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THE REVELATION OF JOHN
Adela Yarbro Collins

SETTLERS AND SOJOURNERS:
AMERICANS AND THEIR LAND
Richard E. Wentz

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Uh-Huh! Unh-Unh!

The two expressions that form our title are exclamations signifying an affirmative or a negative answer. They are often used in arguments, and the tone of our voice betrays respectively our positive or negative feelings. When we pronounce Unh-Unh, for example, we use a strong glottal stop before each syllable or at least that's what Webster tells us. We're reminding you of these grunts because we think they might come in handy after you read this issue. All our authors are asking: "Did you ever see it that way before?" "Will you see it my new way in the future?"

Adela Yarbro Collins, for example, gives us a new look at the social crisis felt by the audience to whom the book of Revelation was addressed. Conflict with the Jews, rejection of the surrounding culture, hostility to Rome, and bitter feelings toward the rich were all part of that late first-century community. The author of the Apocalypse helped the community to clarify and objectify their conflict and to discard fear by telling how God and the lamb would victoriously destroy their enemies. For us today, reading Revelation may get rid of psychological tension nonviolently, or it may remind us that life has a lot of conflict and that the powers of death sometimes have the upper hand. Or it may suggest to us that not all our opponents are monsters of the watery chaos.

What's your attitude toward the land? Do you see the land as the ground of your being and yourself as a sojourner? Or do you see the land as private property, which you possess, and on which you settle? **Richard E. Wentz** proposes that there are important religious beliefs behind each opinion. Those with the sojourner's view are, primarily, the Native Americans; those with the settler's view are the European-Americans. Is land the place where important words are spoken, or is it merely an instrument of progress? Both settlers and sojourners in our history were attempting to come to terms with this continent, but they had worldviews that led to mutual rejection and misunderstanding.

God knows we North American Lutherans have had doctrinal disputes enough, so it is with no arrogance that we can read **Frederick Hale's** essay on some current disputes in the Church of Norway. The issues have been posed in a slightly different way in that country where 93 percent of the population is nominally Lutheran although a mere 5 percent go to church 20 or more times a year. Theological education in Norway takes place in different kinds of institutions, and the public press gives the disputes great attention even if the society and the church are as alien there as here. Some of the issues under dispute are the Virgin Birth and the ordination of women. What advice should we give? What might we learn?

Of all things — stewardship! **George Anderson** opens some new windows on this important topic. With all our conflicting priorities, how can we act responsibly, with concern and accountability? Yet proper stewardship brings freedom, too. We do not have to do it all; other forces, including especially God, are working hard toward our same ends. Sometimes we use money to protect ourselves and to make God almost unnecessary. If money is our chief security blanket, then why not drop the defenses and see what will happen? That way we will have to rely on God to see us through. In addition to this new dependence we'll have new interest in what the money we give is doing, or, better still, what God is doing with it.

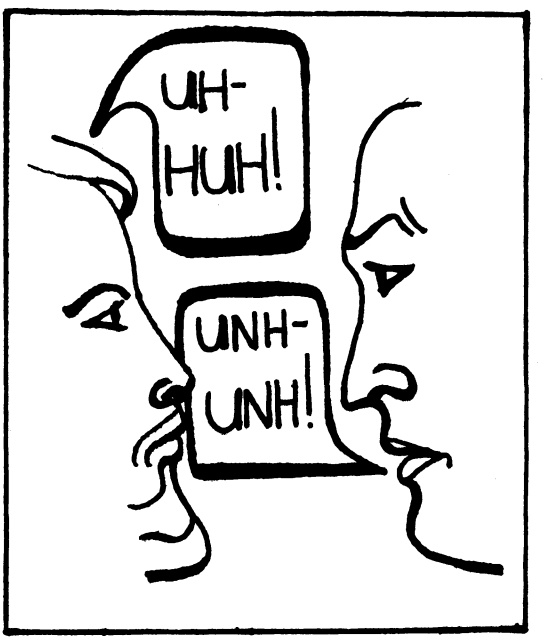
Perhaps you've thought of Job as Prologue, Dialogues, Yahweh Speeches and Epilogue. **William J. Urbrock** helps us to see Job as drama. Some see Job as drama ala Euripides, with Job becoming reconciled to the indifference of providence, going down fighting, with head held high. Others see Job as comedy — in the technical sense of that term. Job is full of the incongruous, the ironic, the ludicrous and the ridiculous. The plot line leads ultimately to the happiness of the hero and to his restoration to serenity. Job rediscovers his limits as a man and through God's eyes he now sees

the world in all its marvelous and mysterious interworkings. Precisely because he has experienced suffering, he can see the festive in the speeches of God and their portrayal of creation. Is Job both tragic and comic at once?

If we did not trust you so much, we wouldn't supply you with the expressions with which you can gruntle after reading. Though "gruntle" may be an obsolete verb, the articles and reviews in this issue are fully contemporary; the sort that keep you young and growing.

As always,

Ralph W. Klein
Editor



The Revelation of John: An Apocalyptic Response to a Social Crisis

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This address was given at a Festival of Scripture and Theology, jointly sponsored by Christ Seminary — Seminex, Eden Seminary, Kenrick Seminary, and the Department of Theological Studies of St. Louis University.

Apocalyptic literature is often defined as literature evoked by a crisis. The books of Daniel, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch, for example, were written during or shortly after grave crises faced by the Jewish people. The book of Revelation also seems to have been written in response to a major crisis. Interpreters of the book, however, disagree on the nature and extent of the crisis. Revelation has long served as the primary evidence for a persecution of Christians under Domitian (81-96 C.E.), but the existence of such a persecution has been seriously questioned by recent researchers.[1] The lack of supporting evidence for a Domitianic persecution is one factor in the attempts to assign the book an earlier date. Most interpreters seem to assume that the occasion of the book must have been an objectively intense and extensive crisis of which the author had personal experience. This axiom can be questioned from the perspective of recent psychological, sociological and anthropological studies. *Relative,* not absolute or objective, deprivation is a common precondition of millenarian movements. In other words, the crucial element is not so much whether one is actually oppressed as whether one *feels* oppressed.[2]

Elements of Crisis

If the majority of interpreters are correct in accepting Irenaeus' testimony on the date of Revelation (90-95 C.E.), is it appropriate to speak of a crisis which led the author to write, and if so, what was the character of that crisis? A number of elements in the work clearly imply that the author perceives and is responding to a social crisis with several facets.

Conflict with Jews

One facet of the crisis perceived by the author involves conflict and ambivalence over against Jews and Jerusalem. In the message to Smyrna, the author refers to those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan (2:9). Such language implies a significant degree of hostility between the Jewish and Christian communities. A similar remark is made about the Jews in Philadelphia (3:9). This hostility makes it unlikely that followers of Jesus were welcome in the synagogues of western Asia Minor, or that the Christians of the region directed much missionary effort toward those synagogues. In spite of the apparent breach, the author of the Revelation claims the name "Jews" indirectly for himself and his community of faith.



A similar ambivalence is evident with regard to Jerusalem. On the one hand, the historical city is rejected by the use of the pejorative symbolic names "Sodom" and "Egypt" in 11:8. The crucifixion of Jesus is mentioned in the immediate context, and it is likely that the author interpreted the destruction of Jerusalem as punishment for the rejection of the Messiah. On the other hand, the two witnesses of chapter 11 are going to appear in Jerusalem. After their ministry, a great earthquake will strike the city (Jerusalem). A tenth of it will be destroyed and seven thousand people will be killed. The rest will be frightened and will glorify God. This response is in striking contrast to the reactions evoked by the plagues of the trumpets and bowls (9:20-21; 16:11, 21). The positive response associated with Jerusalem may reflect the author's concern for the eventual conversion of the Jews. At least it places Jerusalem in a more positive light than the rest of the world. More significantly, Jerusalem appears as a major symbol of salvation in the book of Revelation (3:12; 21:2, 10).

Rejection of Greco-Roman Culture

A second facet of the social crisis reflected in the book of Revelation is the rejection of the surrounding Greco-Roman culture. Such a rejection can be inferred from the author's attacks on the Nicolaitans and the followers of "Jezebel." The Nicolaitans were apparently active in Ephesus (2:6) and Pergamum (2:15). Followers of "Balaam" and "Jezebel" are mentioned in the messages to Pergamum and Thyatira. All three groups are presented as holding the same basic teaching and practice. The author's criticisms focus on their eating meat sacrificed to idols and playing the harlot *(porneusai)*. The accusation that they eat meat sacrificed to idols is probably meant literally, and it has extensive implications for the question of assimilation. The social and economic associations of Asia Minor had a cultic aspect as well. The trade guilds were probably prominent in Thyatira and would have had such a religious dimension. It would have been difficult, it not impossible, to remain a member of such an association without taking part in its cultic activities. The author of Revelation takes a stricter position on the issue of eating meat sacrificed to idols than Paul and was, in effect, calling on Christians to withdraw from the local associations. Thus, eating meat sacrificed to idols symbolized for the author of Revelation a stance of openness to the surrounding Greco-Roman culture, an openness which he rejected as syncretistic.

It is less likely that the reference to playing the harlot is also meant literally.

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[1] See the literature cited by J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 233, note 64.

[2] J.G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 27.

In any case, it is its traditional symbolic meaning that the author of Revelation apparently wanted to emphasize. In Jewish tradition, playing the harlot had become synonymous with practicing idolatry. The harloty of Babylon elsewhere in the book is clearly metaphorical and refers, on one level at least, to idolatry. The harlotry of Babylon elsewhere in the book is clearly metaphorical and refers, on one level at least, to idolatry. In one case (9:20-21), harlotry seems to be meant literally and there it is associated with idolatry. As in the case of meat sacrificed to idols, the author's attack on the Nicolaitans and their ilk as sexually immoral is a rejection of their more liberal position on the issue of assimilation.

This interpretation of the polemics of the messages is supported by the vision of the beast from the earth in 13:11-18. In verses 16-17 it is said that this beast creates a situation in which no one can buy or sell unless one has the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of its name. On one level, the mark of the beast is symbolic, an intangible sign which corresponds to the seal of God (7:3, 9:4). In this particular passage, the image of the mark takes on connotations of the author's contemporary situation and expresses his dilemma. Here the reference to buying and selling calls to mind the portrait, name and other characteristics of the emperor which appeared on Roman coins of the time. The Christian is thus faced with the alternatives of acknowledging imperial claims to divinity by use of the coins or virtual separatism and economic boycott. The threat of eternal punishment for those who receive the mark of the beast (14:9-11) implies that the author of Revelation was calling for such a boycott.

Hostility toward Rome

The breach with the synagogue and the hostility to the surrounding Greco-Roman culture had the combined effect of placing the author of Revelation on the boundary, culturally speaking. He was excluded or had excluded himself from the two major social groupings of his region. This precarious situation was made even more difficult by the conflict between the Roman authorities and Christians. This third facet of the social crisis seems to have been the crucial one, namely, the author's perception of the conflict between Rome and Christian faith and his expectation that it would intensify.

In part, the author's hostility to Rome is due to his identification with the Jews. Roman-Jewish relations were at first excellent, then suffered various strains, and finally degenerated into widespread hostility after the destruction of the temple. Like 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch and the Sibylline Oracles, the book of Revelation refers to Rome with the symbolic name "Babylon." The use of this name probably had a variety of connotations, but the major reason for its use is surely the correspondence between the two cities as the first and second destroyer of Jerusalem and



the temple. Even though the author may have viewed the second destruction as deserved punishment, Rome, the instrument of God's wrath, deserves and will receive even greater punishment (16:19; 17:17; 18:4-8).

Nero's prominence in Revelation as an Antichrist-like, eschatological adversary makes it likely that Nero's massacre of Christians in Rome in 64 C.E. was the other major reason for the author's hostility to Rome. It is quite plausible that that event was a major occasion for the writing of Revelation, even if as much as thirty years had intervened. According to Tacitus, large numbers of Christians were executed. Further, their deaths were of a particularly ostentatious and grotesque nature. Such an event, even if it were entirely local and unique, would have made a profound and enduring impression on Christians throughout the empire.

It is unlikely that Nero or the Senate issued a general law against Christianity as such. Two other factors probably prompted Nero to act: traditional Roman rejection of foreign cults and popular hatred of Christians. Nero may have expressed some legal grounds for his action, but the nature of the charge is debated. So Nero's action and its legal basis may have set a precedent for other Roman authorities who followed him. Or they may have taken analogous actions independently, perhaps under popular pressure. When Pliny encountered Christians in Bithynia about 112 C.E., he concluded that it was his duty to execute any unrepentant, adult, male Christian who was properly accused. Again, the charge is not completely clear, but the general effect certainly is.

The major grounds for the author's perception of a Roman threat then are the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., the massacre of Christians by Nero in 64 C.E., and the continuous danger to Christians throughout the empire of being similarly treated. In addition to these general factors, two particular, local events probably played a role in creating the author's sense of crisis. One was the death of Antipas in Pergamum (2:13). The circumstances of his death are not given clearly by the text. That he is called a witness (*martys*) implies that he died for his Christian faith. In the context, his death is closely associated with "Satan's throne." In light of chapters 12-13, Satan's throne must be understood in terms of Roman power. Thus, it is likely that Antipas was executed by the order of the provincial governor. Why was he banished rather than executed? The most probable explanation is that he claimed to be and was recognized as a Jew, who was then banished for practicing magic. (Magic included prophecy from a Roman point of view.)

Conflict over Wealth

A fourth facet of the social crisis perceived by the author of Revelation is the conflict between rich and poor in Asia Minor in the last third of the first century C.E. This conflict was prepared

by two characteristics of the previous decades. On the one hand, new opportunities for economic growth were presented by Rome's involvement in the East. As a result the provincial elite and the Italian immigrants prospered. On the other hand, Roman taxes were heavy, and the burden of taxation was borne mainly by the working and middle classes. Even though the cities of western Asia Minor were splendid during this period, their splendor was created by and existed for a privileged few. The vast majority of people in these cities had a very moderate income or were extremely poor. Resentment of this unequal distribution of wealth is reflected in various passages of Revelation. The harlot Babylon is clothed in luxurious garments and adorned with jewels (17:4; 18:16). It is implied that she deserves punishment partly because she is a source of wealth for merchants (18:3, 15) and shipowners (18:19). This theme reaches its climax when the angel with the great millstone announces judgment against Babylon and gives as one of the reasons the fact that her merchants were the great men of the earth (18:23).

The Function of Revelation

The occasion for writing the book of Revelation thus seems to have been the perception of a four-fold social crisis involving (1) a painful split with local Jewish communities, (2) rejection of the surrounding Greco-Roman civic life and culture, (3) hostility toward Rome and a sharp sense of threat from its agents, and (4) resentment of the disparity of wealth and privilege between the provincial elite and the ordinary people of Asia Minor.[3] The function of Revelation serves to heighten the awareness of this perceived crisis in the first readers and to elicit a response to it. There is an analogy between Aristotle's explanation of the function of Greek tragedy and the function of Revelation. In each case certain emotions are aroused and then a catharsis of those emotions is achieved. Tragedy deals with the emotions of fear and pity; Revelation, with fear and resentment. Aristotle's term catharsis is a medical metaphor. In its medical sense it refers to the removal of alien matter from the body which is painful and the restoration of the system to its normal state. The relation between this medical sense and Aristotle's application of the term to tragedy has been much debated.[4] It appears he did not mean that the emotions of fear and pity are removed by tragedy, but only that their painful or disquieting elements are removed. Fear and pity in daily life can be disquieting for at least two reasons. Such feelings are often inarticulate, vague, and thus difficult to deal with. Also, they relate to people and events which are very close to home and thus especially threatening. This threatening character applies also to pity in Aristotle's understanding: we pity others where under like circumstances we should fear for ourselves. The emotions



of the audience are purged in the sense that their feelings of fear and pity are intensified and given objective expression. The feelings are thus brought to consciousness and become less threatening. A vague uneasiness gives way to calm.

Revelation functions in a similar way. Fear of Roman power is evoked or intensified. In various symbolic narratives, conflicts are described, each of which is a paradigm of the readers' situation. The readers' destiny is symbolized by the story of the two witnesses in chapter 11 and of the woman in chapter 12. The powers that threaten them are symbolized by the beast from the abyss and the dragon. These vivid images are certainly designed more to evoke terror than to allay it. Nevertheless, the projection of the conflict onto a cosmic screen, as it were, is cathartic in the sense that it clarifies and objectifies the conflict. Fearful feelings are vented by the very act of expressing them, especially in this larger than life and exaggerated way.

Resentment of Roman wealth and power is evoked or intensified especially in chapters 17 and 18. The great harlot Babylon is arrayed in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, jewels and pearls and she drinks from a golden cup (17:4; 18:16). The impressive volume and variety of the products traded throughout the world (the thriving world economy made possible by Rome) is vividly portrayed in chapter 18 and implicitly condemned as sinful. All these alluring goods, which the readers are expected to forego, are to be destroyed by divine wrath.

Revelation produces a catharsis not only by means of individual symbolic narratives, but by the structure of the book as a whole. Feelings of fear and resentment are released by the book's repeated presentations of the destruction of the readers' enemies. The individual symbolic narratives are organized into series of seven: seven seals, seven trumpets, seven unnumbered visions, seven bowls, and a second series of seven unnumbered visions. Each of these series tells a cosmic story in terms of which the readers are invited to understand their present situation. Each story is different in images used and in narrative detail. At the same time, each story has the same underlying pattern and thus the same message. The underlying pattern is threefold and involves: (1) persecution of the faithful, (2) punishment of the persecutors, and (3) victory of God and the Lamb and salvation of the faithful. The element of persecution represents the present, conflict-ridden and threatened situation in which the author invites the

[3] For a more detailed study of the historical situation of the book of Revelation, see A.Y. Collins, "Persecution and Vengeance in the Book of Revelation," published in a volume of proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism at Uppsala, Sweden, in August, 1979, edited by D. Hellholm.

[4] See the discussion in S.H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art* (New York: Dover, 1951, 4th ed.), 240-57.

readers to see themselves. The second two elements, judgment and salvation, represent the resolution of that situation: the persecutors are destroyed by divine wrath, the persecuted are exalted to a new, glorious mode of existence.

To be effective, this narrative resolution of the crisis must be believable. Those readers attuned to the perspective of myth would find it so, since the threefold pattern is an adaptation of an archaic mythic pattern of cosmic combat. Nearly every people of the ancient Near East and the Greco-Roman world had at least one version of the combat myth. In these myths, the hero or ruling god and the order founded by him are threatened by a rebel god, often a dragon or other beast. The rebel tries to gain control of the cosmos, often succeeding for a time, and chaos characterizes his rule. This threat is followed by combat between the two divine beings and the victory of the hero. The hero then reestablishes his rule and the order and fertility which characterize it. The archaic and universal nature of this mythic pattern lends a certain authority and credence to the underlying message of Revelation. As it was in the beginning, as it always has been when the chaos monster rears its head, so it will be once again. God and the Lamb, as representatives of creation, life, and order, will be victorious over the dragon and his two bestial allies.[5]

This intrinsic authority of the narrative itself is reinforced by the account given of its origin and by the way it is presented to the reader. The book as a whole is characterized as revelation originating with God (1:1). This revelation is mediated by Jesus Christ to John, the author of the book, who in turn communicates it to the other servants of God and Christ. The revelation is given to John in a supernatural manner, through ecstatic visions and auditions. Although he does not refer explicitly to himself as a prophet, John implicitly presents himself as an authoritative spokesman of God, apparently on the model of the prophets of the Hebrew Bible. The content of the revelation involves a hidden, heavenly reality which shows the visible world to be radically different from what it seems. Jesus, though slain, is exalted in heaven and controls the destiny of the world (chapter 5). Although divine honors are accorded Rome and her agents, Satan is the real source of her power, not heaven (chapters 12 and 13). The revelation contained in the book also involves a future reality in which the earthly realm will be fully and manifestly determined by the heavenly world, that is, by God and Christ.

The Book of Revelation and Christian Community

In the First Century

What sort of community, if any, was associated with the book of Revelation? It cannot simply be assumed that the people to whom the book was sent shared the point of view of the author,



before or even after hearing it read. The messages contain ample evidence for diversity of point of view in the seven congregations. It is striking that only two of the messages lack censure. Further, the book of Revelation is unusual in early Christian literature for its open hostility to the Roman empire. Paul's implicit recognition of Roman authority in Romans 13 is much more typical. The author of 1 Peter takes a position similar to Paul's even in a situation of persecution (2:13-17). Nevertheless, the author of Revelation must have had some hope of gaining a hearing; otherwise, it is doubtful that he would have written the book or have sent it to these particular congregations.

It has often been suggested that the author was a member of a Johannine school. Another hypothesis is that he was the head or leader of a Christian prophetic-apocalyptic school.[6] The first theory rests on early Christian tradition and certain similarities between Revelation and the gospel of John. The second is based on (1) the presence of traditional material in Revelation similar in form and content to material found in the Synoptic gospels and Paul, (2) the authority claimed by the author for his book, and (3) the theory that a group of prophets was the primary recipient of the book, who then transmitted it to others, guarded and interpreted it. Neither hypothesis is impossible; yet, neither is compelling. It seems more likely that the author of Revelation was an itinerant prophet of the sort attested primarily by the gospel of Matthew and the Didache.[7] As a charismatic, eschatological prophet, he visited various congregations, won some people to his perspective and came into conflict with others.

It would seem then that the book of Revelation is primarily the product of an individual. It does not, apparently, reflect the perspective of an already existing, organized community. At the same time, the author evidently wished to create a like-minded community and wished them to understand the current crisis as he presented it and to respond to it in a particular way. What would the characteristics of such a community be? First of all, they would see their situation in dualistic terms. All reality is caught up in a struggle between God and Satan, Christ and the beast. The community's enemies (hostile Jews, Roman authorities, and perhaps all who are outside the group) are considered followers of Satan and the beast. This dualistic perspective would have various effects. One would certainly be withdrawal from the sur-

[5] For a fuller discussion of the mythic elements in Revelation, see A.Y. Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976).

[6] E.S. Fiorenza, "The Quest for the Johannine School: The Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 23 (1977) 402-27.

[7] U.B. Mueller, *Zur fruehchristlichen Theologiegeschichte: Judenchristentum und Paulinismus in Kleinasien an der Wende vom ersten zum zweiten Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Guetersloh: Mohn, 1976), 35-38.

rounding social world, which would make possible the preservation of a distinct Christian faith and life. At the same time, such withdrawal would be a political act, which would invite increased hostility and persecution. The author seems fully aware of this consequence, and the book's promise of individual rewards and glory for death suffered for the faith is a major step toward the glorification of martyrdom.

Secondly, the focus of community life would probably be the liturgy. This conclusion is based on two observations. The book of Revelation was evidently intended for public reading (1:3). It is likely that such readings took place during worship services. If so, then the evocation, intensification, and resolution of the members' social crisis would take place in a communal, liturgical setting. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the visions of salvation in all but the last series are presented as heavenly scenes and contain a heavenly liturgy which proclaims victory and salvation (7:9-17; 11:15-19; 15:2-4; 19:1-10). This formal characteristic implies that, in the present, the social crisis can be resolved only by knowledge of a hidden, heavenly reality. It is only in terms of this true, invisible reality that the worldly, visible realm can be properly understood.

In the Twentieth Century

What can we in 1981 learn from this model of a community in crisis? The book of Revelation is a very powerful portrayal of conflict and its resolution. As such it must be handled with care. Its roots in social crisis make it an ideal vehicle for the expression and outlet of feelings of envy, resentment and desire for revenge. Its images of battle and bloodshed may function in either of two ways. They may allow for a release of psychological tension and thus a nonviolent resolution of conflict. On the other hand, in some circumstances, quite apart from the author's intention, these images could move a person or group from violent fantasy to violent deeds.

The question may be raised whether the dualistic view of Revelation was justified. Was Rome so totally a tool of Satan? The same sort of question would have to be raised about some contemporary uses of Revelation in theologies of hope and liberation. When is one justified in portraying one's opponent as the monster of watery chaos?

Revelation is powerful in part because of its insights into the nature of reality. It reminds us of the dark side of creation, of human beings and institutions. It reminds us that life is a matter of conflict and that the powers of death sometimes have the upper hand. And finally, however one-sided its view of a social system it opposes, Revelation reminds the privileged what it is like to live on the boundary.

Settlers and Sojourners: Americans and Their Land

Richard E. Wentz

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> Your dead forget you and the country of their birth as soon as they go beyond the grave and walk among the stars. They are quickly forgotten and they never return. Our dead never forget this beautiful earth. It is their mother. They always love and remember her rivers, her great mountains, her valleys. They long for the living, who are lonely too and who long for the dead. And their spirits often return to visit and console us.[1]

Those words by Chief Seattle, spoken in 1855, are a vivid representation of the radical difference between the experience of the red American and the white American. The Chief of the small Duwamish tribe on Puget Sound, in signing the Treaty of Port Elliott, was forecasting the interminable anxiety that would befall the white man. There would be a time of haunting by the "invisible dead." "Let (the white man) be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not altogether powerless. Dead, did I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds."

Chief Seattle's oratory revealed a world that was not shared by his auditors. At the heart of the matter is a view of the earth that has served as the historical basis of conflict between Americans of red and white heritages. The most prominent focus of misunderstanding between American Indians and the dominant culture has been the land.[2] Disputes over land continue to be the fundamental issue between red and white Americans. Interpretations of the land serve as the basis of dispute because land is a religious matter. And *that* white America could never bring itself to comprehend. For the most part, European Americans have not understood the meaning of land religiously; whereas, the American Indian has no other comprehension — even in the midst of a secular twentieth century.

A religious understanding of land is one that assumes that the very unitive meaning of life somehow includes the land. Johann Kelpius, hermit of the Wissahickon, recounts these words of an Indian spokesman, directed in 1701 to the proprietor of Pennsylvania:

> You ask us to believe in the great Creator and ruler of Heaven and earth, and yet you yourself do not believe or trust Him, for you *have taken the land unto yourself, which we and our friends occupied in common.* You scheme night and day how you may preserve it,

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[1] Louis Thomas Jones, *Aboriginal American Oratory* (Los Angeles: Southwest Museum, 1965); reprinted in Shirley Hill Wist and Stan Steiner, *The Way: An Anthology of American Indian Literature* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 28-29.

[2] Wilcomb E. Washburn, *Red Man's Land/White Man's Land: A Study of the Past and Present Status of the American Indian* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 143.

> so that none can take it from you. Yea, you even scheme beyond your life, and parcel it out between your children, this manor for one child, that manor for another. We believe in God, the Creator, and ruler of Heaven and earth. He maintains the sun. He maintained our fathers for so many many moons. He maintains us and we believe and are sure that He will also protect our children, as well as ourselves. And so long as we have this faith, we trust in Him, and never bequeath a foot of ground.[3] (italics mine)

Of course, we must bear in mind that we are dealing with *accounts* of the words of the Indians, and not with first-hand written sources. This means that we are often confronted with whatever it is that the recorder understood the Indian to believe, wanted him to believe, or wanted the reader to believe about the Indian. In spite of such qualifying considerations, we can take this speech to point out the manner in which the religious understanding of the land was the leading concern in relations between white and red Americans. I would venture to say that it is probably true that neither understood the other, even when they used the same words.

So my thesis is this: Past differences between European and native Americans can be understood by examining their views of the land. While there are the usual dangers of generalizing, that is, there are many tribes and families of red Americans with some diversity in their thoughts and ways, the Indians' views of the land led them to live in the style of the sojourner. The European-American tended to be the proprietor-settler. Americans tended to be settlers or sojourners, depending upon their religious understanding of the land.

Conflicting Worldviews

Religion is fundamentally expressed in terms of worldview. From the beginning of the red and white encounter, there was a confrontation of worldviews. Europeans were the exponents of a fervent historical motivation. Human destiny was something that took place in a setting partly provided, but waiting for human initiative. Possessed of a devout eschatological thrust, Europeans tended to direct their thoughts and actions toward a future which held promise of fulfillment. The setting itself was utilitarian, if not irrelevant. This eschatological thrust was sometimes articulated by literature, philosophy and theology; at other times it was also part of the beliefs that people have when they consider themselves not especially religious. Over the centuries, the Renaissance and Reformation exerted a continuing and pervasive influence on Western culture. Whatever else people believed, they could agree with the exponents of Enlightenment religion that the world was brought into effect by a



Supreme Being who expected emulation by humanity. We were to take the stuff of the world and make something of it. One wonders parenthetically whether it could be expected that, like this distant Creator, we would eventually cease to function (in God's image). The thoughts and the actions of Western European humanity tended to become abstract and operational.

Much has been written recently of the autonomous character of the modern mind and its presumptuous separation from the contexts in which it lives. It was derived of a worldview compounded by circumstance and the exaggeration of biblical and Greek notions in the course of exciting discoveries in science, philosophy and geography. This emboldened mind was revolutionary and zealous, if perhaps somewhat intolerant. Pious dissenters and radical religionists, as well as rationalists and opportunists were emissaries of this mind; and they found the North American continent a congenial environment for their exploits. In fact, the American wilderness seemed to say to them: Here is a setting; let's see what you can do with it. It awaits your dedication; it may well be the last place for the fulfillment of history, of divine and human destiny.

Representatives of such a worldview would find it extremely difficult to comprehend one that was altogether different, except that it would have to assume the inferiority of most other views. However, it is just as true that the red Americans would find the European worldview incomprehensible. The mythology of these people reveals a worldview in which human beings are part of the personal interdependence of animals, mountains, skies and waters.[4] One of the early records of Indian life and belief is provided by John Heckewelder, Moravian missionary in Ohio and Pennsylvania. He discovered what was for him a peculiar sense of Indian relationship to the animal world. He was informed, for example, that the Delawares considered themselves grandchildren to the rattlesnake.[5] Heckewelder learned that the Delawares, like many native Americans, emerged out of the interior of the earth. It was the wolf who first found his way to the surface and lured others out of their damp and dark residence.[6] When one emerges from the earth with the assistance of the animals, one acquires a view of the world that is quite different from that of those of us who are placed here by a Creator — who is quite removed from the creation and wishes human beings to act in the same manner.

[3] Quoted in Samuel W. Pennypacker, *The Settlement of Germantown, Pennsylvania, and the Beginning of German Emigration to North America* (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1970, reprint of an 1899 edition), 252.

[4] See Ruth M. Underhill, *Red Man's Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

[5] Paul A. W. Wallace, Ed., *Thirty Thousand Miles With John Heckewelder* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1958), 51.

[6] *Ibid.*

I realize I am offering a caricature of the best of Western thought on such matters, but it is not an exaggeration to say that the *modern* mind, since the Renaissance and Reformation, has lived with such a worldview. What is extremely important to observe is that such opposite perspectives as we have described also develop *different views of history.* You can not subsume the red American story into the European American conception of history without doing violence to it. What we call history is derived of a worldview that makes maximum use of human intentionality. Such history does not exist for the red Americans. Their history is part of a story that has intricate, yet simple, cosmological involvement. This probably means that if we wish to do a new history, the native American will have to discover the meaning of Western intentionality, while the scientifically oriented historians will have to discover their own mythology, along with the art of storytelling.

Colonial American attitudes toward the Indian tended to fluctuate between the extremes of romanticizing the noble savage and Volney's notion that the Indian world was one of anarchism, arrogance and violence.[7] To Volney and others, Indians had not yet learned to do things as they ought. They were savages, without benefit of family and civilizing institutions. The romantic refused to accept Indians for what they were, and made them into something which could compensate for the failure of white intentional history. Enlightenment progressive libertines (as Elemire Zolla refers to them), on the other hand, refused to accept Indians for what they were because they assumed that their own worldview was absolute.[8]

These essential attitudes are still with us. They are the cause of most of our difficulties with regard to relations between red and white Americans. And they are also the focus of our historical dilemma. Differences in worldview are religious differences that cause economic, political and historical problems. "You have noticed," said Black Elk,

> that everything an Indian has is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. In the old days when we were a strong and happy people, all our power came to us from the sacred hoop of the nation. . . Everything the Power of the World does in a circle. . . The life of a man is a circle. . . But the Wasichus (whites) have put us in these square boxes. Our power is gone and we are dying, for the power is not in us any more. [9]

White Americans had their boxes because their worldview demanded the regulation of space in order that it might be controlled. They became the proprietor-settler, whose understanding of the world could not contend with the circular life of the sojourning red American.



Territory of Sojourn

For the European American, the land became private property; whereas for the native American, it was ground of being. Indians and white both contended for the land, but from the beginning it became evident that their contention was for different reasons. Land, for Indians, was the ground out of which they emerged, the habitat shared with all other living things. A certain wide range of land had been the place of sojourn by their fathers and grandfathers. This land was their mother and grandmother. It was their range of existence, either as a hunter-gatherer or as hunter-gatherer-agriculturalist. And if they seemed more settled and agricultural in their culture, it was with a sense of having to operate with the rules and limitations of the earth of which they were part. In all of this activity there was a certain amount of exploitation, but it was done with a sense of belonging to the very creatures that were exploited.[10] Land was the range of existence, the ground of being. If it was to be claimed by a tribe, it was claimed in common and with the understanding that outsiders might sometimes share its goodness.[11] And it was claimed as territory of sojourn, not possession.

The evidence for such observations is abundant. The fact of its continued presence from colonial times at least through the nineteenth century is an indication of its validity. David Zeisberger, another Moravian to recount his impressions of Indians in Ohio and Pennsylvania, wrote of the manner in which the various tribes he encountered thought of the land as territory over which to roam in freedom, as well as to fight over with each other and with whites. But it was not with a sense of possession, rather with a sense of accessibility. Territory was where people had been born, lived, fought, died and were buried; where they subsisted with the source of life.[12] "On their journeys," wrote Zeisberger, "they are never in haste, for they are everywhere at home and whithersoever they wander they find sustenance in the forest."[13]

Heckewelder relates a number of interesting incidents of this variety. On one occasion a missionary had erected a cabin and was in process of expanding

[7] Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence, The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 383.

[8] Elemire Zolla, *The Writer and the Shaman* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1973).

[9] John Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks* (New York: Pocket Books, 1972), 164-166.

[10] Slotkin, 559.

[11] *Ibid.*, 43; see also Joseph S. Walton, *Conrad Weiser and the Indian Policy of Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York: Arno Press, 1971; reprint of Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1900), 277.

[12] Archer Butler Hulbest and William Nathaniel Schwarze, editors, *David Zeisberger's History of the North American Indians* (Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1910), 9, 12, 14, 147.

[13] *Ibid.*, 22.

his agricultural domain. A representative of the Council of the tribe drew on his experience among Roman Catholic priests in Detroit. These priests, said the speaker, have only small garden plots. They cut down no trees and tore open no great stretches of land to till. They existed as the Indian did, by relying on a source other than that of hard labor and acquisitiveness. So, if you are called by the Great Spirit to preach among us, continued the speaker, then you will be provided for as were the priests in Detroit. You may have a garden plot, no more.[14]

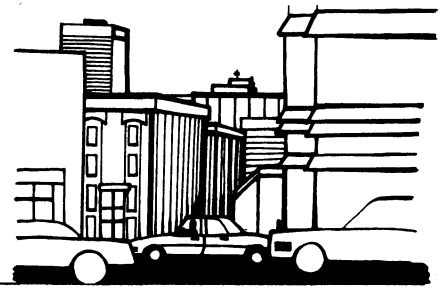
On another occasion, Heckewelder was irritated by the fact that some traveling Indians had pastured horses in his meadow at Gnadenhuetten on the Muskingum. He complained to them of trespass and pointed out how his crop of hay had been destroyed. Do you make the grass grow? asked one of the Indians. No, Mannitto causes it to grow for all our horses. The grass belongs to all, just as the game in the woods is common to all. If we have not complained when you ate of bear's meat, why should you be disturbed that our horses ate *some* of what you call *your* grass, he asked?[15] Francis Daniel Pastorius, founder of Germantown, commented that the Indians planted corn and beans about their huts, but paid "no attention to further cultivation of the ground, and to cattle, and wonder much that the Christians are so much troubled over eating and drinking, clothing and houses, as though they doubted that God would care for them."[16]

One of the most bloody episodes of American history had to do with the manner in which the colonial governments sought to gain land by pitting the Iroquois against the Delawares.[17] "The Governor of Virginia and the Governor of Canada," said an Indian statement of 1754,

> are both quarreling about lands which belong to us, and such a quarrel as this may end in our destruction. They fight who shall have the land. The Governors of Virginia and Pennsylvania have made paths through our country to trade, and built houses without acquainting us with it. They should have asked our consent to build there . . .[18]

Among the Puritans of New England, conversion of the natives was frequently stated justification for settlement and colonization. Yet it is interesting to note that no clergyman ever came from England expressly to evangelize the Indians.[19] And according to Henry Adams, even Thomas Jefferson's greed for land "equalled that of any settler on the border, and his humanity to the Indian suffered the suspicion of having among its motives the purpose of gaining lands for the whites."[20]

That the Indian viewed the land much differently than the whites is illustrated by an anthropologist's description of the sale of Manhattan:



> [In] the eye of [the Indians] the currency was the symbol, not the value equivalent, of the relinquishment of their hereditary rights to the land as well as to its products. This . . . price was to them a symbol over which they transferred their goodwill and spiritual power over forces dormant in the land, clearing away the poison that might have been engendered by the inequality of value in the transfer."[21]

The point to be taken further is that *private* property was the *real* villain in the process of misunderstanding. For, in the Indian worldview, the land could not be possessed, only claimed as a range, a territory of tribal existence with the earth. There could be no individual possession of land among a sojourning people. Only settlers intend to possess; and European settlers of the modern vintage thought of themselves as individual, autonomous and godlike possessors of the land.

Territory of "Progress"

For the whites, land was an instrument of progress; for the American Indian it was the place where important words had been spoken; where identity, vocation, and destiny were experienced. Time and space do not permit a full-scale treatment of this problem in this essay. Elemire Zolla has offered an interesting discussion of the manner in which progress controlled European attitudes to the native American. I wish only to emphasize that it was the different views of the land, derived from differing worldviews which enabled the European to use land as an instrument of their own progressive march to human fulfillment. We have become familiar with the symbolism of the wilderness, which for Europeans frequently represented that which was to be overcome by civilized society.[22] It was assumed that the settled life of the farmer was one of industry, intelligence, and high human achievement. The settled life was certainly in keeping with the Renaissance and humanist (whether Christian or not) ethic of individual toil as a mark of the dedicated and enlightened (or redeemed) existence.

Progress required a settled life, which in turn converted the land into a measure of possession either as wealth or as natural resource. Crevecoeur, for ex-

[14] Paul A. W. Wallace, 42-43.

[15] *Ibid.*, 144.

[16] Pennypacker, 236-237.

[17] Joseph S. Walton, *Conrad Weiser*, 29.

[18] *Ibid.*, 279.

[19] Reference in unpublished anthology, Robert S. Michaelsen, "The Encounter of Religions in North America: White and Red; European and Native," 95.

[20] Zolla, *The Writer and the Shaman*, 132.

[21] Quoted in Slotkin, 172.

[22] Slotkin, 42; see also Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); George H. Williams, *Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

ample, felt that intelligence and reason were debased and dominated by passions and fears in the lives of the sojourning Indians.[23] Progress was (still is, for many of us) an absolute value that makes it possible to comprehend cultures like the native American's as earlier, hence morally inferior. To fail to see the settled life and the kind of intelligence it requires was to see little intelligence or morality at all for many white Americans. A commentator of the mid-nineteenth century noted that the Indians had "no chamber of commerce, no insurance companies, no joint stock associations" because, the author pointed out,

> the complete development of the tender affections, and the institution of those associations by which men express their interest in one another, and aid one another, depends almost entirely upon the diffusion of Christianity.[24]

What he really meant was that the modern mind of an enlightened, individualistic European Christendom was by some strange self-definition more progressive than any other combination of human spirituality.

From the seventeenth century onwards, the notion of progress was a dominant motif. It defined white attitudes toward the American land and its native residents. King Philip's War (1675-1676) had been fought because Indians had sought to remove whites from land that had been usurped. But the land had been claimed for progress over inferior and savage claims. John Cotton had preached in 1630 of "God's Promise to His Plantation."

> God makes room for his people in three ways.
>
> 1. when he casts out the Enemies of a people before them, by lawful war with the inhabitants . . .
>
> 2. when he gives a foreign people favor in the eye of many native people to come and sit down with them, either by way of purchase . . . or else when they give it in courtesy;[25]

We may ask, why should God grant such favor? Cotton applies a very theological view of the doctrine of Progress:

> 3. when he makes a Country, *though not altogether void* of inhabitants, yet *void in that place where they reside.* Where there is a vacant place there is liberty for the sons of Adam or Noah to come and inhabit, *though they neither buy it nor ask their leave.*[26]

In other words, God's sovereignty determines the placing of peoples. And if some people do not use the land the way they ought to, it is proper for those who know how to use it to take it over.[27] To use the land improperly is to make that land as though devoid of inhabitants. Progress is a providential sign that invalidates inferior claims.

To be sure, not all white Americans shared in this progressivist assumption. But almost all shared in the benefits of



that assumption. Whether a Roger Williams, a William Penn, a John Woolman, or a Samuel Farmar Jarvis was aware of the truth of native claims or not is almost beside the point. For all of them were settlers among a people who were essentially sojourners, residents of the range of existence.

It is difficult to tell whether the way of the settler or that of the sojourner is the better way. From the perspective of this moment in our experience, the evidence seems to fall heavily in favor of the sojourner. But, lest I be guilty of some ideal of reverse progressivism, I prefer to let each be what they are. If my words seemed to be weighted in the ways of the sojourner, it is because I believe that we must re-do our history with an honest appreciation of their worldview. Our history has been one-sided because it is a landed history, a settler's history.

In Conrad Richter's novel of Indian life, *A Country of Strangers,* the author depicts life among the Delawares in the 18th century. Richter seeks to avoid romanticizing Indian life, while at the same time, revising history from the red American's perspective: In a key incident, Indians have burned the house of an important white settler. One of the observers is a white girl who has been brought up among the Indians:

> Staring at [the remains of the limestone house] Stone Girl remembered the stories in her home village. Old men would sit peacefully smoking in front of their cabins and tell of burning a house like this. It was the wickedness of the white vandal that had brought it on him. He had taken possession of Indian land as if the Great Spirit had given it to him. He had destroyed the trees, cut them down not for winter warmth but to pile and burn in huge wanton fires so that the smoke drove the game away in the forest. Not satisfied, he had turned up even the sacred Indian earth with his ground cutter and crusher. For awhile the Indian had endured him, hoping he would get tired and go away. In the end he found the only way to get rid of the white plunderer was to destroy him and the work of his hands. He had lain in the forest watching and hating the white profaner, then early in the morning descended on him! *Ehih!* What a difference now. He who had been so bold and shameless begged for his life. The Indian teller of tales would hold his pipe from his mouth and mimic the

[23] Slotkin, 335.

[24] Michaelsen anthology, 130.

[25] *Ibid.*, 32.

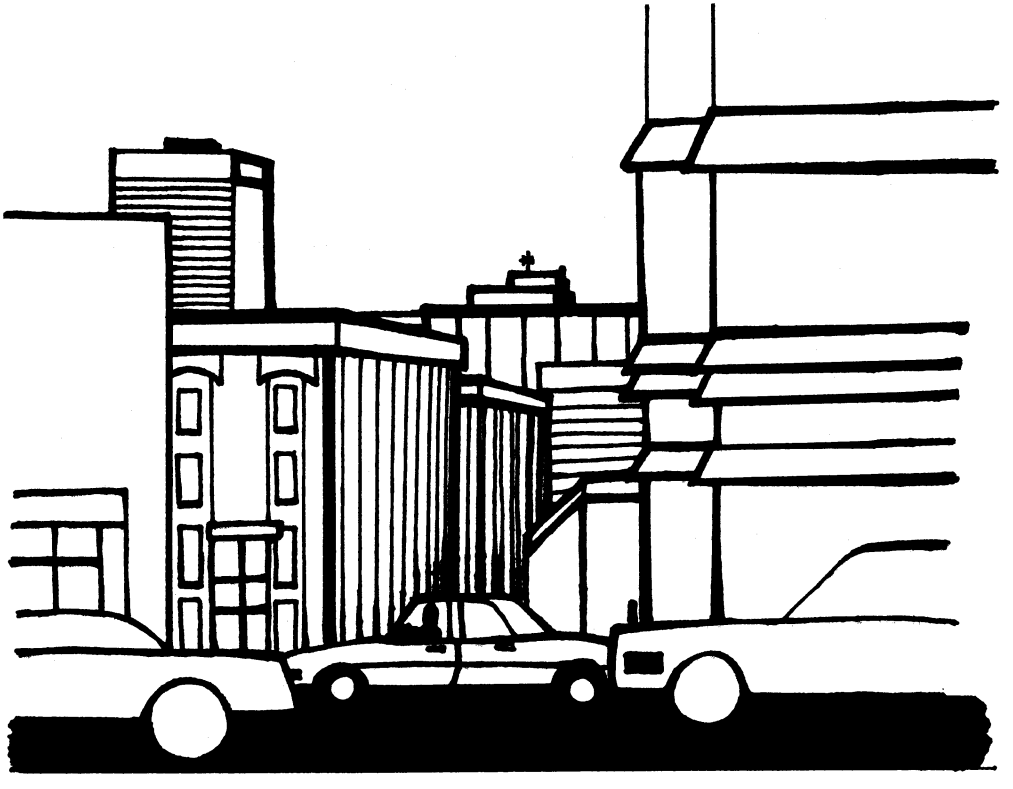
[26] *Ibid.*

[27] See also the case of the Cherokees, where the charge was that they had forfeited their right to the land by not cultivating it. The law required that a man "improve" the land; improvements meant agriculture. See Slotkin, 355-356.

fearful faces, the useless prayers to the white man's gods. The villagers had heard the story many times. They stood around waiting for the happy ending, that the white man had paid for his crimes with blood and scalps and with burned houses and crops for the burning of the Indian forest."[28]

It is all an affair of the land. Our history is the story of proprietor-settlers and sojourners, both attempting to come to terms with this continent. It is a story of two worldviews, encountering each other in terms of rejection and misunderstanding.

[28] Conrad Richter, *A Country of Strangers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 128-129.



Tensions in Norwegian Lutheranism

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The Lutheran state church of Norway has found itself in a perpetual state of crisis in recent years. During the 1970s it was frequently at loggerheads with the governing Labor Party over such issues as the liberalization of abortion policy, the extent to which employers may discriminate along religious lines when hiring new employees, and the appointment of bishops. Without having satisfactorily solved any of these or other problems endemic to its Erastian position in Norwegian society, the church entered the 1980s racked by internal theological disputes which threaten its integrity and have caused many observers to doubt that it can survive in its present form. Some pessimistic church people have broached the possibility of a schism; others, without ruling out that eventuality, fear that the Lutheran establishment will be too preoccupied with divisions in its ranks to meet effectively the mounting challenges of secularization, religious pluralism, and other vicissitudes of rapid modernization.

In the present article I shall analyze two central issues in Norwegian Lutheranism, namely the historicity of the Virgin Birth of Christ and the ordination of women. While neither of these disputes is new or uniquely Norwegian, they take place in a church weakened by a dearth of clerical discipline and unity, massive indifference and hypocrisy among its nominal members, and a widening cleft between itself on the one hand and other institutions and the lifestyles of most Norwegians on the other. The centrifugal currents of diverse and incompatible convictions are presently far stronger than whatever centripetal forces may be present to restore stability to Norwegian Lutheranism.

These controversies involving the Virgin Birth and the appropriateness of ordaining women will be familiar to many Christians in North America. Indeed, they have contributed to disunity and schisms in Lutheran and other Protestant denominations on both sides of the Atlantic. Regrettably, the Norwegian combatants, incapable of settling their own theological disputes, can offer no panaceas for embattled Christians abroad. Nevertheless, an analysis of the tempests in this diminutive land where 93 percent of the population is nominally within the state church may help North American Lutherans to understand the larger context of their own controversies.

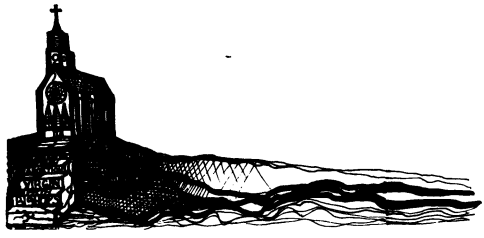
On the surface, Norway may seem an unlikely arena for vigorous public theological debate. The nation lies near the cutting edge of modernization and, as elsewhere in Europe, secularization has been an obvious biproduct of postwar prosperity and rapid social change. Public opinion polls and sociological studies conducted during the late 1970s revealed a widening cleft between the official faith of the state and the beliefs and practices of most Norwegians. The number who had attended worship services or had been in church for any other

reason more than 20 times in 1978 had sunk to 5 percent. Only 30 percent had opened their Bibles that year.[1] 75 percent professed belief in God in 1978, a decline of 10 percent in 13 years.[2] These trends will in all likelihood continue, since in most quantifiable respects young Norwegians are less religious than their older compatriots.

The number of withdrawals from the Lutheran establishment reached record levels in the late 1970s. Nevertheless, the spiritual hunger of most Norwegians has not diminished the appetite of many clergy and active laity for theological debate. The present struggles in Norwegian Lutheranism can be traced to the turn of the century when German higher criticism of the Bible began to make inroads in the theological faculty of what is now the University of Oslo. As one reaction to this liberalizing current, another institution for educating pastors, *Menighetsfakultetet* (literally "the Church Faculty," but more meaningfully translated as the Independent Theological Faculty) was founded in 1907. Consistently a bastion of conservatism by almost any Lutheran standard, it today enrolls approximately ten times as many students as the theological faculty at the University of Oslo and has long trained the majority of the pastors for the state church. Meanwhile, theologians at the university have accommodated various trends in modern Protestant thought while generally maintaining a confessional Lutheran stance. Their flexibility on certain issues has subjected them to occasional verbal abuse, especially from pastors educated at the Independent Theological Faculty. Yet in the spectrum of European Lutheranism they would be most appropriately placed to the right of center. The two institutions are often seen as rivals but, as some of the university theologians point out when accused of deviating from Lutheran orthodoxy, the cleft between them and their colleagues at the Independent Theological Faculty has narrowed in recent years.

The debate over the Virgin Birth, however, indicated that on several key matters of hermeneutics and confessional theology the cleavages remain deep and may be growing wider. Theologians of the two faculties, especially the New Testament scholars, have taken incompatible positions. Yet the inter-faculty debate is only one part of a wider scale of perspectives on the Bible in which Norwegian Christians have taken positions ranging from old-style rational liberalism on one extreme to unflinching literalism on the other.

The most prominent exponent of the liberal-rational view is not a professional theologian, but the literary critic Philip Houm (b.1911). On Christmas Eve of 1962 Houm published in the independent liberal daily *Dagbladet* an unqualified attack on the Virgin Birth, which he dismissed as an atavistic remnant of antiquity which Christianity should have outgrown. Indeed, he declared, "one is amazed that such a



primitive story as that of the Virgin Birth has been able to survive so long in the Christian church." Blaming its longevity on Christianity's supposedly "generally negative view of sexuality," Houm indicted Augustine for elevating celibacy to a lofty position on the church's scale of values and indissolubly linking sin with sex. As a result, he argued, Christianity has consistently emphasized that Christ's freedom from original sin would not have been possible had he been born of a worldly father. The literary scholar asserted, however, that some Roman Catholic theologians had finally begun to question the necessity of such doctrines as the Immaculate Conception and the perpetual virginity of Mary. He bitingly concluded his already provocative Yuletide present by suggesting that "perhaps Protestant theologians should also have bad consciences because of their all too facile use of biblical texts."

Houm broadened his attack on the Virgin Birth three years later in *Mannen fra Nasaret og Den norske kirke* [The Man from Nazareth and the Norwegian Church], a book in which he also disavowed the physical resurrection of Christ. His arguments were characterized less by depth and originality than by their eclectic character. Most, however, were borrowed from the history of religions school. Declared Houm,

> To begin with, we can be certain that the idea of the Virgin Birth originated in Iran; among other things, the doctrine is evidence of the strong Persian influence on Judaism during the centuries immediately preceding the birth of Jesus.

He pointed out that virgin births had also been ascribed to Alexander the Great, Plato, Scipio Africanus, and other prominent individuals. Since in the Hellenistic world such accounts were commonplace, it was only natural that "both Luke and Matthew begin their gospels with reports which are filled to the brim with stories of a mystical and legendary sort. . ." Houm also touched on exegetical problems arising from the nativity accounts in Matthew and Luke and found support for his own position in the fact that neither Paul nor Mark mention the Virgin Birth.[3] His bestselling book predictably aroused the ire of many in the church, but probably owing both to its author's position on the periphery of Norwegian Christianity and the derivative nature of his arguments, its impact faded rapidly and did not necessitate a major scholarly reaction.

The views of Jacob S. Jervell (b. 1925) have been far more consequential. They are the epicenter of the tremors which have shaken the Lutheran establishment in recent years. Jervell, a professor of New Testament at the University of Oslo

[1] *Aftenposten* (Oslo), April 11, 1979.

[2] *Aftenposten,* January 4, 1979.

[3] Philip Houm, *Mannen fra Nasaret og Den norske kirke* (Oslo: H. Aschehoug, 1965), 87-91.

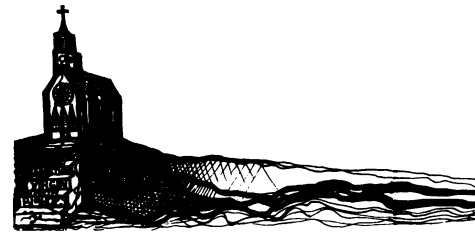
and one of the few Norwegian theologians known outside of Scandinavia, has been instrumental in bringing to Norway the scholarship of Ernst Kaesemann and other German scholars. He foreshadowed the present dispute in a series of lectures on the quest for the historical Jesus broadcast in 1962. In harmony with more than half a century of biblical scholarship, the young professor declared

> the narratives of Jesus' birth and childhood found in the gospels of Matthew and Luke cannot be used as historical sources for the life of Jesus . . . They arose for Christological reasons and seek to explain the meaning of Jesus' coming to the world. One can find a number of legendary elements in them; the natural and the "supernatural" are inseparable. Only a small group within apostolic Christianity knew of these accounts, which were not part of the earliest proclamation of the gospel.[4]

Jervell did not discuss directly the doctrine of the Virgin Birth at that time, and during the intervening years he has paid it scant attention. In an expanded series of lectures broadcast in 1969 and 1970, however, he questioned the historicity of the nativity stories. Replying to his critics, Jervell conceded in a popular Lutheran periodical that he did not regard the Virgin Birth as an historic event. He also stated that "the creation of the world in seven days, the story of the Garden of Eden, etc. are old traditions which hardly relate historical facts."[5] Moreover, he has asserted repeatedly that the Virgin Birth is peripheral to the gospel and unnecessary to the doctrine of the Incarnation. In an interview broadcast on Norwegian radio in the autumn of 1979, Jervell raised ears by suggesting that the word "virgin" be deleted from the Apostles' Creed. Yet on the whole, it has been his unwillingness to affirm the Virgin Birth, rather than a frontal assault on it, that has irked conservative Norwegian Christians. Jervell's statements, they insist, are "unclear." His opponents have frequently protested against and occasionally prevented him from preaching to congregations and voluntary groups within the state church. How, they ask, can Jervell lead with full sincerity a worship service which affirms the Virgin Birth?

One such incident, in November, 1979, triggered a lengthy debate. Jervell was invited to preach at a Sunday morning worship service in Arendal, an important provincial town on Norway's pietistic southern coast. However, the parish pastor cancelled the invitation. The parish council thereupon chose to permit Jervell to preach at an evening service the same day, a compromise which apparently satisfied no one. Bishop Erling Utnem (b. 1920) of Kristiansand, one of Jervell's foes, agreed to it.

The incident in Arendal was especially heated because it coincided with the



refusal of Hakon Andersen (b. 1920), bishop of another diocese in southern Norway, to ordain a theology graduate who could not conscientiously affirm an unqualified belief in the Virgin Birth. Andersen's decision received public support from Carl Frederik Wisloff (b. 1908), an ecclesiastical historian who retired early from the Independent Theological Faculty when even that bastion of conservatism became too flexible for him and whose rigid hostility toward views which differ from his own have embarrassed other conservatives. Wisloff declared that the bishop had acted correctly in postponing the ordination until the candidate had "come to theological clarity."[6] Jens Lund Andersen, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church — after the Pentecostals the largest nonconformist communion in Norway — crossed denominational lines to lend similar support.[7]

While the recent debate about the Virgin Birth was at its height, some Norwegian Lutherans renewed the perennial issue of ordaining women. The latter question, involving many of the same antagonists and similar matters of biblical authority and exegesis, also gained considerable public attention. Opponents of women's ordination are deeply entrenched, and the controversy promises to remain as severe among Norwegian Lutherans as it has long been among their North American counterparts of several denominations.[8]

The appropriateness of ordaining women has been discussed in Scandinavia for several decades. The social and political emancipation of women in northern Europe inevitably gave impetus to demands by some that they play a more active role in Christian leadership as well. As early as 1906 Finnish women gained suffrage in general elections; women in Norway, Denmark and Sweden were enfranchised in 1913, 1915 and 1921, respectively. The Norwegian parliament in 1938 opened ministerial positions to women with the provision that they could not be forced on congregations which were opposed to them. That reservation was deleted in 1956. Danish women were given the legal right to become pastors in 1947. In the 1950s approximately 500 clergymen in the Danish state church vowed to resign if the government actually began to install women pastors. Significant numbers of women have been ordained in Denmark, but the massive walkout never took place. In the Swedish state church the ordination of women was approved in 1958 and began two years later despite powerful protests by many clergymen.

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[4] Jacob Jervell, *Den historiske Jesus* (Oslo: Forlaget Land og Kirke, 1962), 103n.

[5] Jacob Jervel, "Kvalbeins ubesvarte sporsmal," *Luthersk Kirketidende,* CV (June 20, 1970) 266-267.

[6] *Aftenposten,* October 31, 1979.

[7] *Aftenposten,* November 14, 1979.

[8] For one recent set of arguments, see "For the Ordination of Women," *CurTM* 6 (1979) 132-143.

A similar resistance movement began to gain headway in Norway in the 1950s. Realizing that the law of 1956 would soon bring the issue to a crossroads, a large number of Lutherans, led by the Pastoral Association for Bible and Confession, marshalled various arguments against female ordination. In addition to the familiar passages in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:12, opponents pointed out that Jesus had chosen only male apostles and maintained that women were simply unsuited for ministerial tasks. As one leader of the campaign asserted,

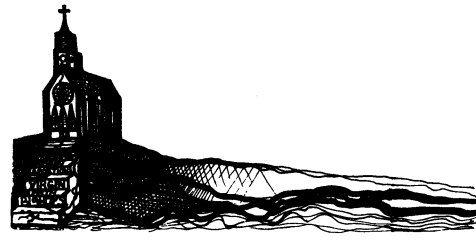
> We have a divinely inspired "division of labor" which is an expression of realism in the biblical view of mankind; in the final analysis it will better preserve women's uniqueness and human value than will modern concepts of equality.[9]

The government refused to relent and in 1961 the ministerium of the state church became sexually integrated. The first female ordained and the circumstances of her installation were unusual in several ways. Ingrid Bjerkas, then 59 years old, had undergone a conversion experience during the German occupation of Norway and studied theology for seven and a half years at the University of Oslo in the 1950s. The liberal bishop who ordained her, Kristian Schelderup, had been involved in disputes with conservative colleagues since the 1920s. Six of the eight other bishops stated publicly that they did not approve of women pastors. The parish which Bjerkas accepted was a rural one on an island north of the Arctic Circle.[10]

This modest crevice in a male-dominated office continued to widen during the 1960s as several other women studied divinity at the University of Oslo and entered the ministry. During the following decade the Independent Theological Faculty opened its doors to women with the same intention. That move, which followed a long and bitter debate within the institution, cost the Independent Faculty some of its most ardent supporters and seemed to have removed the last major hurdle from general female participation in the leadership of the state church.

Yet opposition remained strong in some quarters. The Pastoral Association for Bible and Confession, together with a "high-church" group called Ecclesiastical Renewal, launched a counteroffensive to clear what they believed were unwarranted insurgents from a divinely ordained male office. In November, 1979 the two organizations jointly issued a set of guidelines outlining their strategy to turn back the clerical clock. Unabashedly advocating civil disobedience, their leaders admonished clergymen, sextons, organists and other personnel not to cooperate with clergywomen. In the words of their statement,

> We do not take part in worship services and other ecclesiastical functions at which a woman officiates or assists as a pastor. We do not



take communion from a female pastor or assist their administering of the sacraments. We do not accept spiritual counseling from a female pastor. Nobody may be forced against his conscience to participate in worship services or other ecclesiastical functions where a woman serves as a pastor, even if our job instructions make it unavoidable to do so.[11]

The reaction to this strategy was swift and sharp; moreover, it was led by men. One pastor asked,

> If a woman was chosen and called to give birth to our Savior on the first Christmas, should she not be allowed to administer His body and blood in the sacraments? . . . since a woman was the first person whom Jesus sent to His disciples to proclaim His resurrection, should she not be allowed to tell about His life and resurrection from a Norwegian pulpit, as well? [12]

Professor Ragnar Leivestad, already deeply involved in the debate about the Virgin Birth, wrote a newspaper article reminding readers that the two organizations responsible for the recent guidelines encompassed only a minority of the Norwegian Lutheran clergy. He also pointed out that all of his colleagues on the university's theological faculty approved of women pastors and thought it important "to encourage more women to study theology with the intention of entering the ministry. . . ." Perhaps on a mildly sarcastic note, Leivestad remarked in conclusion that "hardly anyone today wishes or is in a position to equate the Lord's apostles with the pastors of the Norwegian state church."[13]

One of Leivestad's colleagues, Professor Inge Lonning (b. 1938), now dean of the university's theological faculty, [14] had in the meantime sought to demonstrate the compatibility of women's ordination with the Lutheran doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. His arguments failed.

Norwegian Lutheranism has thus arrived at an impasse. Both sides have dug in deeply and give no sign of budging. The most conservative elements have been especially adamant in declaring their unwillingness to compromise. In December, 1979 the theological faculty at the university suggested a "summit conference" bringing themselves and

[9] Bjarne Skard, *Contra kvinnelige prester* (Oslo: Forlaget Land og Kirke, 1960), 29.

[10] Bjerkas related her story in *Mitt kall* (Oslo: J. W. Cappelens Forlag, 1966).

[11] "Rad i kvinneprestkonflikten," *For Bibel og Bekjennelse,* XVI (November, 1979) 1-2.

[12] Vart Land, December 13, 1979.

[13] *Aftenposten,* December 3, 1979.

[14] Inge Lonning should not be confused with his older brother Per (b. 1928) of the same faculty, who is better known among Lutherans in Norway and in the United States, especially after he dramatically resigned his bishopric in 1975 in protest against the government's liberalization of the abortion law.

the college of bishops together to discuss current doctrinal issues.[15] Their plea apparently fell on deaf ears. Others have openly declared their aversion to speaking with the faculty. "Such a meeting would fail to clarify anything, and its conclusions would be determined in advance by the selection of the participants," explained an executive of the Home Mission Society.[16] A few days later a like-minded lecturer at the Independent Theological Faculty condemned the university theologians as "heretics."[17] At their subsequent annual winter conference, delegates of the voluntary organizations within the state church discussed coordinating their efforts to confront what many believe is the most serious doctrinal crisis in the modern history of Norwegian Christianity. The secretary general of the Norwegian affiliate of the International Federation of Evangelical Students suggested staging a meeting similar to one in 1920 that united conservative forces in a fairly successful campaign to counter the liberal theology then current. [18] Whether it comes about remains to be seen.

Those who are more hospitable to theological reformation are also determined, if generally less bombastic in their rhetoric. Jacob Jervell has enough sympathy among the clergy to have been a serious candidate for two bishoprics in the late 1970s. Pastors who disagreed with the decision not to let him preach in Arendal at a Sunday morning worship service subsequently arranged for him to speak at a church in a neighboring community. The government, moreover, continues to appoint clergywomen, and the minister of ecclesiastical affairs and education has declared that "there is and must be room for the view that Jacob Jervell represents."[19]

Finally, there is no end in sight to the present tension in Norwegian Lutheranism. The issues of ordaining women and the historicity of the Virgin Birth have plagued Norway for two decades or more, pitting one resolute faction against another while often diverting attention from crucial matters on which concensus might have been attainable. As Inge Lonning warned a pan-Scandinavian conference of systematic theologians early in 1980, there is a disturbing tendency among Scandinavian youth — and elsewhere, one might add — to avoid wrestling with complex issues which may require nuanced theological answers, and to canonize simplistic, categorical formulations often unrelated to contemporary realities. It seems likely, therefore, that Norwegian Lutheranism will remain in tension not only with itself, but also with the secular society to which it is becoming increasingly alien.

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[15] *Aftenposten,* December 4, 1979.

[16] *Aftenposten,* December 3, 1979.

[17] *Aftenposten,* December 15, 1979.

[18] *Vart Land,* January 9, 1980.

[19] *Vart Land,* December 6, 1979.

Stewardship as a Life-Style

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"How out of date can you get? Here the world is choking in its own waste products. Countless Christians find it difficult even to believe in God and now we are going to sit down and talk about STEWARDSHIP! How typical! How institutional! How irrelevant!"

It's not hard to imagine a reception like that for any report on stewardship. After all, the term has become an euphemism for "contributing to the church." To a fund raiser, money is a "gift"; to charities, it is a "contribution"; to a lawyer, it is a "consideration"; to church members, it is "stewardship." In a sense, that is a mark of success, because one's money is a sensitive indicator of one's loyalty.

But I don't need to tell you how restricting that popular equation of stewardship with money really is. The current skepticism about stewardship springs precisely from that popular misunderstanding. Church members associate stewardship campaigns with building programs, funding efforts, and "business as usual." There is little interest in pumping funds into a bloated ecclesiastical bureaucracy. The *world* demands our attention; let the church-as-institution shrivel.

Keeping A Broader View

I certainly don't intend to dispel that misconception or reverse the trend with this little paper. I propose only to address those of you who have long held a larger view of stewardship, in the hope that together we can keep our perspective as comprehensive as possible. This breadth is needed now more than ever, because it offers a standpoint from which pollution, faith, world and church can all be treated. It even has something to say about money.

The major problems confronting us are basically ones of priorities. Which is more important to our nation; moonwalks or sidewalks, inflation or employment, defense or decontamination? In our personal lives we wrestle with responsibilities to job vs. family, social action vs. church participation, and giving our children standards vs. understanding.

To establish priorities is to make a religious statement, because religion is a matter of what we put first in our life. As Luther says in his explanation of the first commandment (Large Catechism), "That to which your heart clings and entrusts itself is, I say, really your God." On this basis, the top item on our priority list represents our God and our religion. Some people "worship" their children; others play bridge "religiously;" still others are "dedicated" employees.

Sacrifice and Priorities

Seen in this light, the whole sacrificial system of the Old Testament makes sense. It is easy, I know, to dismiss all the chapters dealing with burnt offerings and grain offerings as quaint vestiges of ancient superstition, but a closer look

yields some surprises. Why did God demand the first-fruits? Why is it declared that "everything that opens the womb belongs to God"? When we remember that the Israelites were a semi-nomadic people who counted their wealth by the size of their herds, the demand for first-lings becomes significant. It was a way of guaranteeing that "God would be God." To sacrifice a bull or a ram to God was a visible demonstration of priorities. No earthly wealth was to stand between the believer and the living God. As the system developed, family and crops were added to the list of would-be idols that had to be offered to the one God through dedication and the tithe. In this way Israel kept its priorities straight.

Many Gods, Many Aspirin

Seen in this light, most of us are trying to serve many gods. No one activity receives our undivided attention. We rush from one altar to another trying to offer a little of ourselves to each deity; nation, job, home, society. If we find this hectic condition within ourselves, I think it is safe to assume that it plagues many others in our society, both inside and outside the church.

Now comes the crucial part. We dare not let stewardship become another of the gods, just one more competing voice for time, talent, and treasure that would make it part of the problem. It must become part of the cure. Stewardship must become the way we deal with competing claims; it must furnish us the perspective within which we handle conflicting priorities. It is like a magnet passing over the jumbled pins and needles of our life, organizing them into a meaningful pattern. Stewardship is the Christian life-style. It is the attitude we bear toward all our responsibilities and possessions.

Responsible, Yet Free

The first mark of this life-style is a sense of responsibility. We feel answerable for what has been entrusted to us. What could be more up-to-date than that? This generation calls it "care of the environment"; an earlier generation called it "conservation"; the church has long called it "stewardship." This generation speaks of "sharing our wealth"; an earlier generation called it "charity"; the church has long practiced it as "stewardship." This generation preaches "being for others"; an earlier generation called it "concern"; the church has long called it "stewardship." In each case, whether talking about the use of nature, wealth, or time, the stewards consider themselves answerable to another. We cannot exploit them or use them only for our own personal benefit. The many New Testament stories about stewards make this clear. There will be an accounting.

But stewardship as a life-style also provides us with a new freedom. It removes

the awful burden of ultimate responsibility from our shoulders. When we think only of the responsibility, we become paralyzed like that servant who had but one talent to watch. Which movement should we join? Which action group should we support? Each has something to offer; none is perfect. How can we decide? So we do nothing, since we cannot take the risk.

The world, however, is God's, not ours. We do what we can to help care for it and heal it, but we know that there are forces far greater than ours working toward the same end. So we take the risk, and pray that our fallible efforts will be used in concert with God's own purpose. This is what Luther meant by "Sin boldly — and trust yet more boldly to the grace of God!" Stewards know that the ultimate disposition of property is not in their hands.

Money and Faith

Now let's come back to money. I'd like to link it with the other crisis of our times, the crisis of faith. We have often linked faith and money in our talk about stewardship, and usually in that order. The faithful Christian is the contributing Christian. If you believe, then you give. I'd like to suggest that reversing the order might also prove workable.

The basic problem of faith today is the question of God's existence, or, more precisely, whether or not God "makes a difference" in our life or the world. We do everything in our power to make sure that God won't *have* to make a difference. We guard against every unforeseen occurrence; we minimize the variables; we insure ourselves against every possible accident, including "acts of God." In short, we try to put our life on such a secure and self-guaranteed basis that there is no room for any will other than our own. No wonder it is difficult to discover the "mighty acts of God."

Our chief instrument in this attempt to conquer the future is our money. We spend it on insurance, market forecasts, research and development, and even on fortune-tellers. Why not see if this remarkable tool could not be put to another use? Why not set out deliberately to use it as a means of providing the sort of conditions under which God's power and presence *would* become manifest? I am suggesting that we use money to establish a "culture medium" in which the acts of God may grow and become visible. Now to some details.

Tithing for Fun and Profit

If money is our chief defense against the unforeseen, then one way to allow the unforeseen to happen is to let down our guard — to spend our money in other ways. The tithe has long been viewed with disfavor among Lutherans because it smacked of legalism. Let's forget that; we can never give enough to God. But what about seeing the tithe as a challenge to take a financial risk? What if the purpose of the tithe is not to satisfy God but to make us a little hungry? What if stretching the budget to give a significant portion to God would force us to abandon our self-reliance?

The first result is that God *will* see us through. We shall discover that God *does* make a difference. I have known many families who have been challenged to give sacrificially (usually to a building campaign) and who have discovered that the risk they took brought exciting discoveries. There was still enough food for the table; the family focused on their new-found burden and thus learned to share; the "financial crisis" never developed. In other words, by using

money to *create* risk rather than to avoid it, a "space" was opened for the graceful touch of God. New friends, new tasks, new joys, and new values crowded onto the scene. It was a fresh start.

The second result springs from the fact that "where your treasure is, there is your heart also." When a family gives sacrificially to a project — and let's hope that it won't always be a building — they are interested in what happens to that money. When the contribution goes toward a project involving people, the family can see how their small gift is multiplied in its usefulness. Perhaps they will become further involved in the project. Once again the stage is set for God's action. The donor is sensitive to what great things can still be accomplished by money that is given wrapped in love.

Having Everything, Possessing Nothing

There is no better way for faith to grow than to be exposed to the radiation of God's activity in our own lives and the lives of others. A program of financial risk will provide the opening for this radiation to stream upon us. One of the best prospects about the current financial crisis which confronts the church is that it will force us to rely again on the power of God (rather than the interest rate) to multiply our loaves and fishes. Perhaps we are on the brink of a new era of faith in the church, since doubt is a disease of the affluent. To live one's life as a steward is to have all things and possess nothing.

Job As Drama: Tragedy or Comedy?

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The literary form of the canonical book of Job is best viewed as unique. Nevertheless, affinities with the canons of drama have been noted by commentators over the centuries. Already in the fifth century of the Christian era, the Eastern church father Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428) identified the book of Job as a drama fashioned in the manner of a Greek playwright. Theodore believed the author, prompted by literary ambition, had distorted an ancient true story of Job, having concocted the Prologue (with its blasphemous picture of God making a wager with the Satan), the fanciful descriptions of Behemoth and Leviathan, and the speeches of the Dialogue (many of which verge on blasphemy). Such a work of unedifying fiction Theodore wished to exclude from the Bible.

The idea that Job is a drama was revived by several commentators after the Reformation. Theodore Beza, the Geneva Calvinist, began a course of lectures on Job in 1587 by dividing the book into acts and scenes. Bishop Robert Lowth in his landmark study on Hebrew poetry, *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum* (1753), noted that eighteenth-century scholars *generally* regarded Job as a drama and dealt with its structure and contents after the manner in which one might analyze an Attic tragedy. Lowth devoted an entire lecture to the question and argued that Job appeared to have all the marks of tragedy that Aristotle outlined in his *Poetics* except the essential mark, viz., the "actio," the dramatic action by which the soul of the drama is unfolded and the tragic event determined and brought about. One may call Job a dramatic poem, he concluded, but not a drama proper.

Greek Drama?

One of the most thoroughgoing attempts to interpret Job as a drama proper was that undertaken by Horace Kallen. His dramatic version of Job was performed in Milwaukee and Madison in 1913 by the Wisconsin Dramatic Society and in Boston by the Harvard Menorah Society in 1916. Kallen was encouraged in the endeavor by Professor George Foot Moore, who also wrote the introduction to the 1918 published version.[1] The aim was to restore Job to what Kallen believed was its original form, "a Greek tragedy in the manner of Euripides" (p. vii). Kallen included the Prologue, the Chorus (a priestly group with musical instruments), and the Epilogue among his *dramatis personae,* along with Job, the Three Friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar), Elihu (cast as leader of the Chorus), and the Voice of God. He set the drama in a village on the edge of the Arabian desert and, besides the actors themselves, placed only Job's shattered house and an altar on stage (the village was in the back-

[1] See now Horace Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1959; paperback reissue of 1918 original).

ground). Kallen included stage directions for the entrances and exits of the double Chorus and the Friends. They first come on stage just after the Prologue. Bildad and Zophar exit to the village after Chapter 21, then reenter the action after 23:10. Kallen also provided directions for gestures and mime; for the burning of incense on the altar; and for changes in lighting to make transitions between night and day, darkness and light. There were sound cues as well, especially for the winds, thunder, and lightning that were to accompany God's Voice from the midst of the stormwind.

For the most part, Kallen simply followed the English text of the American Revised Version, arranging it to read like a script. The few liberties he took with the text, however, illuminate his understanding of the whole. For example, Elihu as leader of the Chorus is present on stage throughout the drama. Thus, he does not appear like the unexpected intruder who suddenly speaks up in Chapter 32 in the Bible. In fact, as leader of the Chorus, Elihu has already spoken with the Chorus on several occasions during the Dialogue. The first time was in response to Job's opening oration (Chapter 3), where Kallen interpolated a choral chant: "Shema Yisrael, Yahweh Elohenu, Yahweh Ehad! The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." The second occasion was at the recitation of the Poem on the Inaccessibility of Wisdom (Chapter 28), which Kallen placed after Chapter 14 (at the conclusion of the first cycle of Dialogue) and orchestrated for two Semi-choruses and individual voices. There, Elihu speaks the refrain ("Where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?") as an antiphon, the Chorus repeats it after verse 6, Elihu after verse 11, the Chorus again after verse 19; then Elihu recites verses 22-27 before the full Chorus response of verse 28. The third occasion was the recitation of the Poem About the Wicked in Chapter 24. The biblical text connects this chapter to Job's speech in Chapter 23. Kallen placed it as a response to Chapter 21 (where Job denies the orthodox doctrine about divine retribution) and divided it into segments for Elihu (verses 2-8) and voices of the Chorus (verses 1 and 25 are omitted). A fourth occasion has Elihu again intoning the Shema, while the Chorus repeats the chant of "The Lord giveth, etc." This interpolation, which Kallen set at the time of evening prayer and placed after Chapter 29, forms a dramatic inclusion with the identical chant he interpolated after Chapter 3 and set at the hour of morning prayer. Kallen interpolated the same chant, this time heard faintly from the village, at the conclusion of the Dialogue and just before the Epilogue.[2] In this way Kallen rearranged the text so that "each round of the great debate is followed by a choral ode" (G.F. Moore, "Introduction," p. xxiii) in the Greek manner and accustomed the audience to the presence of Elihu through his role as leader of the Chorus. The Voice of God that finally is heard at the very conclusion of the Dialogues becomes a counterpart to the *deus ex machina.*

In short, Kallen belived Job was composed about 400 B.C.E. as a tragic drama in four acts in direct imitation of Euripidean theatre. Indeed, he felt that the Jewish author was influenced by Euripidean themes as well as form:

> The injustice of divinity, the unhappiness of mankind, the desirability of death, the rebellion and the ultimate or primal mystical preception which consoles — these are the commonplaces of Euripides' thinking (p. 37).

In his chapter on "The Joban

Philosophy of Life" Kallen finds the tragic features of Job to lie in its conception of a God who is very much like Bergson's *elan vital:* God's "justice" is

> nothing else than power, force, the go and potency, generative and disintegrative, in things. It possesses nothing of the moral or the human; it is not foresight but performance, the originative and annihilative flowing of nature (p. 71).

Divine action is indifferent. In such an ultimate environment the glory of humanity is to cling to one's own integrity and realize the excellence appropriate to one's nature while maintaining one's self by eternal vigilance in the *fear* of our Lord. Our proper excellence *(arete)* is to live courageously, take our chances, and keep our self-respect in a world that was not made for us. In this way we, like Job, can be "victorious in the warfare of living even when life is lost" (p. 78) as, inevitably, it must be! Thus, Job's final words are to be understood not as an expression of repentance, of sorrow over sin and presumption, as the usual translations have it: "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes" (42:6). Rather, they are to be translated: "I recant my challenge, and am comforted amid dust and ashes."[3] They express Job's reconciliation to the indifference of providence.

Personal Encounter

The dramatic dimensions of Job have been explored again in a 1977 issue of *Semeia,* an experimental journal for biblical criticism recently launched by the Society of Biblical Literature. The volume to which I refer, *Semeia 7,* is entitled "Studies in the Book of Job." It attracted the attention of John Dart, the well-known religion writer on the staff of the *Los Angeles Times,* who wrote a lengthy review article in his syndicated column on June 4, 1977. The major essays in the *Semeia* issue all deal with Job as drama.

The tone for the issue is set by Luis Alonso-Schoekel's essay, "Toward a Dramatic Reading of the Book of Job." Alonso-Schoekel asks us to "project a

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[2] Other interpolations and rearrangements include: 1) the Friends' spitting and retorting "Sinner! Liar! Enemy of God!" in response to Job's angry words at 17:5; 2) the placing of 17:10, 8-9 as angry interruption by Job in the middle of Bildad's second speech (after 18:4); 3) the assigning of 21:16, 19a, and 22 to the Friends as interpretations of Job's complaint about the prosperity of the wicked and the interpolation of another stifled objection after v. 26; 4) the placing of 24:1 as conclusion to Job's complaint in Chapter 23; 5) the connecting of 26:5-13 with Chapter 25 as Bildad's last speech; 6) connecting 26:1-4 and 27:1-6 as Job's response to Bildad; 7) assigning 27:7-23 and 24:25 to Zophar; 8) more spitting and insults by the Chorus against Job after their evening prayer; 9) assigning 40:15-24 (Behemoth) and 41:1-10a, 12-34 (Leviathan) to two Semi-choruses that speak in response to Job's peroration in Chapters 29-31; 10) assigning 36:5-15 and 36:26-29 to "A man of the Chorus"; and 11) placing 42:2 (Job's response) after God's first speech (Chapters 38-39) and attaching 40:4-5 to 42:3b-6 after God's second speech (40:1-14).

[3] Kallen notes (81) that this is "the outstanding change" he had to make in the interest of accurate translation. *Nihamti,* derived from a Hebrew root meaning "comfort," can only be translated "I am comforted" in the context of this drama. The Friends came to comfort Job and failed. God succeeded in answer to Job's challenge. In his new translation of the Book of Job, *Into the Whirlwind* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1979), Stephen Mitchell argues for a similar interpretation: "Therefore I will be quiet, comforted that I am dust" (99-100). A radically different view is offered by John Briggs Curtis, who paraphrases: "Therefore I feel loathing, contempt and revulsion [toward you, O God]; and I am sorry for frail man." This statement indicates that Job had reached the point where he "totally and unequivocally" rejected Yahweh. See Curtis's article, "On Job's Response to Yahweh," *JBL* 98 (December, 1979) 497-511.

mental picture of the book as drama, in order to be attentive to the dynamism of its conflict and to enable ourselves to be caught up in it" (0.2.).[4] Appealing to some of the staging of Archibald MacLeish's well-known play *J.B.*, a modern adaptation of Job, he wants us to imagine a stage with a second level on one side. This level represents the upper realm of heaven, where God is seated. It may be lighted with greater or lesser intensity as the dialogue unfolds. In any event, the audience realizes what Job does not: God is ever present and observant although neither seen nor heard by either Job or his friends. Alonso-Schoekel argues,

> This triangular vision is the source of irony that very much enriches the drama. Only at the end of the fourth act will the barrier be removed so that Job can see and hear God: pleased to see him, but appalled to discover that God has been listening all the time" (1.03).

A second, more important, irony follows: the drama of the man Job calls forth audience participation and empathy. The viewer becomes caught up in the testing of Job and finds *himself* under the scrutiny of God (1.05). Thus, "the character of God becomes a spectator and a judge of the audience viewed as characters" (1.06). Suddenly, we find ourselves on stage, just like Elihu, a faceless onlooker through 31 chapters, who suddenly takes the spotlight in Chapter 32 as an "impulsive volunteer" who could no longer be contained and had to jump up on stage and start speaking "as if he were a member of the company" (1.07).

According to Alonso-Schoekel, Job evokes such an "interested" response precisely because it is less a book to be read than an event to be encountered. It is not so much a debate about divine justice as an expression of the human longing to actually *engage* in a lawsuit with God (2.04). Job is willing to risk all in order to be admitted into the presence of God:

> To be admitted to the presence of God so that one may defend himself and die is already salvation, provided that his appearance before God and his speech are vehement, desperate and a risk of his life (2.12).

Here is portrayed a fundamental human experience in such compelling terms that we are unable to remain spectators. Job ushers *us* into the awesome presence of God in such wise that we find ourselves standing face to face with impending doom. Yet, paradoxically, precisely in our moment of mind's confusion and soul's turmoil, precisely in our moment of utter darkness and ultimate risk, precisely when we must speak out *against* God, precisely then we become infused with an illumination that saves us and returns us to our creaturely selves with deepened knowledge and wisdom (2.34; 2.38; 3.1). In the pain of encounter we are vouchsafed a perception of reality.

As noted earlier, according to Horace Kallen, the consoling preception is that the world was not made for us and that our proper excellence is to go down fighting, as it were, and with head held high. Actors in such a tragedy, we are called upon to enact our roles in a sublime and heroic manner. An article complementary to Alonso-Schoekel's in *Semeia 7*, however, leads to a different conclusion. Here I refer to J. William Whedbee's "The Comedy of Job." Whedbee is conversant not only with Kallen's reconstruction but with other champions of the Job-as-tragedy school. He rejects their views and argues that "the most apt and compelling generic

designation of the book of Job is *comedy*" (0.3).

Whedbee develops his analysis of Job from the thesis that the comic vision contains two major ingredients: first, "a perception of incongruity that moves in the realm of the ironic, the ludicrous, and the ridiculous;" second, "a basic plot line that leads ultimately to the happiness of the hero and his restoration to a serene and harmonious society" (0.4). Whedbee argues that the plot of Job is typically comic: the hero undergoes an ordeal "from which he comes out on top only by the utmost effort and the demonstration of his prowess." This is the typical U-shaped plot, as literary critic Northrop Frye calls it, that finds the dramatic action sinking into troubled, near-tragic complications only to take a sudden reverse turn upward to a happy conclusion (1.0). Job, after the trauma of suffering and the exhaustion of seeking a lawsuit with God, suddenly finds innner peace and harmony with God and is blessed with double his previous wealth, a new set of children (his daughters are renowned for their extraordinary beauty and receive an inheritance just like men), and a life span of 140 years — exactly double the traditional three score and ten cited in Psalm 90!

As for the dramatic action itself, it fairly seethes with incongruities that keep us caught in "a subtle and powerful interplay between comedy and tragedy" (0.4). Whedbee points to the incongruity of the friends' arguments concerning Job's guilt and how God punishes the wicked in the light of what we know about Job's innocence (affirmed by none other than God!) from the prologue (1.2). He calls attention to the ambiguous personality of God: a just God who makes frivolous wagers with the Satan, a defender of the right who makes war on the righteous Job (1.2). But Job has two faces as well: pious and patient, he blesses God in the prologue; angry and impatient, he curses God in the song-cycle (2.0). Whedbee underlines the alternating attraction of life and death in Job's complaints (2.1), the interplay between God's test of Job and Job's trial of God (4.1), the portrayal of the wise friends who end up making fools of themselves (3.1), and the personality of the angry young man Elihu, whose brash pretensions to wisdom give the lie to the saying "There's no fool like an old fool" (5.1)! We are confronted by unresolved opposites at every step of the way through Job's ordeal. None of this is really very *funny*; it is more like "the dark comedy of the grotesque" (4.2).

In the end, however, argues Whedbee, the dark gives way to light. Beyond irony and incongruity, beyond the ordeal, lies celebration. Whedbee detects a festive note in the speeches of God with their magnificent portrayal of the creation. The descriptions of the various animals celebrate their freedom, their strength and power, the grandeur of flight. Even the bizarre ostrich is extolled as a superb runner. And to top off this carnival of animals, we are given a rather sporting description of the great monsters Behemoth and Leviathan — sportive at least from the Creator's view (6.33). And this, after all, is the point: Job "sees God and through God's eyes he now sees the world" in all its marvelous, albeit mysterious and seemingly incongruous, interworkings. Like the recognition scene in the comic plot, Job's confession marks a dramatic turning:

> His confession is authentic yet is paradoxical: his new wisdom is that he does not know all, his new perception is that he does not see

[4] This citation, like those following for the *Semeia* articles, is to paragraph number.

all; but he knows enough and sees enough . . . Job as comic hero rediscovers his limits as a man and repents before the Creator God (6.7).

The dramatic action has come full circle as catastrophe gives way to restoration, penance to festivity, alienation from society to reintegration into society. Nor is the restoration for Job only, but for his three friends as well. For the crowning irony comes when God rebukes the friends and commends Job — and then orders the friends to offer sacrifices and ask Job to intercede for them that they may also be restored to divine favor (7.0). It's a happy ending, and they all live happily ever after!

Whedbee concludes his article by quoting approvingly the assessment of the playwright Christopher Fry:

> The bridge by which we cross from tragedy to comedy and back again is precarious and narrow. We find ourselves in one or the other by the turn of a thought . . . If the characters were not qualified for tragedy there would be no comedy, and to some extent I have to cross the one before I can light on the other . . . [But] a bridge has to be crossed, a thought has to be turned. Somehow the characters have to unmortify themselves: to affirm life and assimilate death . . . Their hearts must be as determined as the phoenix; what burns must also light and renew: not by a vulnerable optimism but by a hard-won maturity of delight, by the intuition of comedy . . . The Book of Job is the great reservoir of comedy (7.2) . . .
>
> The comic vision does not necessarily eliminate evil and death; it is not incorrigibly and naively optimistic; it does not shut its eyes to the dark, jagged edges of life in this world . . . it is precisely because man has experienced suffering that he has sharpened awareness of cosmic incongruity (7.1).

Tragedy and Comedy

Seen from a larger perspective, the book of Job represents biblical religion in microcosm, with its movement from disaster to restoration, from humiliation to prosperity, from fall and exile to redemption and homecoming.[5] In his chapter on "Christ the Harlequin," Harvey Cox asserts that biblical religion is comedy, it is laughter and hope and affirmation in the midst of the hopelessness around us: "*Deus ludens* . . . winks at man, his all-too-serious creature, disclosing to him the comic dimension of it all."[6]

"There is no act in life," writes Walter Kerr, "that is not, when it is seen whole, both tragic and comic at once."[7] When we approach Job as drama and ourselves enter into its seriocomic incongruities, we find ourselves running the gauntlet between the ridiculous and the sublime, the tragic and the comic, the sea of troubles and the ocean of tranquility. Evidently, those who are able to survive the ordeal like Job did and who can penetrate to that inner *sanctum* where the opposites are reconciled may also experience the spiritual healing that will "bless their latter days more than their beginning" (Job 42:12).

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[5] Compare Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 316, 324-325.

[6] Harvey Cox, *The Feast of Fools* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970; paparback edition of 1969 original), 151.

[7] Walter Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 28.

Books Worth Discussing: J. Louis Martyn. *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel.*[1] *The Gospel of John in Christian Tradition.*[2]. Raymond E. Brown. *The Community of the Beloved Disciple.*[3]

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These three books play a fascinating contemporary game based on an old axiom of critical biblical scholarship: the gospels are only secondary sources for the life of Jesus (written not by Jesus himself and not by eyewitnesses at a time contemporary with Jesus), but they are primary sources for the life of the first century church (penned at various moments between 6 and 95 C.E. to serve the needs of young Christian communities). The game is to use the hidden clues in the gospels, the indirect and off-guard comments, to reconstruct what Brown refers to (rather journalistically in the subtitle of his book) as "the life, loves, and hates of an individual church in New Testament times."

That Martyn's *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (first published in 1968 by Harper) has now been republished testifies to the cogency of his argumentation, the soundness of his procedure, and the continuing attractiveness of the positions he advocates: that the fourth gospel was written as a Christian response to the formal separation between church and synagogue marked by the Jews' inclusion of a prayer against heretics (the Christians) in the Eighteen Benedictions around the end of the first century; that the new benediction was meant to detect Jews who desired to hold dual allegiance to Moses and to Jesus (and to remain within the synagogue as members of a messianic fellowship); that some Jewish-Christians were formally condemned and executed for their faith; that conversation between members of church and synagogue nevertheless continued (especially regarding the technical issue of Jesus' messiahship).

Martyn's reconstruction of the basic crisis in the history of the Johannine community rests upon (and then throws light upon) the narrative of the healing of the blind man (ch. 9), the talk about excommunication and execution (16:1-4; no mention of Roman persecution there or elsewhere), the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus (ch. 3), the arguments regarding Jesus in his superiority

[1] *Revised and enlarged edition. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979. 176 pages. Cloth. $8.95.*

[2] *New York: Paulist Press, 1978. 147 pages. Paper. $4.95.*

[3] *New York: Paulist Press, 1979. 204 pages. Paper. $3.95.*

to Moses (1:14-18, 45; 3:13-14; 6:30-31 and elsewhere), the accent on Jesus' signs, and the exalted designation of Jesus as Son, Son of God, Son of Man. Martyn makes excellent use also of external sources such as the Mishnah, the Talmuds and Justin Martyr.

This new edition is not so much "revised and enlarged" as it is fine-tuned. Footnotes take account of recent books and articles, especially criticisms of the first edition regarding such matters as the influence of Jamnia, the interpretation of the Eighteen Benedictions, the place of John 5 in the structure of the Gospel, the contemporary portrait of Moses (as seer of visions and ascender into heaven). In the give and take of the footnotes Martyn reveals a remarkable openness, generosity, and honesty.

While Martyn personally continues to hold that John knew none of the synoptics and that a signs source (close to what Robert Fortna has delineated) is to be discerned, he recognizes that contrary opinions have resurfaced and are asserted strongly. In a couple of places, he has altered his rhetoric so that modern categories have been replaced by more ancient terms: "dualism of decision" gives way to "dualism of election," features of "divine man" have become features of "the coming Elijah." We may suspect a growing inclination to discount Hellenistic and gnostic influences upon the writer of the Gospel.

Martyn no longer seems to promise a commentary on the Gospel (cf. n. 161, p. 101, of the first edition with n. 171, p. 112, of the second), and that is a disappointment, but his many articles on the Gospel published in the last decade, together with this study, offer penetrating, helpful, and important comment.

Some of Martyn's essays have been collected in *The Gospel of John in Christian History,* and they fill out the picture he has sketched in his earlier work. His study of John 1:35-49 convinces him that in its earliest period the Johannine group was at home in the synagogue, observing the Torah, not involved in debates about admitting Gentiles, experiencing no social dislocation and little alienation from their Jewish heritage, but insisting that Jesus is God's long-awaited, eschatological prophet-Messiah, who had come to grant genuinely new deliverance to his people. The "signs source" is the basic document of the group at this period. Later the group was born as a separate community as Martyn has described in his *History and Theology.* In its third period the community produced the Johannine Gospel (in its first and second editions), as it formed its own theological perspective and found its identity in relationship both to the parent synagogue and to other Christian groups. Martyn takes the "other sheep" of John 10 to refer primarily to other groups of Jewish Christians who had been scattered by the excommunication from the synagogue. Ch. 21 shows an awareness of communities in which Peter was prominent, that is, an awareness of the great church or of early catholicism which was engaged in the mission to the gentiles.

All in all Martyn stresses the Jewish heritage and character of the Johannine community, illuminates passages of the Gospel by reference to debates between synagogue and church, and understands the history of the community which produced the fourth gospel as a chapter in the larger history of Jewish Christianity. (At the same time he cautions readers to remember that Judaism in all its variety was to one degree or another a Hellenistic religion.)

For his part, Raymond Brown thinks that "the community of the Beloved

Disciple," early in its life (mid 50's to late 80's) received into its fellowship Jews of an anti-temple bias who then made converts among Samaritans. Somewhat later (around 90) the community, expelled from the synagogue and having coalesced around the Beloved Disciple (who helped the outcastes see that they had gained more than they had lost by their expulsion and focused their hearts on the great promises of God that had been realized in Jesus), may have moved from Palestine. Converts were made among the gentiles. The Johannine community was alienated from Jewish-Christians who rejected the high Johannine Christology, but the community remained open to mainstream apostolic Christianity (Gentile-Christianity).

Around 100 the Johannine community split into (1) spiritualizing secessionists (followers of Diotrephes) and (2) adherents of the author of the Johannine epistles. In the second century the secessionists (the larger of the two groups) moved into gnosticism and the others were assimilated into the mainstream of the great (or orthodox and victorious) church.

Thus, in contrast to Martyn, Brown considers the epistles as well as the Gospel, sees greater influence of Samaritans and Gentiles in the community and its history, and finds a place for the contributions of the Beloved Disciple.

Both authors are playing an exciting contemporary game: mining the evangelical records about Jesus for materials with which to reconstruct the story of the communities in which the authors lived and wrote. The rules are still being written and so the evolution of the game is as yet incomplete, but people are playing the game energetically with all four gospels.

It is fascinating, stimulating, and so frequently illuminating that it ought not be called on account of darkness, or because it produces a number of casualties or seems to depend on some rather tricky plays that are hard to follow even with instant replay. The differences between the reconstructions of Martyn and Brown, both excellent scholars on the same faculty, might make some readers groan and complain that the game is hopeless; but it might be fairer to say that it is a little like basketball in the year 1891, when John Naismith nailed a peach basket to a wooden standard in Springfield, Massachusetts. It may be primitive, but it has a future.

Because of the experimental character of his book, Brown says he hopes it will not be the vehicle for any reader's first encounter with the Johannine writings. Because of the technical detail with which Martyn's books are replete, that caution applies all the more to his work.

For all their differences, Martyn and Brown represent the current consensus (it began to be established around 1950) that the intellectual and cultural setting or background upon which the gospel was produced was primarily Palestinian, Old Testament, and Jewish.

A gnostic background at least in the form suggested by Rudolf Bultmann is today almost everywhere discounted, because of the work of researchers like Martyn and Brown and others who have taken into account the patterns of thought in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in Jewish wisdom literature and those who have undermined the notion that gnosticism was a fullblown religion of salvation in pre-New Testament times.

Nevertheless, the late Ernest Colwell in a rather obscure essay in an oddly titled book, *New or Old?* (The Christian Struggle with Change and Tradition. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), suggested that the fourth gospel was written to woo

to the Christian faith the kind of sophisticated, cosmopolitan, educated people who were attracted to gnosticism at the end of the first century and the beginning of the second. He played a rather different game from the one in which Martyn and Brown (and Bultmann, too) engaged. He depended on no source theory, and he made no pretense of distinguishing older from newer strata in the narrative. But like them he did point to peculiar phenomena in the Johannine text.

In John's gospel Jesus is Jewish and lives in the land of the Jews, but John records; no genealogy linking Jesus to a Jewish past (instead his prologue presents Jesus as the Eternal Word), no praise of John the Baptist (or of baptism or Lord's Supper or any other sacramental or cultic acts), no scribes or Sadducees or Herods in conversation with Jesus (the setting is altered in a universalizing fashion), no use of "gentile" as synonym of "heathen," no recommendation of Jewish law or custom by Jesus (but instead a "new" commandment and the assertion that the law came by Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus). Jesus also seems less bound by human limitations (no temptation in the wilderness, no agony in the garden, no seizure and arrest in the synoptic manner, no mocking at the cross, no cry of dereliction). Talk of eternal life nearly supplants that of the kingdom of God (lest the Gospel be suspected as anti-Roman propaganda). Very strikingly John's Gospel mentions no poor people, no tax gatherers, no widows, no children, no demoniacs, no lepers, no prostitutes.

In John's Gospel we may well see an example of the early church's laboring to explain itself in relation to what were widely regarded as serious handicaps: Jewish particular national origin, a peasant background, an execution by Roman authorities, prominence of women in the biography of Jesus, a savior clearly subject to human limitations, and the flavor of superstition and magic (exorcisms and ritual).

The fourth gospel is still faithful to the earliest traditions about Jesus. It may be voicing its appeal to the same people who were drawn by gnosticism, but it is not itself a gnostic gospel. What a gnostic gospel would be is shown by the ancient apocryphal Gospel of Truth. It contains no actors except the Father, Jesus, and Man (perhaps also Error), and there are no narratives, no events, no country, no city, no town, no dates, no times, and no festivals. Such a gospel has lost its anchorage on the earth and in history.

Sifting clues in the text in an effort to deduce the social and historical setting is a fascinating and useful exercise. Brown and Martyn point to one set of clues, and Colwell to another (and others also play the game), and they therefore paint different pictures. Again, various and differing conclusions do not invalidate the quest. These scholars have hung their conclusions out in the open to invite public scrutiny and correction. Obviously we cannot agree with everything they have written, but we can learn from them if we enter into dialogue with them and let ourselves be driven by their arguments back to the text time and again.

A Book Worth Discussing: *The Role of the Augsburg Confession: Catholic and Lutheran Views.**

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The title of this book promises to take up the *role* of the *Confessio Augustana* (CA). It is difficult to determine from this book what *the* role of the CA is since its authors raise countless questions about who is speaking through its lines, to whom its speeches are addressed, and how it is related to the other "actors" in the ecclesiastical drama and fellow members of the confessional guild. Although the script was written and premiered in 1530, like every great drama, the CA is both timely and timeless. It cannot be read or received in any one way, or locked into some confining role or bit part. Beneath the sixteenth century language the CA is alive — engaging and enthralling the reader in ever new and renewing ways with the grace of the One whom it confesses.

The impact of this book about the CA is such that it enables the reader to explore the many roles the CA has played in the ensuing 450 years, what uses it currently holds for us involved in dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, and what functions it may continue to serve within the *oikoumene* of the future.

The book itself is a collection of eleven essays, eight of which were published in 1977 by the Institute for Ecumenical Research at Strasbourg and which were the outgrowth of the Meeting of the High Church Society of the Augsburg Confession at Schloss Schwanberg in 1976 and the consultation on ecumenical methodology at Geneva in the same year, a meeting initiated by the Secretariat for Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation. In addition to these essays by European Lutherans (Pannenberg, Meyer, Vajta — together with Lindbeck of Yale, Dietzfelbinger) and Roman Catholics (Vinzenz Pfnuer, Heinz Schuette, Hans Jorissen, Walter Kasper), three essays by North American theologians appear for the first time in this volume — one Lutheran (Robert Jensen) and two Roman Catholics (Avery Dulles and Harry McSorley). Cardinal Johannes Willebrands and ALC President David Preus have contributed forewords, and editor Joseph Burgess has provided an introduction. The final 37 pages of the book reprint the CA from the Latin-based Tappert edition of the *Book of Concord.*

The strength of the book is that the authors do not stop at providing the reader with the historical context and theological issues surrounding the presentation of the CA, or even with a description of its function within contemporary dialogues — although they do this well; they also enter into dialogue with the CA and with each other and thereby invite the reader to explore the

* *Edited by Joseph A. Burgess, in collaboration with George Lindbeck, Harry McSorley, Harding Meyer, and Heinz Schuette. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980. xviii and 203 pages. Cloth. $13.95.*

role of the CA by studying the theological script, surveying the ecclesiastical scenery, and by playing a personal role in the gracious and unfolding drama of God's dealing with humanity through Christ's Body, the church.

Some of the most engaging dialogue in the book occurs as its authors identify the obstacles that stand in the way of "recognition" of the CA by the Roman Catholic Church; as they engage in debate over the thesis, "Resolved: To recognize only Part I of the CA" (suggested as a possibility by Pannenberg, Schuette and McSorley; *contra* by Meyer, Dulles, Kasper); or as they disclose the ambiguity of the term "recognition" as do Kasper and Meyer. A quick look at the dictionary provides no less than nine definitions for the term "recognition," a fact which should caution all participants in current dialogues to clear with one another assumptions about and expectations of what recognition might mean as discussions progress.

It is Robert Jensen who offers the most helpful, if the most discomforting, ideas about recognition. Jensen offers a critique of the seminal essays of Pfnuer and Pannenberg. Essentially Jensen denies the latter's assertion that "the disputed questions raised in the First Part of the CA . . . do not touch agreement in basic articles of faith" (cf. pages 34 and 154). Conversely Jensen says, "The controversy was no longer about abuses but directly about that which the Reformers thought to be abused" — which Melanchthon now labels (in the *Apology*) "the chief locus of Christian doctrine" (that is, justification by faith; see page 156).

Vinzenz Pfnuer's doctoral dissertation ("Unified on the Doctrine of Justification?" which has been credited with stimulating the "Ratzinger Initiative" toward recognition of the CA by the Roman Catholic Church) together with essays by such theologians as Gunther Gassman and William Lazareth conclude that the theological differences on justification by faith alone resulted from incorrect identification of the objects of reformation polemic and can be resolved through historical study and reformulation of doctrinal language acceptable to both parties.

Jensen contends that such reformulation is merely "formula-negotiation" which condemns to death by a thousand qualifications the radical proposal of the reformation, illustrated by the CA. If Jensen is correct, what Roman Catholics and Lutherans need to be dealing with are not the "practical issues" or "abuses" of CA, Part 2 (many of which the authors acknowledge are no longer "at issue"), but rather how to understand the nature of faith and apply that to the entire life and teaching of the church, a task which, Jensen contends, is desperately needed within the whole of Western Christianity and which allows the CA to play its primary role. Among the Roman Catholic authors, Avery Dulles most closely complements Jensen in recognizing the "sweeping nature" of the CA's role: "The section dealing with abuses does not in fact deal only with questions of practice. Underlying the demands are certain doctrinal assumptions which here and there become explicit" (page 134).

Awaiting a response from Pannenberg and Pfnuer, let us grant Jensen his thesis. If he is correct, what does this mean for the strong hopes voiced by most of the other authors and for the dialogues presently underway? Must we ignore differences or substitute reformulations for reformation? Should we give up and go our separate ways? I offer the following comments in response.

Given crucial differences regarding justification by faith, a point not conceded

by all, the dialogues between Roman Catholics and Lutherans should continue not just in spite of the differences but precisely because of them. Who else would take the doctrine of justification by faith so seriously as to debate, discuss, and dissect it except brothers and sisters in the one family of faith? Dialogue itself can be a confessional act, as Walter Kasper implies (page 127) and Jensen makes explicit (page 163). In the process of dialogue we need to remember that faith is not some issue to be defined or the position of one denomination vis-a-vis another; it is our hold on the promise of God to us in Jesus Christ, and that, thrown into the bargain, we are God-given gifts to one another. Therefore, to recognize the CA must also mean to recognize in each other the faith which gives the church its shape.

Had it not been for a particular historical response to the CA, the reformers would have continued celebrating the eucharist as members of the Roman Catholic Church. Should we not press for greater expressions of unity including especially the celebration of the eucharist, seeing this not merely as an issue of historical precedent but as an essential expression of the purpose of the church of all ages?

It also needs to be said in this regard that the CA's radical proposal for ordering Christian life and language is not the exclusive possession of Lutherans, as Jensen notes (page 163). Both he and Dulles (page 137) recognize the presence of the CA critique and *elan* within the life of the Roman Catholic churches, which in fact may give more evidence to its liveliness and activity than do the churches of the Augsburg Confession. Which is to say that the CA is not something Lutherans hold but which the whole church holds and which holds Lutherans within it. That also means we Lutherans cannot play the role of rescuer in the present dialogues with much credibility. Perhaps we need to see ourselves first as victims — victims of our neglect of our own confessional heritage, victims of paying lip service to confessional subscription while letting its impact on our own ministry lapse. Lutheran readers will find this book continually challenging them to examine the life of the churches in the catholic perspective of the CA, as Pannenberg does in relation to the celebration of the eucharist, Schuette in relation to confessional subscription, Dietzfelbinger in relation to scripture, Jorissen in relation to confession and absolution, and all-embracingly, Jensen in relation to justification by faith. I would only hope that future discussions such as this would move beyond European and North American authors only to include those of the Third World so that the critique of the CA may be heard in terms of a truly catholic vision.

This book is not inexpensive, but I believe it may be one of the few in the pastor's library to increase in its value and usefulness over the years. It is not an easy book to read, but careful study of it will repay the reader many times over. It can be a useful tool in reacquainting the pastor with the CA and in helping clergy people look at the confessional movement, intensified during the reformation, in a fresh way. Most importantly, though the book may not tell you what *the* role of the CA is, it will engage you in dialogue and enable you to play your role in the confessing movement with great joy and growing hope.

Book Reviews

MARX AND TEILHARD: TWO WAYS TO A NEW HUMANITY. By Richard Lischer. New York: Orbis Books, 1979. xii and 174 pages. Paper. $6.95.

We have come to associate the name of Karl Marx with Orbis Books, but Lischer's book will certainly introduce a new twist into their catalog of offerings. Quite in contrast to Orbis' usual Roman Catholic, liberation-oriented authors, here is an orthodox, Lutheran, philosophical appraisal of Marx and Teilhard de Chardin. Lischer makes no bones about his treatment of Marx. He believes Marx's Judeo-Christian grounding (the atheist Marx was a deliquent Jew baptized into the Lutheran Church) provides access to his fundamental categories of thought: "Whether the Luther/Marx motif reflects only my own sectarian way of looking at things, or an authentic and heretofore recessed accent in Marx studies must be left for the reader to decide." The burden of the analysis in the book, at any rate, is an assessment of the ideas of Marx and Teilhard over against Lischer's Lutheran Orthodox heritage.

Marx and Teilhard is admirable in several respects. The wealth of analytic detail, and Lischer's compact, refined style of writing, are praiseworthy. In fact the style of writing often brings striking illumination to complicated historical connections:

> When we question the validity of all utopias, and especially Marx's kingdom of freedom, we do not do so in order to celebrate original sin or to revel in the 'human condition.' For, as Teilhard's work proves, just as integral to the Christian human condition is the believer's creativity and hope in an absolute future. By criticizing a premature absolute, such as communism, Christianiaty does not mean to dampen the spirit of its aspirations and achievements, but rather to avoid the petrification that hinders the *further* development of love, justice, and personal expression. A Christian witness to God, then, is vital to every utopia, for it must shatter the complacent self-deception of those who would erect upon some preconceived human possibility an absolute system of values. (pp. 160f)

Let it be noted, however, that at times Lischer's prose degenerates into obtuseness and extreme rarification.

That an orthodox believer is willing to take two radical, 'heretical' thinkers seriously, without any fundamentalist or reactionary reading, is itself remarkable. Serious Christian thinkers who are interested in appreciative, yet critical, analysis of Marxian thought, or of the mystical synthesis of science and theology in Teilhard, will find this book worthy of consultation. Obviously, the importance of Marx for the theology of liberation, and of Teilhard for the theology of hope, makes study of these two men indispensable anyway.

The book's deficits are also several. Lischer is very interested in comparing Teilhard with Marx and his German Idealist background, not to mention the Lutheran tradition and Luther himself. This approach hardly seems fair to a thinker of the stature of Teilhard, who at least deserves to be set within the context of his Roman Catholic upbringing and scientific training. There is very little to indicate to the reader the profound sources behind Teilhard's personal development.

A particularly gnawing question arises, moreover, from Lischer's appeal to a coherent body of (apparently) fixed and static Christian doctrines, which he utilizes for his critique of Marx and Teilhard. In an age of pluralism, an age, it might be added, that Teilhard and Marx played a part in initiating, is it acceptable any longer for the "orthodox" to assume that their traditions will provide an adequate framework from which to sit in judgment upon all modern development?

We find no serious investigation in *Marx and Teilhard* of their dissatisfaction with Christian tradition. What led these two great thinkers to choose revolution over against the church, and to reject the historical discontinuity of Christian apocalypticism in order to affirm the process of evolution as a wholistic movement toward God?

Marx and Teilhard were angry about a religious and economic establishment concerned with the needs of the establishment more than the needs of human beings struggling to find fulfillment and community within their present circumstances. To them the pain of human disappointment proved more catalytic than the smug conclusions of established traditions.

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THE LONGING FOR A FORM: ESSAYS ON THE FICTION OF C.S. LEWIS. Edited by Peter J. Schakel. Grand Rapids: Baker, reprinted 1979. (Copyright, 1977 by Kent State University Press). xvii and 234 pages. Paper. $5.95.

In his short but useful introduction to this volume Peter Schakel notes that more critical attention has been paid to the content of C. S. Lewis' fiction than to its form. This book is intended partially to rectify that imbalance. The introduction, in which Schakel discusses what Lewis himself understood literary form to be, is one of the more helpful parts of the entire book. Not all the essays which follow actually illuminate important elements of the form of Lewis' fiction.

The essays themselves are divided into an opening section consisting of three general studies and three further sections which deal respectively with Lewis' space trilogy, his Narnia Chronicles, and *Till We Have Faces*. Of the general studies, only Scott Oury's essay on Lewis' attention to "the Thing Itself" is likely to be useful. Edward Zogby's essay gives a reading of Lewis far too influenced by the thought of Owen Barfield to command general assent. The essays on Narnia are rather disappointing and sometimes lead in different directions (e.g., Charles Huttar certainly does not read the stories as Christian tales in the way Walter Hooper does, and here Huttar's reading is to be preferred). Steve Van Der Weele's essay on *Till We Have Faces*, which explores Lewis' use of Apuleius' "Cupid and Psyche" myth is genuinely helpful and informative, but Clyde Kilby is too concerned to turn *Till We Have Faces* into a Christian book to be a helpful interpreter.

By far the most successful group of essays is that dealing with Lewis' space trilogy. All four essays in this section repay careful reading. And, in particular, Chad Walsh's short piece provides a fine example of how an attention to form can illuminate content.

These essays will be useful to anyone interested in understanding Lewis' fiction. However, for those primarily interested in Lewis's theological views (even when embedded in his fiction), this book is not the best place to start.

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CONVERSION TO ISLAM. Edited by Nehemia Levtzion. New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1979. viii and 272 pages. Cloth. $29.50.

This book is the outgrowth of a 1972/73 seminar (same title) at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. The initial essay outlines the task of comparative study of Islamization, and each succeeding essay traces conversion to and the impact of Islam in a different part of the world: Iran, Anatolia, South Asia, Java, Indonesia, China, Swahili Africa, Dar Fur (Sudanic Africa), West Africa, Black Africa, Nigeria. The content varies from chronicles of conversion myths, to social analyses, to statistical and linguistic studies. Though some sections are a bit technical, one is impressed with both the worldwide impact of Islam and the depth of its

penetration. Islam's ability to penetrate and transform a people's entire culture is documented in place after place, and frustrated only in those areas where it met a spiritual and cultural equal: India and China. For those interested in further study of Islam's heritage and expansion, a detailed index and an ample bibliography of 18 pages make this book a helpful starting place.

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BUT AS FOR ME: THE QUESTION OF ELECTION IN THE LIFE OF GOD'S PEOPLE TODAY. By Andre Lacocque. Atlanta: John Knox, 1979. 191 pages. Cloth. $13.00.

Lacocque's book stems both from his professional background (professor at Chicago Theological Seminary and director of its Center for Jewish-Christian Studies) and his own family background of having sheltered fleeing Jews from the Nazis during World War II.

Lacocque builds on the imagery and theology of Exodus 19:4-6: Israel as God's private property, kingdom of priests, holy nation, messianic people. After a chapter on Paul and the Law, he concludes with a lengthy discussion of "The Duality Israel-Christendom" and "Synagogue and Church."

Lacocque's description of his work as phenomenological is too humble. In fact, it is an intensely theological meditation on and wrestling with the meaning of Israel in the world. Israel is defined as "not a race, but a function, a style of life, a 'doing,' a choice, an experience." As such, historical Israel, both its Old Testament and its modern Jewish and Christian forms, is called by God to be Israel. By itself Judaism tends to lose its cosmic vision, while Christianity, which suffered a "terrible attrition of substance" during its Hellenization, has lost its roots. "Synagogue without Church is an historical abstraction. Church without Synagogue is a stupidity and a swindle." Lacocque's final hope is not merely for dialog and cooperation but for "going *beyond Judaism and Christianity qua institutions.*"

As Lacocque documents his view, he brings a poet's vision to the Scriptures. At times, that poetic gift, bearing a fundamentally process theology, blurs the focus of his impact. (Does *YHWH* really mean "I will become with whom I will become?") More often, it allows him to draw the reader into his vision, particularly as he describes movingly the intensity of God's love, Israel's call to suffering, Israel's mission to all people. Lacocque's book is hardly light reading nor does all of it equally convince. Yet he is very engaging and most provocative.

Henry Rowold

JEWS AND CHRISTIANS IN ANTIOCH IN THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES OF THE COMMON ERA. By Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978. 127 pages. Paper. $6.00.

Consider this book a gem by every standard. It is an important contribution to the subject of the continuing love/hate relationship between Christians and Jews, which scholars are discovering lasted far beyond the traditional date of 90 C.E. In a cautious way, after canvassing the available primary and secondary sources, the authors conclude that there was continuing contact in the second and third centuries, although the evidence is limited. In the fourth century, however, the sermons of John Chrysostom *Against the Jews* and the letters of the pagan rhetorician Libanius offer ample evidence that these two groups could not get along with each other.

Chapter One is a jointly written essay on the book's theme. The essay is a model of scholarly clarity and brevity and of diligent bibliographical research. The other four chapters contain archaeological and literary evidence on which the essay is based. Chapter Two contains archaeological material; Chapters Three and Four con-

tain translations of Libanius' *Letters* and his *Oration on Systems of Patronage,* and Chapter Five contains Homilies 1 and 8 from Chrysostom's series *Against the Jews.*

Herbert T. Mayer
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PROPHECY AND HERMENEUTICS IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY. By E.Earle Ellis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978. xvii and 289 pages. Paper. $15.00.

This volume, dedicated to Oscar Cullmann, consists of seventeen essays, all but one of which have been previously published in various journals and anniversary volumes. The essays fall under two headings: "I. The pneumatics and the Early Christian Mission; II. Prophecy as Exegesis: Early Christian Hermeneutic."

In the first section Ellis argues that the leadership of the early Christian mission was pneumatic. Paul and his co-workers were persons with prophetic gifts who made known the meaning of Scripture, exhorted and strengthened the congregations, and instructed the community by revelation of the future (the latter especially in Acts). The second section proposes that the unique methods of Old Testament interpretation, evidenced in the New Testament, were an exercise of prophecy under the authority and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In his final chapter, "New Directions in Form Criticism," Ellis theorizes that a number of christological, midrashic interpretations of the Old Testament may be pre-resurrectional, and among the earliest transmitted forms of Jesus' teachings, transmitted not only in oral but also probably in written form during the earthly ministry of Jesus. His examples are Luke 10:25-37 and Matthew 21:33-46. The former contains a formula typical of rabbinic exegesis, and the two sections of the pericope (dialogue and the parable of the good Samaritan) have been judged probable authentic words of Jesus on independent form-critical grounds. The Matthean passage includes the parable of the wicked tenants, which Ellis says never would have left the death of the son unresolved had it originated in the post-resurrection community. The pericope also uses Psalm 118 as a judgment when the psalm is applied elsewhere to Jesus' exaltation.

The first example is a fairly good witness to Ellis' thesis since he can show the unity of the pericope, equating the elements of it with the elements in traditional Jewish midrash. The second example, however, falls short. Even though he can demonstrate its unity as a midrash, the parable of the wicked tenants stops with the death of the son only because the point at issue is the character and fate of the enemies of the church. Secondly, the quotation of Psalm 118, "the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner," assumes the resurrection. Since judgment is a function also of the exalted Lord, the use of Psalm 118 is not incongruous with its usage elsewhere.

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NEW DIRECTIONS IN NEW TESTAMENT STUDY. By Patrick Henry. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979. 300 pages. Paper. $9.95. (or Cloth $19.95)

Patrick Henry, professor of Religion and chairperson of the Department of Religion at Swarthmore College, has written a book that is often stimulating and challenging. Unfortunately, the book also often lacks focus and is superficial. The book covers a wide range of topics dealing with areas of history, theology, hermeneutics, plus the sociology and psychology of religion.

The author's most convincing thesis postulates the interrelation of Jewish and Hellenistic cultures at the time of the early church. He uses the late Samuel Sandmel well for ammunition and support. Perhaps the most disappointing chapter is the review of the role of Roman Catholic scholars in current New Testament study. Despite his

valid insight that such scholars are now a vital part of the scholarly mainstream, Henry essentially only introduces readers to *Divino afflante Spiritu* and praises the *Jerome Biblical Commentary.*

Although the book stands on a wide range of materials, a cursory review of the indexes raises serious questions about the eclectic nature of the monograph. Can one chart directions in New Testament study accurately without reference to scholars like Bornkamm, Conzelmann, Cullmann, Jeremias, Marxsen, Moule, and Pannenberg, to mention only a few of the missing in action? It is surprising that Henry devotes an entire chapter to Gager's *Kingdom and Community* but never mentions the work of G. Theissen. The book also suffers because the indexes do not always accurately include the footnotes.

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JESUS AND HIS ADVERSARIES. The Form and Function of the Conflict Stories in the Synoptic Tradition. By Arland J. Hultgren. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979. 223 pages. Paper. $6.50.

Applause, applause! In this book Professor Hultgren of Luther-Northwestern Seminaries, St. Paul, has shown himself unintimidated by the saints of critical scholarship and in the process has made a substantial contribution to biblical study. For nearly sixty years, Bultmann's contention that the conflict stories had their formal provenance in rabbinic dialogues nearly went unchallenged. Now Hultgren has picked up the glove and generated a new conflict within synoptic scholarship.

After briefly reviewing the conflict story classifications of Albertz, Dibelius, Taylor, and Bultmann, Hultgren develops his own based on the unitary (essential agreement between setting and *logian*) or nonunitary forms of the accounts. He concludes that the unitary stories had their settings in Palestinian Jewish Christianity. Some were quite possibly historical, going back to Jesus' own ministry. These stories were apologetic. On the other hand, the nonunitary stories had their origin, according to Hultgren, in the Hellenistic church of the diaspora and were essentially catechetical.

How well does Hultgren's argument succeed? About as well as could be hoped. Given our distance from New Testament times and conventions, modern form-critical study necessarily involves considerable speculation. The author labors valiantly to glean what objective evidence there is, but the result is that his proofs are often only cumulative rather than comprehensive or conclusive.

On the more positive side is the author's sensible inclination to credit Jesus' own divine genius with many of the *logia* basic to the conflict stories. If an institution is but the elongated shadow of an individual, then the Christian church could be expected to reflect more of Jesus' own words and experiences than many other form-critical and history of religions studies have seen it doing.

With the book's focus placed upon a comparative technicality within biblical scholarship, there is perhaps not too much here of practical and homiletical value for parish clergy. Hultgren seems to want to fill this void by attaching an "Afterword" in which he cautions against perpetuating sentiments of anti-Judaism when preaching on the conflict stories. The point is well taken, but with these arguments Hultgren only cracks the cover of the hermeneutical Pandora's box as far as the conflict stories are concerned. He should either have said much more than the two and one-quarter pages devoted to the subject or, for the sake of editorial neatness, he probably should have been satisfied with his exegetical success in the body of the work.

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PAUL: APOSTLE OF THE HEART SET FREE. By F.F. Bruce. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977. 491 pages. Cloth. $13.95.

The excitement in this book is definitely more British than German. The author does not toss sparkling gems of new theory before his readers, does not stun us by proffering some hitherto overlooked key to the Pauline treasures, does not bear us down to depths never previously dared. What he does is to portray the life and thought of Paul in broad and panoramic sweep, and he does it splendidly.

Bruce's work is positive, synthetic, and constructive rather than analytical or critical (and certainly not skeptical) in its approach to the biblical texts and ecclesiastical traditions regarding Paul. His book offers a harmonized narrative of Paul's life using the information in Acts as though Acts were a work of straightforward history rather than a stylized and artfully patterned proclamation of the deeds of God in the Twelve, the Seven, and Paul.

Bruce betrays no doubts about the authenticity of Second Thessalonians or Colossians. He apparently thinks that Ephesians is Paul's work, and he looks with favor on C.F.D. Moule's hypothesis (really rather farfetched) that Luke may have been given a free hand to produce the Pastorals from oral instructions and suggestions of the apostle.

Bruce thinks that Paul had considerable knowledge of the narrative traditions about Jesus and frequently quotes words of Jesus. He emphasizes the Jewish background of Paul and in other ways reflects the idea that the history of the people of Old and New Testaments is holy and coherent even if not completely impervious to external influence.

For Bruce the teaching that God justifies the ungodly is no minor crater but the center of Paul's understanding. Paul had mystical experiences but Christ-mysticism is not his theology.

Bruce speaks frequently and warmly of the Spirit, and his subtitle is taken from 2 Corinthians 3:17, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there the heart is free." He utters cautions on such phenomena as speaking in tongues and interprets Paul's teaching on the work of the Spirit in terms of the dawn of the last times, the appearance of a new humanity, moral transformation, Christian liberty, care for people, egalitarianism and love.

While the book may hold no surprises for Pauline experts, it will still teach them that the intelligent evangelical tradition is alive and well. Everyone else; laity, college and seminary students, and clergy will learn much from this volume. Attention to it will yield both intellectual and spiritual satisfaction.

Robert Smith
Christ Seminary — Seminex

THE TRIBES OF YAHWEH: A SOCIOLOGY OF THE RELIGION OF LIBERATED ISRAEL, 1250-1050 B.C.E. By Norman K. Gottwald. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979. xxv and 916 pages. Paper. $19.95.

A book that begins with a tribute to the people of Vietnam and a quotation from Marx and Engels, and whose author is clearly supportive of Marxist philosophy, might seem to be bordering on sensationalism, but even those who strongly oppose Gottwald's political views will have to grant the immense erudition of this book and its hundreds of contributions to our understanding of the most difficult — and possibly the most important — era in Israel's history.

While the author is fully at home in the humanistic disciplines (historical/critical method, and archaeology), the book is really a sustained apologetic for and illustration of the use of sociological method in biblical studies. Such a method illuminates as never before the structures of Israelite society (e.g., tribe, clan, father's house) and its historical context (Egyptian hegemony in Palestine, the Canaanite feudal system, and the *apiru*, whom Gottwald understands as a socio-political outlaw category with military

subspecialization, not unrelated to the "Hebrews").

What makes this book both controversial and extremely important is his reconstruction of early Israel. Israel is seen as an eclectic formation of marginal and depressed Canaanite peoples; Israel emerged from a breach *within* Canaanite society and was not an invasion from without; Israel's egalitarian social system arose in direct opposition to the Canaanite city state system.

Through it all one finds a systematic and thorough working out of the brilliant/controversial ideas of George Mendenhall. Gottwald recognizes both the strengths and weaknesses of Martin Noth's amphictyonic model for Israel's polity. While sharing some of the criticisms of the amphictyony raised by Rudolf Smend and A.D. Mayes, he finds far more evidence for a unity or confederacy called Israel in premonarchic times than these two are prepared to grant. But for him the *twelve* tribe system was a Davidic creation (though there were "tribes" earlier) and it had become obsolete already by Solomon.

People in the church may be most challenged by the ethical implications of what Gottwald sees as the radical egalitarian shape and anti-elistic dynamic of early Israel. For him Yahwism in the long run — and Judaism and Christianity for that matter — shifted more and more into socially reactionary forces, drifting along uncritically in the main social body, only now and then erupting with sustained critical power. His own Yahwistic faith, unfortunately, is socioeconomically demythologized: "Yahweh" is the historically concretized, primordial power to establish and sustain social equality in the face of counter-oppression from without and against provincial and nonegalitarian tendencies from within the society." (p. 692) Again: "Yahweh's uniqueness lay in the fact that 'he' was the symbol of a single-minded pursuit of an egalitarian tribal social system." (p. 693)

Since Gottwald is plowing new territory, no scholar would agree with all the minor and even major positions taken. He tacks on thirty pages at the end to bring his own discussion up to date. But despite all its flaws, including repetitiousness and too-frequent use of sociological jargon, this massive book has thrown down a massive number of gauntlets, and whoever would dare to pick them up had better know an awful lot about what the Bible itself says about early Israel — and about proper sociological method as well.

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WHAT DOES THE OLD TESTAMENT SAY ABOUT GOD? By Claus Westermann. Atlanta: John Knox, 1979. 107 pages. Cloth. $7.95.

Recent books by Walther Zimmerli *(Old Testament Theology in Outline)* and Samuel Terrien *(The Elusive Presence)* demonstrate that a revival in Biblical theology is in process. In this volume another of the world's finest scholars adds his mature insights to this renewal.

Westermann detects no theological center for the Old Testament and rejects "noun" oriented systems of theology. Instead Westermann prefers dynamic or "verb-centered" categories which take into account the "story" nature of narrative. The title of the book derives from Westermann's definition of Biblical theology: "What the Bible says about God." Upon God's revelation, humanity responds and this creates a dialogue. This dialogue is reflected in the three-fold division of the Hebrew canon: law (narrative), prophets (word), writings (worship).

In God's acts and words Westermann discerns two basic themes: God comes to bring or announce salvation (Exodus-Leviticus), creating and sustaining blessing through community and the world (Genesis, Deuteronomy-Kings, and apocalyptic materials). He notes that the impartation of divine blessing reflects better the historical and theological continuity of the peo-

ple of God than does a theology of God's saving acts.

Israel dialogued with announcements of salvation and blessing through their organized worship, the cult. Westermann again concentrates on two liturgical forms: praise and lament. Unfortunately wisdom literature is neglected as a response of the people except for Job's distress at his loss of blessing. He considers it as non-theological or "profane." This omission of such a large body of teaching points to one limitation in his definition of Biblical theology.

The chapter on prophetic announcements of judgment and salvation reflects Westermann's previous work in *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech.* He escapes the temptation of caricaturing the pre-exilic prophets as "messengers of doom alone." Rather he notes that their message of judgment includes that of mercy and forgiveness. God showed compassion when the people suffered, beginning with the patriarchs, and the prophets reaffirm that message. Ultimately God's promises are to be achieved only in the coming messiah and in apocalyptic events. Westermann's discussion of salvation and blessing includes their New Testament fulfillment. The incarnate suffering servant finally answers the lamenting, suffering people. Through him forgiveness from sin and salvation from death become possible for all.

A major deficiency of the book is its brevity. The author has little opportunity to discuss specific texts where salvation and blessing intermingle and to clarify how they are interrelated. Westermann plans a more lengthy volume of Old Testament theology soon. These summary lectures, however, are especially valuable for lay persons and pastors. Each chapter offers new perspectives on the Old Testament. This book challenges Christian churches to make Biblical theology a catalyst for unity in the modern ecumenical era.

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EZEKIEL 1. By Walther Zimmerli. Translated by Ronald E. Clements. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979. xlvi and 509 pages. Cloth. $32.95.

This first half of Zimmerli's famed commentary on Ezekiel, published in the *Biblischer Kommentar* between 1955 and 1968, is sure to be recognized, also in its American dress, as one of the finest commentaries written in the twentieth century. Zimmerli, Swiss born and a long-time professor at Goettingen, has brought order to the study of Ezekiel, after a period when major portions of the book were considered extraneous and even the prophet's activity in Babylon was denied.

For many the best thing about the commentary will be its obvious thoroughness, but Zimmerli's creativity and evangelical fervor will also win friends. He has linked Ezekiel not only to the earlier "writing" prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.), but also to the forms and traditions of pre-classical prophets like Elijah and Elisha. Each of the forms used in the book is carefully described, with Zimmerli's most decisive contributions centering on the frequent "proof-of-identity" sayings ("You shall know that I am Yahweh") that are a central feature of the book.

Zimmerli knows that not all the book can be attributed to the prophet whose main activity can be dated from 593 to 571 B.C.E. He postulates a "school of Ezekiel," which edited the prophecies, commented on them, and gave them a fuller theological explanation. Passages like 3:16b-21, chap. 18, chaps. 25-32, and 29:17-21 within these chapters are clearly recognizable as insertions. Zimmerli makes sharp literary critical distinctions, marking as secondary many verses that seem to disturb an original, coherent picture (e.g. the wheels in the opening vision are ascribed to a later stratum). Naturally, there is bound to be a certain amount of subjectivity here, and the recent activity of rhetorical critics, the structuralists, and the canonical emphasis of Brevard Childs will lead to debate over the legitimacy of the dissection of the text.

The commentary itself follows the standard format of the *Biblischer Kommentar* — bibliography, translation, text criticism, form criticism (in which literary critical judgments are also discussed), setting (basically, the date of the section), interpretation (verse-by-verse commentary), and aim (or purpose, p. 146), in which the meaning of the pericope is synthesized or its theological import, in the Old Testament and for Christians, is assessed.

All other commentaries on Ezekiel in English are now a second choice.

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BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEATH. By Lloyd R. Bailey, Sr. Overtures to Biblical Theology. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979. xiv and 159 pages. Paper. $6.95.

Amid the growing literature on death and dying, few books are concerned specifically with biblical views on the subject. This welcome monograph is the result of the author's long-standing interest and has been written for those "who sense in the reality of mortality a problem of meaning."

Ninety pages of the book are devoted to a descriptive summary of the various periods of biblical and extra-biblical literature. A reader who is unfamiliar with the pertinent literature (including some of the biblical material!) may be bewildered by the breathless detail and occasional lack of connective tissue.

What emerges from the study is a variety of biblical perspectives. There is no single formula which adequately summarizes the biblical view. Inevitably this poses a nagging hermeneutical problem. How does the modern believing community relate to the multivalent views of the Bible? The answer is almost as vexing: By getting in touch with Israel's "canonical responses," that is, responses to death which have been preserved or canonized by communal decision. Since no one response is normative, the "communities' situation in the present" determines "which biblical response is the most meaningful after dialogue with the entirety of the canon."

The author appears to favor an Old Testament perspective, that is, that death comes from within and so is regarded as a "natural and acceptable condition." This approach contrasts with that of Israel's neighbors who viewed death as a malevolent power from the outside, and likewise with later biblical views which attribute mortality to sin. It obviously contrasts sharply with the modern West's well-documented attempts to avoid the reality of death. For the author, the attraction of the Old Testament view is its holistic anthropology. This resonates with certain modern psychological and anthropological theories which regard us as greater than the sum of our parts.

It is therefore curious that the author makes a distinction between the concepts of death (biological cessation) and "metaphorical death." The latter refers to "those things which detract from life as Yahweh intends it." I would contend that the Old Testament person, in experiencing death as privation, persecution, sickness, etc., experiences in fact some of the genuine essence of death, and so properly expresses this by labelling this syndrome "death."

One senses that the devout person must live with a continuing dilemma, in view of the failure of current funeral practices and even the church's liturgy to adopt an adequate response to the problem of mortality. The proposed solution — to make a bold decision to accept mortality which is "the ultimate renunciation of egocentricity in favor of theocentricity" may long have to await general understanding and acceptance. While the book may not succeed in immediately solving our modern dilemma, it does provide useful insights to those who struggle with the problem of mortality.

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GOD THE FATHER. By Robert Hamerton-Kelly. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979. xiv and 128 pages. Paper. $5.95.

Hamerton-Kelly presents his material in four main chapters: I. The Father Figure; II. God the Father in Jesus' Religious Heritage; III. God the Father in the Teaching of Jesus; IV. God the Father in the Earliest Traditions about Jesus. After a fifth, short, summary chapter, an excellent essay, Excursus on Method: Symbol and History in Modern Hermeneutics, concludes the book.

This book will be useful to students of the Scriptures in several respects. It will serve as an accessible introduction to the biblical material about the fatherhood of God, much more so than the lengthy, complex, and technical article in *TDNT*,V. It brings together insights from IDB, J. Jeremias' *Abba* and *TDNT* — as well as the author's own approach. Furthermore, the book serves as an excellent introduction to the thought of Paul Ricoeur and Wolfhart Pannenberg, and the final excursus is an intelligible discussion of modern hermeneutics (a rarity indeed!). The excursus alone makes this volume worth reading.

But the book is somewhat less useful perhaps in its major enterprise. As an overture to biblical theology and as a hermeneutical study, *God the Father* really gets us no further than we already were. In the first place the biblical study material largely repeats what has already been assembled elsewhere. We must ask in addition whether Hamerton-Kelly helps us to understand how or in what sense Jesus' designation of God as his Father is a unique theological/eschatological event. The author refers to this dimension, especially when he discusses Jeremias' reconstruction of the Our Father as an eschatological prayer. But, the bulk of the study concentrates on the radical, anti-patriarchal flavor of Jesus' sayings and behavior, and the anti-patriarchal demands of the kingdom upon his followers, seen against the backdrop of Jewish and Hellenistic patriarchalism. This could offer a commendable procedure for investigating the underlying principles of Jesus' theology, yet Hamerton-Kelly does not move on to a comprehensive synthesis.

In the second place the author does not resolve the tension existing between symbol and history. On the surface it makes good sense to "get at" the biblical pictures of God's fatherhood through the psychological frame of Freud's Oedipus hypothesis. After all, we perceive fatherhood through our own experience of a father. Nevertheless, the-Bible-seen-through-Freud-interpreted-by-Ricoeur turns out to be less than helpful — by our author's own admission.

History is able to defy psychological typology, just as it once defied christological typology. Each epoch has its own frame of reference, it seems, about psycho-social realities. Word and event remain separated, temporally and experientially. Freudian "metaphysics" cannot bridge the gap, just as linguistic "metaphysics" cannot.

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JESUS CHRIST THROUGH HISTORY. By Dennis C. Duling. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1979. 324 pages. Paper. $8.95.

The ambitious scope of the title is achieved to a remarkable degree despite the book's comparatively short length. Duling's literary skill is evident as he serves up a full course of the history of scholarship in a series of easily digestible chapterettes featuring significant shifts in religious and philosophic thought or biographic vignettes of representative thinkers. The reader can sense the cross-winds of insight and opinion as they sweep across the consecutive stages of history. One could expect to be overwhelmed by the variety of perspectives through so much time and space, but the author makes sure, by regularly positioned summaries, that the theme of our fascination with the enigmatic

figure of Jesus remains constantly up front.

While German scholarship with its Luthers, Schleiermachers, Harnacks and Bultmanns deservedly receives the most space, the Italians (Anselm, Aquinas), the French (Calvin, Renan, Loisy) and the Spanish (Loyola, Teresa of Avila) are not overlooked. Even the Americans (Shailer Mathews, and J. G. Machen) have their role to play. If there is a lacuna in the presentation, it would have to be the omission of the contribution of English scholars such as Hort, Lightfoot, Streeter, Dodd, et. al. and of the Oxford School. Numerous British philosophers (Locke, Berkeley, Hume) receive their due but only John Wesley is left to represent English participation in the quest for an understanding of Jesus.

For Lutheran and Protestant readers, the ecumenical coverage of the book, both theologically and geographically, will come as a welcome corrective to the usual fare. The author, a Presbyterian teaching in a Jesuit college, presents an admirably balanced perspective making room for Roman Catholic, Calvinist and Lutheran traditions as well as those of the mystics and fundamentalists, rationalists and romanticists. Only the Eastern churches could complain of under-valuation in Duling's purview.

With so much territory to traverse in a single volume it comes as a particularly pleasant surprise to find that the author has consciously chosen to include an occasional portrait, or at least one sentence of human interest, about each scholar or theologian featured. The effect is to enable the reader to see people instead of only pens. So, for example, one is led to ache inwardly with an Alfred Loisy, who as a boy was "lonely, timid and unathletic," but also precocious. As a man, he found himself stretched between a growing scholarship and a reactionary church until, excommunicated for opinions later justified, "Loisy was no longer a Catholic, and without his Catholicism ... was no longer a Christian." Or again, on the somewhat lighter side, there is the ironic picture of a jealous John Wesley refusing the sacrament to a lovely lady who had married another man after Wesley himself had piously spurned her. Such drama makes even the most scholarly book easy reading.

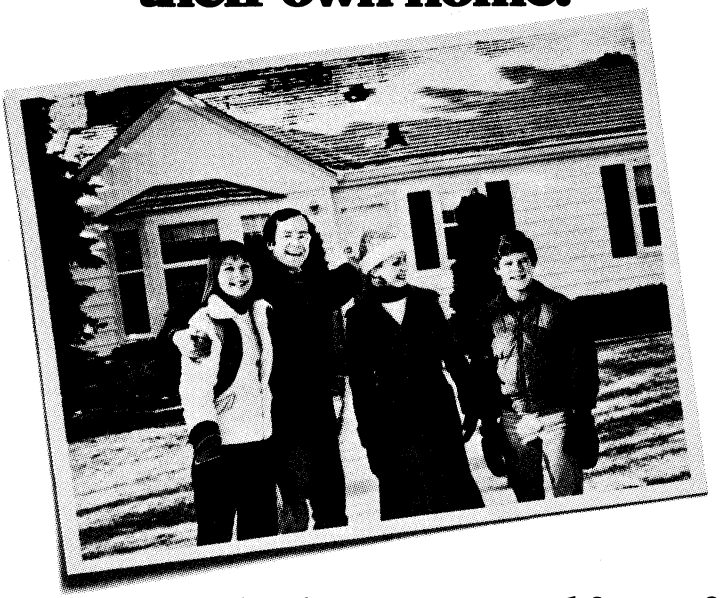
Finally, discontented with a survey of two millennia of history, Duling ventures a look into the future in his closing chapter, "Some Current Approaches to Jesus Christ." There he explores the possible contributions of new(er) methodologies: social historiography, structuralism, analytical psychology, and others.

Jesus Christ through History is an eminently engaging study. Its diachronic portrayal is easy to follow, and its descriptions of the various schools of thought enable readers to structure their own views and locate in time and concept the other authors read. Finally, its sensitive depiction of significant theologians as both scholars and persons makes the quest for the Jesus of history and of faith a very personal one.

From the preface, it is clear that Duling intends his work as a textbook. It would serve well in that capacity, provided two semesters could be devoted to it. In the mind of this reviewer, however, the book will serve anyone well who is interested in coming to grips with the Jesus of the gospels, of the church, and of the human heart. It deserves a place on every professor's, pastor's and theological student's shelf.

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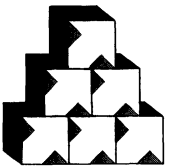
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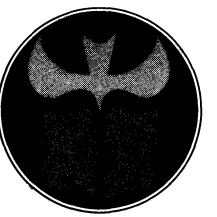
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Clinton Morrison's **An Analytical Concordance to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament** (Westminster, $45.00) is an indispensible resource tool for those who do not know Greek (well). Since the *RSV* does not always render a Greek word by the same English equivalent, a simple concordance would not suffice. Morrison, therefore, has prepared an "Index-Lexicon," which shows all the English words used by the *RSV* for each Greek word. The user need know no Greek since quotations from the original are listed in easy-to-read transliteration. Because of the superiority of the *RSV* over *KJV* in both the Greek text used and the resultant translation, this concordance makes obsolete, at least for the New Testament, the older analytical concordances of Young and Strong. A similar concordance for the Old Testament is urgently needed.

An Introduction to Old Testament Study (Abingdon, $10.95) would seem to be an ideal book for getting beginning seminarians into responsible use of the Old Testament. Written by John H. Hayes, the current editor of the *Journal of Biblical Literature,* this substantial paperback has chapters on the canon, textual criticism, historical criticism and form criticism, followed by sections on the various literary units (e.g. Pentateuch, Historical Books, etc.). Its focus is on the issues and approaches involved in contemporary Old Testament study without pretending to be an "Introduction" ala Eissfeldt. The book is outfitted with most useful bibliographies — and all titles are in English. People without formal theological training will also find it informative and a delight to read. Brian E. Beck's **Reading the New Testament Today** (Knox, $4.95) has a slightly more defensive aim: to justify for the would-be student and the general reader the enterprise of New Testament study as it is carried on today. He attempts to outline the aims, methods, and results of New Testament exegesis and to do so in non-technical language. While he concedes the complexities and even the failings of the discipline, his overall goal is to illustrate some of its many positive gains.

The purpose of **The Literature of Theology: A Guide for Students and Pastors** (Westminster, $5.95) is to help the reader become independent in finding the books, the journal articles, or the information needed in pursuit of either academic study or professional ministry. It lists and annotates over 540 reference tools. Author John A. Bollier suggests that students using his book can save hours, days, or even weeks of undirected and fruitless search for materials required for term papers or research projects.

Ignatius of Loyola, 1491 - 1556, the founder of the Jesuit order, is also the subject of a recent book that attempts to assess his contemporary significance (Collins, $14.95). Illustrated with 52 pages of four color photographs and art objects significant in this saint's life, the book also contains a biographical sketch by Paul Imhof and an essay by Karl Rahner, perhaps the best known Jesuit today, in which he puts into the mouth of Ignatius a message for Jesuits. Naturally much is made of the Spiritual Exercises, but Rahner's Ignatius also pleads for an order without lament over the loss of its political power since 1773: "You should be men who seek to forget themselves for God's sake, who are disciples of the poor and humble Jesus, who preach his gospel, who stand by the poor and homeless in the fight for more justice."

First John combines deceptive simplicity of language with profundity of thought, while Second and Third John provide tantalizing, if obscure, glimpses into the life of the churches of Asia Minor in the late first century. The reprinting of F.F. Bruce's **The Epistles of John. Introduction, Exposition and Notes** (Eerdmans, $3.95) should prove helpful in unraveling both the history and thought of these epistles. Bruce regards the opponents as docetists, dangerous to the faith, and holds that the writer is John the Apostle. Though the bibliography has been brought up to date, this commentary is otherwise an unaltered reprint of a work originally published in England about a decade ago. (Edgar Krentz)

In **A Lay Person's Guide to Conflict Management** (Alban Institute, $2.80) Speed B. Leas suggests how people involved in church fights can handle them creatively. But both in his diagnosis of such conflict and his suggestions for resolving it, he breathes not a word of theology. Even if church fights are basically secular, should not their resolution be linked in some way to the power of the gospel?

The pesharim are a group of sectarian writings from Qumran that present, section by section, continuous commentaries on the prophets and psalms. So-called because the commentary often begins with the word *pesher* (interpretation), they relate biblical citations to the history of the sect that retreated from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. In **Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books** (Catholic Biblical Association, $6.00), Maura P. Horgan presents a transcription of the Hebrew text of fifteen pesharim, a new translation for each, and extensive philological notes. In addition she refines the definition of this genre and points out the many similarities between the pesharim and the type of interpretation found in the book of Daniel.

In **A History of Interpretation of Hebrews 7:1-10 from the Reformation to the Present** (J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], DM 32), Bruce Demarest makes good on the title of his book, dividing each century's interpretation of the Melchizedek pericope into well ordered types (Roman Catholic, Lutheran Orthodox, Reformed, Arminian, Puritan for the 17th century). Strangely, his conclusion is an exegesis of the text rather than an assessment of the significance of four hundred years of commentators.

Back in 1761 James Lyon first published **Urania: A Choice Collection of Psalm Tunes, Anthems and Hymns.** This was the first attempt to spread the art of psalmody in the American colonies. A new edition, with a preface by Richard Crawford (Da Capo Press, $22.50), identifies this work as one of the most comprehensive collections of music published in America during the eighteenth century.

The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music (Da Capo Press, $22.50) first published in 1822, made Lowell Mason the single most influential figure in all nineteenth-century American music. It deflected American music from a British-based native tradition towards a musical ideal rooted in the "classic-era" masters of Europe (Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven). This helped to create a schism in American musical life between "popular" and "classical" music.

The **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,** Volume One: A-D (Eerdmans, $29.95) is a fully revised version of an old classic (first published in 1915). It contains articles on every biblical person and place, on terms with ethical or theological meaning,

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and on the transmission, study, and interpretation of the Bible. *ISBE* actually contains very little from the earlier edition though this volume reprints James Orr's entry on "Bible," and Benjamin Warfield's article on inspiration will show up later in the four-volume set. The editors strove for "reasonable conservatism," well exemplified in the judicious comments on 1 and 2 Chronicles by Gerhard Hasel. When it comes to Deuteronomy, however, a ringing defense of Mosaic authorship is mounted, and there is no entry at all for the Deuteronomistic history. Daniel is seen as a sixth- or fifth-century book. Geoffrey W. Bromiley is the general editor, already well known as the translator of Kittel's New Testament dictionary. He also authored many articles, including those on baptism for the dead, baptism of fire, and baptism of the Holy Spirit (with E.Y. Mullins). The Lutheran view of baptism is presented in an unchanged article from the old *ISBE* by Missourian W.H.T. Dau (1864-1944). The LCA heritage appears in articles by H.E. Jacobs (1844-1932) on "Community of Goods," "Confess," etc.

On the Way to the Future, now in a revised edition (Augsburg, $9.95) is a whirlwind tour of eschatology from OT to NT, from 20th century theologians to secularists like Marx, Bloch, Mao, and Toffler, from date-setting ala Hal Lindsey to a sober survey of Christian views of death and resurrection. Along the way Trinity Lutheran Seminary's Hans Schwarz shows he's on top of a lot of thinkers, but his own favorite future (proleptic anticipation) is rather muted in its call for a better humanity, a more just society, and a more worldly world. For a third edition he might add a chapter that would show how a proleptic anticipator would deal concretely with topics like world hunger, computer technology, or genetic engineering. Or what does it mean to be proleptic anticipators when "we must reject the illusion that we could ever create a good humanity, a just society, or a new world"?

In **African Widows** (Orbis, $8.95) Michael C. Kirwen reports that many African church leaders feel that ethical attitudes on marriage often do not come from the demands of Christianity, but from the narrow ethnocentrism of Christian missionaries. He focuses particularly on the African version of levirate marriage, in which a widow cohabits with her brother-in-law. Though the custom has been condemned by the Catholic church, the author shows how it is a respectable social institution for the care of widows, and is not considered to be sexually immoral. The leviratic union arises out of a solemn pledge made to the bride and groom at their marriage that the groom's relatives will do everything they can to continue the family of the groom if he should be removed by death. The widow's sexual union with her brother-in-law is a symbolic union with the physically dead husband, in his name, with his implied permission, and for his interests. Unless the church reforms, Kirwen holds, non-Western people will have to reject the church as irrelevant and/or call the church to task for its own inner contradictions and ambivalence toward non-Western people.

Biblical Affirmations of Women (Westminster, $9.95) is an attempt, by Leonard Swidler, to search out the positive elements of the biblical tradition as far as women are concerned, to bring them together in one place, to quote them in full, and to provide a context and brief commentary on them. He tacks on some negative quotations from the church fathers at the end lest the reader get an unwarrantedly positive image of the attitudes toward and the status of women in the Bible and early Christian tradition. In 351 paragraphs, packaged for the dabbler or the sustained reader, the author moves from goddess worship (in the culture around Israel) to Gregory the Great (6th century) whose "attitude toward women basically continued that negative pattern which was largely established by the Christian fathers before him."

A History of Christian Doctrine. Edited by Hubert Cunliffe-Jones, assisted by Benjamin Drewery (T&T

Clark, L.11.80 and Fortress, $29.95). In 601 tightly-packed pages, a number of scholars from the British Isles present the great and turbulent story of Christian theology from the sub-apostolic age to Vatican II. G.W.H. Lampe describes the patristic period, E. Gordon Rupp tells of the century and a half before the Reformation, as well as of Philip Melanchthon and Martin Bucer, and Benjamin Drewery writes of Luther (for forty pages). Equally capable writers cover the rest. The editors sum it up: "We present this history not only as an attempt at a more satisfactory introduction to the history of the past, but also as a stimulating tool and resource for the task of the continuing present." And consider this on Luther: "[His] theology of the word of God has won its greatest triumphs not among [his] professed allies and friends ... but in the Second Vatican Council itself, where it may be claimed as the underlying and unifying thread. Luther would have wished no more." Pelikan's five volumes of dogma history are surely going to be more important finally, but there's really nothing else quite like this one-volume treatment in English. Attention to history's personalities and squabbles also makes it eminently readable.

In **The Overseas List** (Augsburg, $4.95) David M. Beckmann, a graduate of Christ Seminary — Seminex, and Elizabeth Anne Donnelly, a staff member of Bread for the World, describe opportunities for living and working in developing countries. How can one hook up with Protestant or Catholic missions, with private development agencies, with International Organizations such as the UN, with the U.S. government, or with business? This book tells you where to write and what you might get to do. Or would you like to study or teach abroad? Again, here's how. But why live and work in a developing country: "Because developing countries are the scene of some of God's most thrilling activities in the contemporary world." To "get there" may require a vigorous job search and long-term career commitments. To put the opportunity to good use requires dedication, critical intelligence, and an alert conscience: Those who learn from their experience abroad can return to our own country to help adopt just and compassionate national policies toward the world's poor. Recommend this book especially to gifted and sensitive young people who are looking for something different from conventional ministry or the 9 to 5 job.

Chrys C. Caragounis focuses on one crucial New Testament word in **The Ephesian Mysterion** (CWK Gleerup, $14.50). The word *mysterion* belongs to a long Jewish tradition for designating God's riches, truths, and plans. As used in Ephesians, the word shows a close tie to the book of Daniel: the mysterion is God's purpose, it is eschatological, it has cosmic dimensions, and it is a unified plan. In both biblical books the principalities and powers are subjected to God as part of and as a prerequisite to God's eschatological purpose. The role of the Son of Man in Daniel and of Christ in Ephesians may be considered as equivalent.

Tord Fornberg illustrates the development of one branch of the church in the years 70-180 C.E. via a study of 2 Peter. In **An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society** (CWK Gleerup, $12.25), the author traces 2 Peter's use of early Christian traditions, its eschatology, and its ethics. Though little affected by Judaism, the person responsible for 2 Peter tried to communicate the Christian message to an utterly Hellenized society. This study is a revision of a doctoral dissertation at Uppsala and is a welcome addition to the literature of an oft neglected book.

With a name like **Greek To Me** (Harper, $7.95), you know this introductory grammar will not be stodgy. In fact, it's full of cartoons that clarify and delight, and it employs a unique memory system which enables the student to enjoy learning grammar, word endings, and vocabulary. Written by Cullen I.K. and J. Lyle Story, father and son, the book is peopled by a cast of zany characters: Vera Verb, Norbert and Nora Nominative, Gerald and Geraldine Genitive, Victor and Victoria

Vocative, etc. Not everyone will need all the mnemonic devices and some are a bit on the exotic side (e.g. Party Zipple — say that one a couple times), but I'd wager a drachma or two that learning NT Greek through "memory visualization" would forever put to rest the complaint that Greek is the impossible requirement of an inflexible curriculum. Suitable, they say, for classroom use or private instruction. What's the stodgy word for "pretty cat"?

Ralph W. Klein

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