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EARLY CHRISTIANS – MIDDLE CLASS?
Robert H. Smith

THE CAUSE AND RELIEF OF POVERTY
Frances Moore Lappe'

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A Poor Perspective

A local chap recently received 101 unwanted Visa credit cards in the mail. "Computer error," they said. Imagine the feelings of the poor guy unpacking his mail box, torn between outrage at all the junk mail and the heady opportunity of over $70,000 in buying power ($700 per card times 101). Or think of the mailman, puffing up to one single house with a whole bagful of Visa cards. In my euphoric reverie I can't bare to think of all the head-knocking up and down the line at Visa computer central. Folks are laughing, screaming, celebrating, and grousing about 101 little pieces of plastic. It all depends on one's perspective.

The early Christians were poor peasants, laborers, and slaves, members of a deprived community, right? That's the current stereotype in exegetical handbooks, but **Robert Smith** uses sociology to give us another perspective. Matthew's audience, he shows, was not rural, poor, unschooled, or charismatically unstructured. "Matthew emerges as urban, well to do, educated, and in a certain sense anti-charismatic." The majority of early Christians were not unemployed, but members of the ancient middle class. The article closes with a number of questions: Why have we found the traditional picture so appealing? Have we used it as a club to disturb comfortable congregations? How much of our Bible reading is shaped by our own present social status?

What about today's poor? How do we help them? **Frances Moore Lappé** argues that scarcity of resources is not the cause of their suffering, nor greater production the solution to it. Her solution is to give power to people through democratic control over food-producing resources. Our fasts and our CARE packages will not bring the needed change, but we need to help remove obstacles which block people from producing a more democratic system. Hers is a non-theological, controversial, some would say Marxist, analysis of world poverty and what to do about it. Christians impelled by

the gospel and deciding on their strategy for social justice need to hear her big questions.

But they also need to consider the views of **David Beckmann,** who works for the World Bank. While he shows that over one billion people around the world are caught in absolute or relative poverty, he holds that the poor have got a little richer in recent years. We are involved with the poor, through trade and through investments; we have the power and responsibility for influencing U.S. public policy toward the have-nots. He urges the church to specialize in what it does best, to capitalize on the deep commitment of its members, to engage in people-to-people projects, and to help raise everyone's consciousness on world poverty. Not only are his views more sanguine than Lappé's, but they also presuppose a much different diagnosis and strategy for solution.

"Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt." (Col. 4:6) **Harry Coiner** may never have put out to sea, but he's an old salt nevertheless. In his view all of us who ride the motley train out of Corinth are poor beggars, and every difference between us blends into the common need for God's verdict of grace. The best perspective for us is to boast of what the Lord has done, is doing and will do.

450 years have passed since Augsburg, and **Kurt K. Hendel** continues to parade before us the confessors who helped make the Augustana an event worth remembering. Elector John of Saxony was a politician who did not flinch at what had to be done to protect his theologians at three famous Diets. Because of his orthodoxy and reliability we call him the steadfast confessor.

The brief article by **Kenneth Haugk** and **William McKay** helps give those of us who are middle class a perspective on the last judgment. Many of our friends do not need our money; they need our time, our understanding, and our acceptance. Any generosity to

them that does not include part of ourselves is vain: "Not what we give but what we share; for the gift without the giver is bare."

Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kindgom of heaven. That's a good perspective on and for the poor. It's your visa to new insight, though the credit belongs to God's charity. A poor person's perspective can provide a good look. And so — in God's economy — can a rich person's.

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

Were the Early Christians Middle-Class? A Sociological Analysis of the New Testament

Robert H. Smith

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For a very long time Sunday sermons, Hollywood movies, and scholarly books have been unwitting collaborators. They have worked together to fix in the popular mind a graphic portrait of the social standing of Jesus, his first circle of disciples, the earliest Christian congregations, and the whole Christian church up to the time of Constantine in the early fourth century.

First of all, I want to display that popular picture so you can see for yourself whether it does not tally with what you have heard repeatedly in churches and seen time and again in theatres. One stream in contemporary sociological study of the New Testament supports that picture.

Then I will introduce contrary voices and allow a different picture to emerge. A swelling chorus today is declaring on the basis of biblical and later evidence that the pre-Constantinian church was very largely what we today call middle-class, not landless peasants or urban slaves, as in the first picture, and not noble aristocrats either. Matthew will serve as a test case within the New Testament era.

And finally it will be useful to raise some questions about relevance: why have so many of us found agreeable that popular picture of the earliest Christians as slaves and persecuted minority? What use should we make of our present-day deductions regarding the economic and social status of Jesus and his earliest followers? Must we today adopt their stance toward the larger society (whether they were revolutionaries or mystics or comfortably in middle)?

The Stock Picture

"Like Jesus himself, the first Christians belonged to the lowest classes of society and were mostly rural peasants, poor urban laborers, or slaves; they shared generously with one another what little they had in the way of this world's goods, and a basic feature of their life was the daily or weekly communal meal; each was brother or sister to the other, and they recognized no hard and fast distinctions of higher or lower, of male or female, of slave or free among them; leaders and doers arose spontaneously to meet specific needs but there was no fixed or regular structure, no complicated internal politics, no division into clergy and lay, officer and mere member; all were spirit-filled charismatics enjoying divine guidance not through tradition and rule and office but immediately in vision, dream and prophecy; they were all alike determined pacifists and rarely claimed public attention except in time of civil persecution, when, unjustly accused, they were dragged off to serve the public's craving for spectacle. Only later — long after the period represented by our New Testament documents, and per-

haps not until Constantine who became the first Christian emperor in A.D. 325 — were the early charismatic fires banked and only then did the church gradually settle down and carve out a niche for itself in the world and become increasingly stratified, tradition-oriented, law-ruled and bookish, comfortable and even secular. And only then did Christianity begin to penetrate the middle and upper classes."

So goes the stereotype. It is safe to omit references to films like *Barabbas, The Robe, Ben Hur* and all the others that have contributed to the picture. We turn to look at other sources and supports of the picture. It has been expanded and refined by a series of recent scholarly essays working with theoretical tools of modern sociology, and it has been nourished by attention to passages in the gospels, in the early chapters of the Book of Acts, and by words of Paul in 1 Cor. 1:26-30. First a look at just a few sociological studies.[1]

Mark's Community and Cynic-Stoic Preachers

While Matthew will serve below as our chief focus and test case, it will be useful to begin with a description recently drawn of Mark's community, because it seems to fit the popular picture sketched above, and because Matthew, in using Mark, altered many details and so revealed his biases.

Howard Clark Kee thinks that while Mark may have been written in Rome (an old idea about the gospel), it was more likely a product of "Eastern Mediterranean rural or village culture" (102).[2]

[1] Only a few works out of a vast and growing literature can be mentioned here. Excellent introductions to various sociological approaches together with bibliographies can be found in (1) Leander E. Keck, "On the Ethos of Early Christians" *JAAR* 42 (1974) 435-452, (2) Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Social Description of Early Christianity" in *RelSRev* 1 (1975) 19-25, (3) Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), (4) J.H. Schütz, "Ethos of Early Christianity" *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible — Supplementary Volume* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976) and (5) Howard Clark Kee, *Christian Origins in Sociological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980).

[2] Howard Clark Kee, *Community of the New Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977). Very useful is James A. Wilde, "The Social World of Mark's Gospel: A Word about Method" in *SBL 1978 Seminar Papers*, edited by Paul J. Achtemeier (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), II, 47-70. Wilde employs a typology of religious responses to the world developed by Oxford sociologist Bryan Wilson and finds that Mark ranks high on the scales of thaumaturgy, conversionism, and revolutionism, while he ranks low on the scales of utopianism, reformism, introversionism, and manipulationism. Wilde is of course operating at a higher level of abstration than Kee and raises important questions of method. There is no one reigning sociology, and interpreters of the New Testament employing sociological approaches use different typologies and vocabularies. On the work of Bryan Wilson see Donald E. Miller, "Sectarianism and Secularization" in *RevSRev* 5 (1979) 161-174.

Even more specifically he thinks the Markan community had its base in rural and small-town southern Syria, someplace in the boondocks outside Antioch and Damascus but not so far south as Palestine. Nevertheless Kee is more interested in the cultural than in the physical geography. He notes in Mark a "clear antipathy toward the city," an attitude that is in fact "anti-city" (104). In editorial sections of the gospel (in the links between the traditional paragraphs of mateial, in the settings which Mark has himself supplied) Jesus is pictured as avoiding the cities. He characteristically teaches and acts "on a hill," "by the sea," "in the desert," "on the green grass." Down to the very end Jesus lives outside Jerusalem, entering the city daily to teach but retiring each evening. He announces the destruction of that city and is himself killed there.

In the ancient world Kee sees close parallels to the style of Jesus and the first Christians in the Essenes of Qumran (producers of the Dead Sea Scrolls) and in the Cynic-Stoic charismatic preacher-philosophers.

The Essenes stood in the Jewish-Hasidic-apocalyptic tradition: anti-city, anti-temple, anti-world, pious, devout and prayerful, looking for the resolution of cosmic conflict by divine intervention and for the early vindication of the faithful elect. Cynic-Stoic philosophers wandered from village to village and gained adherents by preaching, healing, and exorcisms and supported themselves by begging and depending on local hospitality.

The members of Mark's community did not retreat into the desert like Essenes but felt sent upon a worldwide mission like that of the Cynic-Stoic wandering teachers. They went out preaching and practicing exorcism (3:14; 6:12f.) as Jesus had (1:39), and so exercised a prophetic-charismatic ministy. Members underwent a social and economic transformation as they abandoned their families and erstwhile means of livelihood, just as the first disciples had (1:20; 6:7-13; cf. Diogenes Laertius 6:13, 33). The community was marked by new forms of security and solidarity compensating for the call to abandon wealth and break family ties (10:28ff). The Markan community was also peculiarly open to women — even Gentile women — and children (1:31; 10:30; 15:41; 7:24-30; 9:33-37; 10:13, 16). The community was not a politically active entity but adopted a posture of deliberate pacifism (12:13-16; 10:42-45).

Kee's work is scholarly rather than popular and operates at a high level of sophistication with a variety of data. He examines every possible hint of Mark's social and cultural situation. In the end he sees Mark meshing rather neatly with Acts and 1 Corinthians and fitting comfortably into the popular picture. Of course he sharpens the focus, calls

parallels to the witness stand, and works with a carefully articulated perspective.

Early Christianity as Millenarian Movement

In a celebrated work John Gager has offered a theoretical framework within which to ponder the origins and growth of the first Christian communities.[3] His ruminations seem to confirm the popular portrait and are close to Kee's hypothesis regarding Mark.

Gager's basic paradigm is neither the ancient Hasidic or Essene community nor the Cynic-Stoic troop. It is the millenarian movement. (Kee regards the Essene and Cynic-Stoic movements as quite similar to millenarianism).

Millenarian movements attract the disinherited, and Gager proceeds to describe various facets of disinherited existence in first century Palestine. 1) Political alienation was the pervasive Palestinian atmosphere under Roman occupation. 2) The Roman colonizers and occupiers practiced systematic taxation and rigid control of money, and a crisis of finance always generates a crisis of human dignity. 3) Religiously considered, the convents to the new movement seem not to have included any Pharisees other than Paul, any priests other than some of the poor and powerless men of the lower orders, or any Essenes. Thus the first converts did not represent the religious establishment but came from the ranks of the "impure outsiders" (the people of the land or *am ha-aretz*).

Deprivation is the best description of the situation of the earliest Christian community, according to Gager. The deprived who entered the church stood in the tradition of apocalyptic Judaism, politically unorganized but also uncontrolled by those in power and so perceived as a threat, not necessarily from the lowest social and economic classes but embracing an ideal glorifying poverty.

Gager believes that a prophet serves as catalyst in the generation of a millenarian movement out of a mass of deprived persons. He is sometimes not the direct cause of the movement but rather the symbolic focus of the concerns and aspirations of the community.

Being deprived outsiders had as its correlate an "intense preoccupation with the unity" of the congregation (p. 33) and Christians went through a "stage of anti-structure" in which they abolished all status and distinctions in their midst.

A caution is in order: Gager's analysis is more finely tuned than the preceding summary can indicate. He speaks of "rela-

[3] John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1975). John Gager in a review of books by Theissen (note 4), Malherbe (note 1), and Grant (note 16) discusses social and sociological study of early Christianity: *RelSRev* 5 (1979) 174-180.

tive deprivation" (p. 27), a sensing of a gap between actuality and expectation, of rising aspiration, frustrated by circumstance. He does not mean that every early Christian was dirt-poor, illiterate, and spit on by all comers. Yet he thinks deprivation is the best description of the situation (inner and outer) of those first drawn to the Christian movement.

Wandering Charismatics

A third example of sociological analysis may be cited even more briefly than the preceding two. Gerd Theissen[4] focuses on biblical texts which speak approvingly of the most radical forms of behavior: leaving father and mother and children, relinquishing house and home and job, releasing the grip on possessions, turning the back on all claims to defense and protection (see, for example, Mark 1:16-20; 10:28-30; Matthew 5:38-41; 6:25-32; 8:20-22; 10:10; 19:10-11). He seeks a home for all these texts. He asks questions such as, "Who preserved these texts? Who lived by them?"

He believes that Christians in the years A.D. 30-70 fell into two major groups: 1) The decisive figures in early Christianity were wandering charismatics: traveling apostles, prophets, and disciples characterized by homelessness, lack of family, and the relinquishing of all wealth, possessions, and security. Not only were Peter and Paul travelers (1 Cor. 9:5), but at Antioch of Syria, for example, there were Christian leaders from all over the Roman world: Barnabas of Cyprus, Lucius from Cyrene, Menahem brought up with Herod Antipas at Rome or Jerusalem. 2) The wandering charismatics were supported morally and materially by sympathizers settled in local communities. The sympathizers were more moderate, making compromises with the world and not renouncing it totally as the radical, wandering charismatics had done. (see Luke 8:2-3; 10:38-42; etc.)

The wandering apostles had an analogy in the itinerant Cynic philosophers (pp. 14-15), and the division of the complex movement into more radical and more temperate segments has an analogy in the Essene movement. While Cynics and Essenes are the basic analogies identified by Theissen, he finds parallels to some early Christian attitudes towards wealth and the wealthy landowners, toward the city, toward the temple with its cult and priesthood, toward Gentiles and the Romans in particular, not only among Cynics and

[4] Gerd Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*(Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978) and "Itinerant Radicalism: The Tradition of Jesus' Sayings from the Perspective of the Sociology of Literature" in *The Bible and Liberation. Political and Social Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: The Community for Religious Research and Education, 1976), 84-93.

Essenes but also among resistance fighters, prophetic movements (Jewish and Samaritan), and other groups.

These scholarly sociological studies of the early Christians seem largely to support the popular caricature, as they portray a movement inhabiting the cultural backwaters, led by charismatically endowed exorcists, healers, and teachers who had radically renoucned the things of this world.

In significant ways these recent studies stand in a succession with older works of people like Karl Kautsky, Adolf Deissmann, and Ernst von Dobschütz. Kautsky analyzed Christian origins from the perspective of Marxist social and historical theories. For him the earliest Christians were proletarian — uneducated, disinherited, alienated — eagerly practicing the communism which they believed Jesus had taught. Later, as the gospel penetrated upward into monied and ruling classes, the revolutionary fervor died and the movement was co-opted by the very classes against which it had originally been directed.

Deissmann found the closest analogies to the language of the New Testament in the colloquial papyri recovered from the rubbish heaps of Egypt at the end of the last century. To Deissmann the language was an index of low social standing. Primitive Christianity was a movement of the weary and the heavy-laden, people lacking both power and position, the poor, the base, the foolish. And yet Deissmann insisted on adding to the preceding description the qualifying phrase "on the whole." Von Dobschütz attempted a description not merely of the dogmatic and ethical teaching of the earliest Christians but of their ethos, their actual behavior, style, attitudes, and patterns of life.

The work of Kee, Gager, Theissen, and others is an effort at renewing sociological analysis of New Testament texts by taking advantage of developments in the field of sociology after the time of these pioneers working in Germany and following upon the labors of the Chicago School, especially Shirley Jackson Case and Shailer Matthews.[5]

Matthew: A Test Case

Recent study of Matthew sees the first gospel as revealing at least one influen-

[5] Karl Kautsky, *The Foundations of Christianity* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1953; German edition, 1908); Adolf Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* (New York: Harper, 1957; first published in 1912) and especially *Light from the Ancient East* (New York: Harper, 1927; first German edition in 1908). Deissmann's review of Kautsky is published on pages 465-467 of *LAE*. Ernst von Dobschütz, *Christian Life in the Primitive Church* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904; German edition, 1902). Keck and Malherbe (note 1) review the works mentioned in this paragraph, among many others.

Matthew was most likely writing for an urban community . . . They were not rustics.

Matthew's community . . . does not fit the popular portrait of early Christians.

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tial early Christian author who does not fit the stock picture. Matthew and his community do *not* seem to fit the popular picture of unlearned evangelist and unwashed people. These results should make us hesitate to accept the popular portrait and should make us wonder about the adequacy (or at least the sole sufficiency) of the millenarian, the Essenic, or the Cynic-Stoic models.

Matthew's Community: Not Rural

Matthew has altered the setting of the ministry of Jesus offered in Mark, and in fact Matthew's gospel has "an undeniable urban character." Throughout the first gospel Jesus' activity is city-oriented. Capernaum is designated as "his own city" (8:1). From there he makes forays into the surrounding countryside, but he continually returns home to the city. His disciples traveled from city to city (10:11-15,23; 23:34). Matthew was most likely writing for an urban community, "for people who, like Jesus, have their home in the city." They were not rustics.[6]

Matthew's Community: Not Poor

Furthermore the audience seems to have consisted of "affluent Christian Jews who probably belonged to upper class society." Genealogies were especially safeguarded as the historical records of the urban elite. They served to record a family's pedigree and defended its prestige. Matthew's audience apparently included many landholders, merchants, businessmen, and entrepreneurs. They were people who would appreciate the words on debtors and courts in 5:25-26, be startled by the suggestions regarding generosity (so unbusinesslike!) in 5:39-42 and the casual attitude toward sound financial planning in 6:19, be captivated by the dealer in pearls (13:45-46) and confounded by the logic of the landowner in 20:1-16 and would need the warning about the fate of those who have this world's goods but fail to share their resources with "the least of these my brethren" (25:31-46). Matthew has a more extensive vocabulary of coinage and wealth than Mark or Luke.[7] If Matthew's community contained a sizeable group of relatively affluent merchants and businessmen, then it does not fit the popular portrait of early Christians.

[6] On this and some of the other material in the following paragraphs on Matthew see G.D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946) and Herman C. Waetjen, *The Origin and Destiny of Humanness* (Corte Madera: Omega Books, 1976).

[7] Many further details on money in Kilpatrick and Waetjen and in Jack D. Kingsburg, "The Verb *Akolouthein* ("to follow") as an Index of Matthew's View of His Community" *JBL* 97 (1978) 56-73.

Matthew's Community: Not Unschooled

The Gospel according to Matthew is a literary piece, sophisticated in construction and in theological argument, exhibiting a far greater mastery of the Greek language than his predecessor Mark.[8] Matthew had apparently enjoyed some considerable schooling, a privilege of the upper class. Most modern commentators on Matthew see the author mirrored not in the tax collector Matthew-Levi of 9:9, but in the scribe of 8:19 and 13:52. The scribe initiated into the kingdom, and that means taught by Jesus the messianic interpreter of the Torah, brings forth teachings old and new, both traditional and startlingly fresh. He does it like a man who pays out coins of various ages and reigns — all of them genuine, none of them counterfeit — so he is not afraid of the account he must render on the day of reckoning (13:52; 12:35-37).

It was Ernst von Dobschütz (1928) who suggested that the Gospel according to Matthew was written as a manual of discipline and catechism for Christian behavior by a rabbi trained in the Jewish school of Johanan ben Zakkai and subsequently converted to Christiantiy. Philip Carrington (1940) spoke of a Matthean school, whose teachers parallel the elders and teachers of ancient Judaism. G.D. Kilpatrick (1946) pictured Matthew's community at prayer, using pieces of the gospel tradition for liturgical reading and homiletical exposition in the midst of the worshiping community.

Krister Stendahl in reviewing the work of precedessors lauds the increasingly insistent accent on the actual life situation of the community and exploits the suggestion that the material in Matthew's gospel has the character of a manual or handbook intended particularly for the leaders of the church.[9] He compares the gospel of Matthew with the Qumran *Manual of Discipline (Rules of the Community,* 1QS) and the early Christian *Didache.*

Stendahl sees strong evidence of scholarly activity behind the production

[8] According to James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, 1919), Matthew, as he deals with his predecessor Mark, was not only "an artist in his genius for compression" but he also frequently substitutes "literary flexions for popular" (169), and yet all in all his is a "correct if rather colourless Greek which avoids the vulgar forms without displaying a mastery of the literary syntax" (29). In the opinion of C.F.D. Moule, Matthew was "an educated person commanding sound Greek with a considerable vocabulary (The Birth of the New Testament, New York: Harper and Row, 1962, p. 219). See also F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament,* translated and revised by R.W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), para. 485, 492.

[9] Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew* (Uppsala: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1954).

of the gospel in its systematic teaching and its neat and symmetrical arrangement of material into clusters of threes, fives, sevens, and tens, in its developed casuistry (as opposed to the repetition of broad ethical principles), in its application of tradition to fresh situations in church life, in its reflection upon the duties and position of the church leaders and, above all, in its ingenious interpretation of the Old Testament in a method reminiscent of that practiced at Qumran. Jesus forbade his disciples to be called rabbi, father, or teacher (23:8-10), a caution with relevence only if something very similar to a rabbinic school existed in the church. Stendahl, opposing the notion that the Christian leaders were wandering missionary prachers, says it was the social pattern of the rabbi and his disciples which made the deepest imprint on the life of the early church as we see it in Matthew's gospel.

Matthew's Community: Anti-Charismatic as much as Charismatic

It is generally agreed that Matthew's gospel comes from a Jewish-Christian community with a strong antipathy toward certain elements in the synagogue. No one needs to be reminded that Matthew includes sharp rebukes of his fellow Jews who refused to confess Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (16:16). Ch. 23 is a notorious denunciation of scribes and Pharisees who teach Moses without Christ.

Less frequently observed are the attacks of Jesus upon certain charismatics.[10] Towards the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew records Jesus' warning ot the community about "false prophets in sheep's clothing" (7:15-20). These enemies of the community are Christians (sheep), not Jewish or pagan outsiders. They confess Jesus in language sufficiently orthodox: "Lord, Lord" (7:21-22). That is also the cry of both sheep and goats in the parable of the last judgment (25:37,44), and throughout the gospel it is the specifically Christian way of addressing Jesus. This correctly formulated way of hailing Jesus is probably not just liturgical convention or brief creed, but inspired utterance (see 1 Cor. 12:3). Nevertheless in spite of their inspired and orthodox confession, those Christian prophets are exposed as false by the fact that they are not bearing good fruit

[10] Gunther Bornkamm, "The Risen Lord and the Earthly Jesus," in *The Future of Our Religious Past,"* ed. by James M. Robinson (London: SCM Press, 1971), 203-229; Eduard Schweizer, "Observance of the Law and Charismatic Activity in Matthew" in *New Testament Studies* 16 (1970 213-230; J. Massingberd Ford, *Baptism of the Spirit* (Techny, Illinois: Divine Word, 1971); James P. Martin, "The Church in Matthew" in *Int* 29 (1975) 41-56.

(7:15-20). They are "evildoers" or, more literally, "workers of lawlessness" (7:23).

Lawlessness *(anomia)* is a Matthaean word and a Matthaean worry. It describes the scribes and Pharisees once (23:28) but is used of Christians three times (7:23; 13:41; 24:12). Looking ahead to the days of the church and the end of history, Jesus says that many people will give up their faith and begin to betray and hate one another (24:10). Here hatred and faith are unexpected opposites; for Matthew both have a deeply ethical and equally religious content. Betrayal and hate are fertile ground for false prophets and their deceptions (24:11). And again it is rather surprising that deception is spelled out, not in doctrinal or speculative, but in ethical terms. Deception means there will be a spread of lawlessness. Lawlessness is the way Matthew describes the cooling love, the easy morality, the stance both in behavior and in teaching of those who come under the influence of the false prophets with their deceptions (24:12). He warns that at "the end of the age" (13:40; 28:20) the angels will gather up the doers of lawlessness and cast them into the fire (13:36-43).

Their exclusion from the kingdom comes as a surprise to them (25:1-13, 14-30,41-46; 22:11-14). But why are they startled? How could they possibly have expected to get in? On what basis? Apparently on the basis of their charismatic endowment. That is, they esteemed their spiritual gifts and powers as infallible evidence of God's indwelling and therefore of God's favor and acceptance of them as the children or people of God. They had no doubt that they were spiritual people, God's people, because the gifts of the Spirit were clearly displayed among them: tongues and spiritual utterance, exorcisms, prophecy, and the power to do miracles (7:15-23). The possession of the Spirit and the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit had become their boast and the ground of their confidence.

Matthew, like Paul, is basically positive about the Spirit and about spiritual endowments. The very fact that Matthew speaks not simply of prophets and charismatics but also of "false" prophets shows that he assumed that there are "true" prophets and so "true" charismatics. He describes Christian discipleship in terms of charismatic deeds and charismatic speech in Jesus' mission discourse (10:5-20). Jesus was himself conceived by the Spirit (1:18,20) and endowed with the Spirit at his baptism (3:16; 4:1); and he performed charismatic deeds of healing, exorcism, and raisings of the dead (11:2-6). Matthew apparently uses "prophet" alongside "little ones," "righteous person," and "disciple" as synonyms, all equivalent to "Christian" (10:41-42). If "prophet" is a synonym for "Christian," then Matthew has a very high view indeed of the

Matthew time and again betrays his uneasiness with certain charismatics.

charismatic endowments in the congregations. If "prophet" designates only some especially gifted Christians, then Matthew still thought of all Christians as possessing the Spirit or as being alive in the Spirit (see Rom. 8:9). And of course Matthew's estimate of the Old Testament prophets is incomparably high.

Nevertheless, Matthew time and again betrays his uneasiness with certain charismatics. His formulation of the Beatitudes (which may be designed especially for church leaders) appears to include anti-charismatic cautions. "Blessed are the poor *in spirit*" (5:3, italicized words not in the parallel, Luke 6:20) seems aimed at those who boast of their spiritual riches, just as "Blessed are the meek" (completely absent from Luke's list) may have in view those who are puffed up and arrogant because of their endowments (cf. Matt. 11:29; 21:5; 1 Cor. 4:6,18,19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4).

Jesus' words on prayers uttered secretly behind closed doors and spoken simply without babbling or prating sound very much like Paul's instructions regarding tongues in 1 Cor. 14. Even the "much speaking" of Matt. 6:7 is reminiscent of Paul's words in 1 Cor. 14:19. Matthew omits the generous saying of Mark 9:38-41 (cf. Luke 9:49-50) concerning exorcisms performed by a charismatic leader who does not follow Jesus. It is simply unthinkable to Matthew that a true prophet or true charismatic is not simultaneously discipled to Jesus.

According to Matt. 25:31-46 it is not notorious public sinners who are excluded from the kingdom, nor is it the charismatically endowed who enter. It is doers of deeds of loving kindness, people who have exhibited love towards the deprived and disinherited. They are called sheep and righteous, and they enter the kingdom.

Finally, it is seldom noted that Matthew is silent about Pentecost. He neither has Jesus promise the Spirit nor does he describe the coming of the Spirit. And yet there is nothing incomplete about the portrait Matthew has drawn, and it is not necessary to fill in any gaps with paragraphs taken from the other gospels or from Acts.

Jesus promises, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (18:20). "Lo, I will be with you always" (28:20). His name, after all, is Emmanuel, which means "God with us" (1:23). The presence of God is experienced and known in the crucified and resurrected Jesus and not apart from him.

A church full (too full from Matthew's perspective) of boastful charismatics, prophets, visionaries, healers, and other claimants to spiritual endowment prompted him to say loud and clear that Jesus is himself still present. He did not say that in a merely anti-charismatic fit, nor does he seem concerned for the authority of some ruling caste or for structure and orderliness in general

Matthew emerges as urban, well-to-do, educated, and, in a certain sense, anti-charismatic.

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against their threatened breakdown and dissolution. He is concerned for love, for discipleship, for the higher righteousness, for service in the world of human need, exactly as Paul (1 Cor. 13) and John (John 13-16; 1 John) were in their own ways, in the face of people who located the heart of their religion in pyrotechnic displays of spiritual virtuosity.

At the conclusion to his gospel, Matthew declares that the same Jesus is present who had taught the Sermon on the Mount. For Matthew the Resurrection means the conferring of unbounded authority upon Jesus of Nazareth, whose story the gospel has rehearsed. He and he only is the Lord of the church. Matthew's gospel holds before the church the picture of him who alone is norm of all churchly activity and teaching. With his words and deeds Jesus is the standard against which all fresh charismatic (or non-charismatic) activity is to be evaluated — not extinguished but distinguished.

The production of the gospel met the need for controls over some forms of charismatic activity and for guidance for Christian leaders. The historical Jesus of Nazareth, who had exercised a charismatic ministry not only by healing and exorcising, but especially by rebuking lovelessness and by forgiving, by offering his life as a ransom, and by uttering the Sermon on the Mount, was the exalted one present in the community at prayer, study and worship.

Back to the basic question: Are the earliest Christians aptly described as the disinherited and the disadvantaged, as those who felt political alienation acutely, as people shamed and gutted by Rome's control of their money, as a steamy hothouse of otherworldly virtues walled off from the predator-filled jungle of the world, as outsiders, as a family minimizing status and structure, as following the urgings of charismatic rather than of traditional or rational-legal leadership? The correct answer appears to be both "yes" and "no." There has been diversity in thought and style in the church from the beginning. But the "no" has usually been disregarded. The foregoing sketch of Matthew and his community constitutes one "no" vote.

Matthew emerges as urban, well-to-do, educated, and, in a certain sense, anti-charismatic. An influential voice in the church from the beginning, he was not a wandering radical, but a settled critic both of traveling charismatics and of the stuffy emerging establishment, in so far as it swerved from the path of discipleship to Jesus. What may be even more surprising is that Matthew is not all alone in the New Testament, and there are contemporary voices declaring that many and perhaps most Christians in the period before Constantine were members of the middle class.

First Corinthians and the Book of Acts

1 Cor. 1:26-28 has probably been more influential than any other single text in shaping popular belief and scholarly opinion regarding the social origins of the earliest Christians. It has operated as a proof text for the low, proletarian origins of church members, and passages such as Acts 4:13, Mark 6:3, and John 7:15 have functioned as backup. The RSV translates the passage as follows:

> For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise . . . (1 Cor. 1:26-27)

The passage and its context have been subjected to rigorous analysis by Wilhelm Wuellner,[11] who concludes that the passage is written in the lively diatribe style of oral delivery. Paul tosses out lines to which his readers will respond with their automatic answers, and then Paul, assuming their response, proceeds with his own argument. The passage (including audience response) might be paraphrased as follows:

Paul: "Look, brethren! At the time you were called, isn't it true that many of you were wise according to human standards? Were not many of you powerful and of noble birth?"

Answer: "Yes, many of us were certainly well-endowed, but what about it?"

Paul: "Well, you seem to have forgotten that God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, . . . so that no human being might boast in the presence of God . . ." (And that's the basic problem of the Corinthians — their ingratitude, their boasting, their taking their stand on what they regard as their own strength, instead of standing on the grace of God alone.)

The congregation at Corinth may have recruited its members not only from the very poor, but also — and perhaps largely — from the well-to-do bourgeois circles and even from the upper classes.[12] Even if the suggested paraphrase is wrong, and the tradition is correct that only a minority was rich, powerful, and noble, that minority was dominant in the congregation.

The portrait of the Jerusalem congregation in the opening chapters of Acts

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[11] Wilhelm Wuellner, "The Sociologicl Implications of 1 Corinthians 1:26-28 Reconsidered" in *Studia Evangelica* 6 (1973) 666-672.

[12] Malherbe (note 1) and E.A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century* (London: Tyndale Press, 1960) arrive at the same conclusions as Wuellner concerning the social mix in the congregation at Corinth.

. . . the first generation for a short time conducted an unsuccessful experiment in voluntary sharing.

has worked like magic, casting a spell over readers' eyes as they moved beyond those first chapters. Luke reports that the people of the first generation for a short time conducted an unsuccessful experiment in voluntary sharing. At least it was unsuccessful in the long run, unable to be sustained, as the Jerusalemites soon impoverished themselves, having depleted their capital resources by repeated liquidations, and they became dependent upon the generosity of Antioch, Asia Minor, and Greece.

In later chapters Luke pictures more well-to-do Christians and offers no hint of any effort to revive or copy the form of sharing attempted at Jerusalem. Perhaps the expectation of the imminent end of the world had nourished the voluntary poverty and selfless sharing, but that expectation dimmed and the church turned increasingly to the task of worldwide missionary endeavor. Luke's world as a whole documents the church's rapid adjustment to the on-going history of the world together with its efforts not to be completely secularlized.

In view of the recent widespread infatuation with portraits of Jesus and his first disciples as freedom-fighters (revolutionaries, liberationists, or radical reformers) or as wandering, homeless, world-renouncing charismatics, the number of publications picturing Jesus and his disciples as belonging to the ancient middle class is impressive.

Years ago George Adam Smith offered a quick and rather romantic portrait of Jesus' disciples:

> In the ranks of those who pursued this free and hardy industry (fishing) Christ looked for His disciples. Not wealthy, they were independent with no servile tempers, and no private or trade wrongs disadjusting their consciences. This was one reason why our Lord chose him . . . Christ went to a trade with no private wrongs and called men not from their dreams but from work they were content to do from day to day till something higher should touch them. And so it has come to pass that not the jargon of the fanatics and brigands in the highlands of Galilee, but the speech of the fishermen of her lake and the instruments of their simple craft have become the language and symbolism of the world's religion.[13]

He wrote those words almost as an aside in his description of Galilee. The research of others has however confirmed the basic truth of his portrait of the in-

[13] George Adam Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966; reprint of the 25th edition published in 1931), p. 300.

It is a mistake to think that the recruits of earliest Christianity came primarily from the lowest ranks of society . . .

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dependence and hardiness of the disciles and of Jesus.[14] Jesus was himself a skilled worker from the middle class, a kind of mason, carpenter, cartwright, and joiner all rolled up into one.[15] The Galilean fishermen called by Jesus were independent owners of family businesses. Zebedee was an entrepreneur who employed day-laborers.

It is a mistake to think that the recruits of earliest Christiantiy came primarily from the lowest ranks of society, from the unemployed or underemployed. Christianity was not a religion of slaves. The majority of its adherents in the whole period up to Constantine were members of the middle class of antiquity. They were primarily free workmen, craftsmen, small businessmen, and independent farmers; and as time passed more and more members of the upper classes entered the church, although it was not until after the conversion of the emperor that the aristocracy converted in any numbers, which is easy enough to understand in a hierarchically organized society.

Eusebius reports that the grandchildren of Jude, the brother of Jesus, were brought before the Roman emperor Domitian for questioning. They declared that they each owned property worth about 4500 silver dinarii. They farmed their land, supporting themselves and paying their taxes *(Ecclesiastical History* III 20.1-4).

Apocalyptic circles were critical of riches and may have promoted radical sharing, but the majority of Christians exhibited a positive evaluation of work, industry, business, and possessions and also very quickly established a comprehensive system of care for the poor.

At the beginning of the second century Pliny noted that Christians in Asia Minor were members of every class and were primarily city dwellers, disturbing Pliny in part because they were beginning to penetrate the countryside. In defense of the Christian movement an apologist of the second or early third century wrote, "We do not originate from the lowest levels of society," and, "If we refuse your purple robes of public office, it does not follow that our ranks are composed of the very dregs of the rabble" (Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 31:6; 8:4).

One of the larger conclusions at which Robert Grant arrives in his recent work on *Early Christianity and Society* is that the Christian movement as a whole in all the years up to Constantine was not "a proletarian mass movement," but a "relatively small cluster of more or less intense groups, largely middle class in origin."[16]

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[14] Wilhelm Wuellner, *The Meaning of 'Fishers of Men'* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967).

[15] Martin Hengel, *Property and Riches in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974).

[16] Robert M. Grant, *Early Christianity and Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 11.

Retrospective Comments

The sociological approach is limited (as are the historical and literary approaches) but is so useful (ditto for the others) that it dare not be rejected or ignored. The gospels are not simply biographies of Jesus but are the religious charters of the earliest Christian communities. With the emergence of the Christian movement, there arose a new world constructed and maintained by a new faith. The New Testament writings reveal the minds and hearts of their authors and of the communities which received them. They give voice to their profoundest convictions, their fundamental orientation, their perspective on existence, the basic generative forces invigorating them.

Diversity in thought and style was a fact from the beginning. All kinds of people became disciples of Jesus and still do. The church needed (and needs) prodding, but it has always had leaders and communities committed to crossing boundaries, whether they are geographical or cultural and social. Matthew's was itself a comprehensively mixed community, including many well-educated and well-heeled persons, because that community was inclusive rather than exclusive and practiced ecumenicity up and down the social and cultural ladder. At least Matthew had such a vision of inclusion and ecumenicity,[17] and his gospel was received and preserved by his community.

Concluding Questions

All kinds of questions arise in my mind, and I offer some of them here in the hope that they might stimulate further questions and even some answers.

Why have preachers and congregations found the traditional picture of Christian origins so appealing? Is it part of a nearly universal yearning for a bygone simplicity, a lost paradise, an Eden in which the complexities of modern society disappear? Does the popular portrait of Christian beginnings function like a Grandma Moses painting, provoking, and feeding a deep nostalgia for a simpler, brighter time? Do we desire to escape the demands of our culture and time? Is our yearning a sign that we should like to be out from under the burden of having to think and decide — and err? / And is the dream of an old simplicity and a radical directness then ultimately a cry for absolution, for forgiveness, for purification?

Do preachers use the popular picture of radically obedient and self-sacrificing early Christians as a club or a whip with which to disturb their uneasily comfort-

[17] Edgar M. Krentz, "The Egalitarian Church of Matthew" in *CurTM* 4 (1977) 333-341, and Gunther Bornkamm, "The Authority to 'Bind' and 'Loose' in the Church in Matthew's Gospel" in *Jesus and Man's Hope* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1970), I.

able congregations? And are they misreading the texts and abusing their already battered congregations?

What if some of the very earliest Christians were slaves and some were free, some poor and some affluent? What if some sold all they had and laid it at the apostles' feet while others retained their inherited or earned wealth and donated from it as they were moved? Do any of the several ancient patterns lay an obligation upon us to conform? If there were many different ancient forms, even inside the covers of the canonical New Testament, are we then not freed to view those forms and patterns not as laws but as possibilities, stimuli, and encouragements from ancient fathers and mothers to experiment today with numerous patterns and forms appropriate to our own time and place?

What analogies really do best describe Jesus and his first disciplines: revolutionaries or resistance fighters (liberationists), social reformers, healers (like M.D.s and psychological counselors), mystics, millennialists, charismatics? What is appropriate not only in our personal and individual lives, but in our larger social setting? Did the earliest Christians have a more global view (at least a larger, imperial or Mediterranean view) than most of us?

How much of our reading of the Bible and of early church history and how much of our analysis of the attitudes, organization, and style of ancient Christians is shaped by our own present social status and social prejudices? If we ourselves are middle class and not radical renouncers on the poor, do we enjoy hearing that many ancient Christians were also middle class? And do we feel uneasy and threatened by descriptions of the early Christians as ragged and uncouth? Or do we envy them their ability to throw off the encumbrances of civilization and the trappings of middle-class ease? How much of our study is controlled by our social-political-cultural biases?

Some of the sociological studies cited above seem to imply that deprivation was a necessary condition, a kind of prerequisite for becoming Christian. That view would seem to make deprivation in some sense the cause (necessary and sufficient basis) of the rise of the Christian movement. What is the relationship between psychological or sociological conditions and receptivity to the Christian gospel? What do inner and outer circumstances have to do with God's election?

When Jesus said that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom, did he not mean that rebirth as children of God is an impossible possibility for all of us? That it is ever a gift of God and never a natural or an easy passage?

Who Benefits? Who has the Power to Decide? The Cause and Relief of Poverty

Frances Moore Lappe
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An edited transcript of a speech delivered at St. Louis University, January 30, 1980

I would like to begin with some personal history. I graduated from Earlham College in Indiana in a year of anguish and desperation for many people, especially for young people, and certainly for me.

The Vietnam War was killing dozens of people every day, the civil rights struggle was in full swing, and I felt that something drastic needed to be done. I did what many people thought was the most worthwhile thing: I went to the people who were suffering the most. I began working with welfare recipients in the Philadelphia ghetto informing them of their rights and helping them organize. I worked there for a year and a half, becoming more and more desperate and unhappy. For I realized that even if I succeeded in my everday work, I would not be getting at the fundamental causes of the suffering that I saw all around me. But I went on because I didn't know what else to do. I entered a graduate program to study community organization.

Then in 1969 I made the most important decision of my life. I vowed not to do anything until I understood how my actions related to the *causes* of needless suffering. This decision meant a period of self-directed study. I worried that people would ask me what I was doing and I wouldn't have any answer. So I buried myself in a corner of the agricultural library at the University of California in Berkeley. Nobody bothered me there.

The growing ecology movement was influencing me. I looked at the big questions: how close are we to the earth's limits? Is widespread suffering really due to the scarcity of resources? And I began studying. I audited courses on soil science, tropical agriculture, and geology. Then one day, almost by accident, I came across statistic about American agriculture that shocked me and made me understand something. I discovered that half of the harvested acreage in the United States was being fed to livestock. I found out that the livestock reduced this food to a small fraction of its original nutritional value. Newspaper stories at the time were telling us that we were pushing the earth's limits, that the problem was scarcity. Yet here I was learning that half of our harvested acreage goes to feed livestock. On the one hand I was told that scarcity was a problem. On the other hand I saw a system that was creating scarcity out of abundance.

For me this was a turning point, the idea that eventually became *Diet for a Small Planet.* The one-page handout I planned to post at health food stores grew to two pages, then to 70 pages, then to the book. I hoped that if I could just show people this one example of how something they thought was natural was really determined by economics, they would then question other things they took for granted.

Diet for a Small Planet was published

Scarcity cannot be the cause of hunger because there is plenty of food in the world to feed everyone.

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in 1971, and overnight I became the Julia Child of the soybean circuit. It wasn't exactly the fate I had hoped for. I wanted to be taken seriously as a person writing about political and economic questions. I got tired of being invited to talk shows on the condition that I bring my bowls of beans and rice, stir them together, and tell people how to save money. My colleague, Joe Collins, says the talk show folks wanted us to tell people how to "lose weight *and* make money on the world food crisis."

Fortunately that period of my life more or less ended in 1974, another big turning point for me. I went to the much-heralded World Food Conference in Rome. I was shocked. First, because people looked at *me* as an expert, coming up with their microphones and asking *my* opinon on the global food problem. The second shock was that the people whom *I* thought were the experts still embraced the conventional analysis of world food problems that I had discarded. They were still saying that greter production itself would solve the problem of hunger; I had finally understood how a narrow focus on production actually generates *greater* hunger.

I came back from Rome and made a personal commitment that I would not allow myself to be put in the cookbook slot on TV talk shows, that I woulk take my work very seriously, that I would no longer look up to the "experts" who were going to solve the problem for us. I understood, really for the first time, that needless hunger would not be solved by government experts, but only by people like you and me taking responsibility for the economic system.

After the World Food Conference, I met people who shared my sense of what was needed, and together we were able to write *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity* and establish the Institute for Food and Development Policy in San Francisco.

In working together for the past five years, our understanding and commitment have deepened, and certain principles have emerged as the basis of our research and education work.

Analyzing The Problems

Our first principle is that to make a better world, we have to analyze what is wrong. Outrage and compassion are not enough.

Organizations such as the United States Agency for International Development (AID) and the World Bank define the cause of hunger as scarcity — scarcity of goods and scarcity of resources. Their solution is greater production. We at the Institute believe this is wrong. Scarcity cannot be the cause of hunger because there is plenty of food in the world to feed everyone. If the grain produced in the world today were divided equally, everyone could eat three thousand calories a day, the American average.

The solution lies in the poor winning the power they need

Of course, the world's grain is not divided equally. But even in the near-famine "basket cases" such as Bangladesh, India, or the Sahelian countries in Africa, there is already enough food to feed everyone or there is the potential for growing enough to feed everyone. A report done for the U.S. Congress says Bangladesh not only has the capacity to feed itself, but that it could actually become a major grain exporter. (Bangladesh is already a major exporter of seafood.) We correctly associate India with hunger for millions of people; yet today in India there are sixteen to eighteen million tons of grain in storage guarded by soldiers so that hungry people will not take it. Many other examples are available to anyone who researches the issues.

The second part of the commonly-held analysis of hunger says that greater production will solve the problem. This, too, is false; the famous "Green Revolution" is a perfect example of this mistaken analysis. The "Green Revolution" refers to the introduction of higher yielding seeds used with large doses of fertilizer and machinery to make third world agriculture more productive. What is the result of introducing such technology into societies that are structured so that only a few families are able to afford the technology? The result is an increasing impoverishment of the mass of people on the one hand, and increasing enrichment of a few on the other. More food per capita is produced, but ironically — or tragically — there is *more hunger* than before. A recent International Labor Organization study, quoted in *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity,* documents this result for seven Asian countries that comprise seventy percent of all people living in nonsocialist underdeveloped countries.

One of these countries, the Philippines, has been a center for research on higher yielding rice. Rice production there has almost doubled since the early 1960s. Thie Philippines is now a rice exporter, yet its people are hungrier. With lower grain intake per person than Bangladesh, the Philippines today has the most poorly fed population in all of Asia.*

If scarcity is not the cause of hunger, and increased production not the solution, what is the correct analysis? My answer is this: the cause of hunger and world poverty today is the increasing concentration of control over food-producing resources. The solution lies in the poor winning the power they need to share in control over food-producing resources. Four percent of the landholders now control 80 percent of the land in most of the third world. In the

*Cambodia in 1979/80 is the tragic exception.

United States, 55 percent control over half of the land. But it is not just a question of land; more than land is needed to grow food. Who controls the fertilizer, the tools, the seeds, and so on? Who controls the market? On the level of international trade, for example, five to twelve firms control the bulk of trade in every major agricultural commodity. Concentration of control over each of these factors is tightening.

This increasing concentration of control over food-producing resources means that production can increase while the majority of people will not be able to put this increase into their bowls. They lack the land, the farming inputs, and income. Most of all, they lack the political and economic power to make their needs count.

The aid agencies and the World Bank say the problem is scarcity and production. My analysis says the problem is that most hungry people in the world lack power. They lack decision-making control over how the resources are used and for whose benefit. The solution is to give power to people through democratic participation and control over food-producing resources.

Questioning Aid Projects

An analysis of the causes of hunger does us little good unless we apply it rigorously enough to question every project to aid the hungry, no matter how beneficial, or even progressive, it might seem at first glance.

Many "experts" claiming to address the root causes of hunger advance land reform and appropriate technology as answers. But let us examine them closely, according to our power analysis. An encounter I had negates the appealing notion that land reform is by itself a root-cause solution. At the U.N. Conference on Agrarian Reform in Rome in July, 1979, a Venezuelan peasant activist told us his story.

His community "benefited" from the Venezuelan land reform of the early 1960s. Along with the others in his community, his family was given a parcel of land by the government. The government also supplied credit for fertilizers, seeds and pesticides, and determined what was to be grown — corn. The corn was to be sold to a nearby agro-industrial firm. Some of the corn was exported and some turned into animal feed and beer. The rest was processed into nutritionless flour and sold back to the peasants at twice the price they'd received for their original corn.

After fifteen years, this peasant community realized that although its productivity was among the highest in Venezuela, its children were suffering from severe malnutrition. Such deprivation was not being experienced in communities where people did not "benefit" from the land reform and were still doing subsistence farming of mixed crops. The

The key is: Who is in control of the decision-making?

villagers then calculated that if they were growing their own food, they could feed themselves on a much smaller amount of land than they were cultivating for corn to sell to agro-industry.

The lesson that I drew from this story is that progressive-sounding solutions like land reform will fail or even lead to exploitation if they do not address the issue of *power.*

The government can parcel out the land, but the distribution of power can remain unchanged. In the Venezuela example, a bureaucratic and landed elite controlled all of the farming inputs, the credit, and the decisions concerning what would be produced and where the production would go. The land reform "solution" was a more subtle but perhaps more damaging form of exploitation. The key is not a piece of land, not whether people are getting the seeds or fertilizer they need. The key is: Who is in control of the decision-making? Who has the power to decide who benefits?

"Appropriate technology" is another seemingly progressively solution widely promoted today. "Bio-gas", a simple fermentation process which converts organic waste into methane gas and fertilizer, is considered an appropriate technology for the third world. It sounds like an ideal way to make use of local resources already available to the poor.

But to begin with, one needs a large quantity of organic waste to make investment in a small bio-gas unit worthwhile. In India the only people who have enough waste are those with livestock. Where this technology has been introduced, not only did it favor only the people with access to enough organic waste, but it also put a premium on the cow dung, which traditionally was available free. Before, poor landless people would pick up the dung from the roadside and use it as fuel. Now, because it can be used in bio-gas units, it has a price; the poor peasants who have no other source of fuel often cannot pay the price.

This example shows again that the key issues are who controls the process and, therefore, who is able to benefit, not the theoretical appropriateness of the reform. For an illuminating contrast, look at the same bio-gas technology applied in a different context. In the People's Republic of China there are bio-gas units at the village level, controlled by a production team so that everyone in the village benefits from the methane gas and the fertilizer produced.

We must also apply our analysis of the cause of needless hunger to World Bank and AID programs. First, as was noted earlier, these agencies define the problem as scarcity and the solution as supplying material goods, such as food, seeds, or irrigation pipe. Second, their programs are based on the false premise that aid can reach the powerless by going through the powerful. Even in the case of something so seemingly simple and humane as food aid, this is simply not

possible. Documentation from many countries shows that where food aid goes through the government to reach the poor, it doesn't work.

Most food aid is not given away. It is *sold* to foreign governments who then resell it to their own people. Only those who have the money can buy the food. Unfortunately, the hungry are precisely those who *cannot* afford it.

Even food-for-work programs, in which the poor are paid in food for their labor, may help the enemies of the poor more than the poor themselves. Field reports from rural Haiti, for example, describe the reality behind CARE's claims that it is having a positive impact at the grassroots. "In the community where we are living," our colleagues in Haiti write, "there is one family that is in control of the village. When the food-for-work programs come in, it's that one family that is able to use that food to pay workers to improve its own land. This powerful family is the primary beneficiary."

Roads in Bangladesh are another illuminating example. A colleague in Bangladesh notes that roads are now a major investment of the large development agencies, with the U.S. a main contributor. But according to our colleague's analysis, Bangladesh does not need extensive new rural roadways. There is a good deal of traffic on the many footways and cartways in rural Bangladesh, not because thre is a shortage of roads, but because the great majority of the people are so indebted that they must sell all their grain as soon as they harvest it. The middlemen who buy grain then transport it across the country. When the lean season comes and the poor peasants are without food, they borrow money at high interest rates to buy grain, and so grain is moved back into the area. Our colleague draws a picture of circles of grain transportation around the countryside caused largely by this pattern of exploitation. If social change allowed people to control the land they are working, much of the traffic would end, and there would be no need for new roads in rural Bangladesh. Under the present conditions, however, the construction of new roads will only make it easier for people from Dacca who have money to speculate on the land, as well as help the military to move around the countryside keeping tabs on peasants wherever there is political organizing.

Indonesia provides a third example of the failure of aid programs aimed at the poor but channeled through the powerful. In Asia, forty percent of all AID funds designated for food and nutrition are actually going to rural electrification. Colleagues from our institute interviewed an AID mission director in Indonesia and asked about the effects of rural electrification. (Our sense was that electrification would not be what peasants would say they most needed, if they were asked.) This mission director admitted that, in fact, the primary result would

. . . we cannot go through the powerful to reach the powerless.

probably be the mechanical milling of rice. Since many rural women earn their livelihood from hand milling grain, electrification wuld mean that many very poor people, especially women, would be put out of work.

The lesson of these examples is that we cannot go through the powerful to reach the powerless. Additional material resources are basically not what is needed to eliminate hunger. But the influx of such resources, where control is highly concentrated in the hands of the few, ends up strengthening the powerful local and national elites who prevent the now-dispossessed majority from gaining power over resources. Official foreign assistance necessarily flows *through* the recipient governments and too often, particularly in those countries, to which the United States limits its aid, these governments represent just such narrow, elite economic interests.

Ignoring the Landless

Another false assumption underlies the dominant perspective on development: that one can reach the poor and alleviate poverty by getting credit for inputs such as seeds and fertilizer to the small farmer. But in many third world countries small farms are not the real poor majority. A recent Cornell University study (sponsored by AID) shows that in twenty Asian and Latin American countries, over fifty percent of the rural population is *landless*. So, a strategy based on the idea of the rural poor as masses of small landholders is simply inaccurate for the third world. Yet the major aid agencies have no strategy for the landless. Moreover, very little credit from AID or the World Bank actually reaches the small farmers.

Even if credit to increase productivity did get to the small farmer, and even if the bulk of the poor were small farmers, the problem of hunger would still not be solved. If credit is extended to small farmers, what is most likely to happen is that those with power in the rural economic structure — the moneylenders, marketers, the large landlords who rent out their land — will reap the lion's share of the production increases made possible by the aid.

Power Is The Issue

The underlying error, the false assumption, is that aid can play a transforming role without touching the fundamental issue of power. But government-to-government aid cannot change power relationships. Rather, official foreign aid *reinforces* the power relationships that already exist. Only with great difficulty can private ("voluntary") agencies avoid the same problem.

In Nicaragua, for example, the United States gave over $300 million in aid to the Somoza regime, ostensibly to soften his dictatorial misuse of power and ram-

. . . we must get over the presumption that we can change the world* for *other people.

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pant corruption. But the flow of American aid to that government was in large part responsible for sustaining the Somoza family's brutal exploitation of the Nicaraguan people for more than forty years. American aid was not solely responsible for the horrors of Somoza, but by introducing resources where a few people monopolized power and national resources while viciously repressing the majority of the people, the United States was an important factor in making possible the kind of brutality that occurred in Nicaragua.

Hunger In Context

To reiterate, the first two principles that guide my own work are (1) developing an analysis that always confronts the question of control over resources, and (2) rigorously applying that analysis to look beyond the conventional assumptions. The third principal I want to suggest is that the problems of hunger, food, and agriculture must be not be viewed as separate issues. Often, when people look at a particular problem, such as food, they focus exclusively on that issue. They look at what AID is doing or what CARE or some other development agency is doing, rather than looking at how American government and corporate policy overall affects who eats and who doesn't. For example, U.S. military assistance and military sales to the third world are four times greater than U.S. assistance to development projects. Military assistance is often used to crush the poor who are working for change; thus it is directly related to our concern about needless hunger.

What Can We Do?

Based on these principals, what can Americans do? First, we must get over the presumption that we can change the world *for* other people. We cannot. Our responsibility is to help remove the obstacles blocking people who are already working in their own communities and their own societies to bring about a more just and democratic system.

We start with the knowledge that in every country where people are suffering, there is already movement for change. People do not suffer willingly. In some countries, such as the Philippines, the resistance and struggle for justice is increasingly well-organized; in others, such as Haiti, it appears hardly to have begun. Yet in both cases, one of our prime responsibilities is to stop supporting the enemies of change. The role for Americans committed to helping end needless hunger is not to go into other countries to solve their problems. Instead, we must work to end support for the adversaries of the poor and hungry — beginning by exposing the true impact of foreign economic and military aid. This can be a powerful contribution.

Change, At Home and Abroad

Ultimately, however, it seems clear that "our" government will not play a constructive role internationally until we have changed it internally. This means that our work to build a democracy in America is not a separate task from our work to end needless suffering abroad.

As long as we Americans acquiesce to the increasingly tighter concentration of economic power in our own society, can we expect the U.S. government to put itself on the side of the less powerful abroad? Can we expect the government of a country that allows a mere one percent of its food corporations to control eighty percent of the industry's assets to favor redistribution of economic power elsewhere? Can we expect a society where only forty-five corporations are permitted to control one-third of the best farm land in the top agricultural state to have a government supporting land redistribution abroad? Can we expect a society which has the greatest food bounty in human history — yet has millions of poor children stunted from poor nutrition — to have a government advocating everyone's right to food? We believe the answer is "no."

From Concern to Action

The Institute for Food and Development Policy has produced a small book entitled "What Can We Do?" The heart of the book is a series of interviews with people confronting food-, land-, and hunger-related problems all over North America. In this book we also draw out some key lessons for those eager to take that leap from concern into action. I would like to end this talk by summarizing the points we have made in that book.

1. *Challenge "normality."* Hunger is not a physical given nor the result of a conspiracy. Hunger is the product of the mundane workings of the economic system that we often accept as almost God-given. The first step is to look at everything with the eyes of a visitor from another planet.

2. *Analyze the issues.* Concern is not enough. Outrage is not enough. The natural human response of "if they are hungry, send them our surplus food" has systematically undercut the food security of people overseas. We must therefore develop and apply our tools of analysis, as well as our hearts, as we attack the forces that generate hunger and build an economic system based on human values. Throughout our lives, we must not only seek information, but analyze, asking both "why" and "why not?"

3. *Don't expect the "leaders" to lead us.* Since those who hold power in our economic institutions and government were groomed to accept the "limits" of our economic system, we must not look to them for answers. Trust the ability of

"ordinary" people to find fresh ideas. We have less at stake; we are freer to start asking the big questions.

4. *Seek lessons, not models.* Looking for ideal models of human organizations sows cynicism. There *are* no models; there are no ultimate solutions. But we also know, from our own experience, that there are lessons we can learn from the efforts of our counterparts in other countries. We must seek out those lessons, learning directly of other people's experiences. There are societies where people are asking fundamental questions such as: How can ordinary people take an active part in economic decision-making? How can planning take into account the need for participation and the need for coordination? Since there are no absolute answers to these kinds of questions, it is the *process* of asking, searching, experimenting democratically that is the goal.

5. *Focus your efforts.* Address the problem that hits *you* the hardest, the one that is most evident where *you* live, the one *you* are the best equipped to address. It may not be a food problem. It may relate to law, education, health or energy. Through any one of these problems one can attack the most basic question: How can we restructure our institutions so as to maximize the participation of those involved and the just distribution of rewards?

6. *Believe that change is possible.* It's hard to work toward a better world unless you believe that change is possible. But what makes us believe change is possible? Part of the answer is discovering that most of the suffering we see today is not caused by geographic or physical givens but is the result of the actions of people. What people have created, people can change. But it is hard for people to believe in the possibility of positive change in the world outside unless they also experience change in themselves. Thus "changing the world" must always involve *us* in a process of change. Personal change means taking risks — committing ourselves beyond what we thought we were capable of.

7. *Take the long view.* Unless we can see ourselves as part of a historical human struggle much longer than our individual lifetime, we are likely to be very disappointed and tempted to give up. The causes of needless hunger have been created and reinforced over thousands of years. Such forces — both the institutions and the assumptions on which they are based — cannot be changed in a few years or even a few decades. Yet, dramatic beginnings can be achieved with apparent quickness — such as the overthrow of a Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua or the defeat of Portuguese colonialists in Africa. But what appears sudden is the result of years and years of work and sacrifice. However, the rejection of the old does not create the new. That takes more years of work

and sacrifice.

In closing, I would like to refer to where I was in 1966 — desperate, anguished, and despairing. What I've learned since then is that we have to see ourselves as part of a process which is much longer than our own lifetimes. I've been helped in this perception by a man I respect a great deal. His name is I.F. Stone, and you may remember that during the war in Vietnam he was one of the very first to start telling people what was wrong with the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. This was well before the anti-war movement became strong. A newspaper reporter once asked him, "Mr. Stone, what keeps you going? Here you are working seven days a week on this newsletter and nobody is listening to you." "Well," said Izzy Stone, "I look at it this way. If you expect to see the final results of your work, you simply have not asked a big enough question."

My challenge to each of you and to myself is this: Let us be sure we are asking big enough questions. I am not asking you to fast for hunger tomorrow. I am not asking that you send a contribution to CARE. What I am asking is that you examine every aspect of your life. Only with this understanding that everything you do — where you work, where you shop, what you teach your children — either confronts or strengthens the forces that generate needless suffering. By analyzing your role in the economic and political structure of power you will be able to choose the ways you can work in your community to end this needless suffering.

I wish to express my thanks to Nick Allen for his help in editing this speech.

The Christian and the World's Poor

David Beckmann

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A graduate of Christ Seminary — Seminex working at the World Bank?

The World Bank, part of the United Nations system, loans money to developing countries for economic development projects. When the Bank offered me a position several years ago, it seemed an appropriate place from which to live out my call to be a "missionary economist."

My vicarage congregation, First Lutheran in Omaha, had called me to this particular ministry shortly after I graduated from Christ Seminary five years ago. The basic idea was to help the church relate more effectively to economic issues, especially the problem of world poverty. Since then I have done some academic study of development economics and have worked for the development program in Bangladesh administered by the Lutheran World Federation. I now work on projects financed by the World Bank aimed at alleviating urban poverty in developing countries.

This article is an opportunity to share with people in the churches who are concerned about poor people abroad the perspective I've gained. It is in four parts:

1. An overview of world poverty;
2. The extent of U.S involvement with the world's poor;
3. The importance of influencing public policy; and
4. Some suggestions about what the churches' role might be.

I have limited myself to an economist's point of view, leaving theological reflection on these matters for another occasion.

This article is adapted from a presentation to the Board of Directors of Lutheran World Relief. The views I express are my own, however, not necessarily those of the Lutheran World Relief or of the World Bank.

World Poverty

The problem of poverty is immense. In the World Bank we are trying to develop preliminary measures of poverty, to make estimates of how many people in a given city or country are *absolutely* poor — with incomes so low that they probably cannot afford a calorie-adequate diet.

In helping to plan urban poverty projects in East Africa and now Latin America, we have made such estimates for urban areas in a number of countries. We found, for example, that forty percent of the urban population of Botswana is probably unable to afford a calorie-adequate diet. The figure for Tanzania is probably around forty-eight percent; for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a grim sixty percent. In the largest city in Ecuador, a middle-income country, roughly thirty-seven percent of the population falls below the absolute poverty threshold.

Nobody knows with any accuracy, but

perhaps 800 million people worldwide, in both urban and rural areas, are absolutely poor.

Millions more are *relatively* poor, with incomes far below the average for their own country. In middle-income countries, including most of Latin America, the problem of poverty is not so much absolute, hungry poverty, but the discrepancy between affluence and relative poverty.

Poverty breeds oppression, is sometimes caused by oppression, and is almost always aggravated by oppression. This is true within countries: a richer class, race, or ethnic group often humiliates and takes advantage of the poor. It is also true internationally: richer countries make decisions which affect poorer countries, but those of us in rich countries normally pay more attention to our own needs than to the needs of the world's poor.

It is not generally true, however, that "the rich are getting richer, while the poor get poorer." In general, over the last twenty-five years, poor people throughout the world, too, have been getting a little richer.

The developing countries are not generally sinking into ever-more desperate poverty, as sometimes imagined. On the average, their economies have grown as rapidly as those of the developed countries. Some grew much faster, and the number of middle-income countries has increased. Virtually no country has failed to experience some growth in per captia income.

We should not underestimate what has been accomplished. A generation ago nobody was sure whether economic growth could ever become routine in countries like India or Libya. Policy-makers in the developing countries, many of them newly independent, focused on growth — and succeeded. They also succeeded in making fundamental structural changes: increased national control over the economy, limited industrialization, reduced dependencies on a small number of export products, diversification of foreign economic ties, and better representation in international forums.[1]

Poor people within the developing countries have had some share in this unprecedented growth. Twenty-five years ago about a third of all adults in developing countries could read; now about half can read. The proportion of children in primary school has risen almost everywhere, and the proportion of children in secondary school has about doubled. In the past couple of decades the developing countries have registered increases in life expectancy that took a century to achieve in the industrial countries. Fewer babies die, several killer diseases are under control, and the overall increase in life expectancy also suggests that there have been widespread improvements in standards of living.

Despite this progress, however, there have been serious flaws in the character of the world's economic development during the last generation. Rich nations and richer classes within nations have, in general, benefited more than the poor. Their incomes have risen faster, and the gap between the rich and poor, both internationally and within nations, has tended to widen. About fifty countries have experienced very slow economic growth and are now among the poorest countries in the world. In some parts of

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[1] For figures on the progress which has been made in developing countries over the last generation, I've relied primarily on David Morawetz, *Twenty-five Years of Economic Development, 1950 to 1975* (Baltimore and London, 1977).

South Asia and Latin America poor people may actually be worse off than they were 25 years ago.

One billion peole have been left behind in absolute or relative poverty.

Our Involvement

Poor people in India or the Ivory Coast may seem far away, but we and they are deeply involved in each other's affairs. Conquest, trade, and technology have unified the world. Today almost no one is unaffected by powerful countries like the United States, and we in the more affluent countries are increasingly affected by events in the developing countries.

The world is now interdependent in many ways: politically, militarily, culturally, and religiously, as well as economically. But, as an economist, I will focus on the two major types of economic interdependence: trade and investment.

Trade with the industrialized countries is of overwhelming importance to the developing countries. For most of them foreign trade is a major part of national income, and trade with the industrialized countries accounts for about two-thirds of all their foreign trade. They especially rely on the industrialized countries for newer technologies and manufactured goods.

Trade with the developing countries, primarily OPEC and middle-income countries, is becoming more important for the industrialized countries, too. The developing countries produce most of the world's oil, and the industrialized countries rely heavily on developing countries for at least a dozen key minerals. Trade with the developing countries now amounts to about $200 billion in sales and purchases each year, about one-quarter of all the exports and imports of the industrialized countries.[2]

Perhaps such statistics seem too abstract. Our links to the developing countries are as real as the gasoline at ever-higher prices; much of it comes from the Middle East. They are as specific as the beans for our coffee, which may have been picked by landless laborers in El Salvador, or the jute backing on our carpets, which may have been grown in Bangladesh.

It may help to think of foreign investment, too, in terms of its role in our personal lives. Foreign investment in developing countries totalled $46 billion in 1976, nearly all of it from the industialized countries.[3] If you have money in the bank, your bank may have reinvested it in a big New York bank which in turn loans money to Peru or Chile. Nearly two-thirds of the $46 billion in foreign investments in developing countries was loaned at market rates. About thirty percent of the $46 billion was foreign aid on soft terms. Nearly all of us had a share in it through the taxes we pay.

The rest of the $46 billion, about five percent, was direct foreign investment by multinational companies. If your family owns stock in certain U.S. corporations, you may even have a share in this relatively controversial flow of capital into the developing countries.

The entire $46 billion is not really much money in world economic terms. It represents only ten to twenty percent of total investment in developing countries,

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[2] Trade statistics mainly from *The United States and World Development: Agenda, 1979,* ed. Martin M. McLaughlin (New York, 1979).

[3] Data on foreign investment in developing countries compiled by World Bank staff preparing the *World Development Report, 1979.*

the rest derived from local sources. It is even less important in comparison to the huge economies of the industrialized countries. Foreign aid (official development assistance) from the United States, for example, amounts to only one quarter of one percent of GNP, about as much as individuals in the U.S. spend on flowers and potted plants.

Nevertheless, broader economic relations — like trade and investment — between us and the developing countries obviously dwarf the churches' direct relations.

Changing Public Policies

We in the U.S. churches are spending less than $1 billion a year for relief and development. We are spending another $1 billion for evangelistic missions abroad. The churches can depend on spiritual commitment to stretch their dollars, but these voluntary contributions are hardly significant in comparison to the resources governments and businesses are handling. Thus, if Christians want to assist the poor, we should aim to influence broader relationships between our own country and the developing countries.

Christian influence and political support are needed for a number of public policy reforms in the interest of the developing countries: lower tariffs, especially on manufactured goods from developing countries; food reserves; commodity price stabilization schemes; a code of conduct for multinational corporations; and some of the other proposals which representatives of developing countries have raised in international forums.

Since I'm familiar with the World Bank, I'll focus on the Bank's future as an example of the sort of public policy issues which are at stake. Other issues, the structure of trade, for example, may be more important than the future of the World Bank. But the Bank is presently committing over $8 billion a year to investments in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, so its policy directions are not unimportant to the developing countries.

A major effort is being made to twist the Bank's investment, so that more of its benefits go to poor people in developing countries. I've been involved in the Bank's efforts to find ways of investing in the urban poor. So far we have been most successful in financing residential improvement — slum upgrading and the provision of new areas where poor people can settle legally. In many instances, the availability of international funds earmarked for poverty projects can "leverage" innovations or policy changes in the interests of the poor. We are pressing for realism: standards of shelter which poor people can afford, and the recovery of most costs from the people who benefit so that a project approach can be expanded to encompass the great masses of the urban poor.

Our efforts are a direct response to a general realization in the early 1970s that the benefits of development had not been evenly shared. In 1973 Congress gave "new directions" to the U.S. bilateral aid program, and that same year Robert McNamara, President of the World Bank, announced a reorientation of the Bank's programs, more toward the needs of the poor.

Foreign assistance programs need continual improvement, but at the same time they need to be expanded. Year after year there is a struggle in the U.S. Congress over the foreign aid bill, a struggle in which concerned Christians should have an increasing role.

In the case of the World Bank, two types of appropriations are needed. Most

of the Bank's business is done with money borrowed from private investors. All that taxpayers in the rich countries contribute is their government's guarantee that they will pay its debts should the Bank ever fail. That risk isn't great; no country has ever defaulted on a World Bank loan.

In addition, the World Bank also has a special fund called the International Development Association (IDA) which makes it possible to finance development in poorer, less credit-worthy countries like Mali or Bangladesh. Since IDA money is loaned at low interest rates over long time periods, the fund needs to be replenished by regular contributions from the rich countries.

Economic Advice to the Churches

It is possible to overcome the worst aspects of world poverty by the end of the century. But, if that goal is to be accomplished, we need, among other things, to build a movement of moral support for national policy changes in the interest of the world's poor. It should have the intensity of the civil rights movement and anti-war movement of the 1960s, but be more long-lasting.

As I look at the churches' current efforts to build a movement of support for poor people abroad, I would, as an economist, offer two suggestions.

First, I would caution a respect for the complexity of the problem of world poverty. Church leaders want to encourage action among their members, many of whom have only vague ideas of what the map of Africa or Latin America might look like. They feel some pressure to suggest individualistic solutions to world poverty, because most people are more willing to sponsor a "foster child" abroad or eat vegetarian than to organize for lobbying by congressional district. Somehow we must present a few basic concepts on which people can act, yet maintain public awareness of the immense complexity of world poverty. Otherwise, we risk mass discouragement when, after some years, our understanding of world poverty improves and strategies change.

Perhaps one reason for the simplistic character of some church-related discussion of development is that in biblical times virtually the only way to accumulate wealth was by oppression — conquest or taxes. Wealth could almost be equated with social injustice. The modern dynamic of economic growth, however, allows for unprecedented prosperity not necessarily based on oppression.

Is it because of the prophetic paradigm that so much church literature on Third World development is mostly gloom and doom? I suspect there is a temptation not to mention the real progress which has been achieved, because it doesn't fit into a simplistically Biblical understanding of wealth and poverty. The message of Amos to the rich is still powerfully true, and it is the churches' task to challenge injustice courageously. But the message of Amos is not the whole story. Our understanding of world poverty and what can be done about it must be more complex.

We need to involve technical specialists — agriculturalists, economists, and the like — in church discussions of international justice. We need to heighten awareness of the differences among developing countries (how many generalizations hold true for countries as different as Brazil and Burundi?). And we need to strengthen the work of study-action organizations like Bread for the World, the Christian citizens' lobby.

We probably need organizational

complexity — official church statements and prayers on Sunday primarily raising consciousness, while various ecclesiastical and para-ecclesiastical organizations (like Bread for the World, the Maryknoll Mission Society, and the World Council of Churches) advocate different understandings of what should be done.

My second suggestion as an economist is that, in order to maximize the churches' contribution to development among the poor, the churches should specialize in what they do best, making use of their comparative advantage and relying on other institutions to do things churches tend to do less well.

The churches are not banks or governments; they have little money. They are not universities; their analysis of development issues is sometimes amateurish. But the churches can count on the deep involvement of millions of people, both in the developing countries and in the United States, and they are able — certainly better than governments, banks, or universities — to give meaning and direction to people's lives.

In their direct relationships with the developing countries, I would thus suggest that the churches spend their limited resources primarily on *people-to-people* projects, preferably related to preaching and teaching ministries. The churches are uniquely qualified for evangelism and pastoral care. They also often have comparative advantage in:

- helping the poor organize themselves to resist oppression;
- programs addressed to the needs of the very poorest of the poor which call for flexible administration and charitable judgment;
- providing administrative personnel in very poor countries or difficult areas where government programs may not reach;
- cultural exchange;
- simply living *with* the poor, affirming their dignity and human solidarity.

In our own nation there is also an obvious, people-oriented job for the churches to do: *raising the consciousness* of world poverty, of our relationships to the poor, and of current issues. If church leaders could only teach their members to remember the poor in their prayers — in their most fundamental concerns — the eventual impact on broader economic and political relationships between the world's rich and poor might be enormous.

The Gospel Train Out of Corinth
(Reflections on a Bumpy Railroad with a Motley Crew)

Harry Coiner

Waynesboro, Virginia

The Gospel Train with headquarters in Corinth had a crew of a few Jews and a few more Gentiles, all of them afflicted with "original sin" problems. Their lifestyle as a Christian community was marked by division, quarrels, immorality, and jealousy. Their behavior vis-à-vis one another was fleshly, boastful, envious, individualistic. What's more, they were puffed up about it. Pastor Paul could almost see their eyes flashing and their voices rasping, "I am of Apollos, I am of Peter, I am of Paul, and hey, I am of Christ." Pastorally concerned, Paul tenderly, but positively, reminds them that God chose them, brought them into union with Christ, put them right with himself by grace, made them to become God's holy people, and set them free.

So Pastor Paul spells it out. You are to live toward one another with the Word of God in every sanctifying way so that your life together will be a proper and effective witness to what God has done, is doing, and will do in Jesus Christ, the power and wisdom of God.

Although Pastor Paul was concerned about this motley crew in Corinth, we may believe that he was hardly surprised about the low level of their sanctification. He had learned to accept in his own life the tension of *simul iustus et peccator.* He had learned in his own life in Christ that this "both/and tension" is the universal and natural experience of the baptized. The tensions between freedom and servanthood, between the Old Man and the New Man, between the flesh upon us and the Spirit of God within us, were accepted by Paul as fundamental to our life in Christ as individuals and as a church. Pastor that he was, he was realistic and ready to take the situation in Corinth in hand and to heart.

Some Christian folks find these inherent tensions scandalous. This both/and business is not for us, they say. It's either one or the other. For us the only comfortable solution is to have it all nailed down, they say, not accepting the proposition that the resolution of human tension is to be found only in Christ.

Through the centuries this tension or that has caused mayhem in the church. Take legalism and antinomianism, for example. Legalism seeks to achieve by means of the Law of God, or even through human rules and regulations, what only the gospel can accomplish. Antinomianism rejects any and every function of the Law in the Christian realm. Other tensions arise from the common frailties and imperfections which Christians experience even in their mutual and sincere commitment to God's Word as the Word of truth. One group may focus on the many-faceted diamond of God's revelation and substitute one facet of its truth for the truth itself. People will react in various ways when some single aspect of God's truth is hammered upon. At worst, they may not learn what the full gospel of Jesus Christ really is and how it really works.

Tensions in the church have torn apart, disrupted, divided, and alienated what God intends to be a holy community. When Christians feed on suspicion and listen to appeals to their fears, love can hardly be the power that guards their hearts. When any Christian community hopes to thrive on slander, deceit, or scandal, there will be no winners, only losers. The truth can hardly be spoken or heard rightly in such an atmosphere. Add to the sad scene the stuff-shirtedness of intellectual pride, which cannot keep silent and admire but must talk and criticize, and what do you have? "Faith" which cannot bear to have its propositions contradicted or even questioned. "Doctrine" that must prove that it alone is right.

Understanding 1 Corinthians whole, one can believe that St. Paul sensed an attitude in the Christian community there that was exclusive and unseemly, yet characteristic of what obtains so often. One wonders what force it is that makes some Christians look down on other Christians patronizingly, trying to prove to themselves why the others are in the wrong and why, beyond all doubt, this wrong or that excludes from the fellowship?

When brothers and sisters in Christ are able to sit down together in common sin and suffering and ask God for common forgiveness, then the deepest dilemma of human life and community is on the way to being resolved. And that dilemma is: how do we condemn wrong in the wrongdoer without putting ourselves out of fellowship with that person? If and when we judge, we usually separate. When, however, we seek common forgiveness and new life in Christ, we may hope to be created new people.

In fact, no note of triumphalism, either on the part of the individual or the church, is ever appropriate. What Christian is better off or more favored by God than another? It is God's verdict alone which decides whether we shall stand or fall. St. Paul posits no distinction between any of us in our human condition; rather, all of us stand before God on the same ground, always in the wrong, always beggars. The profound solidarity of sinfulness and spiritual myopia among us allows no one to stake a personal or corporate claim on God. There is no feather to be had for anyone's white hat, no prize for anyone's trophy case, nor anything that we might put on display — things like theological studies, doctrinal propositions, synodical resolutions, or confessional statements. If we should ever use such things to put others down, or even to build ourselves up, then we had better get into the skins of the Galatians and let St. Paul give us the message again. All we can do is to beg the mercy of God in the way he has revealed himself to us and trust that his grace will work in us in our humility. Before God every difference blends into the need for his verdict of grace. This we may never convert into our own possession, as though we had in any way earned it or deserved it. What do we have that we have not been given by pure grace?

The Corinthian "people of God" received a true leveling down by Pastor Paul. The Gospel Train out of Corinth was no streamlined outfit, no super, perfectly tuned body of believers. "Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble" is the way Pastor Paul rated them. "But God has chosen the foolish things . . . the weak things . . . the base things . . . things which are despised . . . to bring to nothing things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence." A motley

crew, yes, but holy. Pastor Paul was given the vision of God's secret plan for them.

Pastor Paul told them straight from the shoulder: God works through what he chooses and as he chooses. He simply works through what he gives. So trust the Giver and win by losing, by giving to others what he gives you. The bottom line reads like this: it will never be your wisdom, your influence or power, your theological system, your administrative savvy, your public relations slickness, your reputation in the religious world, or whatever else that you might run onto the tracks of your Gospel Train, that will win for God. You must accept God's judgment that he chooses to choose a motley crew, so that whoever wants to boast must always boast of what the Lord has done, is doing, and will do. Period.

Augsburg Confessors
Elector John of Saxony: Steadfast Confessor

Kurt K. Hendel
Assistant Professor of Historical Theology, Christ Seminary — Seminex

Although the Augsburg Confession eventually became the most widely accepted and most authoritative Lutheran confessional statement, in June, 1530, it was the confession of only seven princes and two cities. The confession of this small group was a faithful one, and it served as an example and inspiration to all who espoused the evangelical faith.

The political leader of the evangelicals at Augsburg was Elector John of Saxony (1468-1532), who had become Elector when his influential brother, Frederick the Wise, died in 1525. Unlike Frederick, who refused to espouse the evangelical faith openly, John became an early and ardent follower of Luther. John's early entreaties on behalf of Luther help to explain Frederick's toleration and protection of his creative but troublesome university professor. Following Luther's advice, he carefully avoided unwarranted interference in purely spiritual or ecclesiastical affairs. At the beginning of his rule he informed the clergy that the Word of God must be preached in its purity and that the reform of the church must continue. He fostered the reform and reorganization of the University of Wittenberg, carefully supervised the distribution and use of confiscated ecclesiastical property, and allowed his theologians to serve as advisors and organizers of the reform movement in other parts of Germany and Europe. In all of these activities he sought the counsel of his evangelical advisors, especially Luther and Philip Melanchthon.

His most dramatic and visible support of the evangelical movement came in his capacity as its political leader. Throughout his tenure as Elector, the Lutherans were repeatedly confronted with imperial efforts to eradicate their movement. John was also convinced that the evangelical faith was true and orthodox, and he was determined to defend that faith. That determination became evident during the imperial Diets which met during his seven-year rule.

The first of these Diets assembled in the city of Speyer in the year 1526. The Lutherans expected that the Emperor would command the enforcement of the Edict of Worms and would require a defense of the reforms they had initiated. Imperial military action against them also loomed as a possibility. In preparation for the Diet, John asked his theologians to defend the princes' right to reform the churches in their territories. Melanchthon argued: "The question really is whether the reformed doctrines are true or not; if true, then the princes ought to protect them." John also forged a political alliance with Landgrave Philip of Hesse.

After these preparations John proceeded to Speyer, ready to face any eventuality. In order to demonstrate concretely their resolve to defend the evangelical cause, both the Saxons and the Hessians wore

the following motto on their coat lapels: "Verbum dei manet in aeternum" (the Word of God lasts forever). In spite of their fears, the Diet proved to be an auspicious and favorable one for the evangelicals. Charles V was unable to attend because of renewed military conflict with the French, tensions with the papacy and the threatening danger of the Turks. As a result, the Catholic side was severely weakened. The Protestants, on the other hand, defended their position and ultimately won the day. The representatives at Speyer determined that the Edict of Worms could not be enforced. They further agreed that until a general council was called "[all estates] with their subjects, would live, govern, and act in such a way as everyone trusted to justify before God and the Imperial Majesty." The evangelical estates, obviously convinced that they could justify their actions, viewed the Diet's decision as an opportunity to continue the Reformation in their territories.

The victory of the evangelicals at the first Diet of Speyer was profoundly challenged when the second Diet of Speyer met in 1529. The political situation favored the Emperor on this occasion, and the Catholic party was determined to suppress the evangelical movement. The conciliatory decisions of 1526 were revoked by the vote of a small majority. The Edict of Worms was resurrected and all further reforms were forbidden. Elector John and the other evangelical representatives were shocked, but refused to accept the Diet's decisions. They protested that a law passed unanimously could not be abrogated by the majority and that the 1526 resolution was, therefore, still in effect. The evangelicals also argued that they could not agree to the 1529 decision "since in matters concerning God's honor and our soul's salvation everyone must stand before God and answer by himself, nobody can excuse himself in that place by the actions or decisions of others, whether they be a minority or majority." The efficacy of majority votes in matters of conscience was clearly rejected. As a result of this protest at Speyer, the evangelicals were referred to as "Protestants." The Elector John was one of the signers of the protestation document. Because King Ferdinand, who was the Emperor's representative at Speyer, refused to recognize the protest, the evangelicals sent a copy to the Emperor. Charles's opposition to the Protestants was again evidenced when the messengers carrying the document were imprisoned by the Emperor.

Although specific imperial threats had been voiced at the 1529 Diet of Speyer, the religious question was still unresolved. Charles, therefore, determined to call another Diet at Augsburg in 1530. The time still seemed to be an inauspicious one for the evangelicals. Efforts at union with the Zwinglians had failed when Luther and Zwingli could not agree at the Marburg Colloquy on the issue of the eucharistic presence. Although negotiations to establish a military alliance among the Lutherans continued, disagreements surfaced over the nature of that alliance. The Elector John, following the advice of Luther and Melanchthon, opposed an offensive alliance, while Philip of Hesse and others were ready to take up arms against the Emperor. Fortunately for the Lutherans, Charles was also not completely free to pursue his goals. The Turks, under the dynamic leadership of Suleiman II, continued their periodic attacks on Europe and were perceived as a dangerous menace by Protestants and Catholics alike. Because he needed the support of

the evangelical princes and cities in his struggle with the Turks, Charles could not arbitrarily enforce his religious preferences. For this reason Charles's invitation to attend the Diet was an irenic one. He promised

> to give a charitable hearing to every man's opinion, thoughts and notions, to understand them, to weigh them, to bring and reconcile them to a unity in Christian truth, to dispose of everything that has not been rightly explained or treated of on the one side or on the other, to see to it that one single, true religion may be accepted and held by us all, and that we all live in one common church and in unity.

The irenicism of Charles's invitation was tempered by the Emperor's inflexible stand at Speyer and by his imprisonment of the evangelical messengers carrying the 1529 protest to the imperial court. Furthermore, during his belated coronation in February, 1530, the Emperor reiterated his intention to defend the Church and the papacy. The Elector therefore began his preparations for the Diet with some ambivalence but also with the determination not to compromise the evangelical faith.

On March 14, 1530, three days after he received the imperial invitation, Elector John asked his Wittenberg theologians to prepare a document explicating and defending evangelical theology and reforms. The Wittenbergs concentrated on a defense of Saxon ecclesiastical reforms initiated via the Torgau Articles because the Schwabach and Marburg Articles already summarized crucial theological points. Armed with these documents and accompanied by both secular and theological advisors, including Chancellors Bruck and Beyer, George Spalatin, Philip Melanchthon and Justus Jonas, the Elector travelled to Augsburg, where he arrived on May 2, 1530.

Elector John's courage and devotion to the evangelical cause evidenced themselves especially after the Emperor's belated arrival at Augsburg on June 15, 1530. Already at the welcoming ceremonies the Elector gave an indication of his character and the strength of his convications. As Charles greeted each prince with a handshake, the papal legate, Campeggio, seized this opportunity to pronounce a papal blessing. All those assembled knelt. Only the Elector John and the audacious young Philip of Hesse remained standing. Even in the presence of Charles they refused to recognize the Pope's authority. As lord high marshall of the Empire, John did participate in the imperial procession into the city. This was a civil ceremony, however, and John did want to indicate his political loyalty to the Emperor. In the evening of June 15 a Te Deum ceremony was conducted in the cathedral. John attended, but he refused to participate and did not remove his hat, even for the blessing. These two audacious, public acts were a clear witness of his loyalty to the evangelical faith.

The Emperor could not be expected to ignore such audacity. After the service he summoned John and three other Lutheran princes to his quarters. There King Ferdinand, Charles's brother and spokesperson, bitterly criticized the princes. He also demanded that they participate in a Corpus Christi procession scheduled for the following day and that they forbid all evangelical preaching at Augsburg. The Elector was so shocked by this unexpected vehemence that he could not respond. Philip of Hesse and Margrave George of Brandenburg, however, spoke for the Lutherans. They argued that the Emperor had no right to bind their cons-

ciences nor to forbid the preaching of the Gospel. "Before I let anyone take from me the Word of God and ask me to deny my God," Margrave George declared, "I would rather kneel down here before Your Imperial Majesty and let you cut off my head." In broken German the Emperor quickly assured Margrave George that he had no intention of cutting off his head, but he did not revoke his demands. The Lutherans were given until the next morning to consider their final response.

Like Luther at Worms, the princes did not change their position. Other evangelical estates were consulted during the night, and the theologians prepared a statement explicating and defending the evangelical position. By 7:00 a.m. the Protestant princes appeared before the Emperor and rejected his demands. Although the Elector John was still too shaken to be present at this early morning meeting, he fully supported the unflinching stand of his co-religionists. Therefore he did not participate in the Corpus Christi procession nor did he command his preachers to cease preaching. The shock of personally experiencing the Emperor's wrath had shaken John physically, but it did not weaken his steadfast confession.

On June 23 the Elector was the first to sign the Augsburg Confession in preparation for its public presentation to the Diet. Six other princes and two cities also affixed their signatures. When the Emperor Charles attempted to prevent the Confession's public reading, the Saxons objected. The Elector insisted on a public presentation and argued that the Confession be read in German since the Diet was meeting on German soil. Charles acquiesced to the Lutheran demands. In the afternoon of June 25, 1530, Dr. Christian Beyer, the Saxon Chancellor, read the Augustana publicly, in German. George Spalatin reflected that "one of the greatest events that has ever happened on earth" had occurred, and Luther expressed his pleasure "to have lived to this moment when Christ, by his staunch confessors, has publicly been proclaimed in such a great assembly by means of this really most beautiful confession."

The presentation of the Augustana was, of course, the high point of the Diet, although it was not recessed until October. The Elector and his party remained in Augusburg until the end of September and participated in the complex, but ultimately futile, discussions and negotiations which persisted throughout the summer of 1530.

In one of his letters to the Elector John, while the latter resided in Augsburg, Martin Luther expressed the prayerful wish: "May our dear Father in heaven help Your Electoral Grace to remain steadfast and patient [in God's] grace, which he gives us so abundantly." Luther's hope and expectations for his Elector were not disappointed. John was a pious and faithful individual whose devotion to the evangelical cause was absolute. As Elector of Saxony from 1525 until 1532 he was thrust into the role of political leader of the evangelical movement during a crucial and formative period of its history. His leadership was exemplary, for his overarching goal was to make a bold confession in the face of ecclesiastical and political opposition. The constancy of his confession had rightfully earned him the title John the Steadfast. His place among the bold confessors of Augsburg is assured.

The Last Judgment: Twentieth Century Style

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Does the Last Judgment apply to us in our *everyday* relationships with friends, relatives, work associations, neighbors, members of our congregation, and so on? If we are "middle or upper class," does this parable also apply directly to our relationships with other "middle/upper class persons"? The following is a rewrite of the Last Judgment as it might apply to those of us who could be considered financially "fortunate" in our relationships with others who are also "fortunate." Any resemblnce to Matt. 25:31-46 is purely intentional.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at his left.

Then the King will say to those at his right hand, "Come, oh blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you not only purchased some food for me and gave it to me, but you sat down with me and talked with me while I was eating it. You even ate some yourself. For I was new to your group, and you took the time to speak to me, welcome me, and get to know me. We became friends. When my daughter became pregnant out of wedlock, you did not 'flinch.' Our friendship did not cease. If anything, the number of our get-togethers increased. When a child was born to me with Down's Syndrome, you were not overcome with fear and disgust. When I became divorced, you continued to invite me to your home as before. When I experienced financial difficulties and had to quit the country club, you continued to drop by my house and I, yours. It is true that we did not see each other at the club anymore, but our 'home-to-home' contacts did not decrease. Some say that I was no longer considered a 'beautiful person,' but that did not seem to matter to you."

Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, upset and listen to you, or new to our group and greet you? When did you have a daughter pregnant, or lose your membership in the country club?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my sisters and brothers, you did it to me."

Then he will say to those at his left hand, "Depart from me, you cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you either gave me no food, or, at best, dropped it by and quickly left. I was new to your group, and a little bit different in background, *and I sure felt it.* We did not become friends, but because our jobs

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thrust us together, we became acquaintances. When my daughter became pregnant out of wedlock, you kept me at a distance and spoke badly about my family behind our backs. (That is, until they struck oil on our farm and then everything seemed to be all right.) When my child was born with Down's Syndrome, we did not hear from you for three months. One day you ran into my wife while at the grocery store. You talked to her briefly without even recognizing the child's presence or glancing at him, although he was right there two feet in front of you the whole time. When we were experiencing great financial struggles, it was quite obvious that our 'stock' went down with you. When I was divorced, you responded self-righteously and judgmentally. You talked to me just long enough to express your indignation. Because I was born and raised in the rural South and was a little "rough around the edges", you kept your distance, except for 'business times' when we absolutely *had* to relate to each other."

Then they will also answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry, or new to our group, or your children having difficulties, or having lost your job, and did not minister to you?" Then he will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me." And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

A Book Worth Discussing: Ralph W. Klein. *Israel in Exile: A Theological Interpretation**

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The intention of the Overatures to Biblical Theology series is to "explore fresh dimensions of research and to suggest ways in which the biblical heritage may address contemporary culture." Klein's is the sixth title in this series, two earlier volumes of which, W. Brueggemann's *The Land* and C. Westermann's *Blessing,* have addressed a central Old Testament concern that forms the backdrop to the present study.

Modern biblical scholarship, with its concentration on the individual saving acts of God in Israel's history, sometimes caricatured as a string of super-events rather discontinuous with the rest of life, has tended to overlook the importance of life on the land in the Old Testament. Both Bruggemann and Westermann have challenged their readers to reconsider the fact that for biblical tradition the gift of the land and the ongoing blessing of God through the abundance of that land and through the religious and social institutions fostered in the land were of paramount importance. As Westermann notes elsewhere:

> God's blessing allows humanity's food to grow and prosper, preserved human living space, gives people success in their work, and grants peace *(shalom)* in the community. A theology tht is only soteriologically oriented is inclined to regard all these relationships as irrelevant and therefore to understand humanity as abstracted from them. But this is not in accordance with the Old Testament understanding.[1]

Around the saving acts recorded in the traditional stories of Exodus through Numbers, the Pentateuch preserves a primary emphasis on the gift of the land: it is promised again and again to the patriarchs in Genesis (Gen. 12:1; 15:7; etc.)[2], while in Deuteronomy all the people stand poised to enter "the land that

[1] C. Westermann, *What Does the Old Testament Say About God?* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), p. 42.

[2] A first critical reading of Genesis in a course on the Old Testament always surprises those many college students, especially Christians, who were given to understand that the primary aim of faith in God is to enable people to reach an afterlife in heaven. That Abraham's faith in God is shown in Genesis to find its fruition in the twin gifts of land and descendants here on earth, with no hint of a life to follow in heaven, is just as striking to Muslim students. The Quran, quite unlike Genesis, portrays Abraham as living in expectation of the Last Day, resurrection, and the life to come (see Suras 2:126 and 26:69-91).

* *Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979. xv and 159 pages. Paper. $6.95.*

the Lord swore to give to your forefathers and to their progeny after them" (Deut. 1:8; etc.)."

If the winning of this land meant so much to the ancient Israelites, what might it mean to lose it after centuries of occupation? *Israel in Exile* deals with six major literary-theological responses to the shattering disappointments and disasters that overtook the small Judean kingdom in the late seventh and early sixth centuries B.C. and culminated in what is commonly known as the Babylonian captivity. Klein shows how the composers of Lamentations, the Deuteronomistic History (Dtr - the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings), Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Second Isaiah, and the Priestly writing (P), "made the most of a disaster" and attained to "some of the most profound insights in the entire Old Testament" (p. 7). His aim is to help readers see how each "book" responded to exile and how each "author" combined older traditions and new ideas in such a way as to help a defeated and scattered people reidentify itself, reassess its place in the world, and gain a new hope for a future that loomed dark and threatening — and homeless. Finally, he wishes to suggest some ways in which these six responses to an ancient exile might serve as pathfinders for people trying to cope creatively with the pervasive modern experience of physical, cultural, and spiritual exile.

Those familiar with the work of Hans Walter Wolff and his kerygmatic exegetical method,[3] with its focus on the meeting of memory and crisis, will recognize its influence on Klein. He approaches the texts with an ear sensitive to their status as confessions of faith, forged in the flames of a great crisis that purified the religious imagination as it reconsidered and re-membered sacred tradition. As such, these texts may be read as occasional pieces, tracts for the time. Their relevance for the faithful today would lie not so much in any timeless dogmatic truths they might convey. Rather, they present a strong appeal for us moderns to enter fully into the sufferings of our own times and to reform and repossess our own heritage in such manner that we, who also are "strangers and in exile," may be encouraged to restake our claim to the land as we discover how to live responsibly beyond fear, honoring the Lord, encouraged by a sure hope and a clear conscience.[4]

Nor is Wolff the only German to have left a significant mark on Klein's thinking and methodology. Throughout the book Klein develops discussions in dialogue with more widely-known scholars like Zimmerli, Noth, von Rad, Smend, and Elliger, and with a host of lesser-known contemporaries whose work in German seldom is translated into English. This remarkable range of study represents no mean contribution to the many readers, lay and professional alike, whose exposure to recent continental scholarship is necessarily limited by available library resources or other constraints. Klein's recent year of study at Göttingen has borne unusually excellent fruit for the benefit of many. (It need hardly be added that Klein is conversant with the latest research published in English as well.)

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[3] This hermeneutical method is succinctly described, analyzed, and illustrated as it applies to the traditions of the Pentateuch in the several essays contained in W. Brueggemann and H.W. Wolff, *The Vitality of the Old Testament Traditions* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975).

[4] See 1 Pet. 2:11 and 3:13-16.

Klein's treatment of the Lamentations underscores the stark portrayal of the Lord who had become enemy to his people and their pervasive sense of guilt, anguish, and humiliation. Moreover, he notes the striking absence of certain central features we might have expected to encounter in these poems. Especialy noteworthy is the lack of appeal to all those religious traditions that might afford a glimmer of hope: traditions about the promises to the patriarchs, about the Exodus, the gift of the land, or the special election of David and Zion. Rather, the poet zeroes in on the merciful character of God himself. All other props having fallen, it is only the remembrance of the Lord's mercies (3:21-24) that affords hope for future restoration after punishment has been accepted and borne silently. The book ends on a somber note: "Why have you forgotten us forever? / Why have you abandoned us for so many days?" (5:20, Klein's translation).

While the Lamentations represent an immediate, emotional response to the fall of Jerusalem (almost a timeless, symbolic reaction arising from the collective unconscious), the Deuteronomistic history (Dtr) represents a more prosaic, didactic-theological account seeking to justify the events of destruction and exile as a proper consequence of Israel's rejection of the Lord throughout their history on the land. Klein shows how the composer and redactors of this imposing work, often employing earlier sources, tried to account for Israel's exile by their portrayals of covenant-breaking and idolatry during each of the three major episodes of Israel's past: the period of Moses, the period of Joshua and the judges, the period of the monarchy. Not even the thorough reform of the absolutely loyal Josiah (2 Kgs. 22:2 and 23:25; cf. Deut. 6:5!) could avert judgment.

But what of the future? Does Dtr hold out any hope? Here Klein dissents from Noth's argument that the Deuteronomistic historian explains only why God brought about destructions and reticently avoids any speculation about the future, which remains hidden and unrevealed. Rays of hope should be discerned in the reminder of the oath to the forefathers (Deut. 4:31), in the announcement of unconditional election of the Davidic dynasty in Nathan's oracle (2 Sam. 7), and in the laconic but highly suggestive account of Jehoiachin's rehabilitation (2 Kgs. 25:27-30). While the secret things still belong to the Lord, the many sermons and stories that stress the importance of repentance throb incessantly like the heartbeat of One who was still inviting exiled Israel "as part of her turning to Yahweh, to acknowledge God's justice, to listen to his voice, and to do his law. And then . . . Israel could hope that Yahweh, in his unpredictable freedom, would act as Savior once more" (p. 43).

Klein's approach to Jeremiah, influenced especially by the recent work of E.W. Nicholson and Winfried Thiel, begins by positing a redaction of the book by a Deuteronomistic editor (or editors) sometime around or after 550 B.C. By identifying and isolating the contributions of the redactor(s), in what remains "we can often discover a tradition that differs from the Deuteronomisic redaction in language, form, and content" (p. 45). Evidently, this tradition is the best we have of Jeremiah himself. Klein then proceeds to offer a lucid and masterly analysis of the response to exile first in Jeremiah, then in the Deuteronomistic redaction (= Jeremiah D).

Jeremiah's reactions to the destruction of Jerusalem and the beginning of exile include outbursts of personal suffering and complaint; expressions of solicitude

for the survivors of the Northern Kingdom, which had fallen to Assyria a century earlier; and an ever-increasing insistence that Judah and Jerusalem must submit to Babylonian supermacy, must "say yes to the reality and appropriateness of God's judgment" (p. 49). Nevertheless, Jeremiah also retains a dogged — albeit rather restrained — hope for deliverance after suffering. He hears the Lord's words assuring him of personal protection, he addresses a message of consolation to the north, and he engages in symbolic actions that speak a no to continued exile and predict an eventual reversal of fortunes: Babylon will fall (51:59-64) and Judeans will again own their own land (32:6b-15). Evidently, if 23:5-6 is authentic, Jeremiah also envisioned the restoration of a purified monarchy for a reunited Israel sometime in the future.

Jeremiah D, as Klein sees it, adapts Jeremiah's messages to the ongoing situation of the exiles especially in two ways. First, like Dtr , the redaction presents a clear theological confession that the exile was brought about by the Lord himself (21:5; 40:3) because of the sin of the people and their leaders in rejecting God and turning a deaf ear to repeated warning from all the prophets beginning with Moses (11:6-8; 7:27). Indeed, Jeremiah D presents a regular catechism of questions and answers rehearsing the reasons for exile (eg., 5:19; 16:10-11; 22:8-9). There should be no lingering doubts about God's will being at work in all these events. Second, the redaction presents a more emphatic no to the exile and a much fuller account of future restoration, not only for Israel but for other nations as well (12:14-17; 18:7-10). In glowing terms a new exodus is envisioned, along with a new gift of the land, a fully restored Davidic monarchy, and a new and everlasting covenant. The key passages are 23:1-4,7-8; 24:6-7; 29:10-14; 32:37-41. Klein's careful exegesis of these passages shows how Jeremiah D builds on but goes beyond the muted hopes expressed both in Jeremiah and Dtr (discussed above). It also indicates the depth of theological insight that may be vouchsafed to a prophet's disciples, interpreters, and editors!

While Jeremiah lived in Palestine from about 625-580s B.C., Ezekiel the priest, whose oracles are dated from about 593-571, was himself among the exiles in Babylon. Especially noteworthy in Ezekiel's outlook are his emphases on the sovereign freedom and mobility of the Lord; the vindication of God's honor; the detestable abominations and religious "harlotries" of Israel, beginning already in the Exodus and wilderness periods and climaxing in the era of the Jerusalem Temple; and the new exodus and gift of the land that would culminate in a new age of holiness and prosperity presided over by the Good Shepherd, the Lord himself.

Klein underscores Ezekiel's concentration on divine monergism: everywhere in his oracles and visions the overwhelming presence and effective activity of God is felt. He acts freely, for his own sake, to recreate (37:1-14) a purified remnant, to institute a new covenant (34:25-30), and to completely reorient the tribes and religious functionaries on the land around his central and controlling presence in the restored Temple (chaps. 40-48, including later additions). That there be no confusion of powers, Ezekiel specifically draws a *separation* between lands to be set aside for restored Jerusalem, for royal holdings, and for the new Temple precincts. The very boundaries and divisions for all to acknowledge the absolute uniqueness of God, the presence of whose life-giving energies is the sole source of protection,

fertility and healing for the nation and the world.

Several of Ezekiel's theological emphases are echoed by the Priestly writing (P), which Klein believes was originally composed as an independent work in Babylon during the exile.[5] Like Ezekiel, P stresses God's freedom and transcendence, his glory, and his holy presence among his people. Similarly, P shares Ezekiel's thoroughgoing sense of the contrasting sinfulness and faithlessness of Israel, whose pollution so defiled the precious land that it finally vomited them out (Lev. 18:28).

P, moreover, develops some strikingly distinctive theological ideas. Especially noteworthy is the unusual treatment of covenant that shifts attention to two non-breakable pacts established long before the events of Exodus and Sinai. After the Flood, God made a unilateral and everlasting covenant with Noah by promising never again to cut off the human race and reduce the world to chaos (Gen. 9:8-17). Later, God freely entered into an everlasting covenant with Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17). Already before he died, Abraham came to possess part of the land promised to him. Afterward, God "remembered" (a key term in P) his covenant with Abraham's descendents, who had become enslaved — exiled, as it were — in Egypt. He liberated them with overwhelming demonstrations of his glory. At Sinai he gave to Moses the whole set of cultic prescriptions which, if followed, would enable the chosen community to realize in its daily life the blessings inherent in the earlier promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. P emphasizes that God's promises are not empty and that his covenants cannot be voided. The same effective power present in God's word spoken at Creation (Gen. 1:1-2:4a) remains operative in the promises to Noah and Abraham.

Obedience, trust, and hope are called for. Sabbath observance (Gen. 2:2-3) and ritual circumcision (Gen. 17:11) on Israel's part, along with God' rainbow in the sky (Gen. 9:12-17), marked the continued effectiveness of God's life-giving and restorative word present among his people. If only they would trust in God like Caleb and Joshua once trusted when everyone else lost heart (Num. 14:6-7, 36-38). "A reader of P," Klein concludes, "would know what good things happen to Israel and what bad things to their oppressors when God remembers his covenant . . . P ends his narrative with old Israel on the verge of the land and full of hope, and that is *where* and *how* he wanted his audience to understand themselves as well" (p. 148).

Second Isaiah (= Isaiah 40-55(,[6] who seems to have preached in Babylon towards the end of the exilic period (ca. 550-540), shares with P an emphasis on God's effective and creative word (e.g., 40:8; 55:10-11). Furthermore, he uses creation language far more extensively. God is hailed not only as creator of the world in general but of Israel in particular. Every step by which he originally elected Israel, provided for her in the past, and is about to deliver her in the near future is seen as a sign of his onging activity of creation.

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[5] Although there is currently a fairly wide consensus on the extent of P in Genesis through Numbers (the Tetrateuch), questions about its provenance and date and especially as to whether or not P ever existed as a separate narrative document are still widely debated.

[6] See Klein's article in an earlier issue of this journal, "Going Home — A Theology of Second Isaiah," *CurTM* 5 (August, 1978) 198-210.

As Klein shows, much of Second Isaiah is devoted to a series of trial-like disputations intended to "prove" the absolute uniqueness and saving ability of this great Creator. Alongside these challenges, Second Isaiah utilizes a rich catalog of divine titles (the Lord is the everlasting Creator, Holy One, Redeemer/Kinsman, and King of Israel) and develops a breathtaking picture of a new exodus from Babylon. In this way the Creator who redeems, forgives, and comforts (40:1-2), invites his people to "fear not" (41:10) because it is his nature to be glorified in a people renewed and recreated (43:5-7; 48:9-11).

In his interpretation of the famous servant poems (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12) Klein identifies the servant as Israel itself and, to a lesser extent, simultaneously the ideal mission of Israel as embodied in the prophetic career of Second Isaiah. Many scholars nowadays perceive the anonymity of the servant in these poems as intentional: the servant represents not so much actual Israel or any single person in Israel, but an office or type not yet fully realized until a future that would include universal salvation for all the nations (49:6).[7] In this way Second Isaiah has gone beyond the usual idea, present even in come of this othe oracles, of setting the nations against Israel and vice versa. He has seen that hopeful perseverence in affliction — liike the bearing of exile by the faithful in Israel — can lead to a victorious emergence that helps recreate the life of the entire world. This is, indeed, a new creation!

The foregoing rather cursory summaries may indicate the length and breadth of the ground Klein covers in his small book. What they cannot convey is the depth of insight and the meticulous scholarship evident on every page. The book is tightly-constructed, eminently clear and readable. Each chapter could serve well as a discussion guide for four to six weeks of adult Bible study on any one of the six exilic works discussed.

A major contribution this book would make to pastors, seminarians, and laypeople would be to open more eyes to the variety of theological responses elicited by the exile and to some of the processes involved in the development of biblical tradition. Drawing on a common, yet always evolving, store of religious traditions, each of these six exilic writers voices a distinctive response and formulates special theological emphases in an attempt to convey the significance of what had befallen Israel and to encourage repentance and hope for the future. Their different responses sometimes even appear to be at variance with each other. Whereas Dtr and Jeremiah D speak of the broken covenant of Sinai, P avoids calling the Sinai event a covenant and concentrates on the un-

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[7] See Carroll Stuhlmueller, "Deutero-Isaiah (chaps. 40-55): Major Transitions in the Prophet's Theology and in Contemporary Scholarship," *CBQ* 42 (1980) 1-29, exp. 21-27 and n. 77. Years ago the great Jewish philosopher and biblical scholar, Martin Buber, asserted that the servant as pictured in Second Isaiah "cannot be comprehended in the life span of a single man. [The stages of proclamation, active suffering, and the resultant liberation for the nations] are the way of the one servant, passing through all the different likenesses and life cycles." While Second Isaiah "felt himself as one of the figurations of the servant," he shows also that "whosoever accomplishes in Israel the active suffering of Israel, he is the servant, and he is Israel, in whom YHVH 'glorifies Himself.' " See M. Buber, *The Prophetic Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960; orig. pub. 1949), pp. 229-230, 234.

breakable covenants with Noah and Abraham.[8] While Lamentations, Ezekiel and P seem almost obsessd by sin and guilt, Second Isaiah concentrates on forgiveness and the new futureabout to open up. While some pin their hopes on a restored Davidic monarchy (Dtr; additions to Ezekiel), another hails the foreigner Cyrus as the Lord's messiah (Second Isaiah), while others look for God to rule as Shepherd assisted by a purified priesthood (Ezekiel; P).

Happenings, raw occurrences, do not become events until they have an impact on someone, until they are taken into personal experience. Not everything that happens is event-full. Similarly, events become part of living tradition when a community re-members them into its larger storehouse of eventful experiences and when the memory, now loaded with meaning and significance, is passon on to others. Clearly, the same happenings do not become events for everyone. Nor do the same events carry the same signifiance for the traditions developed among different groups. Klein's study illuminates some fo the dynamics at work as the eventful happening of exile, with its diffuse impact on the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual life of the Israelite community, was being remembered in different ways as sacred tradition by prophets and priests, singers and storytellers, wise men and scholars, for their contemporaries and for their descendents in ages to come.

This process is paradigmatic of the way Christian tradition has developed as well. A better understanding of it coupled with an acknowledgement of how "what we learn is always tempered by who we are, when we live, and what we anticipate" so that "the meanings we assign to the past arise out of the crucible of the present and our hopes for the future"[9] might help more of us to appreciate and enter into respectful dialogue with the variety of theological responses that are still being formulated by the people of God — both Christians and others — to the challenging events of the present.

Finally, as Klein notes in his very brief conslusion, "Light for *Our* Exile," we live in an age of overwhelming displacements, physical and spiritual. The story of our century is largely the story of vast numbers of people either killed off their land or exiled from it. The Holocaust and the "boat-people" aftermath of the Indochinese conflicts are but two of the most obvious examples. Famines in Africa and Asian, the long-standing Arab-Israeli conflict, and very recent developments in Afghanistan and Cuba, have added to the steady stream of fugitive, refugees, and displaced peoples that flows around the world. The American Indian still lives as an exile in our very midst.[11] Furthermore, even those of us who are settled in our own homes on landof our own

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[8] One might compare Paul's argumentation in Gal. 3:17-18.

[9] Robert L. Wilken, *The Myth of Christian Beginnings: History's Impact on Belief* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1972; orig. pub. 1971), p. 203. Wilken's book can serve as an excellent introduction to "The Diversity of Christian Memories" that have developed over the centuries and to the divided character of Christianity since its very inception.

[10] A telling portrayal of the Indians' intimate relationship to their (largely lost) lands is contained in the Shelly Grossman film originally prepared for National Educational Television, now available for classroom use, "The Water is So Clear, That a Blind Man Could See."

suffer from a gnawing feeling of rootlessness, alienation, and loneliness — as even our TV soap heroes and heroines constantly remind us.

Whatever their differences, one thing did unite all those biblical writers who were speaking and shaping a religious response to Israel's exile: they insisted that the Lord was not exiled from his universe and that he, at least, was neither limited by their bondage nor unable to release them from it for a new future on the land.

Jürgen Moltmann has written:

> If in history God creates salvation for the people that lacks it, then he liberates that people from slavery, whether it is self-imposed or imposed from outside . . . We can therefore call salvation in history the divine opening of "closed systems." The closed or isolated person is freed for liberty and for his own future. A closed society is brought to life so that it can look upon the future as being the transformation of itsef.

He continues:

> Closed systems bar themselves against suffering and self-transformation. They grow rigid and condemn themselves to death. The opening of closed systems and the breaking down of their isolation and immunization will have to come about through the acceptance of suffering. But the only living things that are capable of doing this are the ones which display a high degree of vulnerability and capacity for change. They are not merely alive; they can make other things live as well.[11]

God is an open system. His creative work during Israel's exile is manifest in the impassioned voices of those who were calling Israel to a new life as a transformed peole beginning already *during* the exile. Through those voices, a greater Voice was beckoning a people in exile to participate in his openness, to grow again through "the indwelling of the limitless fullness of God's potentialities."[12]

To hear that same Voice calling is to receive impetus for courageous involvement in the universal human struggle also in the days of our exile. "A voice cries out: 'In the desert prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!" Now, as always, it is still appropriate to respond to that Voice by seeking against whatever odds to rebuild communities fit for sharing and cultivating a more complete life on the New Land that awaits our arrival.

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[11] J. Moltmann, *The Future of Creation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), pp. 122-123.

[12] Moltmann, p. 126.

A Book Worth Discussing: Ernst Christian Helmreich. *The German Churches Under Hitler.**

Arthur A. Preisinger
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When Adolf Hitler came to power on 30 January 1933, the program of National Socialism was undergirded by the concept of *Gleichschaltung,* the integration of all German life (cultural, economic, political, family, community, social, etc.) with the Nazi world view.

Gleichschaltung applied also to the religious life of Germans and to the churches to which they belonged, however nominally. Both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant (Evangelical) churches, as well as the so-called "free churches," became the target of the Nazi effort to bring the religious life of Germans into conformity with the aims and goals of Nazism. But whereas in other areas of German life, *Gleichschaltung* was achieved in a relatively short and easy time, the churches presented a more difficult problem to National Socialism. Resistance to the Nazi regime from the churches on theological and moral gorunds became evident almost from the beginning of Hitler's power grab. This resistance became known as the Church Struggle(*Kirchenkampf)* and it lasted, in one form or another, until the fall of the Third Reich.

Ernst Helmreich has written a comprehensive study of the German churches under the Nazi tyranny. It is a valuable contribution to the literature of the German Church Struggle, exhaustive in scholarly research, rich in bibliographical material and heretofore unpublished archival sources. Anyone who is interested in this period of church history, and especially in the question of how the church can deal with despotic religious and political power, will want to examine Helmreich's work.

The study is divided into three parts. The first section covers the development of the Protestant and Catholic churches in Germany since the Reformation. This background is exceedingly important, since Hitler's attempt at *Gleichschaltung* of the German churches can only be understood in the light of the intricacies of pre-Nazi church-political structures.

Those structures were dictated by the situation in Germany at the time of the Reformation, particularly by the Religious Peace of Augsburg of 1555, which established the principle of *cuius regio eius religio;* that is, the religion of each German estate within the Holy Roman Empire was determined by the religion of its ruler. Since the Luthern church, unlike the Roman Catholic, had no bishops to head the various provinces,

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* *Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979. 616 pages. Cloth. $30.00..*

the princes claimed the right of the bishops. The Calvinists (Reformed), on the other hand, never wanted an episcopal system of church government and developed, instead, a presbyterian-synodical polity. Thus began, at first out of sheer necessity, the so-called Territorial System. Each territory had its own church, whether Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed; in the case of the Evangelical groups, these territorial churches were known as *Landeskirchen.*

Another complicating factor in the Protestant church picture came in 1817, when Friedrich Wilhelm III combined the Lutheran and the Reformed territorial churches of Prussia, creating what was known as the Union Church. Even though the majority of congregations retained their Lutheran or Reformed character, the Union met with opposition among a number of Lutheran groups who called themselves "Old Lutherans", and who refused to enter the Union under any circumstances. In 1841, these groups constituted themselves into the Evangelical Free Churches in Prussia. A number of these emigrated to escape the hated Union; some came to America and started two of the three largest Lutheran church bodies in the United States today.

The Catholic church, too, came under the power of the State after the Thirty Years War, as bishops turned to the princes in Catholic lands for support against papal interference with certain episcopal privileges. And after the French Revolution, many German dioceses were "secularized" and put under the power of the princes.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, then, both the Protestant and Catholic churches were, in essence, state churches. It is true, after World War I, the Weimar Republic provided in its constitution for the separation of church and state. But churchmen, steeped in monarchical sentiments and politically conservative, did not reconcile themselves to the establishment of democracy; few took advantage of the autonomy that the Weimar Constitution offered.

But Hitler did take advantage of *them.* He, in fact, believed that the churches were weak and malleable. He could hardly conceal his contempt for the Evangelical churches, in particular. He once remarked:

> The Protestants haven't the faintest conception of the church. You can do anything you like to them — they will submit — (the parsons) are insignificant little people, submissive as dogs, and they sweat with embarrassment when you talk to them. They have neither a religion that they can take seriously nor a great position to defend like Rome . . . The parsons will be made to dig their own graves. They will betray their God to us. They will betray anything for the sake of their miserable little jobs and incomes.

The instrument for "coordination" of the churches with the Nazi State was the so-called "German Christian Movement." Under the leadership of Bishop Ludwig Müller, this movement called for "positive Christianity" (a German nationalistic, anti-semitic perversion of Christianity, with neo-pagan overtones) and one Reich church. Hitler's initial support of this movement set off a chain reaction of resistance to the German Christians that developed into the Evangelical Confessing Church.

So we come to the heart of Helmreich's book: the conflict of the churches with National Socialism.

As far as the Protestant churches are concerned, the story centers around the origin and vagaries of the Confessing Church *(Bekennende Kirche)* and its

leadership. The Confessing Church was the child of the "Pastors' Emergency League," organized by Pastor Martin Niemöller of Berlin-Dahlem, in September, 1933. It became apparent that Müller's increasingly provocative directives needed to be countered in a more organized way. On 31 May 1934, after a series of "Free Synods," 140 delegates from nineteen territorial churches assembled at Barmen-Gemarke and issued the Barmen Declaration, a six-point credal statement written for the most part by Karl Barth. Each article was put forward on the basis of a key text of the Bible, restated in terms of the present crisis, and followed by the traditional condemnations of heresy. The Declaration dealt with the heresy of identifying the Christian faith with a national or racial way of life, with the false teaching of the Aryan Clause (the paragraph in the Evangelical Church Constitution which denied the ministry to Christian Jews), and with the accusation that the confessors were "meddling in politics."

Thus the Confessing Church was born. It should be noted that the Protestant territorial churches were not so much in conflict wth the Nazi authority *per se,* as with the religious group that fostered Natonal Socialist aims: the German Christians. J.S. Conway cogently remarks:

> the Church Struggle was not primarily, as all the English speaking writers assumed, the struggle between Church and State, but rather between rival theological parties within the Church. In this view it was a conflict between the true and false Church, and therefore of more consequent significance to the life of the Church long after the political persecutions of the Nazis had been forgotten.

There is another aspect of the Church Struggle that needs to be emphasized. The Evangelical church consisted of three groups: the Prussian Union Church, the Lutheran churches, and the Reformed churches. After 1934, friction between those adhering to the Lutheran Confessions and those committed to the Reformed Confessions surfaced, thus diminishing the effect of a *united* front against German Christians and state interference. Barmen was the high point of the unity of these confessors in the face of a common enemy. The honesty of Karl Barth's call for unity in the struggle, despite the differences of confessions and the promise of no compromise of confession, was always in question among conservative Lutherans. They did not trust Barth, and they were unwilling to compromise their doctrine, even in the face of Nazi tyranny.

As for the Catholic church: almost immediately after Hitler became Chancellor of the Reich he concluded a Concordat with the Vatican. The Concordat guaranteed certain rights to the Catholic Church, particularly in regard to education. Much of Catholicism's struggle with the German state centered in the church's attempt to keep the Concordat's provisions in force. Hitler broke provisions of the Concordat when it suited him, in much the same way that he broke many of his other promises. In spite of official Catholic reaction, such as Pius XII's encyclical, *Mit Brennender Sorge* ("With Burning Sorrow"), the Fuhrer moved to "coordinate" Roman Catholicism to state aims. Hilmreich tells the story of the Catholic church conflict in great detail and witty empathy. By and large, the Catholic church fared slightly better than the Protestant churches under Nazism.

When war came in 1939, most church

leaders supported the government and its war aims. Still, both the Protestant and the Catholic churches suffered under wartime restrictions, limitations on pastoral work and religious education, confiscation of church property, financial controls, and Nazi racial policies.

The third section of the book sketches the situation of the Churches from the end of the war to the present time. It is not surprising that the Confessing Church furnished, in the main, the leadership for the revived post-war Evangelical Church, which acted immediately to reestablish the historic territorial churches and fell again into a "partnership" with the State. Helmreich also deals, however briefly, with the church in a divided Germany and the problems this division has created.

A final word on the Confessing Movement: the great majority of Evangelical pastors did not join either the German Christian Movement or the Confessing Church, although many were in sympathy with the latter. The story of these "neutrals" has yet to be researched and told. Nor does Helmreich analyze the important theological problems between Lutheran and Reformed between the more radical "Dahlem" confessors and the leaders of the "intact" territorial churches (Bishops Wurm and Meiser), between the Barthians and those who took (as some assume) Luther's "two kingdom" doctrine to its logical conclusion. It is clear that at the beginning of the movement, the Confessing Church was created by the interest and concern of church leaders — bishops, bureaucrats, and pastors. Their struggle was for the identity of the church, for its independence and autonomy; in short, theirs was basically a religious and ecclesiastical concern. Insofar as the German Christians were tools of Nazi ideology, the opposition was "political." But the Church Struggle did not constitute political resistance in the strict sense of the word. The confessors, following what they thought was proper Lutheran exegesis, always kept the "two kingdoms" apart. The Nazi authority was to be obeyed as long as it did not usurp the authority of God. Of course, it did this constantly, but the confessors, with a few exceptions, did not understand the larger theological implications of Nazi tyranny.

The Confessing Church fully accepted an intellectual inheritance that was politically conservative and heavily nationalistic. So church opposition did not completely shed the conservative prejudices which hated liberalism, rejected democracy, accepted the dream of a Protestant-Lutheran Reich (a synthesis of nation and pulpit), dwelt on the trauma of Versailles, and defended a latent anti-Semitism. Thus the rejection of Christian state ideology as defined at Barmen and the proclamation of Jesus Christ as Lord of the whole world, did not always find constant political application. The Confessing Church made no protests against the overthrow of democracy in Germany, no protests against German expansionism, no concerted effort to save the Jews. As time went on, in fact, conservative confessing Lutherans more and more wanted to come to terms with the State.

On the other hand, the churches had relentless pressure put on them. A system of infiltration, seduction, and divide-and-conquer created chaos. If some seemed weak, there is justification in the fact that their objective was to ensure that the word of God continued to be preached. Their position and responsibilities, so they believed, did not entitle them to martyrdom. In any case, the

resistance of the churches was the only resistance which had any real success, precisely because the churches offered their resistance from a different vantage point and out of an essentially different worldview than their Nazi tormenters.

Book Reviews

GOSPEL HYMNS AND SOCIAL RELIGION: The Rhetoric of Nineteenth-Century Revivalism. By Sandra S. Sizer. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978. xi and 220 pages. Cloth. $15.00.

Ever wonder why some congregations seem to turn on to "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me" more than to the Te Deum? Does it make any difference which hymns you pick for next Sunday? Do worship forms have any real theological and/or practical significance?

This book isn't for everyone, since it's based on a doctoral dissertation. There are some dry spots, and in places the technical jargon is a bit oppressive. But if any of the questions above trigger a spark of interest, you could do worse than to spend a couple of hours in this first volume in the "American Civilization" Series.

During the 1870s, revivals featuring the preaching of Dwight L. Moody and the singing of Ira D. Sankey attracted large numbers of white northern urban Protestants. Key elements in that tradition have continued to infuence American religion, down through Billy Sunday and Billy Graham, to this week's prime-time electronic evangelists and the legions of their lesser-known local counterparts.

Sizer applies the tools of anthropology and literary criticism to analyze the rhetoric in Sankey's *Gospel Hymns* (six editions, 1875-1895), which, in her judgment, "virtually embodies" the gospel-hymn movement of the late 19th century. Her analysis focuses on the metaphors utilized in the hymns their recurring themes, and their literary form (primarily: mode of address). She draws effectively, if (of necessity) superficially, on the social, economic, and political history of the period.

The critical element in gospel hymns, Sizer concludes, is their interpretation of reality in terms of emotions. Their primary purpose is "to create a sacred community articulated in terms of shared emotions. The analogue of that community is home-and-mother." (p. 129) Her argument is compelling. And more than slightly terrifying, if you share Luther's abhorrence of *Schwärmerei.* Bounce some of this stuff off your doctrine of the church if you dare. Better: work through some of it with the elders or a Bible class. If you are occasionally tempted to be jealous of the highly successful manipulators of feelings, this might be a useful antidote. And if you've got a worship (planning) committee, this might stimulate a little hard thinking and edifying discussion about what we sing when we come together to worship.

Donald J. Dallmann
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
Tulsa, Oklahoma

ROOTS OUT OF DRY GROUND. By Reuben Swanson. Dillsboro, North Carolina: Western North Carolina Press, 1979. 181 pages. Cloth. $8.50; Paper $6.50.

The author is professor of theology and religion at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina, and at the same time pastor of St. Andrew Lutheran Church of Andrews. This volume comprises ten sermons, nine on Gospel texts and one from Easter 1957 on Isa. 53:2, accounting for the title of the volume. He terms his messages "meditations." A concluding section is entitled "Poetic Musings."

These sermons are fine indeed, explicitly Christocentric, reflecting patiently upon human need as distance

from God, and are strongly concrete in contrast to abstract or dogmatic rhetoric.

Not only the "musings" but also the "meditations" are printed in strophic format with sentences separated into their components — a method which produces a handsome but also expensive book. When the late Peter Marshall published sermons in this format readers acclaimed the "poetic" style Actually the prose was hard-nosed and the format was devised for good reading from the Presbyterian pulpit. Much pulpit oratory fails when the speaker allows important ends and climaxes of his sentences to fade as he looks ahead to the next sentence. Dr. Swanson's volume is a good antidote to this practice because the format draws attention to the chief impulses of each sentence. In good delivery the speaker reinforces this quality with his face, bodily movements, and variety of pace.

Good poetry has concreteness and feeling. These sermons have these qualities also, not as poetry, but as good preaching, which leans strongly on the message and method of Jesus Christ himself.

Richard R. Caemmerer, Sr.
Christ Seminary — Seminex

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE THERAPY. By John W. Drakeford. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978, xvii and 140 pages. $7.95.

The sub-title describes the contents of the book: "Self-Help Groups: Roots, Principles, and Processes." Drakeford identifies himself with the general group therapy position of O. Hobert Mowrer, who advocates the exclusion of professionals from the group therapy process. The author labels his own particular version "Integrity Therapy," and devotes the last chapters of the book to this topic. Other chapters are devoted to the history of self-help groups in Methodism, Moral Rearmament, Alcoholics Anonymous, and so forth. The reviewer found the chapter on the history of Methodism to be uniquely valuable and helpful.

The general theme of the book needs to be heard and taken seriously by clergy. In theological terms, Drakeford is affirming St. Paul's principle about the unique gifts provided by the Spirit to the body of Christ so that all members might minister to each other for the sake of God's mission. This book also reminds those who are interested in small groups that there is an art to their formation and development; it's not quite as simple as falling off a log.

Herbert T. Mayer
Christ Seminary — Seminex

CONGREGATIONS ORGANIZING FOR MISSION ENDEAVOR, THE LEADER'S MANUAL. By Herbert T. Mayer. Medford, OR: Morse Press, 1979. 326 pages. Paper. $19.50.

Through an examination of the biblical, historical, and denominational elements of the Christian tradition, the C.O.M.E. program enables congregations to move from understanding to expressing their faith. Theology, mission, and ecumenism are seen as areas that concern not only theologians and pastors. Here, theology involves the laity in discussion of scripture and tradition. Here, mission enters daily life and everyday situations. Here, ecumenism brings Christians of different denominations together into ecumenical neighborhood house churches. Here, the Christian faith becomes an immediate, concrete, and public expression.

Jürgen Moltmann
Tübingen, West Germany

SOMETHING OVERHEAD: AN INVITATION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT. By A.E. Harvey. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1978. viii and 88 pages. Paper. $3.50.

"Reading the New Testament is rather like overhearing a conversation." Since the New Testament authors were writing to people of their own "in group," we who want to understand it today must get behind the many unexplained technical terms, assumptions, and unspecified situations. This is the point of view from which Harvey has written this brief introduction to the writings of the New Testament, directed primarily to laity. It is made useful for study by a list of passages for reference and further study at the end of each chapter and a guide for further reading.

In chs. 1-7 Harvey reviews what we can overhear in the New Testament about the life of the early Church — its worship, preaching and Baptism, ethics, use of the Scriptures, and its encounters with Judaism and paganism. In chs. 8-14 he takes up the writings in order, noting especially the factors that brought into being and shaped each work. The last chapter contains comments on the way in which these particular writings came to be gathered into an authoritative canon.

Harvey is good at seeing the New Testament in its setting and capturing its uniqueness and diversity. Unfortunately, this approach means that he spends little time relating the writings of the New Testament to its central themes. The book is well written and explains clearly some of the critical methods of biblical scholarship, assuming no previous knowledge of the reader. However, there is little new information or insight in this book for one who is even superficially acquainted with modern scholarship.

David Kuck
Good Shepherd
Lutheran Church
Hamden, Connecticut

JESUS, AN EXPERIMENT IN CHRISTOLOGY. By Edward Schillebeeckx. New York: Seabury, 1979. 767 pages. Cloth. $24.95.

This is a big book in every way. Its author, a Flemish-Dutch Dominican priest, now 65, was one of the handful of key theologians at Vatican II and the leading light of the controversial revival of contemporary Dutch Catholicism. It is a big book in size: 675 pages of text and another 60 of notes, with many topical biblographies scattered throughout. The index to modern authors cited alone runs eight pages. But even then this volume is just the first part of a more extensive christological study. This is the "Jesus book," whereas the next one, already out in Dutch and concentrating particularly on Pauline and Johannine tradition, is a "Christ book." Rumor has it that a third volume is in the works. Certainly we have here one of the most ambitious theological projects of recent years. And, alas, also a big price.

Most striking overall is the enormous place given to exegetical analysis over theoretical construction. Schillebeeckx is a systematic theologian steeped in the Thomistic tradition, enlivened by contemporary phenomenology, the great majority of whose work has been in sacramental theology. When one compares this work with other Roman Catholic systematic theologians, e.g., Walter Kasper, Karl Rahner, or even Hans Küng, one realizes how different this book is. Of course he depends on the more detailed work of biblical scholars as such, but even here there are surprises. He follows the general drift of the post-Bultmannians. Käsemann, Hengel, Hahn, Jeremias, Conzelmann, and Braun appear frequently; but there are other names, less well-known, who seem to constitute a new generation of Dutch and German scholars, especially K. Berger, J. Roloff, L. Ruppert, S. Schultz, and B. van Iersel. In using these sources Schillebeeckx is concerned about establishing as honestly

as possible the portrait of the historical Jesus and his message. For this he depends heavily on studies of pre-Christian Judaism and on the earliest strands of the NT material, particularly the earliest levels of the Q-tradition. On the other hand, there is very little interest in structuralist analysis, aside from a few uses of its language (diachronous, synchronous, semiotic, fatic code) and no references to liberation theology (Jon Sobrino's work was not available in 1974 when the Dutch edition of this book was published). This is clearly what the subtitle bills it as, an *experiment* in Christology. "Let us see what we can do as systematic theologians if we take the most responsible NT biblical criticism seriously," Schillebeeckx seems to be saying. The result is a long, elegant, complicated argument, full of hundreds of controversial positions and original insights.

There is no possibility here of going into the intricacies of this book, but a bare outline might give some idea of its scope. There are four main parts to the work: first, on method, hermeneutics, and criteria (Jesus of Nazareth is the norm); second (by far the longest part), the historical Jesus and his message (Jesus the eschatological prophet-martyr and his original *Abba*-experience as source and secret of his being, message and manner of life seem to be key); third, the NT interpretations of Jesus (Schillebeeckx essentially sees parousia, *theios aner,* wisdom, and Easter christologies independent but balancing each other); fourth, the present christological crisis (Jesus, parable of God and paradigm of humanity).

The most controversial aspect of this whole study is probably his understanding of the resurrection experience. Schillebeeckx detects a variety of modes of expression in the NT tradition for speaking of the victory of Jesus after his death, resurrection language being just one. What exactly Schillebeeckx understands by these "conversion visions" is difficult to nail down. One comment perhaps gives his drift:

> May it not be that Simon Peter — and indeed the Twelve — arrived via the concrete experience of forgiveness after Jesus' death, encountered as grace and discussed among themselves (as they remembered Jesus' sayings about, among other things, the gracious god) as the 'evidence for belief'; the Lord is alive? (p. 391)

He distances himself from a merely subjective understanding of this experience in the style of Willi Marxsen, but the argument is long, complicated and sophisticated. Hence, he is in no danger of official censure. Here and throughout the work Schillebeeckx takes a solid, well-thought-out, but minimalist stand on what the Jesus experience was, but on this firm ground he is able to construct a most impressive, contemporary christology.

The translation seems smooth, except where one gets lost in the author's Teutonic sentences replete with parentheses, dashes, and endless qualifiers, which might have read better in Dutch. Frequent use of phrases of "lots of" and "cum" as a sort of fancy hyphen ("soteriological-cum-Christological") mar the text. The bibliographies and notes are a gold mine of information in themselves. Though guilty of the customary German bias, many French, British, and American works are noted, though even he usually cites their German editions. A nice eighteen-page lexicon helps the student through terms like aporia, aretalogy, theologoumenon, and the like.

This is an important book for any serious student of christology, a one-volume education in contemporary European NT studies, and in its final section a most impressive presentation of a Jesus of faith which can be preached convincingly to contemporary consciousness.

F.W. Nichols
St. Louis University

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The Words of *Currents*

The writers in *Currents* try to express competent theology in understandable twentieth-century English. Since not all technical terms can — or should — be avoided, we have begun a new feature in which we will comment on difficult words or ideas used in these pages, in order to facilitate your understanding of the articles and to expand your theological vocabulary. If theological words appear — in *Currents* or elsewhere — which you do not understand, drop us a line. We shall be happy to comment on them in future issues.

Ralph W. Klein

The Essenes. A Jewish ascetic sect in Qumran (site of the Dead Sea Scrolls) from ca. the second century A.D. Highly organized, communistic. They required a three-year novitiate with vows of obedience and secrecy. (see p. 262)

Hasidic. From a Greek transcription of the Hebrew *Chasidim,* conservative Palestinian Jews of the second century B.C. who tried to maintain a traditional scribal interpretation of the Law against Hellenization. The immediate ancestors of the Pharisees, they participated in the first stage of the Maccabean revolt. (see p. 262)

Millenarianism. The belief in a future millenium, a thousand year period preceding the Second Coming of Christ, during which he will reign on earth through his saints. Prevalent among Gnostics, some orthodox Christians prior to Origin, Anabaptists at the time of the Reformation, German Pietists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and many contemporary so-called Evangelicals. (see p. 263)

Johanan ben Zakkai. The founder of a school (beth ha-midrash) at Jabneh prior to the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem, which combined intellectual and religious traditions. (see p. 267)

Didache. An early Christian manual on morals and church practice. Probably of Syrian origin, second century or later. Chh. 7-15 discuss baptism, feasting, prayer, the Eucharist, and how prophets, bishops, and deacons should be received. (see p. 267)

Simul iustus et peccator. Luther's phrase in his lectures on Rom. and in the first lecture on Gal.: "*At one and the same time a righteous man and a sinner:* a sinner in fact but a righteous man through faith in the promise and through hope of its fulfillment." (see p. 294)

Antinomianism. The view that a Christian is by grace set free from the need of observing any moral law. Attributed to Paul by his opponents in Rom. 3:8. Recurrent problem in church history. (see p. 294)

Edict of Worms. A declaration of Emperor Charles V on 25 May, 1521 formally condemning Luther's teachings. Luther had already left Worms on 26 April after refusing to recant. (see 297)

Marburg Colloquy. A meeting in October 1529 to achieve unity between Saxon and Swiss Reformers. They found agreement on fourteen of fifteen articles drawn up by Luther, but Zwingli refused to accept the Lutheran understanding of the Lord's Supper (consubstantiation). (see p. 298)

Corpus Christi procession. A feastday commemoration of the institution and gift of the Eucharist — celebrated universally in the Western (Roman Catholic) church since the fourteenth century on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. (see p. 300)

Cuius regio eius religio. The prince determines the religion (Evangelical or Catholic) in his region. The first Diet of Speyer (1526) gave legal sanction to this principle already long practiced in Germany. Confirmation of this principle actually represented postponement of a decision to enforce the Edict of Worms. (see p. 311)

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