame, 1965, p. 244.

If theology is, in Ott's words, "the reflective function of preaching itself," then preaching might be termed the *projective* function of theology itself. But how to make such an assertion without robbing the two disciplines of their unique character? E.L. Mascall has sternly warned against "the kind of philistinism which would reduce theology to homiletics and would repudiate any interest in scholarly questions as 'wisdom according to the flesh.' " He adds, "The relevance of a piece of research to the work of man's salvation may be remote and yet real."[21] While never accepting any stereotype of theology as an ivory-tower discipline, we might say that preaching engages the apparently remote, assimilates and internalizes it, and finally makes it real and near.

The movement to theological proclamation results in a two-fold confluence: in the preacher and in the sermon. In the preacher it means the end of "memo theology" carried on by means of occasional contacts between members of the several departments in the university or divisions within the theological faculty. The preacher *is* the exegete, systematician, dogmatician, historian and pastor. The preacher becomes the embodiment of Schleiermacher's ideal theologian described in *Brief Outline of the Study of Theology.*[22]

The ministry of this ideal individual integrates all the theological disciplines. For preachers it means that every aspect of preaching is theological; not only the restatement of Scriptural words and themes but the style with which they are restated; not only the words but the posture and the sense of congruence between person and word; not only the message but also the programs and pastoral action by which the message is implemented. A boring sermon, an unimplemented sermon, an orthodox but disincarnate sermon are all theological statements.

Here we come to the confluence of disciplines in the sermon. Into the sermon pour exegesis, Biblical theology, systematics, dogmatics, symbolics, apologetics, history, comparative religion, practical theology, liturgy, the wisdom of the non-theological disciplines, the experience and personality of the minister. Whenever the exegetical, systematic or historical disciplines obtrude and become too visible, the sermon is in danger of losing its unique character as an estuary, and the preacher must begin anew. For the sermon, as the projective function of theology, contains all but only *in nuce.* It is a fragment, a nuance of the whole, yet containing the whole. Tillich writes, "A fragment is an implicit system; a system is an explicit fragment."[23] As fragments, sermons are no less rigorously designed than systems, but sermon structures differ according to the existential purpose of preaching and its fluid, fleeting mode of presentation. Systems tell the way things are; sermons tell what they might become. For these among other reasons we still speak of the "mystery of preaching" but seldom of "the mystery of theology."

If the desired integration is to take place in theology, it may begin with the recognition of the legitimacy of preaching as a theological discipline. Preaching will be understood not only as the last point on the theological continuum but also as a moment of convergence in which all that we are about in theology comes to expression.

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[21] *Theology and the Gospel of Christ,* p. 24.

[22] *Brief Outline of the Study of Theology,* trans. William Farrer, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1850, reprinted by The American Theological Library Association, Lexington, Kentucky, 1963, p. 97.

[23] *Systematic Theology, I, p. 58.*

A Book Worth Discussing: Daniel and Aline Patte. *Structural Exegesis: From Theory to Practice.**

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Like Mount Everest, structuralism will be explored, indeed, *should* be explored, simply because "it's there." But not everyone is a Sir Edmund Hillary, who can afford the luxury and thrill of conquering new challenges. There are only so many hours in a day and more than a few people will simply decide it is not worth their time to attempt scaling the intellectual and semantic summits like this half-paragraph from the Pattes' book:

> Thus, the system formed by the states of a narrative's symbolic system may be thought of as a series of semiotic squares whose terms are the states of mythemes (and no longer those of macro-mythemes); it is the symbolic manifestation of what Greimas terms the "idiolectic semantic universe." These squares are homologable with one another and therefore homologable with a "fundamental" semiotic square, which also belongs to the mythical system in that its terms are also states of macro-mythemes. (p. 22)

Is this sample so opaque simply because most of us are unfamiliar with its technical terms? Or is it difficult because it is profound? Or is it an example of an intellectual hype; sloppy scholarship covered up by gobbledygook prose, an over-grown mole-hill rather than a Mount Everest? And, most important, does structuralism offer the church any new tools for grasping the Word?

A Rationale for Structuralism

Structuralism is a far-flung, interdisciplinary method of analysis employing the tools of linguistics to understand texts and other cultural artifacts. Since the time of the Enlightenment, mainstream biblical criticism has used the tools of historical analysis to understand a text. Structuralism involves a shifting of perspective; viewing a familiar object from a new, linguistic angle.

Linguistics is, simply, the science of language. While we may be unfamiliar with linguistic theory, there is one branch of linguistics familiar to anyone who has ever gone to school: grammar (or, to use the linguistic term, syntax). Syntax is the set of rules which governs how words are put together into meaningful sentences. *Language always operates by rules,* whether or not those rules are consciously recognized. A person can learn a language by learning the *rules* (the way I learned Latin in high school). But language can also be acquired simply by learning how to operate within the *structure* of syntax; all of us used syntactical rules from the time we first began to speak (long before we knew any of the rules). Syntax attempts to describe scien-

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* *Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978. x and 134 pages. Cloth. $8.95.*

tifically one set of rules by which language functions. Morphology and phonetics are other sets of rules.

Classical linguistics has operated with levels of language as large as and smaller than the sentence. Recently, however, linguists have asked, "Do rules exist which govern larger levels of language? Can one, for example, find rules which describe the 'grammar' of a story?" Such questions are one source of modern structuralism.

The Pattes' book is an attempt to combine two areas of this new level of linguistic study into a general theory of narrative and a corresponding exegetical method by which to analyze a narrative text. To understand this synthesis it is first necessary to become familiar with these two examples of current structuralism.[1]

A.J. Greimas and the Study of Narratives

Several scholars have attempted a linguistic analysis of narrative. Pioneering work was done by the Russian scholar Vladimir Propp, who analyzed a large number of Russian fairy tales and a great body of Russian folk lore. Propp was able to describe a set of rules by which these stories operate. The French structuralist Algirdas Julien Greimas expanded Propp's work to suggest a linguistic theory to describe the structure of any narrative text.[2]

Greimas proposes that there are six interacting elements present within a narrative:

1) Sequence. Every story operates out of a narrative program which includes at least three sequences; to be a story, it must have a beginning and an end, and at least one thing must happen in the middle.

2) Functions. These are the "verbs" of the story which describe what happens.

3) Actants. These are the "nouns" of the story; the characters, props and other "things" which act, are acted upon, or help to move the action of the story.

4) Actantial model. Greimas was able to identify six different types of actants and how they relate to each other; they are organized along three axes. (see Figure 1. Using Patte's convention, we will capitalize all actants.) On the *axis of communication,* a SENDER communicates or transfers an OBJECT to a RECEIVER. Often, the SENDER needs to be inferred from the story (much in the same way a subject needs to be inferred in an imperative sentence). On the *axis of power,* a SUBJECT is aided by a HELPER, while an OPPONENT acts as an opposing force. The *axis of volition* is, in my opinion, the most difficult to understand. Here a SUBJECT (which is differentiated from a SENDER) wills the communication of the OBJECT to the RECEIVER. At times the SUBJECT and SENDER are identical, but even then their *actantial* identities need to be distinguished. Perhaps the best way to understand the actantial model is to see an example.

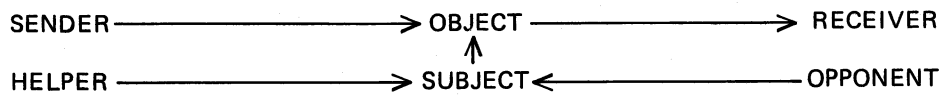


Figure 1

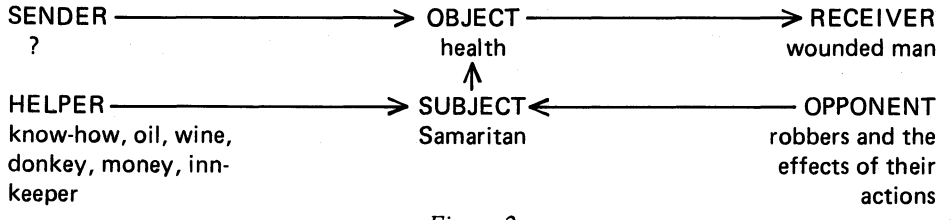


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows Daniel Patte's analysis of the topical sequence (the center section) of the parable of the Good Samaritan.[3] Please note that not every actantial position can be known (for example, in this case, the SENDER), nor is every actant specifically named by a word in the narrative text (in our case, the OBJECT, "health"; or the HELPER, "know-how", that is, the knowledge the Samaritan had of how to help a wounded man).

5) Statement. This is the combination of actants ("nouns") and functions ("verbs") into the most basic actions of the story.

6) Syntagm. In the same way that the narrative can be divided into three or more sequences, so each sequence is made up of three syntagms, each syntagm being a chain of statements. The first syntagm is called a *contract syntagm,* in which a contract is mandated. The second is called a *disjunction/conjunction syntagm,* in which the contract is carried out. The final syntagm, the *performance syntagm,* describes the completion of the contract. Again, an example is helpful.

> In the topical [middle] sequence in which the Samaritan is present these three syntagms are concisely actualized. The contract syntagm is manifested in the words "when he saw him, he had compassion" (Luke 10:33). Seeing the wounded man the Samaritan felt he was called (mandated) to do something. His acceptance of this contract is expressed in the statement "he had compassion." The disjunction/conjunction syntagm is manifested in the words "and he went to him." In order to fulfill the contract which he had accepted he must approach the wounded man [become disjunct from his initial status and conjunct with a new status as one who aids a wounded man]. The rest of the Samaritan's actions manifests the performance syntagm: this is the Samaritan's performance of his contract.[4]

Greimas' narrative structuralism may seem somewhat arbitrary and artificial. Again, however, a comparison with grammar may be helpful. It is obvious that a dog and a cannon have little in

[1] These two areas are covered in an earlier book by Daniel Patte, *What Is Structural Exegesis?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976). The Pattes presuppose familiarity with this volume in the book under review.

[2] For a more thorough presentation on Greimas see Jean Calloud, *Structural Analysis of Narrative* (Philadelphia and Missoula, Montana: Fortress and Scholars Press, 1976).

[3] *What Is Structural Exegesis?,* p. 43.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 40.

common, yet the words "dog" and "cannon" are grammatically equivalent as nouns. Likewise, two sentences (for example, "The cannon fired a shot" and "This dog could bite a man") may speak of two entirely different things and yet be syntactically equivalent (their sentence diagrams are identical). The linguistic categories of "noun" and "subject" are two levels of abstraction that can be made after viewing many words and many kinds of sentences. The actantial position SENDER is another linguistic abstraction on still another level. The word "cannon" could be a manifestation of all three levels: it is a noun, it is the subject of the sentence quoted above, and it is the SENDER in the actantial model for that statement. Greimas' narrative structuralism permits a structural comparison of widely differing kinds of stories, much the same way that syntactical analysis can compare sentences whose meanings are vastly different.

Levi-Strauss and Mythical Structuralism

The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss recognized that linguistics offered a system of analysis for cultural phenomena other than language. By applying linguistic methods to anthropology, Levi-Strauss encouraged a wide variety of interdisciplinary investigations using semiology or the study of signs as the analytical paradigm. This interdisciplinary study is structuralism in its widest meaning.

The major focus of Levi-Strauss' structuralist analysis has been mythology. Like anthropologists before him, he recognized that a culture's myths communicate a society's systems of belief and values, and that these are communicated without the constraints of logical argument. Traditional hermeneutical methods always emphasized the cultural gaps between a mythological culture and our own scientific understanding. Levi-Strauss understood linguistics as a description of human thought processes that transcend culture and history. Linguistic analysis, then, should free a citizen of the twentieth century West to hear and understand the structure of reality presupposed and expressed by a myth.

Through this method each myth is considered a sign, and the entire mythical system is analyzed as the structure of all the signs together. Levi-Strauss breaks up the mythical system into its constituent elements, which he calls *mythemes.* In the Oedipus myth an example of a mytheme would be "Oedipus kills his brother, Laios" or "Eteocles kills his brother, Polnices." Furthermore, individual mythemes can be grouped together when they share a common link. For example, the two mythemes quoted above are similar because in each a person underrates a blood relationship. These mytheme bundles are called *broad mythemes.* In turn, the broad mythemes are interrelated in ever larger patterns until finally there emerges the sum total of all mythemes, called the *mythical structure.* The mythical structure is one example of a *deep structure.* By this term structuralists designate the transhistorical and transcultural shape of a perceived reality. Deep structures reflect the organizational principles of the human mind and are similar to the concept of archetype in the work of Carl Jung.

The purpose of the mythical structure, says Levi-Strauss, is to mediate pairs of oppositions; some examples of oppositions would be Life-Death, Feast-Famine, Peace-War, Heaven-Earth, God-Man. For example, in Levi-Strauss' analysis of the mythical structure of the

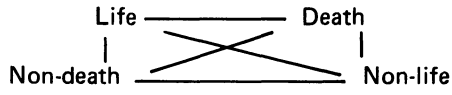


Figure 3

Zuni culture, Life-Death is the primary, irreconcilable opposition. Since there can be no intermediary between these two, the fundamental opposition is replaced by a pair of equivalent terms; the broad mytheme "agriculture" can be substituted for "life" while "warfare" can be used in place of "death." This new opposition creates the possibility of a mediating term, "hunting." Hunting uses warfare (death) for the use of food gathering (agriculture-life). Further mediations are possible by the continued replacement of one or both of the terms in each successive opposition. The entire mythical structure reveals itself to be a series of mediations based upon the primary, irreconcilable opposition: Life-Death.

The Pattes' Synthesis

In his significant volume *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* Thomas S. Kuhn describes the process by which a body of scientific facts is transformed into "normal science" through the development of a paradigm, a conceptual and instrumental framework accepted by the entire scientific community. Before a paradigm is invented, Kuhn notes, each writer is "forced to build his field anew from its foundations" since there is "no standard set of methods or of phenomena" recognized as a common body of assumptions.[5] Such is the case, one could argue, with a great deal of structuralism: there is not yet a consensus on how to apply the theory as a method. In *Structural Exegesis,* Daniel Patte attempts to create a new narrative exegetical method by joining the structuralist systems of Greimas and Levi-Strauss in a new paradigm. Aline Patte applies this method to a study of Mark 15-16, and gives us a concrete example of both how to use the method and what to expect as results.

The possibility for synthesizing these two methods exists by virtue of the fact that mythological systems (studied by Levi-Strauss) are communicated through narratives (studied by Greimas). Patte suggests that the narrative and mythological structures are two levels (among a variety of levels) manifested in a given text. His goal is to find a way to project elements of the narrative level onto the mythological level and so discover the presuppositions ("semantic universe") which operate through the text. To accomplish this projection Patte borrows an analytical device from Greimas: the *semiotic square.* A semiotic square relates four elements in three relations (see Figure 3). The *relation of contrariety* manifests basic oppositions: life vs. death, non-death vs. non-life. The *relation of contradiction* manifests another pair of oppositions: life vs. non-life, death vs. non-death. And the *relation of implication* is manifested in the final set

[5] (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press), p. 13.

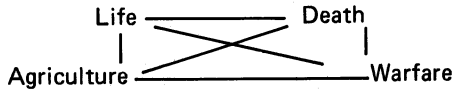


Figure 4

of pairs: life and non-death, death and non-life.

In the semiotic square, Patte saw a potential link with the concept of mediated broad mythemes in the work of Levi-Strauss. (In *Structural Exegesis,* Patte calls broad mythemes "macro-mythemes.") Figure 4 illustrates how a semiotic square would picture the mediation of macro-mythemes from the Zuni myth. The heart of *Structural Exegesis* is Daniel Patte's exercise in linguistic theory which uses the semiotic square first as a way to transform narrative structures into mythological structures and then to analyze the semantic universe (the presuppositions about reality which are held by the author and which operate within the text) which the text manifests.

Patte then applies this linguistic theory to a description of an exegetical method by which an exegete can perform operations upon a narrative text to uncover the semantic universe presupposed by the text. A complete understanding of the method depends upon a close reading of Daniel Patte's argument together with the example of its use provided by Aline Patte's exegesis of Mark 15-16. However, a brief thumbnail sketch might give the reader some idea of how the method works.

First, the text is read in order to untangle three types of narrative strands that together form a complex narrative. There is one *main narrative,* the central story which steadily moves toward the ultimate program (goal). There may be one or more *interpretive levels,* sections of the narrative text which branch off the main narrative and which do not advance the main narrative's progression. Finally, there may be one or more *parallel narratives,* sections of the text recognized by discontinuities in the text at the beginning and end of each parallel narrative; parallel narratives also do nothing to advance the main narrative's progression.

The same set of operations is performed first on the main narrative and the interpretive levels (analyzed together and called the primary level of the text) and then on each of the parallel narratives. Each narrative strand can be deconstructed into a *principal axis* (which is identified by those sections of the strand which contain actantial HELPERS) and a *polemical axis* (identified by actantial OPPONENTS). By performing this operation, the exegete begins to identify the mythological oppositions within the text. By comparing the programs of the principal axis with programs of the polemical axis, the exegete can establish a system of *pertinent transformations,* which are then used to establish a series of semiotic squares. The Pattes' method yields one set of semiotic squares for the main narrative, another set for each of the interpretive levels, and another set for each parallel narrative. Each semiotic square is studied in order to discover the semantic universe presupposed by the text.

Some Results from an Exegesis

The linguistic reasoning of Daniel Patte is both ingenious and intricate. For most of us, however, it is only as good as the fruits which his methodological tree will bear. Happily, Aline Patte not only provides us with a demonstration of the method which makes it comprehensible, but also shows us an example of what structural exegesis might produce. A basic goal of the Pattes is that "by employing this method we should be able to describe the system of convictions presupposed by the text with such rigor that two exegetes working independently of each other should reach similar conclusions" (page 11). In other words, the results of Aline Patte's exegesis should be typical of what any structural exegete would understand from the text of Mark 15-16.

As we study the seven semiotic squares generated from the main narrative we see an increasingly clear picture of the oppositions operative within this text. What begins as a contrast between the silence and isolation of Jesus vs. the roar of an angry crowd soon reveals itself as Jesus' voluntary powerlessness in contrast to the world's power. Furthermore, this voluntary powerlessness is shown to be a *positive* value, an expression of the kingdom of God. This stands in bold contrast to the world's value system, where powerlessness is seen as something negative and undesirable. And yet, even though the values of the kingdom stand opposed to the world's values, the kingdom's system includes a positive assessment of the secular and of political and religious authority.[6]

Patte identifies three interpretive levels in the text, and she next turns her attention to each level's set of semiotic squares. Interpretive Level III, dealing with Jesus' cry of abandonment on the cross, shows that Jesus, as the crucified one who is no longer in relation with God, is at the same time in relation with God through his prayer. Jesus is thus "the mediation between God and man." This is what the centurion's confession of Jesus as "Son of God" recognizes; the centurion had found the link he needed to be in relation with God.

Interpretive Level II deals with the comments of those gathered around the cross (their interpretation of the event). The first semiotic square deals with the contrast between being for others and being for oneself. Comments Patte:

> The Passion according to Mark presupposes that there is no possible compromise between "being for others" and "being for oneself." If a compromise had been possible, there would not have been a Passion. Jesus would not have used for himself the power that he had manifested when saving others. These values presupposed by the Passion have been emphasized and proclaimed on many occasions without ceasing to be felt as deeply paradoxical, and to be betrayed in favor of various types of compromises. (page 82)

The second square portrays the new social order which is a part of the gospel. The traditional hierarchy is reversed. Those who were at the bottom (gentiles, a Roman centurion, Galileans, women) are now on top, and the mighty (scribes,

[6] These results are interestingly similar to the thinking of Dietrich Bonhoeffer; cf. *Ethics* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), pp. 332-353. In general one may expect this method to be responsive to the inner dynamics of Lutheran theology; there are basic points of contact between the concept of mythological opposition and the use of paradox in Lutheran theology. See Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972).

Pharisees, chief priests) are brought low.

Interpretive Level I, dealing with the resurrection, shows that there are a series of oppositions: the world of the living and the world of the dead, the imminent and the transcendent, that which is present and that which is not present. Jesus' resurrection is legitimately understood only when it is understood from *within* one's current position. We seek the risen Lord not by trying to escape the world nor by trying to make contact with the world of the dead, but as we find that the transcendent has drawn near to us in our world, our society, our time.

In conclusion, Patte notes that the findings of structural exegesis are in agreement with some conclusions from traditional exegesis. A more complete study of the Markan passion narrative would lead one into dialogue with historical critics.

Legitimate Hermeneutic

The fruits of Aline Patte's exegetical study are good — as good, in my opinion, as anything anyone has offered on Mark. But the best which the Pattes have to offer comes in the last chapter, where Daniel Patte takes up a discussion of the "Conditions for a Legitimate Hermeneutic."

Structuralism seeks to discover various kinds of *constraints* which are at work in a text. Constraints operate on three levels. The *level of enunciation* deals with constraints of the author's own creativity and style, and his or her intention in addressing a certain message to a specific audience. There is also a *cultural level* in which constraints influence an author and text simply because both exist in a given culture. Historical criticism offers many tools for exegetes to study the constraints at work within a text on both of these levels. The third level is the central focus of structuralism, the *level of deep structures.* These are basic presuppositions about reality which operate within the text. They are religious in nature, whether the text is religious or not; they are the basic belief system, the expression of the author's faith.

Deep structures, with which structuralism is most concerned, are *not* limited by the author's intention, situation or culture. Rather, deep structures reflect the operations of the human mind and the transhistorical, transcultural perceptions of reality presupposed by the text and its author. The goal of structural exegesis, by uncovering these presuppositions (the "semantic universe") is to make possible other discourses which continue and prolong this belief system, not necessarily by adding to the story but by taking up the beliefs and making them one's own, by creating new texts which operate out of the same semantic universe. Patte suggests these prolonged discourses may be the text of an exegetical interpretation, or the life of a disciple claimed by the text, or, we could just as easily assume, a sermon. Validity in interpretation in this method would mean that a legitimate reading of the text has disclosed the proper semantic universe and that the hermeneut has executed a legitimate prolongation of the discourse. So, Patte raises the question, "How do we know if a hermeneutic performed on the text is legitimate?"

The legitimacy of a hermeneutic depends upon a correct analysis of the text type. Patte differentiates two different hermeneutics to be used on two different text types.

A *sacred hermeneutic* prolongs the semantic universe of a *sacred text* by being a further mediation of the oppositions of the text's mythical system. A sacred text, then, can be identified by

comparing the oppositions in the text's main narrative with those in its interpretive levels. In a sacred text the semiotic squares of the main narrative will display oppositions which are closer to the fundamental opposition "life vs. death" (or "God vs. man") than the semiotic squares of the interpretive levels. A sacred text's mythical structure has its most fundamental tensions in the main narrative; these are interpreted within the narrative, and the hermeneut carries out a legitimate hermeneutic by continuing to find new mediations of the fundamental opposition, mediations which prolong the semantic universe of the text.

In a *profane hermeneutic* these relationships are reversed. The *profane text* displays the more fundamental oppositions in its interpretive levels, while the main narrative mediates these and acts as a demonstration of the validity of the interpretation. Likewise, a profane hermeneutic will understand the hermeneut's semantic universe to be primary and will seek to test whether this belief system is reflected in the test under consideration.

The first criterion of legitimacy, then, is to correctly analyze the text as sacred or profane. What about the Markan passion narrative? A review of Aline Patte's exegesis quickly discloses that the most primary opposition (God vs. man) is found on an interpretive level (Level III). This means that the Markan passion is a profane text and that only a profane hermeneutic is legitimate for it. We must realize that the term "profane" is used here in a technical sense; it is not a pejorative term, nor does it mean that this text cannot operate as Scripture. Indeed, the Pattes point out that "a legitimate hermeneutic demands that we as hermeneuts agree to modify our own semantic universes so as to adapt them to the text's universe"; every text, whether sacred or profane, acts as "canon" and determines the hermeneut's work. The text's semantic integrity needs to be respected by hermeneut and hermeneutic.

Patte makes another distinction. A deep value is *not* an idea. It cannot be transmitted through a series of proofs in logical argumentation. A deep value is not manifested by a sign but is communicated through the relations that exist *between* the signs of a given system. A deep value is a religious conviction and to confuse it with a sign is a type of idolatry. Deep values are transmitted indirectly, not through logical proof but as revelation. In ritual, for example, believers reenact the narratives of a mythical system and thus appropriate the semantic universe as the normative, shaping influence of their lives. A similar appropriation of religious conviction happens as the believer enters the text of scripture and subordinates his belief system to the semantic universe of the text, making the narrative of the scripture his own story.

This appropriation takes place differently in a sacred and a profane text. Through a sacred hermeneutic, a believer becomes a disciple by making his life story a variant of the text. An excellent example provided by Patte is the celebration of the Jewish Passover. An example of a textual discourse which prolongs a text would be the succeeding theological discourses which interpret the covenant made at Mount Sinai. The Sinai covenant is seen as the normative text and is interpreted at a first stage through the Haggadah (a retelling of the text). At a second level a further mediation of the mythical system is effected through the halakah of Pharisaic Judaism's ethical discourses. If the passion narrative is told through a sacred text rather than a profane (Patte suggests

that the Matthean passion text may be sacred), a legitimate hermeneutic would imply that the believers stand in continuity with the text by identifying with the various SUBJECTS of the positive axis and retelling the story in their own lives. (Since Mark's narrative is profane, not sacred, this would be an illegitimate hermeneutic of his text.)

A profane text also acts as "canon," and a legitimate hermeneutic must respect it as much as a sacred text. However, the appropriation of the profane text's semantic universe takes place in a different manner. Patte's example of a profane hermeneutic is apocalypticism. In this hermeneutic, the text is not viewed as a final revelation but as a type, a promise that is to be fulfilled in the hermeneut's present. Here the biblical text is used as a key which provides access to the meaning of the present's events. The main focus is on the present, and the text is

> a promise or a type that orients the reader's "gaze" toward a "beyond" of the text — the reader's experience — in which God will eventually be discovered at work. This promise — or type — will be viewed as fulfilled when we as readers discover in our own experience events that can be "retold" in such a way as to manifest the same system of deep values as the text. The hermeneutical discourse is, therefore, in a first stage a "retelling" of the hermeneut's experience. (page 107)

A legitimate hermeneutic of the Markan passion, then, will search for events in the present which exhibit one or a few values from the Markan semantic universe. The entire semantic universe is never manifested in any one contemporary event; at best only a portion is seen. And the events of the hermeneut's present experience will probably already be interpreted in a different way by another semantic universe, that of the culture in which the hermeneut lives. Profane hermeneutic, then, is an invitation to reinterpret present experience by a new system of values presented by the semantic universe of a text. The hermeneut can perform a legitimate hermeneutic another way: by envisioning how a contemporary event might have happened had the event been directed by the semantic universe of the text. By either route the hermeneut uses the text as a key for understanding his or her own experience.

Patte recognizes that profane hermeneutic is easily abused. It is easy to ignore the integrity of the text in favor of one's own present understanding. The reader's "gaze" toward contemporary experience can become an obsession and the text then becomes a pretext for supporting an ideology, a religious belief or a political program of the hermeneut's own choosing. The potential abuses of profane hermeneutic have caused many exegetes to avoid it. Patte argues, however, that this fear of abuse leads the critic to also abuse the text by treating profane texts, like Mark 15-16, as if they were sacred texts, so that Mark's gospel becomes a new law and his semantic universe is considered prescriptive rather than descriptive of the kingdom. Or, afraid of the potential abuses of profane hermeneutic, the exegete defuses the potentially creative power of the profane text by considering every text an archaeological relic which speaks only of the past and says nothing about the present. The Pattes offer their structural exegesis as a potential corrective to such hermeneutical timidity. Structural exegesis offers the hermeneut a means by which to perform a controlled, legitimate exegesis of a profane text.

Conclusions

Is structuralism a significant new method of biblical study or a hopeless confusion of pseudo-intellectual rhetoric? One test would be to return to the original quotation from the first paragraph of this article and see if it makes any more sense now than it did at first.

In evaluating structural exegesis (the field as well as the book), one is certainly struck by the challenges which structuralist prose puts before the reader. It *is* ironic that a method which so consciously deals with the meaning of texts is so difficult to understand. But just what makes this book (and so many structural studies) so opaque? The major obstacle is vocabulary. To be comfortable in structuralism one needs to be conversant in linguistics. Before we become too critical of this private, highly technical vocabulary, let us not forget that Christian theology also uses language in a specific, technical way.

There is, however, a further challenge in structuralism. It is not only linguistic; it is interdisciplinary. Structuralism invites scholars to apply their investigation to many fields of study. And so, we find ourselves confronting mathematical formulae, anthropological theories, analogies to Zuni and Greek mythology. That presupposes an extremely broad base of knowledge. But it is also one of the greatest potentials of this method.

Is it worth the effort? Consider these questions: Is it worth the church's effort to acquire a hermeneutical method which is not complete until it relates the biblical text to the reader's own belief system and life? Is it worth the church's effort to acquire a method which makes possible the reading of a text from another culture and time and which applies it to the present? Is it worth the church's effort to discover a means by which its Scriptures are placed in dialogue with current fields of investigation in science, mathematics and humanities? Is it worth the church's effort to acquire tools which replace our anxious fears that we are no longer relevant with the conviction that the Word stands as Creator of our own self-understanding?[7] Structuralism is more than a pedantic pursuit; it is a significant, although difficult, area for further scholarly reflection in the church.

[7] One of the strengths of structuralism, in my opinion, is its ability to uncover a certain naivete on the part of historical criticism as practiced by Bultmann and his disciples. Bultmann hoped to demythologize ancient texts and so make them intelligible. Structuralism points out that the meaning of the text is not perceived apart from its mythology but *through* it. An exegete can never *demythologize* but, rather, should attempt to *remythologize,* that is, prolong the text's semantic universe into the present. The exegete must guard against a cultural parochialism which unfairly judges certain cultures as "primitive" or "mythological" while naively assuming that one's own cultural ("scientific") worldview is absolute and ultimate.

Book Reviews

GOD'S PEOPLE IN CHRIST: NEW TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHURCH AND JUDAISM. By Daniel J. Harrington. In *Overtures to Biblical Theology.* Edited by Walter Brueggemann and John R. Donahue. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980. xviii and 126 pages. Paper. $6.50.

Overtures to Biblical Theology is rapidly establishing itself as a significant series of biblical studies which address concerns of today's world, ranging from land to sexuality to death to Ralph W. Klein's stimulating book of exile. Daniel Harrington's book is a worthy part of this series, discussing the significance of the church as the people of God.

The readiness with which the modern church assumes the privilege of being the people of God clouds the difficulty of the earthly church's struggle with its self-identity, its relation with the Old Testament people of God, and its relation with contemporary Judaism. On what basis did the New Testament church make the claim to be the proper successor to the Old Testament people of God?

Harrington leads us on a tour of the New Testament, highlighting its varying answers in terms of their specific backgrounds. Jesus proclaimed the imminence, even partial fulfillment of the kingdom of God. Paul emphasized how the element of faith which was constitutive of the people of God in the Old Testament is properly so also in the New. This salvation is for all regardless of ethnic origin — although he insisted on a special place for Israel in God's plan of salvation. Ephesians speaks of a universal people of God united not in race but in Christ. Other writings (1 Peter, Hebrews, Revelation) show a growing identity of Christians as a unique people. In Matthew's and John's Gospels, the church is identified as the people of God over against Judaism.

Though one wonders if this variety of answers isn't a matter of traditions and not only chronology, Harrington has provided a very helpful insight into the early church's struggle with a crucial problem. He offers a series of challenges to today's church: to capture its radical dependence on Jesus Christ and its unmistakable Jewish roots, and to take clues for its existence and mission from its nature as the people of God (pilgrims, covenant community).

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LUKE AND THE LAST THINGS. By A.J. Mattill, Jr. Pillsboro, NC: Western North Carolina Press, 1979. 247 pages. Paper. $8.95.

Mattill here studies the famous Lukan passages on eschatology: "until John" (Luke 16:16), "Abraham's bosom" and "torment in these flames" (16:19-31), and all the many others. And he enters into dialogue with Bultmann, Cadbury, Conzelmann, Cullmann, Ellis, Flender, Franklin, Grässer, Kümmel and the rest of the commentators and essayists.

Mattill concludes that Luke, far from writing for a church that is settling down in the world for the long haul, was an apocalyptist, intent on using the short time remaining before the end so as to insure the fulfillment of the prophesies. He postpones the date of the parousia, looks for the restoration of Israel to be followed by the restoration of all things, stresses the organizational activity of the church, exhorts to ceaseless prayer for the end, calls to repentance and sharing and indeed to a renunciation of property as preparation for the coming holy war and inbreaking of the Kingdom.

Without necessarily agreeing with Mattill's conclusions, one can be grateful for his thorough examinations and discussions of texts.

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PERSPECTIVES ON LUKE-ACTS. Edited by Charles H. Talbert. Danville, VA: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, 1978. 269 pages. Paper. $8.00.

This miscellany of fifteen essays grew out of the work of the Luke-Acts Group of the Society of Biblical Literature in the period 1972-1978.

The essays have much in common in addition to their source. For example, several contributors focus on Luke as a literary artist. Fred Horton ("Reflections on the Semitisms of Luke-Acts") concludes that the language of Luke is the form of *koine* Greek spoken in the synagogue by Jews who used ordinary Greek in their secular affairs but resorted to a specialized religious Greek for cultic purposes, and that Luke was "the great master of the Biblical dialect." Donald Miesner ("The Missionary Journeys") displays Luke's use of chiastic patterns in individual pericopes and in larger narrative units. Joseph Tyson ("Source Criticism of the Gospel of Luke") proposes reconceiving redaction criticism so that the gospel is treated holistically as an intentional unity of a great individual author and not simply as the product of a scissors and paste procedure.

Schuyler Brown studies "The Role of the Prologues in Determining the Purpose of Luke-Acts." Lamar Cribbs continues to track those intriguing similarities between John and Luke ("Agreements ... between John and Acts"), while Jerome Quinn, noting once again certain connections between Luke and the Pastorals, suggests that the Pastorals may have been written as volume III after the Gospel (I) and Acts (II), calling attention to the way in which epistles close long narratives in roughly contemporaneous Jewish and Hellenistic works. (No essay here on Luke as author of Ephesians or Hebrews.)

Raymond Brown contributes his study of Luke's literary method in the annunciation narratives. Joseph Fitzmyer offers his analysis of Luke 9 as consisting of nine episodes each focusing on some aspect of Jesus' dignity and together climaxing the first section of the gospel and introducing the travel narrative. Vernon Robbins scrutinizes Luke's use of "we," Benjamin Hubbard the commissionings, Allison Trites "The Prayer Motif in Luke-Acts," Paul Achtemeier the miracles of Jesus in the gospel and Fred Veltman "The Defense Speeches of Paul in Acts."

However, even if Luke is an artist, A.J. Mattill Jr. ("The Value of Acts as a Source for the Study of Paul") discerns a shift toward a fresh appreciation of Luke as historian.

These essays also seem generally to assume that Luke was a Gentile Christian working in a Hellenistic setting. So Achtemeier, while disagreeing with J. Hull's assessment that Luke's miracle stories are a set of "traditions penetrated by magic," agrees that Luke wrote "in full awareness of the magical views and practices which pervaded the Hellenistic world." Robbins and Veltman make extensive use of Hellenistic parallels to the sea voyages and defense speeches in Acts. According to Robert Karris ("Poor and Rich: The Lukan Sitz im Leben") Luke, by the use of the Greco-Roman philosophical terminology of friendship, modified inherited traditions (Jesus' words on rich and poor, the primitive Christian picture of common life in Jerusalem) in order to make those traditions clear and comprehensible to his Greco-Roman audience, which did not share the Christian-Jewish concern for the poor and needy neighbor.

Hubbard on the other hand sees in the reports of commissionings a pattern common in the Hebrew bible and other ancient near eastern materials.

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GOD AND THE RHETORIC OF SEXUALITY. By Phyllis Trible. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978. xvii and 206 pages. Paper. $6.50.

Phyllis Trible's work appeals to me for two reasons. First, because she ex-

amines Biblical materials (the creation and fall account of Genesis 2 & 3, Song of Songs, the Ruth and Naomi story, and various female metaphors for Yahweh) which deal particularly with women. Second, the method Trible uses to interpret these texts is rhetorical criticism, a method which analyzes the relationship between the form and content of a text. Because this method focuses very intently on the text as literature, and thus as art, it is particularly conducive to producing creative and fresh insights when applied to age-old Bible stories. Trible discovers that Biblical references to women and feminine imagery are not always negative. Indeed, there is a vitality and strength in the witness of Biblical women which has long been submerged under patriarchal structures.

My criticism of the book is that occasionally Trible overstates the case to make her point. For instance, in order to dramatize the radical nature of Ruth's decision to leave her homeland and return to Bethlehem with Naomi, Trible compares it with Abraham's similar decision. Because Ruth, unlike Abraham, had no support group and no explicit call from God, Trible concludes "not even Abraham's leap of faith surpasses this decision of Ruth's." Perhaps. But how can anyone judge the quality or quantity of a faith leap? *Both* Abraham's and Ruth's decisions were remarkable.

Trible uses rhetorical criticism almost exclusively in her treatment of the selected texts. Because rhetorical criticism is one branch of literary criticism, which is, in turn, one branch of historical criticism, Trible's focus is intentionally narrow. Since she does not survey the texts from the broader perspective of all of historical criticism, the results of her work are naturally different. To those of us schooled in *all* the branches of historical criticism, Trible's limited scope may at first be disconcerting. It need not stay so, however. One doesn't judge the view through a microscope to be less worthy than the view from one's picture window simply because the former shows far less of the total picture. The delightful detail revealed by the microscope is well worth the time to take a good look. It doesn't tell the whole story, but neither does the view from your picture window.

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ENCOUNTER WITH THE TEXT: FORM AND HISTORY IN THE HEBREW BIBLE. Edited by Martin J. Buss. Philadelphia: Fortress Press and Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979. vii and 224 pages. Paper. $5.95.

We must move beyond our present encounters with the text to a broader range of textual encounters; this book seeks such an end. Our seminary classrooms must consciously include a variety of disciplines if we are to escape the accusation that our biblical criticism and preaching are filled with "critical description and capricious faith." Yet, as Wayne Booth wisely notes, "Nothing is more self-destructive then the current fashion of cheering each new skyrocket as if it had finally given us all the light we need — and then sighing when it quickly fizzles out."

I was immediately struck by the wide spectrum of possibilities for encounter with the text. Hugh C. White offers a short and modest introduction to the work of Claude Levi-Strauss, A.J. Greimas, and Roland Barthes. The exciting and important work of sociological criticism is represented by Norman Gottwald. Literary and linguistic studies integrated with theological interpretation enliven Wolfgang M.W. Roth's use of Paul Ricoeur's philosophical hermeneutics and John G. Gammie's article on literary and traditional analysis. A marvelous study of the rhetoric of rhythm by Ann M. Vater, reminiscent of the early Russian Formalists, underlines one type of important twentieth century literary critical work left relatively unincorporated by most biblical exegetes.

In my opinion, however, Martin J. Buss, the anthology's editor and author of the introductory essay, risks self-destructive cheering. He hails the rapprochement between structural analysis and historical exegesis and even suggests that such a rapprochement must go beyond merely adding them to each other in order to merge and transcend them. Though he notes the dangers as well as opportunities in such hopes, he does not consider the possibility that historical critical exegesis and structural analysis are logically and methodologically incompatible.

More is at stake here than incompatibility between two biblical, critical perspectives. Major political, social, and theological issues are involved in the relationship between ahistorical and historical methods of interpretation. In this vein, Dale Patrick does well to join theoretical exegesis with practical political concern. He uses James Gustafson's typology of the ways scripture is used by Jewish and Christian ethics as his entry point into the question of legitimacy in political exegesis. He holds that Scripture contains a variety of moral values, norms and perspectives that form an intellectual context for making ethical and political decisions. But Patrick's use of the historical critical method in establishing meaning between the Hebrew text and current discussion is subject to political and social critique; for example, the "hard" structuralists and the liberation theologians have criticized historical critical methodologies and opened the question of political exegesis to a far broader and potentially more significant range of criticism.

In "On Me Be the Curse, My Son!" Christine Garside Allen rises above the trivializing tendencies of much current feminist biblical criticism. Of all the authors in this anthology, she does the greatest justice to the concept of perspective. Rather than relativizing all readings by a vague appeal to different perspectives, she locates her perspectives in relation to sexual identity. In her perspectival approach, however, the *text* serves as a point where the interpretation begins and ends. One is not free simply to develop just any theory at all without regard to the words and phrases of the text. This is a vital and critical understanding since it does not foreclose conversation and since it seeks pluralism without relativism. Wayne C. Booth's observations are also helpful in the discussion of perspective. Booth asks us to imagine a fixed cone placed among observers who are not allowed to change their angle of vision. One person observes a circle, another an isosceles triangle. Others, at other angles, describe highly irregular shapes. This visual analogy is much more rigorous for pluralism than the popular tale of the blind men and the elephant. That tale describes a tolerant relativism or eclecticism, but not a pluralism. As Booth notes, those blind men are, for one thing, blind; and for another, each one touches but a small part of the whole animal that might be touched if he persisted. But each observer of the cone sees *everything there is to be seen from his position,* even by a most acute observer; nothing limits his results except perspective.

The entire range of reader oriented, rather than author oriented, criticism only suggested by some of these essays, opens new doors to renewed vitality in parish biblical study.

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THE THEME OF THE PENTATEUCH. By David J.A. Clines. JSOT, Supplementary Series 6. Sheffield: University of Sheffield Press, 1978. 152 pages. Paper. $12.25.

With this work Clines adds his voice to the call to return from preoccupation with the minutiae of biblical texts or the shadowy origins of tradition to serious consideration of the canonical shape of Scriptural books in general and the Pentateuch in particular. His primary device for understanding the Pentateuch in its canonical shape is

something he calls "theme," or that which conceptualizes plot, focuses its significance, and states its implications. On the way to determining that theme, Clines notes that each of the books of the Pentateuch ends with a movement toward an as yet unfulfilled goal, and the impetus for this movement is the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. Thus, "The theme of the Pentateuch is the partial fulfillment — which implies also the partial nonfulfillment — of the promise to or blessing of the patriarchs. The promise is both the divine initiative in a world where human initiatives always lead to disaster, and a re-affirmation of the primal divine intentions for man"(p. 29).

Clines argues that Genesis 12-50 treats the posterity element of the promise,Exodus and Leviticus, are concerned with the issue of relationship to God inherent in the promise, while Numbers and Deuteronomy are dominated by the land element of the promise. Genesis 1-11 is the story of "Creation — Uncreation — Re-creation" which sets the agenda for all of the chapters and books to follow. "Uncreation" is the result of divine judgment upon human attempts to wrest initiative away from God and "Re-creation" is God's ultimate response to that problem.

Clines assumes that the Pentateuch was put into its final form in the 5th Century B.C.E. among the exiles still in Babylon and that is what gave impetus to the return to the land of promise under Ezra and Nehemiah. Exiles of that day found themselves "at the same point as that reached by the Israelite tribes at the end of Deuteronomy: the promise of God stands behind them, the promised land before them."

In a final chapter Clines argues that the Pentateuch cannot be viewed as a group of "timeless truths" devoid of any integral association with historical circumstances, but neither should the Pentateuch be seen only in its relationship to those circumstances. He seeks a middle ground between those extremes through treating the Pentateuch as "story" and "promise." The Pentateuch as story invites the reader into a world which is to a greater or lesser extent different from the reader's own world and urges the reader to see new horizons and to respond by making the story part of the reader's own story (biography). As promise, the Pentateuch is the vehicle by which the reader is engaged and bound to God's emerging future.

There is much in this book, brief as it is, which will interest the preacher, the structuralist exegete, or the teacher of the Bible as literature. But more than anything else, the book represents a challenge to historical critics who have for more than a century practiced tradition criticism in the reverse order to that suggested by Clines. He does not claim that tradition history or source criticism are illegitimate, unimportant, or impossible. He simply argues that critics have traditionally begun with the unknown rather than with the known and as a consequence have significantly weakened their results.

Aside from that challenge, the enduring value of Clines' work will most likely be his description of the theme of the canonical Pentateuch as apposite to the circumstances of the 5th Century exiles in Babylon. With few exceptions, historical critics have not focussed upon the "kerygma" of the Pentateuch with the same interest they have shown in the message of the various earlier strata within it. An enduring problem with the position which Clines and others have taken may be seen in the fact that each of the earlier strata within the Pentateuch also represents a "story" and a "promise" in a more or less recoverabe condition, and few in the camp of traditional historical critics are likely to agree that the last of the stories and promises is better or more useful to God in engaging readers than the earlier ones such as J, E, D, or P. The traditional historical critic's Pentateuch, with its various strata, offers a history of God's engaging people in story and promise at various points in their relationship, and much can be learned by believers

about God's engagement of people through observation of that history.

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KOMPUTER-KONKORDANZ ZUM NOVUM TESTAMENTUM GRAECE. Herausgegeben vom Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung und vom Rechenzentrum der Universität Münster unter besondere Mitwirkung von Horst Bachmann und Wolfgang A. Slaby. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980. viii and 1015 pages. Cloth. DM 148.00

The long-awaited basic revision of Nestle's *Novum Testamentum Graece* (twenty-sixth edition) by Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland finally appeared in 1979. Its text is also used in the third edition of the *Greek New Testament* published by the United Bible Societies. Thus it becomes the standard manual edition for translation and interpretation. All other manual editions are superceded.

That also makes many of the scholarly tools outdated, especially the concordances. Schmoller's incomplete *Handkonkordanz* (Stuttgart, 1938 and subsequent reprints) is based on the fifteenth and sixteenth editions of the Nestle text, published before the Second World War. The two essentially complete works, Moulten-Geden and Bruder are both now a century old, based on the texts of Westcott-Hort and Tischendorff. They are not concordances of the standard scholarly text.

Now only one year after publication, thanks to modern computer technology, we have a full, accurate concordance to the new text. It is a magnificent volume in conception and in design. It is complete, though for twenty-nine words (prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, etc.) only references are given. It includes paragraphs rejected by modern editors, e.g. the "shorter ending" of Mark and John 7:53 to 8:10.

Its typography and page size are excellent. Each page is large, 34.0 cm by 25.0 cm (about 13½ by 19½ inches). That means that most entries can be contained on the two columns of one page — or at most two pages. The word usage can thus be easily surveyed. The type font used is sharp, clear, and pleasing to the eye. The term of the lemma is put in an italicized font in each passage to enable quick location. A very full citation of context is given, often running to more than two lines (Moulton-Geden usually has one). This means less paging of the Greek Testament to understand the entries.

Accent marks are omitted, unless needed to distinguish forms that are otherwise homographs. That omission corresponds to the form of Greek writing in use when the New Testament books were first written. Regular users of the concordance will soon find it easier to read the unaccented Greek of the Nestle-Aland critical apparatus.

Physically the volume is attractive indeed. Its paper is of high quality, the sizing not so heavy that the paper will crack as it ages. The binding is substantial. Margins are generous to enable liberal personal annotations.

No reviewer "reads" a concordance from cover to cover. I did make several trial forays into the work and saw no misprints or other technical problems. While many may blink at its price, ca. $85.00, this is not out of range. When one recalls that the concordance is *the* basic tool of all interpretation, then the work is not over-priced. The Münster Institute is to be congratulated on this work and the publisher thanked for a magnificent production. The book should be widely purchased; each student of the scriptures should use it diligently.

Edgar Krentz
Christ Seminary — Seminex

LEXICON PLOTINIANUM. By J.H. Sleeman (+) and Gilbert Pollet. Leiden: E.J. Brill, Leuven: University Press, 1980. x pages, and 1164 columns. Cloth. 200 guilders.

Plotinus, the greatest Neoplatonist philosopher (ca. 205 to 270 C.E.),

exerted a strong influence on patristic Christian theology, e.g. upon Boethius, Augustine, and the early mystics. Yet the nature of that influence has been difficult to assess with precision, because the necessary scholarly tools were absent.

The first necessity, a critically established text based on a careful study of the textual tradition, was finally produced by P. Henry and H.R. Schwyzer between 1959 and 1973 (undergoing a form of second edition in the text being printed in the Oxford Classical Texts series). All earlier editions of the text are now antiquated. A second major aid was provided by the excellent translation of S. MacKenna, revised in its fourth edition by B.S. Page (1969).

The present volume provides the first and major interpretive tool necessary for the proper understanding of Plotinus' thought, a special lexicon that can also serve (for all practical purposes) as an *index verborum.* The British scholar J.H. Sleeman began work on the lexicon in 1946; with the publication of the Henry-Schwyzer text it became necessary to adapt the lexicon to the now-mandatory critical edition. Sleeman died before the task was done. G. Pollet of Louvain University completed the revision, made substantial additions to insure completeness, and saw it through the press.

The entries under most lemmata are complete. Where there is extensive use of a term, the articles are divided into intelligible categories, e.g. under *aisthesis.* Except for such necessary modifications, entries are arranged topologically, i.e., in the order of their occurrence in the text of Plotinus. Short English definitions are given for each lemma or subdivision, at times with short interpretive comments. Where there are express citations or certain allusions to specific earlier Greek authors (Plato, Homer, Aristotle, etc.), the lexicon gives the specific source.

The typesetting and proofreading are excellent. The reading of numerous articles brought no typographic errors to my notice, but the design leaves a bit to be desired. Divisions in major articles are indicated by paragraphing, but subdivisions are not highlighted by paragraphing or distinctive type fonts. The result is a "busy page" that unnecessarily slows down consultation of the work. One is reminded of Ast's Plato lexicon. But that is a minimalist complaint. One should rather rejoice that a major tool of philosophical and philological significance has been brought to birth. It will remain the standard for the next decades, if not a century.

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CHILDREN OF PROMISE: THE CASE FOR BAPTIZING INFANTS. By Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1979. xi and 116 pages. Paper. $3.95.

Bromiley, known best for his prodigious effort in translating all 8,384 pages of Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* is a competent theologian in his own right.

After beginning with a study of Old and New Testament roots for the practice of infant baptism, Bromiley quickly takes the question to its proper locus, the theology of baptism itself and its relation to the Gospel. He spells out in helpful detail the significance of baptism into the Triune God and its relevance for every aspect of the Christian life. In the process he discusses the relation of baptism to conversion, to faith, and to the salvation of infants. Though one wishes his final chapter, dealing with baptism in the overall life and ministry of the church, could have been more fully developed, even those brief remarks are pertinent and helpful.

Aside from being a model of clarity, this book is warm and pastoral, and deals sensitively with all issues and viewpoints. It would make an excellent resource for either class study or pre-baptism counselling — or brushing up on one's own understanding of infant baptism.

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THE WAY TO NICEA: THE DIALECTICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY. By Bernard Lonergan. Translated by Conn O'Donovan from the first part of *De Deo Trino.* Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976. xxi and 143 pages. Cloth. $9.50.

This book, a translation of a much longer work (the translation represents approximately 1/6 of *De Deo Trino*), renders explicit and concrete some implications of Lonergan's highly acclaimed theoretical works, *Insight* (1958) and *Method in Theology* (1972). As an exercise in dialectic, one of the eight theological functional specialties he delineates in *Method,* it traces the development from the early Church to the Council of Nicea of both Christology and dogma.

Christology, in this account, developed from one form of clarity to another while dogma, in contrast, went from obscurity to clarity. To make this argument Lonergan begins with an essay on dogmatic development and ends with one on "The Structure of the Ante-Nicene Movement." In between are bare, but incisive, notes on the development of the two phenomena: Christology and dogma. The notes include sections on the Judaeo-Christians, Gnostics, Adoptionists, Patripassians, Sabellians, Subordinationism, and analyses of the phrases, "Of one substance," "The Image of Goodness Itself," followed by the responses of the Arians and Semi-Arians and the development of the dogmatic language of Homoousion and consubstantiality.

Lonergan rejects any suggestion that Nicea and the development either of Christology or dogma represents a perversion of Hebraic consciousness. Rather, the development of dogma from obscurity to clarity is the development of the differentiated consciousness in the West since the Hebraic consciousness, like other primitive consciousnesses, cannot function on the dogmatic plain. Biblical language as a whole is discourse about things while Nicea marks the beginning of "religious discourse about discourse about things" or dogma. This second level discourse, the result of the Hellenic discovery of mind and theory, became the bridge to overcome cultural differences present in the world of the Ante-Nicene Church. Thus, in Lonergan's mind, the Fathers of Nicea and Athanasius won out as "dogmatic realists," which is the next best thing to being "critical realists," a stage reached later by Thomas Aquinas.

I would not recommend this book as an introduction to Lonergan (*Insight* and *Method,* aided by David Tracy's *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan* would better serve this end) or the development of Christology; but it is a marvelous view of a major philosophical and theological mind at work on crucial theological issues. Let the faint hearted beware and the serious student of theology take notes.

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IN SEARCH OF CHRISTIANITY. By Ninian Smart. San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1979. 320 pages. Cloth. $10.95.

Smart (U. of Lancaster, U. of California Department of Religious Studies) brings a unique method to his ambitious task of presenting a phenomenology of the Christian religion. The first half of his book proceeds vertically, each chapter studying the history and genius of one major tradition: Romanian Orthodoxy, Italian Catholicism, the Coptic church, Swedish Lutheranism, the churches of the radical reformation, the indigenous churches of Africa. While this hardly touches all bases, excursuses along the way broaden each section to include other subbranches within each tradition. A helpful summary chapter juxtaposes major emphases and developments of each. The second half of the book proceeds horizontally, tracing major themes or concerns that various Christian traditions have dealt with: asceticism and mysticism, worship,

understanding of Christ, the Bible, Christian doctrine, and ethics.

The result is an amazing panorama of the variety among those who claim Christ as Lord: in history, piety, theology, cult, ethics. One feels as though in a theater with a wrap-around screen. All around are the colors and life of the Christian church, and even those parts seldom seen or appreciated (for us, the Orthodox and Coptic traditions) assume full clarity and beauty. One emerges truly enriched.

Two distractions interrupt this experience. One is that a plethora of names, dates, and excursuses tend to give the book an encyclopediac rather than panoramic character, though the helpful index allows the book to serve as a fine reference. The other is that in places the phenomenological discipline gives way to advocacy of a theological position, particularly in the section on the Bible. The question, "how many biblical happenings, in particular in relation to Jesus, need to be provable or probable as a basis of faith?", aside from being basically unanswerable, is parochially Western.

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EXPLORING THE FAITH WE SHARE. A DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR LUTHERANS AND ROMAN CATHOLICS. Edited by Glenn C. Stone and Charles LaFontaine, S.A. With a foreword by George Lindbeck and Avery Dulles, S.J. New York: Paulist Press, 1980. xiv and 124 pages. Paper. $3.50.

The Lutheran — Roman Catholic bilateral discussions, commissioned by the U.S.A. Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and the U.S. Catholic bishops, have been internationally hailed with good reason. The six volumes of consensus statements and background papers they have produced are among the most significant theological achievements of this century; solid, scholarly, and productive not only of mutual understanding, but of more agreement than was conceived possible fifteen years ago. Yet, up to this time, the fruits of this dialogue have been limited for the most part to theologians. Local congregations remain uninformed about the intentions and results of the dialogues. C. LaFontaine, Roman Catholic editor of *Ecumenical Trends,* and G. Stone, editor of *Lutheran Forum,* have responded to this need by producing a study guide that translates these important documents for a wider Lutheran and Roman Catholic public.

The six chapters follow the chronological development of the dialogue: 1) The Nicene Creed; its authority in both traditions, its relation to scripture, and the conditioned nature of all credal formulas; 2) Baptism; its origins, necessity, and sacramentality; 3) Holy Communion; our common liturgical tradition and the problem of attempting to "separate the inseparable," to separate real presence from the concept of sacrifice; 4) the Ministry of the Church; our agreement on the essential definitions of church and ministry, our disagreements on apostolic succession; 5) the Petrine Ministry, its history, present, and future; 6) Scripture and its relationship to revelation and tradition. In all these areas, the authors are candid in pointing out obstacles and unresolved differences. Each chapter is followed by questions for group discussion.

Lutherans and Roman Catholics have been praying and talking together at the parish level for some time now. This book makes it possible for them to learn together. The language is straightforward and free of jargon, the style clear, the price reasonable, the content challenging.

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JOHN WESLEY. By Stanley Ayling. Cleveland: Collins, 1979. 350 pages. Cloth. $12.95.

"Are you filled with the Holy Ghost?" How would you respond to such a question by this well-known meddler, Wesley, whom many called an "enthu-

siast" or even a fanatic? Wesley's poignant questions surely found a tender nerve as he continued to castigate his Oxford mentors and colleagues: "Do you inculcate upon them (students), day by day, that without love all learning is but splendid ignorance, pompous folly, vexation of spirit?"

Ayling writes that Wesley "proceeded to accuse senior members of the university of 'pride, haughtiness of spirit . . . even proverbial uselessness.' " Such was this puzzling figure who was the friend of the common people and yet detested the "democratic" ideas which those common people sought so desperately. Wesley was known as "the stickler for rules whose success depended on breaking them; the advocate of celibacy who nevertheless married disastriously; the devoted son of the Church of England who fathered in spite of himself a breakaway church."

Ayling describes the climate in the 18th century Church of England as "latitudinarian." This implied a broad acceptance of doctrine, with a loss of ardour and a lukewarmness of faith. Wesley's "methods" found support among the masses and encouraged the formation of dissenting groups. Still Ayling writes: "What was to make the work of John Wesley transcend all others was less any difference it presented, than its astonishing success, to account for which we must surely look first to the genius of Wesley himself."

It was not so much the "connexional" system nor the "class, bands, and societies" which gave rise to Methodism, as it was the spirit of Wesley's organizing talents. Today many criticize Wesley as a zealous organizer and preacher who was after his own soul's salvation; yet his indebtedness to Martin Luther's *Preface to Romans* may encourage a closer examination. Post-Aldersgate Wesley was singlemindedly concerned about the salvation of others; "he has ceased to be obsessed by his own; his heart is spontaneously 'enlarged' towards these wretchedest of his wretched fellow sinners," Ayling notes. Certainly there was much more behind Wesley's energy, which produced 40,000 preached sermons and over 400 published works, along with riding "horseback as far as the earth is to the moon." Perhaps God chose to comfort his people by nudging this enthusiastic and enigmatic priest, who had an effective "follow-up" program to his ministry. Ayling concludes: "But what gave Wesleyan Methodism its especial momentum, the ingredient which made it unique among the rival . . . movements of the day . . . was the thoroughness of its disciplines and organization. What counted was not so much the emotional conversion as the well-managed follow-up."

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TRAJECTORIES IN FAITH: FIVE LIFE STORIES. By James W. Fowler and Robin W. Lovin. Nashville: Abingdon, 1980. 206 pages. Paper. $6.50.

The first chapter of this book is a brief presentation of psychosocial development and its working principles. Faith is defined as the engagement of "all of life in relation to a unifying center of meaning and value," a phenomenological approach defining faith as attitude rather than content. The stages of development are identified as 1) undifferentiated (prelinguistic); 2) intuitive-projective, as in children under adult influence; 3) mythic-literal, interiorizing community beliefs; 4) synthetic-conventional, expanding faith to an ideology; 5) individuative-reflective, establishing an identity over against others; 6) paradoxical-consolidative, incorporating views beyond the community; 7) universalizing, inclusive of all being. As coherent as this scheme appears, it also makes one wish that more substantiating data were available.

The bulk of this book applies this pattern of faith development to the study of history: psychohistory or psychobiography. Five essays present studies of three personages of recent history (Malcolm X, Wittgenstein,

Bonhoeffer) and two of the more distant past (Anne Hutchinson and Pascal). As interesting as these studies are, they are the weakest part of the book. Lack of resources does not deter the authors from applying the paradigm to the faith development of these persons, resulting in a steady stream of "apparently, seems reasonable, may have no doubt, must have been, can be assumed/thought/believed . . ." One emerges feeling that we understand the authors and their paradigm better than the subjects of the essays.

The applications presented resemble more an imposition of a paradigm on scanty data than an objective substantiation of the paradigm by the data themselves. In any case, this discipline deserves to be heard again, and will be.

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COMMON ROOTS: A CALL TO EVANGELICAL MATURITY. By Robert E. Webber. Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1978. 256 pages. Cloth. $8.95.

Webber, professor of theology at Wheaton College, seeks to "raise the central issues which evangelicals must face in the near future, to put them into focus, and to call for action." His diagnosis is "evangelical amnesia," a loss of historical vision and heritage which robs evangelicals of their proper maturity: "popular evangelicalism not only represents a movement away from the reformational heritage, but even more, a digression from the historic Christian faith." Harsh words from within!

Webber's unique approach is to raise a subject (church, worship, theology, mission, spirituality), isolate various aberrations, present biblical and historical (second century church) perspectives, and identify paths for further growth. He calls away from an individualistic, separatistic, social gathering understanding of the church to a sense of the Body of Christ; away from rationalistic, revivalistic, emotional forms of worship to a recovery of the Eucharist and the church year; away from theological indifference or nitpicking to the centrality of the Gospel; away from a manipulative, enculturated, theology of glory mission to a view of mission as wide as creation and redemption; away from a spiritualized, legalistic spirituality to active discipleship in all areas of life. If one theme unites the book, it is a call from a spiritualized to an incarnational Christianity. Each major section is followed by a helpful, annotated bibliography. Webber also shares in an appendix the 1977 "The Chicago Call: An Appeal to Evangelicals," which conference he chaired.

This is an important book. On one level, the integrity and commitment of his call to *fellow evangelicals* will indeed lead to maturity. At another level, his vision of an "ecumenical evangelicalism" (my phrase), which incorporates both the church of time past and today's church (even Roman Catholic), allows *all Christians* to respond to his challenge toward Christian maturity.

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RELIGION IN THE CITY OF THE ANGELS: AMERICAN PROTESTANT CULTURE AND URBANIZATION, LOS ANGELES, 1850-1930. By Gregory H. Singleton. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1979. xxxii and 262 pages. Cloth. $27.95.

This book is a history of the interrelationship of voluntary American Protestant religious groups and of urbanization in Los Angeles between 1850 and 1930, but it will surely be helpful to anyone interested in the history of religion in urban America. According to Singleton "voluntarism" refers to the ecclesiastical system developed by American Protestant churches, primarily those stemming from the British Reformation, to maintain themselves

in the absence of an established church. The voluntarist churches advocated the virtues of hard work and success, which hastened the onset of urbanization, which in turn fostered pluralism and secularization, which ultimately led to the loss of the political, economic, and social power of the voluntary Protestants. This process was played out in the cities of the Northeast and Midwest. Voluntary Protestants flocked to Los Angeles, thinking that here they had one last opportunity to create "a model Protestant community." For a time they succeeded. But after 1930 the pluralism and secularity that emerged in other American cities emerged in Los Angeles as well.

The author raises at least two interesting questions for the observer of American religious history. First, did the voluntary American Protestant churches bring about their own fall from power? Did their emphasis on the value of industriousness and success, which involved the importing of a work force that was often non-Protestant, lead inevitably to a pluralistic social milieu where Protestants were no longer the sole possessors of political, economic, and social power?

Secondly, Singleton suggests that the process of secularization is less the loss of belief in God and religious values than the loss of influence of American Protestant culture. Does this imply, then, that the Anglo-American Protestant religious tradition is the unofficial established religion of America? Is it true that secularization is the process by which the religious scene in America has become pluralistic, rather than dominated by the Anglo-American Protestant religious tradition? In this connection, it is interesting to note that many Jewish people — and Catholics too — perceive American public higher education to be a Protestant institution. Given the vitality of religion in its broadest sense in America today, Singleton's view of the nature of secularization has much to commend it, although it seems clear to me that our society is also increasingly secular in the sense that belief in God and religious values have less power and influence than they once did.

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TELLING THE STORY. By Richard A. Jensen. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980. 189 pages. Paper. $5.95.

"We live in an age where people's lives are bombarded by the electronic media," writes Richard Jensen. "This electronic environment constitutes a genuine challenge to church life as we have known it." Jensen, professor of systematic theology at Wartburg Seminary, thinks that a response to that challenge lies in applying both variety and imagination to the preaching task. His book is designed to stimulate such creativity on the part of the reader.

Jensen outlines three general types of preaching which he calls didactic, proclamatory, and story preaching. He devotes a chapter to explaining each and then offers examples. Particularly helpful is his use of the same text (the story of the prodigal son from Luke 15) to illustrate each type.

According to Jensen, 90 percent of the preaching that he hears and does is didactic in nature; the communication of ideas, the making of points, and the exchange of information. Using the insights of communications thinkers such as Marshall McCluhan, Jensen shares the problems which can result in an exclusive reliance on this type of preaching.

Proclamatory preaching deals with the reality and effect of the gospel rather than ideas and content. Relying on thinkers such as Luther, Bultmann, Wingren, and the "new hermeneutic" exponents, Jensen describes preaching in an almost sacramental way, in which the preached word becomes the vehicle for the "real presence" of Christ for the hearer. Jensen is enthusiastic about proclamatory preaching but admits that here also, there are problems. Not all texts are proclamatory in nature. Proclamatory preaching is highly personal in character yet the gospel also has a social and corporate

dimension which we lose sight of to our impoverishment.

The third type is story preaching. This type is preaching as narrative. Here Jensen relies on writers such as Frederick Buechner, C.S. Lewis, and Fred Craddock's *Overhearing the Gospel.* The emphasis is on the path of indirection which "shocks the hearer out of conventional wisdom into the wise foolishness of what the kingdom of God is like." Prime examples of story preaching include the parables of Jesus and adults "overhearing" the Sunday morning Children's sermon.

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STRUGGLE AND FULFILLMENT: THE INNER DYNAMICS OF RELIGION AND MORALITY. By Donald Evans. Cleveland: Collins, 1979. 238 pages. Cloth. $10.95.

Deep within each of us are conflicting tendencies. Some lead us to affirm life, others to deny it. Each day there is a struggle. The issue, says Donald Evans, is which tendencies will prevail.

Evans, a philosophy professor by trade and an afficiando of depth psychology by avocation, attempts to bring his understanding from those two disciplines together in order to shed some light on religion and morality. Religion and morality are two sides of the same coin. Both are primarily a matter of attitude and life-stance rather than a set of beliefs which dictate behavior. As such, their main components are the attitude virtues of trust, humility, self-acceptance, responsibility, self-commitment, friendliness, concern, and contemplation. These attitude virtues have their counterparts, the attitude vices of distrust, pride, irresponsibility, alienated dissipation, self-isolation, self-indulgence, and self-preoccupation.

Evans spends the major portion of the book discussing the trust-distrust struggle. He notes that each attitude virtue provides a perspective on life as does each attitude vice. Which one provides a true perspective on what's really out there? That's no simple question. But Evans maintains that distrust distorts our vision and trust enables us to see what's really there. "When we view the world from a stance of trust there is a conviction, perhaps implicit rather than explicit, that a trustworthy reality pervades and unifies our environment."

This is an important book and Evans is a clear thinker and a good writer. He is able to combine the personal and the prophetic, the contemplative and the communal aspects of religion, morality, and human fulfillment in a way which does justice to them all. That is a rare quality in these days of the human potential movement and pervasive cultural narcissism.

In his closing pages, Evans delivers some piercing insights into the theological task:

> I am not convinced that the most important issue in human life is whether explicit belief in God can be rationally justified. The most important issue is how we should live as human beings: what stances constitute our fulfillment and what stances are needed to bring us into right relation with God? Explicit religious belief is sometimes a blessing, but it is sometimes a curse ... explicit religious belief may be a self-deceptive substitute for genuine openness to the divine. Instead of using language to reflect on a mysterious human-divine relation which is behind and beyond language, we try to grasp God in language while abstracting ourselves from the inner dynamics of that relation. So if a reader is "converted" by the logic of my argument instead of being encouraged to probe his own trust and distrust he may be worse off than a reader who remains skeptical!

John Rosenberg
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Olympia, Washington

Briefly Noted

Do you want a good commentary on Revelation, based on full scholarly study, but written for the non-specialist like yourself? Who wrote this book — and where, when, and why? To discover answers to those questions you may use with great profit J. P. Sweet's **Revelation** (Westminster, $8.95), a paperback volume in the Westminster Pelican Commentary series. Back then Christians were being told by Jews that Jesus was no Messiah and they no Israel; yet, on the other hand, they were being urged to adopt a gnostic understanding of Christianity which found salvation in present spiritual experience, made no moral demands, and regarded Jesus as only one revealer among many. Revelation presents Jesus to such people — and to us — as the all-sufficient Son of God, who by his death and resurrection had fulfilled the whole Jewish dispensation and set in motion the judgment of the world, which he would soon return to complete. The book speaks both to those who are in danger for their faith and those too sure of their present salvation. A great companion for a leader of a parish Bible class!

Biblical scholars have two reasons for studying ancient near eastern religions: for their innate importance and for their use in illuminating the Old Testament. In **Die Religionen des Alten Orients** (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, DM 24) Helmer Ringgren presents a popular and comprehensive summary of the religions of the Egyptians, Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians, Hittites, and the West Semites. The author, wisely, is not just looking for parallels in a planless way. Rather, he studies the thoughts of the ancient near east in their function within their own culture. This is part of *Grundrisse zum Alten Testament,* a series of supplements to the famed ATD commentary. Othmar Keel will write another volume in this series, which will illustrate various aspects of these religions via pictures.

Anyone who wants to know John Eck's side of the story now has available in English his **Enchiridion of Commonplaces: Against Luther and Other Enemies of the Church** (Baker, $9.95). Translator Ford Lewis Battles writes that a study of Eck's argumentation will open up for the student the whole Protestant-Roman Catholic dialogue from its inception in 1517 to the period immediately preceding the Council of Trent.

Black Theology: A Documentary History, 1966-1979 (Orbis, $12.95) is a collection of fifty-six essays dealing with various aspects of this recent and vibrant development. The section titles tell what's in store for the readers: The End of an Era: Civil Rights to Black Power; The Attack on White Religion; Black Theology and the Response of White Theologians; Black Theology and the Black Church; Black Theology and Black Women; Black Theology and Third World Theologians.

To say much about T.W. Manson's **The Sayings of Jesus** (Eerdmans, $7.95) would gild the lily. Written more than forty years ago, this classic comments on the parables and pronouncements of Jesus contained in Q and in the material peculiar to Matthew and Luke. A bargain at any price.

Prayers of the Eucharist (Oxford, $4.95) presents thirty-six eucharistic services or descriptions of services from early times until 1662. Editors R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming show how each rite handles the four main actions of the eucharist: taking, giving thanks, breaking and giving.

Clergy have special tax problems and special tax breaks — notably in their housing allowances — and two recent publications are written just for them. First, Price Waterhouse & Co. have edited the **Abingdon Clergy Income Tax Guide** (Abingdon, $2.95, tax deductible). This annually revised handbook provides eighty pages of helps for everything from depreciation of books (hopefully from hard use) to the tax status of an office at home, from the special problems of traveling evangelists to the tax dilemmas of those who pay alimony. The second

publication, **Income Tax Law for Ministers and Religious Workers** (Baker, $2.95, tax deductible) is authored by B.J. Worth. Somewhat shorter and therefore not always so detailed in its instructions, it contains, nevertheless, some important helps. Do you know how to figure the fair rental value of the home you own? It might mean a higher deduction than the usual way of totaling up all the actual expenses you had. Or did you know that you can not only depreciate the books you buy but claim a partial tax credit for them in the year you buy them? Worth provides a handy "Statement of Income" form for religious workers. He's even willing — for a fee — to figure your tax for you.

There's more of everything in Ernst Würthwein's **The Text of the Old Testament** (Eerdmans, $8.95), a translation of his fourth revised edition. This edition has 244 pages; in 1957 there were 173; 49 plates now versus 41 then (much better quality now); updated bibliography, more on the Dead Sea Scrolls; bigger price, too. Here one finds all most would care to know about Hebrew writing and the Massoretic Text, about the versions, and about textual criticism. The author explains all the symbols in the new *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia,* as well as in Kittel's older *Biblia Hebraica.* He even provides comparative lists of sigla for the two Hebrew Bibles with English translations (bless him!). He still seems too supportive of Paul Kahle's theories on the development of the Septuagint, and occasionally the reader will be confused by the attempt to introduce two Hebrew Bible editions in one book (paragraph [1] on p. 41 can only be understood by comparing it with earlier editions). But still this is a gold mine, and you know how valuable they are today!

Zondervan is to be congratulated for publishing **The NIV Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament.** Vol. 1/Gen.-Deut., edited by John R. Kohlenberger III, has now appeared ($17.95); there will eventually be four volumes. The New International Version, recently produced by a team from the "evangelical" wing of Protestantism is printed in full down the side of each page and its words are also printed below each word in the Hebrew text. Thus students can not only match up Hebrew and English, but they can also see how the words fit together into semantic contexts. Emendations presupposed in NIV are noted. A clear type face and generous spacing make it a delight to use. The editor hopes that students who only know English can use this volume to study words in lexicons, concordances, and linguistically based commentaries, and even pick up a smattering of Hebrew by induction. And students who know some Hebrew can use it to improve their knowledge of Hebrew and even to outgrow the need for the book altogether.

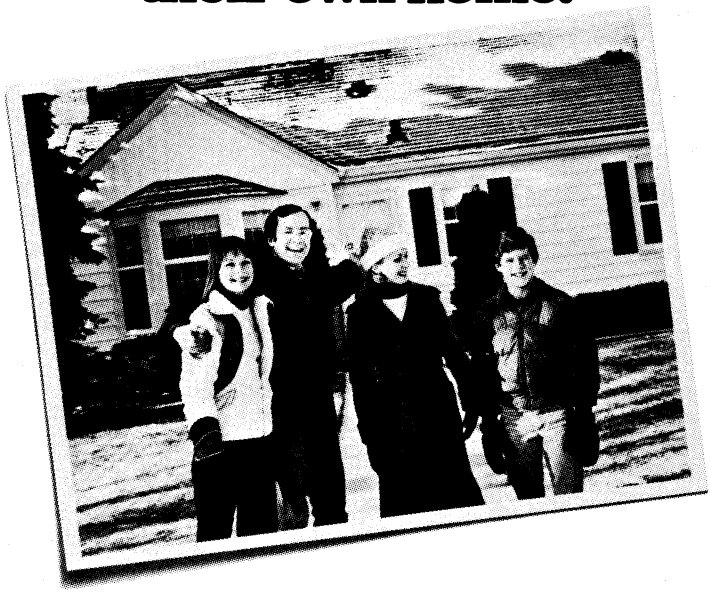
The Gospel of John fascinates and

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puzzles scholars by its unique interpretation of the history and proclamation of Jesus. In 1976 Francis J. Moloney's study, **The Johannine Son of Man,** was greeted with acclaim by many. Moloney argued that the title "Son of Man" as used in John was not taken over from synoptic usage; rather, it referred to the work of the historical Jesus as judge and deliverer *in the present.* In a second edition (Liberia Ateneo Salesiana, 10,000 Lira), Moloney responds to the criticisms of the first edition and evaluates newer publications. He seeks to show that passages like John 3:13 and 6:62 refer only to Jesus' human, earthly existence, never to his pre-existence or post Easter glorification. This strikes me as a *tour de force* of the first magnitude, especially since John regards the cross as glorification to the right hand. Moloney demands a consistency in John's usage that is not present. Yet there is one major contribution that the book makes. Moloney pays no attention to (presumed) Johannine sources or to the question of the background of the term in extra Christian religious thought. He calls for an interpretation of John that is determined by the text as it stands. While this is again overdrawn, it is a healthy antipode to the view that sources and history of religions determine what a text can mean. (Edgar Krentz)

The religion of classical Greece is a complex and labyrinthine subject, best studied by reading the ancient texts themselves. David G. Rice and John E. Stambaugh give a collection of ancient texts in translation in their **Sources for the Study of Greek Religion** (Scholars Press, $12.00, cloth; $7.50, paper). They concentrate on the period from Homer to Aristotle, though later texts are cited when they illuminate the period. Since many people think of Greek religion as mythology, it is good to have available texts that are sacred laws or that illustrate ethics and religious aspects of day-to-day life. Each text is provided with a brief introduction and a functional bibliography. This helpful anthology is a useful complement to F. C. Grant's **Hellenistic Religions.** (Edgar Krentz)

Let editors Claude Gefre and Joseph Spae describe their anthology on **China as a Challenge to the Church,** Concilium 126 (Seabury, $4.95): "The first series of four articles attempts to rehearse once again the immemorial reality of China, especially in its religious and ethical dimension, and it asks in particular about the religious implications of Maoism. The remaining articles seek to decide how far today's and yesterday's China call for a reinterpretation of western Christianity."

If you enjoyed the TV edition, you'll probably like the paperback version of it as well. It = **The Joy of Bach** (Augsburg, $4.95), put together by Robert E.A. Lee, with outtakes from the film.

Keep **The Wedded Unmother** (Augsburg, $3.95), by Kaye Halverson with Karen M. Hess, available for sharing with couples who struggle with infertility. It helps people explore the child-free life, foster care, adoption, and the like. Told by someone who's been there.

Kenneth L. Vaux's **Will to Live, Will to Die** (Augsburg, $7.95) is a book about suicide or "intended death." It's a question faced in new forms today by those who wait for death in nursing homes facing our ambivalent judgments: "You must live," and "We have no need of you." It's faced by the quadriplegic whom medical technology could keep alive, but who asks his brother to shoot him. Deliberating and choosing a human death is a new dimension of our freedom and responsibility. Death is like pornographic material; it lures us to sneak a peak. Vaux reviews modern medicine, social culture and religious values and makes suggestions for public policy and ministry to the dying.

Origen Contra Celsum, translated and edited by Henry Chadwick (Cambridge, $22.50), was one of the greatest apologetic works of the early church. The apologists assured the Roman authorities that Christians were not pernicious and unpatriotic, and they presented Christianity to the educated classes as something intellectually

Two new contributions to Luther studies...

Luther and the Papacy

Stages in a Reformation Conflict

By SCOTT H. HENDRIX. Underlying the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century was the rupture of the medieval church, which was precipitated by the separation of Martin Luther and his supporters from the institution headed by the pope. Focusing on Luther and his relationship to the papal hierarchy, this work traces the course of that separation with emphasis on the decisive years 1517 to 1522. (Coming in July) $14.95 cloth

Luther and His Mother

By IAN SIGGINS. Correcting much of the received tradition, Ian Siggins has undertaken original research that leads to a new understanding of the formative role that Martin Luther's mother—Margarethe ("Hanna") Lindemann Luder—played in his verbal, spiritual, and psychological development. $4.95 paper

Of related interest...

Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue

Personal Notes for a Study

By PAUL C. EMPIE with a Foreword by William Cardinal Baum. Presented in a popular form, this is a report of the six dialogues held in the United States between Lutherans and Roman Catholics in the decade 1965-1975. It carries many vignettes from behind-the-scenes conversations between Paul C. Empie—statesman, church leader, and pioneer in ecumenism who co-chaired the dialogues with William Cardinal Baum—and other participants. $3.95 paper

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respectable. Whereas to Celus, the majority of Christians seemed to be stupid and uneducated fools, with Origen Christians and pagans met intellectually on equal terms. Be sure to specify "paperback" in your order; the hardcover edition goes for $67.50.

Those who minister to and among Mormons will profit greatly by Robert N. Hullinger's **Mormon Answer to Skepticism** (Clayton Publishing House, P.O. Box 9258, St. Louis, MO 63117, $14.95). Pastor Hullinger finds that Joseph Smith wanted to defend God's name, honor and existence and to reclaim for God Jews, Gentiles, and Native Americans. Smith tried to preserve the Bible as a special revelation by writing the Book of Mormon. His non christic defense was vitiated when the Book of Mormon itself turned out to have omissions, corrections, emendations and contradictions.

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered various *pesharim* or commentaries on biblical books. In **The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk** (Scholars Press, $6.00 for members; $9.00 for non members), William H. Brownlee provides the ancient text in pointed Hebrew, a translation, and an exposition that relates the ancient commentary to the biblical text on which it is based. What did the ancient scribes make of the "reformation" text in 2:4b ("The righteous through their steadfast faith will live")? Answer: "Its prophetic meaning concerns all the doers of the Law in the house of Judah whom God will deliver from the house of damnation, because of their patient suffering and their steadfast faith in the Teacher of Right." Brownlee concludes: "A contrast between faith and works was impossible at Qumran, for faith itself was a meritorious work."

What **The Westminster Concise Handbook for the Bible** (Westminster, $3.95) offers the beginner is much too little. Editor C. Vincent Wilson's comments on the book of Isaiah or the Gospel of John fill less than a page! Better to buy an annotated Bible (like the Oxford Annotated RSV) or to use the fabulous and cheap pamphlets on each book of the Bible by the Liturgical Press in Collegeville, MN (Old and New Testament Reading Guide).

Ethiopic Enoch is a massive, pseudepigraphic work, intensely studied by modern scholars for its version of the story of the fallen angels, the son of man, and other apocalyptic themes. In **Tradition and Composition in the Parables of Enoch** (Scholars Press, $5.00 for members; $7.50 for nonmembers), David Winston Suter outlines the structure of the Parables (chaps. 37-71), the role of the fallen angels and Noachic material in them, and the relation of the Parables to tradition.

Documents for the Study of the Gospels, edited by David L. Cartlidge and David L. Dungan (Fortress, $14.95 cloth; $8.95 paper), is designed to provide the educated reader with a better understanding of the way the early Christian portrayals of Jesus arose and what they meant to those who read them at that time. Part 1 provides portrayals of Jesus until the year 300 (Gospel of Thomas, of Philip, of Peter, etc.). Part 2 contains Greek, Jewish, and Roman parallels to the milieu of the Gospels (The Birth of Plato, Rabbinic parables, miracle stories, martyrdoms, ascensions). In part 3 the editors provide spiritual biographies (e.g. of Apollonios of Tyana). The brief introductions will help beginners; of even greater help will be references to these works in any standard modern commentary on the gospels.

Want a popular, interesting tour guide to New Testament Palestine? Pack along on your trip James Martin's **A Pilgrim's Guide to the Holy Land** (Westminster, $4.95). Pastors and others who organize trips to Bible lands will hardly want to do without it.

Clark Hopkins has written up for posterity his memories of **The Discovery of Dura-Europos** (Yale, $19.95). Lining the four sides of this third century C.E. synagogue were five horizontal bands of painting. They are the earliest biblical scenes we possess, with paintings of the likes of Abraham, Isaac, Ezekiel, David and Solomon. This folksy account of the findings and their place in the

understanding of Western religion was edited by Bernard Goldman. Hopkins himself "relinquished his pen" (died) in 1976.

In **A Panorama of Christian Hymnody** (Liturgical Press, $29.50) master hymnologist Erik Routley provides the texts for 590 hymns and a short introduction to twenty-eight historical segments of hymnic history, ranging from Luther to "modern foreign sources." He produced the book to give people the pleasure of reading hymns, to facilitate the teaching of hymnology, and to assist hymnal editors who can here study the texts unencumbered by music-staves. The book means to be representative — it is not a hymnal, nor even a collection of favorites. As a panorama, Routley allows, it includes a few disagreeable sights, the world being what it is!

For specialists only: **A Concordance to the Targum of Isaiah,** compiled by J. B. van Zijl, has recently been published by Scholars Press ($9.00 for non members; $6.00 for members). A Targum is an Aramaic translation of a biblical book. Study of the targums is crucial for textual criticism and especially for exegetical history.

His first scholarly work was done as a prisoner of war (eventually published as *The Praise of God in the Psalms*). His profound insights into the distinctions between praising and thanking God, and his careful study of the Israelite laments (or psalms of supplication) are brought together and popularized in **The Psalms: Structure, Content and Message** (Augsburg, $4.95). He: Claus Westermann, recently retired from his position at Heidelberg. The translator, too, is no stranger to *Currents'* subscribers: Ralph Gehrke, ex of Concordia, River Forest, now of Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma.

The essays published in honor of Robert M. Grant under the title **Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition** (Editions Beauchesne 90 F) achieve a unity in their common concern to show that early Christian literature (including the New Testament) made positive use of Greco-Roman thought and literature. The eleven scholars who contribute include the princes of patristic research (J. H. Waszink, W. C. van Unnik, Marcel Simon, H. Chadwick, G. Quispel), leaders among the younger patristics scholars (F.M. Young, W.R. Schoedel, R. Norris, R. Wilken), and two New Testament scholars (S.E. Johnson, W. Wuellner). Several essays deal with the early Christian doctrine of God. Others discuss exegetical method in Tertullian, Paul's use of digression in 1 Corinthians, Irenaeus' use of a doxographical tradition, the origin of the idea of heresy, etc. All are in English, all are valuable. Personal predilection makes me select Waszink's article on Tertullian's Biblical hermeneutics and Simon's discussion of the term *hairesis* as my favorites. (Edgar Krentz)

Gerald M. Costello provides a journalist's report in **Mission to Latin America: The Successes and Failures of a Twentieth Century Crusade** (Orbis, $9.95). During the 1960s thousands of Roman Catholics, lay and clergy, were sent to Latin America. The result, now that most have come home: The missionaries church gained more than they gave. "The North American church has enriched itself, Christianized itself, through its Latin American apostolate. What has it done for the Latin American church in that period? It registered limited success in evangelization and social services, provided encouragement and some degree of inspiration for the growth of a new church of the people, and contributed massive funding for a variety of projects, good and bad" (p. 246). Ralph W. Klein

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