

BOOK REVIEWS

Faith Misguided: Exposing the Dangers of Mysticism. By Arthur L. Johnson. Chicago: Moody, 1988, 156 pp., \$6.95 paper.

"It is high time that the evangelical community awoke to the dangerous influences we have been harboring in our midst," warns the author of this exposé of "evangelical mysticism" (151). The volume is a useful prolegomenon to the spiritual life. Johnson's objective is forthright: to persuade Christians to renounce all traces of mysticism discernible in their own ranks for their spiritual well-being.

Johnson begins with a chapter on the nature of mysticism and promises a formal definition in terms of its psychological aspects, its philosophical implications, and its theological expressions (25). Unfortunately his "formal definition" is never given concise expression. The reader is on his own to piece these components of mysticism together. The result is something like the following: Mysticism is a psychological attitude of religious commitment rooted in the philosophical belief that knowledge and truth are accessible via inner subjective impressions that are frequently equated with the voice of God (25-26). Johnson's critique of mysticism focuses on two constituents: its epistemological orientation, and the ramifications of this cognitive orientation for the spiritual life. This orientation may operate as a kind of functional presupposition for evangelical mystics who, perhaps unwittingly, adopt a mystical mindset in their efforts to grow and mature spiritually. The chief danger to the Christian consists in the likelihood of a subtle exchange of subjective experience for normative Scripture as the primary guide for the believer in both faith and practice. Mysticism subverts the authority of Scripture.

So that the reader will not conclude that Johnson is merely crying "Wolf!" he documents the intrusion of mystical trends in the evangelical community. The current evangelical fascination with subjectivism is manifested in a variety of ways: testimonies that stress the subjective dimensions of conversion and spiritual development; widespread conception of prayer as "conversing" with God; Bible "study" that reduces to feelings about what a passage "means to me"; dependence upon inner impressions for guidance concerning the will of God. In addition to these general tendencies are two historical developments that have reinforced this type of thinking. Johnson presents as evidence the case of Watchman Nee. Chapter 6 is an analysis of Nee's teaching, which posits a nonrational, intuitive faculty of human nature that makes spiritual truth specially accessible. Pat Robertson, R. Foster, and A. W. Tozer are cited as additional examples of "sincere Christians" who make the same "tragic mistake" of identifying subjective inner states with the ministry of the Holy Spirit (110). Further evidence, for Johnson, is the charismatic movement, treated in chap. 7.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of the appeal of mysticism in terms of the universal human yearning for spiritual meaning. This part of the book is marked by sensitivity to the human condition. Chapter 4 recommends the restoration of reason to its proper place as the antidote to the mysticism that threatens the integrity of evangelical spirituality. Here the author argues for the priority of reason with both candor and balance. Chapters 5 and 8 address specific misgivings

that many will undoubtedly feel as they follow the author's argument for eradicating mysticism from the evangelical community. In these sections he tackles the sticky issues of divine guidance, the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life, and the nature of personal relationship with God.

This book could perhaps be improved by the addition of an appendix explaining key Bible passages in connection with the themes of the book, attention to the relevance of personality differences in the process of spiritual development, and further development of the role of the Holy Spirit in Biblical interpretation. It is questionable whether Johnson's presuppositional view of Biblical authority is ultimately consistent with his challenge to epistemological subjectivism.

Johnson is to be commended for producing a volume that can be recommended to lay men and women in the Church. It contains much that will stimulate and challenge their thinking about matters central to living the Christian life with courage and conviction. Ministers and theologians should weigh its arguments against any mystical tendencies present in their own views and practices regarding the spiritual life. *JETS* recently carried two articles on "Evangelical Spirituality," one from "A Biblical Scholar's Perspective" and the other from "A Church Historian's Perspective" (March 1988). In Johnson's volume we encounter a sustained analysis of evangelical spirituality from a Christian philosopher's perspective.

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Easter in Ordinary: Reflections on Human Experience and the Knowledge of God.
By Nicholas Lash. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988, 313 pp., \$29.95.

Lash has reflected in his various works a strong interest in the question of the multi-dimensionality of human experience as it relates to the being of God. This oddly (or interestingly) titled work seems to be the culmination of such thought and labor. From a desire to examine the dominant perspectives on human experience in the west, particularly as they arise from the Cartesian/subjectivist influence (and its inherent distortions of what it means to be human), Lash has as his purpose to set forth a more full-orbed and processive view of human personhood, one that is in keeping with the Judeo-Christian theological tradition.

In coming to this discussion of man as he stands before the addressing presence of God in the world as the past, present and future, and within the whole of that which constitutes the human, Lash employs a number of paradigms by which he explicates his argument. This very procedure makes reading this text often a "choppy" process but, as the author notes, the very deep-rootedness of Cartesian subjectivism and its view of humanness has required a "step by step" process in order to assist the reader toward a "different" paradigm and an "overarching narrative" of person, experience, knowledge and God. Indeed the book works secondarily as a parable of the point at hand.

Initially the author clarifies the dominant Cartesianism of the modern west. In doing so Lash carefully, and usually with patient cogency, describes the truly problematic implications imbedded in such a view. Western man's inwardness, his seeing his "true self" tucked protectively away from all external tensions in life, has falsified humanity and its relation to the world and distorted his notion of God to the extent that he has come to experience what some have called an "eclipse of

God." Our anthropological dualism has blinded us to the God who lovingly comes to us to transform the whole of life in and through us.

Lash's initial theological paradigm, then, as reflecting this problematic "real inward" versus "outward" dualism, comes from W. James, especially as unfolded in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Despite his desire to bring unity and empirical clarity to what "religious experience" means, Lash shows that in fact James ends up by portraying the realm of the "religious" as a specialized capacity within some (not all) persons, a capacity that is actually severed from "externals" and that makes of those special people the "geniuses" that later adherents simply follow from a distance (cf. Luther, Francis of Assisi, G. Fox). For theological (as distinct from psychological) reasons, Lash contests the assertion that only those persons having a psychological make-up prone to such "experiences" can live "in relation to the creative and redemptive mystery of God." In this way Lash has made room for a different way of seeing.

The author makes use of the conceptualizations of such disparate religious thinkers as Schleiermacher, Newman, von Hugel and Buber. After working to extricate Schleiermacher from the "misunderstanding" of Hegel's negative response to *The Christian Faith*, Lash points to a critical development in Schleiermacher whereby religious experience and that which is external to the experiencing human (e.g. culture) are brought toward reconciliation and unity. In Newman, Lash finds a theological description of man and history much in keeping with the basic direction of his own argument. In opposition to Cartesian "private states of feeling" Newman saw the essence of the personal via an "inclusivism" that believes human integrity and maturity to be the fragile results of a constant dialectical interplay between various constituent forces such as feeling, doing and knowing. This pattern is the "sacramental expression of the vector of God's action in human history" whereby the Christian quest for integrated personhood is attained. But it is primarily with von Hugel and Buber that the major elements of Lash's portrayal of human experience and God are brought into focus. Von Hugel gave much consideration to the nature of religious experience in the earlier part of this century. Against both the Cartesian and Jamesian conceptions of private inward states he reckoned human experience "inclusively" as the ongoing interaction between one's acting and being acted upon in all spheres of human living. Christian experience is set in light of a Christological notion of a processiveness toward completed humanity, the "experience of participation in . . . a school for the production of persons"—i.e. "a school whose pedagogy is structured in suffering negotiated and interpreted after the pattern of the suffering of Christ." Lash asserts that in this way von Hugel was able to avoid the Cartesian distortion of the inward ("exclusivism") while working toward the cultivation of the three-sided (mystical, intellectual, institutional) nature of human character.

Lash then expresses his own re-forming of the Christian perception of human experience and God in the developmental process of the "personal." From the beginning, but especially in the last major section, K. Rahner's transcendental Thomism plays a marked role. Serious theological reflection brings about a reunification, a wholeness of human complexity before the mysterious simplicity of the transcendent God as actively and immanently triune. Here, in all of life, God is experienced. This is not to be found in "unusual" experiences but within the limits of "the ordinary." God in his beauty, love and creativity as Spirit, God in his otherness and unexplainability in death and chaos, God as the Word once spoken, God as dynamically present and eternally active is bringing unity and reconciliation. By God's address and presence, the world becomes sacrament and the commonplace is illuminated. This is seen preeminently in the event and breakthrough of Easter in all of life. God has bound himself into the human world in

order to make the “image of man his own image, the image of the Imageless One.” In this way, via this “imaging,” there will be breathed into human history the very presence of the Spirit by whom man’s “self-severing” may undergo substantial healing.

In responding to Lash I must emphasize that this book is a significant work by one of the most important contemporary British theologians. What Lash is seeking to re-form needs re-forming. What he is working to establish ought to be established. The corrupt notions regarding God, humanity and human experience that derive from Cartesianism need to be vigorously set upon. The relation of the whole of human life, including the social and political, to the presence of the mystery of God must be asserted and clarified afresh. Yet for numerous reasons this reviewer experienced a continual yes, no, yes, no, and finally no in the process of interacting with this work. One question that kept troubling this reviewer was “Why is Lash writing this?” The book often reads more like a series of articles than as the single work it set out to be. Occasionally the issues, while crucial in themselves, seem somewhat trite, somewhat hackneyed. Beyond this, Lash’s use of James as the “whipping boy” for the outworking of his thesis began to take on political or, at least, a “class” orientation. James on his “Harvard chair” (oft repeated) and the Jamesian interest in genius, which is inherently an elitist reckoning of pure religious experience, is most irritating to Lash. It apparently has rankled his vision of the equality of the “ordinary,” of religious and processive egalitarianism as screened through moderately Marxist spectacles. Thus, Lash is regularly willing to build his argument on “impressions,” on what “seemingly is taking place” in order to arrive at partial truths, overstatements and half-adequate criticisms of James for the sake of unpacking Lash’s own proletarian, religio-philosophical fury on his so-called bourgeois opponent.

The whole of this volume is a phenomenological theological enterprise, often constructed upon a questionable metaphysical foundation. It sets forth a God who is experienced pervasively (panentheistically) so as to eliminate on a basic level the obvious but despised reality of distinctions. What is ironic is that the attack on the elitism of James’ “Harvard chair” is given by one writing from his own elitist Cambridge chair. As a well-known theological ethicist asked not long ago: “Is Lash still beating up on James?” Yes, it seems so.

In the final analysis the conclusions of both James and Lash and their theologies “from below” inadequately explicate the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the experience of the One who is. If all of life is in some sense a reflection of the immanent “holy,” then all real distinctions, distinctions that even Lash is wont to make, are erased. As K. Barth noted: “There is here the threat of an awkward turnover from a divine determining to a human determinateness. . . . The human determinateness, the experience and attitude of the knowing subject might well be exalted into the criterion of theological knowledge” (20). As such, Lash’s version of community with God and the overcoming of the eclipse of God in the world by the restoration of human community as metaphor and sacrament falls prey to the un-Biblical outcome of all such methodology—i.e., the glory of the human becomes decisive for the divine rather than the decisiveness of God for us in Christ being the only possible basis for the healing of the human. God’s revelatory Word must be the presupposition. Lash has partaken afresh of the nineteenth-century outcome: the knowledge of a god made in our own image taken from the content and idea of our own freedom and relations.

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Civil Religion and the Presidency. By Richard V. Pierard and Robert D. Linder. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, 359 pp., \$12.95 paper.

Civil religion has existed since mankind first organized in political communities, but it has been the focus of serious scholarly study only during the past twenty years. Civil religion is a "collection of beliefs, values, rites, ceremonies, and symbols which together give sacred meaning to the ongoing political life of the community and provide it with an overarching sense of unity above and beyond all internal conflicts and differences" (23). Civil religion draws from a community's heritage to help form its destiny. Civil religion is more than patriotism; it is a mix of patriotism and piety that supersedes religious pluralism by using generic "God-words" to revere common historical heroes and legends.

Pierard and Linder argue that civil religion exists in the United States, noting that its core belief is that the United States is a chosen nation, divinely appointed to espouse before a watching world the benefits of religion, individual liberty and political democracy. Pierard and Linder also contend that the principal prophet of American civil religion is the president of the United States. The presidency has an undeniable religious dimension that has been undetected, supported, or even exploited by the different personalities who have occupied the oval office.

The authors review the presidencies of nine American leaders, including Washington and Reagan. Pierard and Linder apply to each president a civil-religion model borrowed from Church historian M. Marty, which conceives presidential civil religion behavior as prophet, pastor, or priest. For example, Roosevelt and Eisenhower are considered pastors, for they fused the historic Judeo-Christian faith with national sentiment; Lincoln, Wilson and Carter are labeled prophets, for they summoned the nation to higher, albeit sometimes unpleasant, deeds and purposes; Nixon and Reagan are called priests, for they focused on America's promise and spoke words of comfort and praise. The authors believe that during the twentieth century the presidency has steadily assumed a more priestly posture.

Perhaps the primary shortcoming of this text is an unexplained omission. Although J. F. Kennedy's funeral is mentioned in the first chapter, his presidency is not examined for civil religious expression. This seems odd for two reasons: Kennedy is regarded by most scholars as one of the outstanding presidents of the twentieth century, and his inaugural is the subject of R. Bellah's 1967 article on civil religion that launched modern interest in the topic.

Pierard and Linder have coauthored a number of books, including another on civil religion entitled *Twilight of the Saints: Civil Religion and Biblical Christianity in America*. They recognize that not all civil religion is national idolatry. To be commended is their avoidance of a weary tirade against patriotism as such. On the contrary, their work is scholarly, fair and balanced. They do, however, warn readers not to equate Biblical Christianity and Americanism. They observe that civil religion too easily acculturates Christians, blinding them to their duty to point to higher realities. Consequently the authors prefer a prophetic president, and they refuse to affirm civil religion.

This book provides both an interesting narrative and a thought-provoking analysis. Reading it enhances one's ability to discern Biblical values amid so-called traditional ideas in the often morally ambiguous realm of politics. Those who value a patriotism honoring worthy ideals—liberty, justice, human dignity, truth—will appreciate the message of this text.

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Pushing the Faith: Proselytism and Civility in a Pluralistic World. Edited by Martin E. Marty and Frederick E. Greenspahn. New York: Crossroad, 1988, 190 pp., \$19.95.

The fifth in the Jewish and Christian Traditions series, this compendium is the result of a consultation at Denver University's Center for Judaistic Studies. Contributors come from a range of theological, historical, and social science faculties.

If there is a unifying substratum, it is a commitment to religious pluralism and an aversion to any kind of proselytism. The stated goal is the alleviation of "the tension between the apparent demands of . . . theological rhetoric and the convention of social pluralism" (xi).

Given the pluralism of contemporary society, B. Johnson asserts that any kind of proselytism or evangelism is passé. In fact in order to minimize confrontation all efforts at winning converts must be abandoned. This abandonment is seen to be the "civil" thing to do (18).

Writing from the Jewish perspective, R. Goldberg agrees. He sees the genius of rabbinical Judaism in its achievement of a detente with other religions. Although other religionists "develop acceptable traditions and live acceptable lives," they are not to be compared with the ethical and religious values of Judaism (40). Still the rabbis adopted a "live and let live" attitude toward non-Jews.

Conversion to Judaism is not cultivated by overt efforts. Today it is far more frequently the product of interfaith marriages. Writes R. Seltzer: "The conversion to Judaism of the non-Jewish partner is a significant factor in maintaining the size of the American Jewish community against a shrinkage resulting from assimilation and a low birthrate" (60-61).

In an effort to plumb the depths of history concerning the missionary movement, J. Gager cites two primary motivators: He sees eschatological hope as the main mover, and he sees a counterbalancing zeal that reacts to doubt as the second cause (77).

When it comes to a consideration of the method of mission, W. Hutchison sees the first wave of Protestant mission as an effort to civilize the pagan. Civilization overrode evangelization. It was D. J. Fleming who tried to rectify this, although it was never quite eradicated (89). Hutchison does applaud the return of evangelicalism to a social conscience following the Lausanne Congress of 1974.

Writing from a Roman Catholic perspective, R. Schreiter surveys the eras of Catholic missions: 1919-62, the period of certainty; 1962-65, the period of ferment; 1965-75, the period of missionary crisis; 1975 onward, the rebirth of the missionary movement. Proselytism has declined in Catholic mission since Vatican II, when the Church was enlarged to embrace true believers.

In a caricature of contemporary fundamentalism, N. Ammerman accuses fundamentalists of everything from incivility to racism. Her venom is poured out especially on Jews for Jesus, who in her eyes tend to violate "the sensibilities of most urban Americans" (115).

Representing the evangelical school of thought, N. Malony discusses seriously "The Psychology of Proselytism." He is most objective in his contribution. Without resorting to hackneyed jargon Malony gives a serious discussion of the psychology of both the evangelist and the convert.

A well-informed contribution is J. Richardson's discussion of proselytism and the newer religions. He sets side by side the Unification Church, Hare Krishna and the Jesus Movement. He then draws an extremely helpful portrait of the conversion and resocialization process (154).

Perhaps the best chapter of all is Marty's conclusion. He senses the seriousness of proselytism as one worldview confronts another. He questions, rightly so, the lack of interaction with the theological issues implicit in proselytism. Marty concludes: "This is a book, then, that deals much more easily with pluralism and politeness than with proselytization" (162).

Marty's critique is perhaps softer than mine would be. There is a lamentable lack of theological sophistication among the contributors. Their rather uncritical devotion to the ideal of pluralism limits their ability to assess mission and evangelism. As Ammerman put it: "One of the ironies of pluralism and civility is that we pluralists spend most of our time talking to those who already understand us and agree with us" (121-122). One might call this "preaching to the converted."

In all of the contributions there appear two further glaring deficiencies. First, there is little or no meaningful treatment of the Scriptural bases of evangelism. Second, there is also a woeful lack of comprehension of the breadth of the history of evangelism and mission.

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The Encyclopedia of American Religions: Religious Creeds: A Compilation of More than 450 Creeds, Confessions, Statements of Faith, and Summaries of Doctrine of Religious and Spiritual Groups in the United States and Canada. Edited by J. Gordon Melton. 1st ed. Detroit: Gale Research, 1988, xxiii + 838 pp., \$125.00. *A Guide to Foreign Missionary Manuscripts in the Presbyterian Historical Society.* By Frederick J. Heuser, Jr. Bibliographies and Indexes in World History 11. Westport: Greenwood, 1988, xxv + 108 pp., \$39.95. *Religion Journals and Serials: An Analytical Guide.* Compiled by Eugene C. Fieg, Jr. Annotated Bibliographies of Serials: A Subject Approach 13. Westport: Greenwood, 1988, xxvii + 218 pp., \$45.00.

Once again Melton has produced a massive, pioneering reference work that should greatly aid students of contemporary American religious history. Once again his work is open to charges of hasty and uneven editing. But his overall contribution far outstrips any flaws along the way, most of which are easily corrected. *Religious Creeds* is significant in its own right, but it is particularly important as an expansion of his more basic *Encyclopedia of American Religions* (2d ed. and supp., 1987), bringing yet another dimension to his monumental project of describing, documenting and classifying the over 1500 primary religious bodies (i.e. denominations, sects and cults) in the United States and Canada, the majority of which he was the first to identify within the context of a systematic scholarly survey.

Melton does not give a creed or doctrinal statement for every group he has discovered. Many lack them, or refuse to disclose them, or simply adopt statements previously formulated by other religious bodies. But he has compiled far more material relevant to the present religious scene in America than anyone else has to date. And, as in his previous publications, his special achievement is to locate unique or extremely marginal items that others have overlooked. Where else would one readily find "Articles of Our Faith" for the International Church of Ageless Wisdom or the "Statement of Faith" for the gnostic Federation of St. Thomas Christian Churches?

Melton does not try to duplicate standard collections of historical creeds (Schaff *et al.*, which he lists in the introduction), but he does include older creeds if they are currently in use or recognized by religious groups. Nor does he limit himself to strictly denominational confessions, since many statements and declarations from independent or interdenominational sources are accepted by ecclesiastical bodies. He is also extremely selective at some points. Of the many hundreds of official documents from the Roman Catholic Church he gives only the brief "Profession of Faith" issued by Pope Paul IV in 1564 and slightly revised several times since, most notably in 1877 to incorporate papal infallibility. While the choice is a good one if restricted to a single confession, why not at least discuss the various types of pronouncements promulgated by Rome and its bishops, with bibliographic references to appropriate sourcebooks for the uninitiated? In many cases one wonders why Melton chose the statement(s) he did among the various statements available.

Neither the National Council of Churches nor the World Council of Churches or their respective agencies, commissions and assemblies are represented by a single document, even though the Christian Holiness Association (and its predecessor the National Holiness Association), the National Association of Evangelicals, and the American Council of Christian Churches are included. But by far the most important evangelical document of modern times, the Lausanne Covenant, is never mentioned. Neither are the Chicago Declaration, the Chicago Call, or the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy. Melton includes doctrinal statements from Dallas Theological Seminary and Moody Biblical [*sic*] Institute, but makes no reference to Fuller Theological Seminary's "Mission Beyond the Mission" or its "Declaration of Conscience About the Arms Race." The Hartford Appeal for Theological Affirmation surely merits inclusion. The list of omissions goes on and on. While Melton clearly cannot include everything, he could certainly provide a fuller discussion of the types of material he has left out and some indication of where they could be located.

One of the most misleading aspects of many articles of faith is that they frequently omit ethical codes or behavioral requirements for membership. The naive reader could never guess the host of prohibitions and duties that in fact may be enforced more rigorously than any assent to theoretical formulae. Related problems include the uneven emphases placed on different aspects of an official statement, the peculiar understandings of particular terms (which Melton regularly notes in his commentaries), and the role of oral tradition in interpreting and expanding upon religious creeds. Some of these difficulties are ameliorated if one remembers to read the parallel entries in the *Encyclopedia* proper, where Melton is apt to discuss such matters.

Though Melton is knowledgeable about evangelicals and has been known to identify with them, members of ETS may be interested to learn one of his distinctions between fundamentalists and evangelicals: "Those who believe in inerrancy are generally considered fundamentalists, and those who do not (or tolerate those who do not) are considered conservative evangelicals" (565).

Heuser, by comparison, has constructed a very different type of reference tool, one far more limited in scope and appeal. Given its purpose, however, one could scarcely ask for better results. His guide identifies the missionary manuscripts and archival collections in the Presbyterian Historical Society (located in Philadelphia) as of January 1, 1987. They include records and papers from the board of foreign missions of the PCUSA, the UPC of North America and its predecessors, the Cumberland PC, the Calvinistic Methodist Church (USA), the commission on ecumenical missions and relations of the UPCUSA, and individual Presbyterian missionaries. Home missions and missionaries are excluded, however.

The guide features careful preliminary explanations, an historical overview of Presbyterian missions, country-by-country histories of individual missions, and detailed listings of manuscript collections related to each field. The latter receive extensive descriptive annotations including brief biographies of missionaries whose personal papers are included. The histories and biographies enhance and enliven what otherwise might seem dry as dust, as do eight maps and a wonderful selection of photographs from the archives, some thirty-six in all.

There is really very little to fault. I noticed only one bad typographical error (at the beginning of p. x). Also, the manuscript was prepared using a dot matrix printer and has unjustified right margins, though in this instance there is no problem with legibility. Nonetheless both this volume and the next made me wonder (as I often have) why publishers such as Greenwood, which boast about their acid-free paper and library-quality binding, do not commit themselves to better typography.

Fieg's guide to English-language serials and journals in religion and theology is well conceived and in most respects very well executed. Nevertheless I thought it rather disappointing, especially since Fieg would appear to be, by both education and employment, professionally qualified for the task he undertook. The book begins with excellent introductory matter explaining its use. It concludes with five different indices: geographical, title, publisher, subject, audience. (The other two volumes under review also contain good indices.) The heart of the book is a classified, amply descriptive, and annotated listing of the journals themselves.

Instead of trying to provide an exhaustive guide, Fieg selected 328 of the most important (i.e. academic) titles to list and review, though some general interest magazines such as *Christian Century* and *Christianity Today* are included. Each journal is given a very thorough bibliographic description, with information provided under the following headings: title, date founded, title changes, mergers, frequency, price, publisher, editor, illustrations, index, advertisements, circulation, manuscript selection, microforms, reprints, book reviews, special issues, indexed/abstracted, database, target audience, sample copies. The systematic record of the foregoing data makes the book a gold mine for reference purposes, though some of the elements will be dated quite rapidly. So far, so good.

It is only when he tries to provide evaluative annotations for each entry that Fieg begins to get into trouble. And even at this juncture the problem is certainly not one of fairness or objectivity. One senses that he has bent over backwards to render each publication its due, no matter what its theological orientation or editorial slant. Indeed he may be more generous to some conservative publications than he should be, even though one could tell he was in alien territory when writing about them. The real problem is that he seems previously unacquainted with the vast majority of journals reviewed. It is not simply that he misses almost all the more subtle nuances that might have made the annotations really worthwhile but also that his relative unfamiliarity with the material reduces him to just a few categories of analysis. A limited range of words and phrases appears again and again. The elucidation promised in the subtitle will illumine only those persons almost wholly ignorant of contemporary theological scholarship. One wishes for more.

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Great Leaders of the Christian Church. Edited by John D. Woodbridge. Chicago: Moody, 1988, 384 pp., \$22.95.

Much current research in history seeks to discover the details of the lives of people who are not mentioned in most history texts. For example, by examining the records of the Inquisition French historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie has pieced together a striking portrait of the lives of peasants in the French village of Montaillou in the early 1300s. Other historians are examining the records of the sixteenth-century Genevan consistory, which tell us much about the lives of ordinary individuals in the town of Calvin's reforming activities. The volume under review takes a different approach, examining sixty-four leaders of the Christian Church whose lives and teachings are standard fare in most history books because of their influence on the Church and the world.

Each leader, from the apostle Peter to Billy Graham, is covered in an article of three to ten pages. The article contains a brief chronology of the leader's life, an introduction that sets them in their historical context, and an essay that describes their most important activities and ideas. Half of the leaders covered lived before the Protestant Reformation and half of them during or after it. The volume is filled with pictures, maps, time charts, and several short articles on topics such as the crusades and medieval monasticism. These features add much to the attractiveness of the volume, which closes with a brief list of books for further reading on each leader.

Of the forty-two contributors to this volume, all seem to be evangelicals and most are involved in teaching and writing history and theology. A number are specialists on the leader about whom they write (e.g. F. F. Bruce on Paul, A. Dallimore on G. Whitefield, G. Bromiley on K. Barth).

I heartily recommend this book for several reasons. First, the articles generally achieve a quite high level of quality. They are clearly written and interesting. Many were outstanding (e.g. those on Peter, Tertullian, Luther, Whitefield, W. Wilberforce, W. Carey and Barth). Only on rare occasions did I find traces of Protestant hagiography. Those individuals to whom the Roman Catholic Church looks for guidance are treated with fairness, with only a few controversial comments. In a volume such as this, worthy candidates will always have to be excluded because of space limitations (I wished that Ambrose, Melancthon, Arminius, and C. Hodge had been included). The only individual whose inclusion I questioned was Elizabeth Fry, a nineteenth-century Quaker who worked for prison reform in Britain. But on balance the editor did a fine job in deciding who should be included in the volume.

Second, the book fills a void. I am aware of no volume of comparable length that covers the leaders of the Church as well as this one. It is ideally suited for an introductory course in Church history (as a supplement to a text that narrates the history of the Church) or for a pastor who wants to get reacquainted with some of his predecessors in the ministry of the gospel. I have long looked for a volume to give to friends who are not trained in theology or history but who are interested in learning about the history of the Church. Clearly this book admirably meets that need. Indeed a friend has already asked to borrow my copy when I finish this review.

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The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness. By H. Leon McBeth. Nashville: Broadman, 1987, 822 pp., \$24.95. *The Baptists.* By William Henry Brackney. New York: Greenwood, 1988, 315 pp., \$49.95.

Other religious communities and denominational traditions have surpassed Baptists in producing denominational histories, theologies, and explications of self-identity. With the publication of these two significant volumes, however, major steps have been taken to remedy the situation.

McBeth has produced the finest and most comprehensive account of Baptist history yet penned. It will without question serve as the standard bearer in this field for the generation to come. The volume is written in chronological fashion, dividing the movements by centuries rather than by geographical movements. Thus British, European and American contributions are traced within their chronological framework. In the introduction McBeth notes that he was not willing to tell the story of British and European Baptists up to the present before introducing Baptist beginnings in the American colonies. This has the very positive benefit of seeing these movements and developments within their own context.

The author addresses the question of Baptist origins and carefully but confidently decides in favor of the English separatist explanation of this matter. The anabaptist connection and successionism are fairly evaluated. Most Baptist lay-people still maintain a successionist view, tracing Baptist beginnings back to Jesus' baptism. Others, outside Baptist life, tend to think of Baptist origins strongly tied to the anabaptist movements. McBeth, though cautious, serves as a steady guide through this enigma. In addition to this matter McBeth steers the reader clearly through questions of immersion and its beginnings (or its recovery).

The scope of the volume is truly impressive, especially when one considers that four centuries of Baptist witness, developments and doctrinal controversies are carefully and critically explained. All major Baptist traditions receive fair treatment, but Southern Baptists receive the majority of attention. McBeth's discussion of doctrinal controversies that have characterized Southern Baptists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is both perceptively and skillfully written. He suggests that the controversies of the nineteenth century involving Landmarkism (J. R. Graves), Biblical inspiration (C. H. Toy), gospel missionism (T. P. Crawford) and Baptist origins (W. H. Whitsitt) established the framework for understanding the persisting Baptist controversy over Biblical revelation and inspiration during this century. He sees four phases to the twentieth-century controversy, beginning with the 1920s evolution debate up to the present squabble over Biblical inerrancy.

Generally McBeth serves as an objective guide while writing about the Baptist heritage and witness from the inside. Shortcomings of the volume are minor and technical. Only rarely do his biases surface, as in his discussion of Calvinism in Baptist life. I do not think he gives it its proper place of importance, but then that may be my bias. The overall strength of the volume is the masterful interweaving of Baptist witness with Baptist heritage and of Baptist mission with Baptist thought. We are all in the author's debt for this magisterial work. Broadman Press has done a great service for the Church with the publication of this volume. They too are to be commended.

If there are any gaps in McBeth's approach, they can be filled by Brackney's volume. While McBeth's book concentrates on Southern Baptists, Brackney's work emphasizes American (Northern) Baptists.

Brackney tackles the issue of Baptist identity in his initial chapter. At first the reader receives the impression that the only common Baptist distinctive is a visible

sign of faith expressed through believer's baptism and the Christian experience indicated by that practice. But he expands this discussion to include a commitment to Holy Scripture, a distinctive conception of the Church, and a common commitment to Christian witness and mission.

Part 1 of the book addresses the "Baptist Tradition," and part 2 is a collection of biographical accounts of "Baptist Leaders." The first section is a brief overview (109 pages) of the Baptist heritage and Baptist theological distinctives. While acknowledging the great diversity in Baptist life Brackney observes an underlying unity at the popular level, noting that there is little difference in terminology from one Baptist group to another when Biblical language is used. The five distinctives of Baptist theology are identified as (1) the Bible, (2) the doctrine of the Church, (3) the view of the ordinances, (4) voluntary religion, and (5) religious liberty.

Part 2, perhaps the stronger of the two sections, includes biographical accounts of 124 Baptist leaders. As we would expect, I. Backus, A. Hovey, W. Carey, J. Broadus and others are included. Some will be surprised to find the presence of J. Falwell and Jesse Jackson plus a host of Baptist laypeople and the absence of J. P. Boyce and W. A. Criswell. But the selections for a volume like this are by necessity arbitrary. The biographical essays are quite insightful and include useful bibliographical guides at the end of each discussion.

The volume concludes with an outstanding bibliographical essay and a very complete index. As part of the Greenwood Press Denominations in America series it faithfully fulfills its mission of informing non-Baptists about Baptist life and thought. Together these two impressive volumes complement one another and clearly expound the history, witness, origins, controversies, leaders and distinctive theological contributions of those people called Baptists.

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The Reformed Imperative: What the Church Has to Say That No One Else Can Say. By John H. Leith. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988, 152 pp., \$12.95 paper.

This book is red meat to the pastor because of its content. Here is good theological wrestling with such matters as the Christological controversy of the fourth century (chap. 2), Anselm's doctrine of substitutionary atonement (chap. 3) and Calvin's view of election (chap. 5).

Leith holds up theological preaching as the central task of the Church. Despite the mainline churches' infatuation with societal issues and social action, the Reformed tradition upholds the centrality of preaching the Word of God. This is the Church's unique role in the world. Furthermore preaching, as Leith rightly observes, does not exist to expound moral platitudes, political ideologies, or psychological therapies. It exists to expound the Word of God. When there has been a central focus on preaching, teaching and pastoral care the Church has thrived. When that focus has been missing, no reliance on gimmicks, fads or trends has long been able to stem decay.

In this series of lectures Leith contends that the decline in such churches as The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) stems from a "loss of the theological integrity and competence of the church's witness" (13). This is a refreshing emphasis, particularly because it comes from Westminster Press, an official publisher of The Presby-

terian Church (U.S.A.). Chapter 1 states the thesis: The Church is called to the tasks of preaching, teaching and pastoral care. The Church's only competence is in expounding the Word of God and emphasizing the great verities of the Christian faith. Chapters 2-7 explore six areas in which Christian affirmation addresses the malaise of twentieth-century western man.

Although Leith's book is indeed red meat to the pastor, there are of course bits of fat to cut off and bits of gristle to spit out. Chief among these, for readers of this *Journal*, is the conviction that such neo-orthodox theologians as Barth, the Niebuhrs, Brunner, *et al.*, are the rightful heirs of Reformed Protestantism. From this conviction several corollaries follow. First is the total lack of reference to contemporary scholarly evangelical thought. Second is Leith's waffling on the historicity of the resurrection (68), although ironically he says many powerful things about its objectivity. Third is an implied universalism (93).

Despite these reservations this book deserves wide reading. It will motivate preachers and pastors to serve their congregations substantial homiletical fare. It may herald a shift in the mainline churches toward a more classically evangelical perspective. God grant it!

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John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait. By William J. Bouwsma. New York: Oxford University, 1988, 310 pp., \$22.95.

Is it possible to paint a portrait of Calvin without the stereotypes of later Calvinism or the need to glorify Reformation heroes? This is precisely what Bouwsma has attempted. The result is a picture of Calvin as complex as his times, but one that fits his times and is both believable and even likable.

Calvin, according to Bouwsma, is a balance (never reconciled) of two Calvins, one a "rationalist and a schoolman in the high Scholastic tradition" and the other a "rhetorician and a humanist." The former is fearful of "the Abyss" of chaos, the other of "the Labyrinth" of rigidity. Thus many of the contradictory streams of thought that lay claim to Calvin as father have in fact some justification. But all, in that they are "pure," distort the real Calvin.

In painting this portrait Bouwsma also colors in the background of the sixteenth century so that one gains not only an understanding of Calvin but also of the society in which he lived. Calvin was a revolutionary in a time that tried to force people into boxes and deprive them of legitimate pleasures (he could wax quite lyrical on the greatness of the arts). He was the conservative who tried to bring order into the chaos of a disintegrating world. Calvin never fully came to terms with these two tendencies within him, at least not in a way that would harmonize them.

Bouwsma has written a great biography. True, some evangelicals will not enjoy his removing Calvin from the realm of sainthood and reducing him to human dimensions. But we all will benefit from an understanding of Calvin as a man who was more than *homo ecclesiasticus* (or *theologicus*), a man who was a person like we are, struggling with some of the same struggles although in a different historical context. When we realize this, we are both better equipped to come to terms with

Calvin's thought in all of its ambiguity and also better able to see Calvin as a useful guide for solving some of our contemporary struggles. Bouwsma has done us a great service.

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The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli. By W. P. Stephens. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986, 348 pp., \$19.95 paper.

The volume under review represents the first systematic treatment of this oft-neglected Reformer in English since G. R. Potter's 1978 work. Stephens' avowed purpose is to treat Zwingli's theology in the context of his time. After devoting the first fifty pages to the general context, Stephens proceeds to treat the major aspects of Zwingli's theology in thematic order. He does a thorough job of bringing to light the major secondary literature on Zwingli and bases his analysis on a thorough examination of Zwingli's own writings. In doing so he rarely cites the works of any other author than Zwingli himself. As a result Stephens does not do as good a job of presenting Zwingli in context as he does of analyzing Zwingli's own thought. For example, when he discusses Zwingli's view of the sacraments he focuses almost solely on Zwingli's own position on the subject rather than upon the historical conflicts with Luther on the nature of the Lord's supper and with the anabaptists on the issue of baptism.

The main focus of this work, therefore, is Zwingli's theology rather than its context. Admitting that any study of Zwingli leads inevitably to comparisons with Luther, Stephens presents Zwingli in his own light and agrees with the Swiss Reformer's own assertion that he had learned the gospel through his own reading of Paul and Augustine and not from the German Reformer.

Of particular interest is Stephen's discussion of Zwingli's use of Scripture. Here Stephens emphasizes the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing the believer to a correct understanding of Biblical revelation. One gains a strong sense of the powerful role that the Spirit plays in Zwingli's thought. For Zwingli Scripture is by no means a mere book of sentences but the living Word. For Zwingli one does not gain a correct knowledge of God through the use of unaided reason but only through the power of the Spirit. This is not to say that Zwingli denied the value of reason. After all, he defended its value in theological discourse against the enthusiasts. But he possessed a strong sense of the fallenness of man and the danger of the autonomy of reason. Zwingli uses the illustration of the carpenter who cannot perform his work without proper tools. For the Christian the indwelling Spirit is like the carpenter and the Bible his tools. Although both the Word and the Spirit are necessary, the Spirit is of primary importance.

In his section on Christology Stephens points out Zwingli's dependence on Erasmus for his emphasis on the moral teachings of Christ. Zwingli did not limit his treatment of Christ to mere moral concern, however, but focused on his divinity as well. This is in keeping with Zwingli's primary theological emphasis on God. Obviously the issue of the nature of Christ was most prominent in Zwingli's eucharistic discussions with Luther. Stephens points out that in this debate Zwingli stressed the distinction between the two natures of Christ, leading inevitably to accusations of Nestorianism. The relationship between Christ's divine and human natures was a fundamental basis for Zwingli's denial of the omnipresence of Christ's body.

The real strength of this work is the author's thorough use of Zwingli's own writings, contained in the massive *Corpus Reformatorum*, and in his presentation of Zwingli as an independent thinker rather than merely the product of Erasmus or Luther. It serves as an excellent source for the English reader for French and German scholarship on Zwingli and for the major aspects of the Swiss Reformer's theological system.

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Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition. By Thomas C. Oden. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, 233 pp., \$15.95.

"The only thing new is the history we have not read" (16). This statement aptly summarizes what Oden has attempted to do in his discussion of Wesleyan doctrines and their relevance today for members in the Wesleyan theological tradition. He endeavors to show Methodists the history they may not have read concerning the role of John Wesley's writings. His thesis is that while the Bible has been the rule of faith for Methodists since their organization as a denomination, Wesley's *Sermons, Notes, and Articles of Religion* have been their only doctrinal standards (21-22). He argues that these writings of Wesley were part of the existing standards when the general conference of 1808 formulated the "First Restrictive Rule" (54). This rule prohibits any changes or additions to the existing doctrinal standards of the church.

In part 1 Oden reviews the theological debate over doctrinal standards that have occurred in Methodism since 1773. He wants to demonstrate what has been the traditional reading of these rules as they apply to the writings of Wesley. This should help prevent any "imaginative reinterpretation of history" that would circumvent the intended purpose of these standards or rules for the doctrinal integrity of the church (75). He believes "the constitutional protection of the standards is best insured by a traditional consensual reading of the Restrictive Rules" (77).

Part 2 analyzes Wesley's *Sermons, Notes, and Articles of Religion* in terms of their usefulness as doctrinal standards and their relevance for all churches in the Wesleyan tradition. One of the more important sections of part 2 is the analysis of Wesley's reduction of the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion to only twenty-five. Oden's comparison shows quite clearly Wesley's distinctives and their influence on his followers.

The book is quite detailed in recording the historical debate over doctrinal standards that has taken place within Methodism. It is a useful resource for learning about Wesley's writings and the role they have played in early Methodism. There is a tendency, however, to focus on details to the exclusion of dealing with more significant questions such as why Wesley's writings were accepted as authoritative by the early Methodists in the first place, or whether a political decision made concerning the doctrinal authority of Wesley's writings by the general conference of 1808 makes further discussion or disagreements over their continued authority somewhat pointless and illegitimate by later general conferences.

From the way Oden has presented his case, it appears that the only logical conclusion is that Wesley's writings should continue to be the supreme doctrinal authorities in Methodism today simply because they held this place originally. Of

course this means, for all practical purposes, that the 1808 decision must be regarded as infallible since it left no way open to modify these standards. It means as well that Wesley's *Sermons, Notes, and Articles* should be regarded as somehow infallible since all later general conferences must agree with their doctrinal content.

In his concern to end "the oppressive ethos of liberal elitism" among Methodists, Oden has not stated how the original standards of the church can remain unchanged without conferring some attribute of infallibility on them, whether implicitly or explicitly. If he had addressed this issue in his presentation it would have made the book much more relevant in the current debate.

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The Gospel in Dostoyevsky. Edited by the Hutterian Brethren. Ulster Park: Plough, 1988, 258 pp. \$9.50 paper.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky knew what it was to encounter the grace of God. During a life that included Siberian exile, a last-minute reprieve from execution, and the ever-present physical malady of epilepsy, he came to realize that the mercy of God is most gloriously evident when the material world offers only injustice and suffering. His writings reflect this spiritual pilgrimage, and the editors of the volume under review have taken on the ambitious task of paring down these writings to a few examples of how the gospel (i.e. the saving work of Christ in the life of the individual) is understood in Dostoyevsky's works.

This book is an English translation of vol. 20 of *Source Books of Christian Witness throughout the Centuries* (ed. E. Arnold, 1927). To facilitate their task the editors have limited their excerpts to Dostoyevsky's last three major and most mature novels: *Crime and Punishment, The Idiot* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. In order to explain the function of Christ's redemptive work on the various characters found in these novels the excerpts are arranged under the headings "Faith in God—Man's Venture," "Man's Rebellion against God," "On the Way to God" and "Life in God," with an extremely helpful introduction by E. Gordon as well as a brief biographical outline and aids in establishing the context of each passage.

The book's major strength is that the editors have chosen excerpts focusing primarily on parable-like anecdotes that serve to explain the spiritual state of—or progress of the gospel in—the characters involved and the hopes they have for their inner lives, often in the face of acute physical and mental torment. These characters, their thoughts, experiences and reactions—perhaps even more than the situations they find themselves in—are what serve to describe the gospel in Dostoyevsky's novels. The situations are merely the natural results of the presence of these individuals and their various stages of spiritual maturity. The shock comes when we recognize ourselves—from the evil and frighteningly (even temptingly) rational Grand Inquisitor, to the prisoner who is hungrily grabbing his last seconds of life ("Execution"), to the woman who seeks her own salvation so self-centeredly that she is willing to damn others and so ultimately damns herself ("The Onion"), to Father Zossima, the eerily mystical but utterly sincere servant of God ("Conversations with Father Zossima"). J. Moltmann, even in his admiration for Dostoyevsky, has said that his characters are "psychologically impossible." This may be true, but only because most lives are not lived as introspectively or intensely as are those of his subjects.

The chief danger in reading such a book lies in assuming that once you have read it you have "read" Dostoyevsky. This is simply not the case. To focus on any writer in his maturity, and to do so on only the sketchiest of levels, is to do a disservice to the miracle of his ever having reached that maturity (e.g. the seeds of Dostoyevsky's understanding of spiritual man's struggle for meaning in the material, "reasonable" world are present in his much earlier *Notes from Underground* and *House of the Dead*). But the opposite side of the coin is that in reading this book it is quite likely that, armed with an outline of this great writer's thought and the passion of his spiritual vision, one will have the courage to tackle the novels themselves.

And it does take courage. Dostoyevsky's world is one where sin abounds but where grace abounds more abundantly. While the good news that he embraces is in its aberrations anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic, nationalistic, mystical, and steeped in Russian orthodoxy, in its purest, most distilled form it is full of the hope of grace, built on the foundation of a suffering and resurrected Christ.

The Gospel in Dostoyevsky, then, is an excellent resource tool or textbook. It is valuable to the seasoned reader of Dostoyevsky in that it, through the judicious choices of the editors, clearly traces a major spiritual theme in his later works. The introduction contains a concise and accurate (if a bit simplistic) statement of Gordon's understanding of that theme, especially within the framework of Dostoyevsky's own spiritual journey. This book is valuable as well to the individual who wants a starting point from which to examine Dostoyevsky's works further. It is by no means, however, an exhaustive examination of Dostoyevsky, and the thoughtful reader will not misunderstand it as such.

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Jesus and Marx: From Gospel to Ideology. By Jacques Ellul. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988, 187 pp., \$12.95.

At age eighteen Ellul borrowed a copy of Marx's *Das Kapital* from the library and, upon reading it, experienced a conversion to a global interpretation of the world. About the same time he also underwent what he describes as a "brutal conversion" to Jesus Christ. Unable to eliminate either totalitarian truth or to merge them into a synthesis, for the past sixty years Ellul has sought to hold them in "radical contradiction" (63), by which he means a critical and mutual dialectical tension such as characterizes all of his thought. In this volume he offers a withering critique of the fashionable tendency that merges the two and declares that the only authentic Christian praxis is that which commits itself to Marxism. Understanding Ellul, though, demands an effort to enter into his dialectical mode of thinking, which holds the two in critical tension. Readers must beware of making two errors.

First, despite this scathing critique Ellul does not throw out the baby with the bath water. Marxist thought has challenged Christianity in a number of positive ways (5-10). It focuses attention on the need for social justice (which is not to say it brings justice). It recognizes the role of the poor in the historical process and enters their world (even if not for good). Marxists attain a "coherence between thought and action, theory and praxis," which shames the Church's disparity between

word and deed. By focusing on the material factors of history, Marxists challenge the evangelical tendency toward a disembodied spiritualization of Christianity that is little more than a privatized experience. Finally, the zeal and militant spirit of Marxists challenge the Church to become what we should be. Indeed they take seriously the last of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*: The goal is not to interpret the world but to change it.

But readers must avoid the opposite mistake of reading Ellul as soft on Marxist Christians. His critique is at two levels. First, there is Marx himself. Marx could never answer existential questions of life, love and death. His view of people as merely economic beings (*homo economicus*) is reductionistic, and his belief in the inevitable progress of history is naive. Thus Marx is not scientific but passionate (and that is why Ellul likes him). Most of *Jesus and Marx*, though, occurs at a second level and is directed to those Christians who claim to follow Marx. According to Ellul their words and deeds show that they are neither Marxist nor Christian. In chaps. 2-6 Ellul levels an excoriating attack on such people, with special attention paid to F. Belo's *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark* (Orbis, 1981) and G. Casalis' *Correct Ideas Don't Fall from the Skies: Elements for an Inductive Theology* (Orbis, 1984). We can summarize five salient points made by Ellul.

(1) Marxist Christians display an alarming degree of conformity to sociological trends. Thinking to be progressive in their positions, they are really just the opposite: eager-beaver Johnny-come-latelies who "conform culturally and intellectually to the rest of society" (21). This guts Christianity of all content. Thus we witness an incredible sociological phenomenon: Christians who have every reason to oppose communists and almost no reason to join them continue, like moths to a flame, to find it an irresistible attraction (34).

(2) Liberation theologians must ask the question: Liberation for whose benefit? The so-called wars of liberation from capitalism and imperialism have resulted in worse dictators, more outrageous oppression and shameless brutality, more prisons, greater economic disparity, than any ever perpetrated by the west (58). Given the fact that communism "has never incarnated itself in anything but dictatorships," a Christian "would have to be crazy" to join them (137).

(3) Where is the praxis of most of these theologians? Except for a small minority, most of these liberationists are bourgeois professors whose only praxis "consists of giving lectures, writing articles, traveling to congresses or colloquia, attending demonstrations, signing petitions and manifestos, and organizing seminars" (128).

(4) When Marxist Christians accuse others of a blind reading of the Biblical text and claim to offer the first truly objective and "scientific" exegesis they reveal their own preunderstandings. They fail to apply the myth of hermeneutical objectivity to themselves. In fact this theology that claims to be inductive and based on the priority of praxis is in reality just another deductive theology with its own uncritically accepted assumptions.

(5) Ellul takes to task "service theology," which contends that meeting human need alone on the horizontal level is all that counts. Considering Matt 9:2-13 as a case study, he shows how just the opposite is true: The vertical relationship of confession and worship must come first.

Jesus and Marx is ultimately rooted in a broader Ellul theme: that the gospel revelation is fundamentally iconoclastic and inimical to all power, especially political power (which is the worst kind). Thus the book ends with a chapter on anarchy, "the only acceptable stance in the modern world." By anarchy Ellul does

not mean social chaos. "All my position means is that the present center of conflict is the state, so that we must adopt a radical position with respect to this unfeeling monster" (156).

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Does the Church Really Want Religious Education? Edited by Marlene Mayr. Birmingham: Religious Education, 1988, 267 pp., \$14.95 paper. *A Christian Philosophy of Education*. By Gordon H. Clark. 2d rev. ed. Jefferson: Trinity Foundation, 1988 (1946), 243 pp., \$8.95 paper.

The first of these two books is a collection of essays from many ecclesiastical perspectives responding somewhat to the question in its title. The design of the work is broadly ecumenical. There are contributions from two Roman Catholics, one Eastern Orthodox, a Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Southern Baptist, Methodist, evangelical Protestant and a black. The editor hopes that the book will be prophetic, simultaneously promoting cooperation among religious educators and high-caliber religious education.

What is obvious from the start is that the discipline of religious education has some distance to go before the prophetic impulse obtains. Most clearly is this seen as the different writers struggle with the old problem of definitions. Is it "religious education" or "Christian education"? What do we mean by "education"? What is it that religious educators seek to do? The attempted answers are diverse. For G. Moran, a Roman Catholic, religious education appears to have as its principal task the development of the religious sensibility, that which connects one with the mysterious and the reverence-producing. For most of the contributors, religious education is a process of faith development within a specific tradition or expression of faith. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition this process occurs in the context of the eucharistic community and has its end in socializing the learner in that community's ethos. Lutheran R. L. Conrad tells the reader: "Religious education deals with the beliefs that emerge out of and inform faith." "Faith" is the Christian faith as it matures in the individual believer and provides him or her with the equipment to engage and transform culture. W. Benson, writing as an evangelical Protestant, would prefer the term "Christian education," making explicit the content. In contrast with the foregoing views is G. Schockley's idea that religious education's purpose is training for black liberation.

Little is said anywhere about method. From what is said there is agreement that "schooling" is inadequate for full-bodied religious education. In fact if adults are to attain sophistication in their religious development the schooling model must at some juncture be jettisoned in favor of a greater emphasis on socialization. C. J. Taragas, from the Eastern Orthodox tradition, makes an especially insightful observation to the effect that in uncritically adopting the Sunday school from Protestants, Eastern Orthodox children were severed from the worshipping community and their religious education was reduced to schooling. Everyone, confessional loyalties notwithstanding, would do well to contemplate the implications of this insight.

There is much in this volume that is helpful. For those not well acquainted with the Church of Rome a careful reading of the two Roman Catholic perspectives will be enlightening. One is reminded that to ask about what the Church wants is, in

large part, to ask what the hierarchy wants. Moreover religious education and catechesis are not the same. The articles by Lutheran Conrad and Presbyterian C. E. Nelson are commendable for the breadth of vision they display. Nelson writes: "The religious education task of critiquing and articulating beliefs and then helping people relate them to the theology of the church is never ending. It is an adult activity. . . . What is important in all of this is the creation of a systematic theology out of the package of unsystematic beliefs church members have accumulated" (122-123).

Particular note should be taken of Shockley's contribution for two reasons. First, it offers a succinct appraisal of the experience of black churches with religious education. Second, and more important, the reader gains insight into the culture of the "new black church," a radicalized version of the traditional black church, whose theology is liberationist. This liberationist ideology sets the agenda for religious education in the new black church.

Clark's volume is about religious education tangentially because he takes in hand not "What ought religious educators do to bring about authentic religious education?" but (more comprehensively) "How ought a Christian understand and engage in that endeavor called education?" Hence one seeks not a philosophical construct for Christian education but a philosophical and Christian construct on the nature and task of education. Those who know Clark's original 1946 work will find this new edition considerably expanded and differently ordered. The tone is philosophical but relatively free of technical discussion. The powerful wind of Clark's considerable intellect blows through most of the book, sometimes at gale force, with lucid exposition carrying the reader along from one clear idea to another.

Clark's thesis is that one's worldview matters a great deal and that the Christian worldview is the only one with sufficient ideational power to bring coherence to a theory of education. Furthermore the public education system is dominated by non-Christian presuppositions, leaving Christians with the difficult task of building an alternate educational system from kindergarten through university. More technically, there exists a basic incommensurability between worldviews that admits of no neutrality. From this state of affairs it becomes obvious that Christians must educate their children in a Christian manner.

Clark reasons, rightly, that a person's worldview will determine the way in which life is lived. The importance of one's worldview points up the significance of philosophy as a body of understanding and as a habit of mind. It is by philosophy that the chief end of man is discerned, the chief end being, in turn, that toward which education aims. Clark remarks that among faculties of education there is philosophical disorder and, for that reason, disrepute. Hear Clark: "This divorce between Education and Philosophy, particularly in the case of those who teach the Philosophy of Education, seems the best explanation of Education's discredit." The remedy for the present malaise in education is a worldview that will unify education and life, a philosophy "consonant with the greatest creed of Christendom, the Westminster Confession of Faith" (21). Clark then goes on to present his understanding of the Christian worldview.

According to Clark, when one constructs a Christian philosophy of education one begins with Biblical authority. From it one derives a Biblical understanding of man and his capacity for education. The goal of education is intellectual understanding. Vocational arts, though having merit for other reasons, are banished from the circle marked "education." Liberal arts are the preferred matters in curriculum. Teachers ought to have a thorough liberal arts preparation. While pedagogical methods may be useful, they are only instrumental.

The orthodox Christian community can be grateful that this work is once again available for study. The illuminating exposition of the place of philosophy may yet serve to awaken a generation of evangelical slumberers.

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Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization, and Mission in Theological Education.
By Max L. Stackhouse. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988, 237 pp., \$14.95 paper.

Stackhouse pulls together the results of recent discussion and debate about the shape of theological education on a global scale. Special emphasis falls on the contributions of third-world theologians. Among them are N. Boonprasat-Lewis (Thailand), J. G. F. Collison (India) and L. Sanneh (Gambia).

Amid the welter of ethnopolitical theologies and theologians, Stackhouse pursues the search for criteria. He is seeking ground rules that might give shape to theology in this era. It is his conviction that theological studies are poised on a precipice. He believes that disaster will ensue unless a framework is found within which both research and communication of the Christian message can occur (8).

In his introductory sections Stackhouse outlines various contexts that have given guidance to theological thought in the recent past. Among these are classical liberalism, modernism, neo-orthodoxy, ecumenism and Biblical theology (16-26).

Stackhouse's aim is to "de-provincialize" theology. To do this he seeks an *apologia*, a general systems theory capable of global use (21-22).

The first line of approach is the introduction of contemporary concepts. The late O. Costas' view of the gospel in proclamation is set alongside the incarnational view of Boonprasat-Lewis. Collison's concept of a theology shaped by the life of the Church leads to the translation of the Christian message held firm by reference to certain "faith affirmations" (45).

In the first major section, then, Stackhouse gives rein to the divergent views of thinkers from broad perspectives. A second section broadens the boundaries of the discussion to include nontheological fields.

Four main questions determine this discussion: (1) What is the proper relationship of Christianity to other religions? (2) What is the relationship between the particular and the general in theological formulation, and is generalization possible? (3) How does one resolve the tension between the inclusive and the distinctive? (4) What is the role of religion in shaping civilization?

In the continuing search for a criterion, Stackhouse then moves to a discussion of *praxis*, *poesis* and *theoria*, all of which serves to lay the groundwork for his final section entitled "Proposal." Here he moves to establish irreducible criteria that might serve as the basis for globalization, contextualization and mission in terms of educating the clergy of the future.

Four doctrines comprise the basis of this universal theological system: sin and salvation, Biblical revelation, the Trinity, and Christology (170-182).

Moving from doctrine to practice, Stackhouse sets out four basic elements of Christian practice: the imperatives of piety, polity, policy and program.

To complete his trilogy of criteria, Stackhouse speaks of the imperatives of justice, and here he notes three elements: ethology, teleology, and deontology. There is no doubt in my mind that Stackhouse has here entered into a debate that will dominate the fields of both theological education and missiology over the

coming decade. He has furthermore outlined the issues that must be settled and that override the doctrinal provincialities of our day.

In the frontispiece L. Newbigin summarizes the import of this book: "This is by any standard a very important book for all concerned with theological education and for all concerned with the articulation of the Gospel for our time. It is a powerful plea for a normative, as distinct from merely descriptive, approach to theological teaching."

From T. Ward to R. Lynn (of the Lilly Foundation) there has come a call for theological education responsive to our times. Stackhouse contributes an enormous amount of raw material for this important discussion.

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Psychotherapy and the Spiritual Quest. By David G. Benner. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988, 173 pp., \$13.95.

If one is looking for a new book on the integration of psychology and theology, this one will be a pleasant surprise. Its pleasantness springs from the author's professional treatment of a complex issue. The surprise is the rich bonus of a review of spirituality from a fresh, modern viewpoint.

Benner wastes little of the reader's time reviewing the traditional points of tension between psychology and theology and establishing his premise of the unity of human nature. But his review touches base with Plato, Socrates, ancient Israel, Jesus, the desert fathers, the Celtic church, and the Reformation. His review then centers on the displacement of "soul care" by the "cure of minds." The tension between Benner's thesis of the unity of the human personality and psychospiritual dualism is clearly delineated.

The author begins his special contribution to the discussion of soul/mind care: his "broadened view of spirituality." After a more than adequate review of the supposed dualism of psychology and spirituality, including Jung, Kunkel, Kierkegaard, May and McNamara, Benner's chapter on Christian spirituality opens new insights into the history of Christianity. This special chapter makes the whole discussion come alive. The average reader will greatly benefit from this concise yet thorough look at various models of spirituality. These delightful twenty-nine pages enlighten the reader while preparing him for Benner's central thesis that man is a psychospiritual unit.

What then is the "quest"? It is nothing else than the psychospiritual quest for identity, happiness, success, perfection, truth, justice, beauty, stimulation, mystery. In the fragmented jungle of contemporary soul care there are few adequate models of integrated approaches to psychospiritual ministry. Benner can only suggest B. Tyrrell's Christotherapy as an example. But nonetheless the point is well taken: We need to rethink our outlook on mind/soul care.

Bob Andrews
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Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament. By Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987, 219 pp., \$17.95.

"How should the Christian church in the midst of the modern world understand and appropriate the significance of the Old Testament?" This is the leading

question raised by Kaiser in the preface of the fourth of his *Toward* books. According to Kaiser, it is “*the problem in Christian theology*” (9).

The book is not an introduction dealing with such issues as date, authorship, and purpose of the OT books. Rather, Kaiser’s stated goal is “to describe how Christians may once again find meaning, relevance, and direction from that part of the canon that all too many believers all too frequently have summarily rejected as a source of any Christian guidance for faith or life” (10).

In developing his material, Kaiser’s first concern is historical. He interacts with the issue of how the Church up to the modern era has handled the problem of the relevance of the OT. His second concern is hermeneutical. Kaiser wants to bring Christians and the OT into closer alignment with one another. The third concern is theological. It is one thing to affirm that the OT has authority over Christians. Kaiser takes this a step further, seeking to spell out how to recognize that authority and what the contents of that authority are for the Church today.

In the first section, “The Old Testament and Scholarship,” Kaiser takes up the matter of the OT as part of the Christian canon (chap. 2). Here he evidences a strong premillennial faith and belief in a future conversion for ethnic Israel. Chapter 3, “The Old Testament as an Object of Criticism,” provides a careful evaluation of critical methodologies. He encourages evangelicals to “remain open and proficient” in such methodologies, but he calls for caution and points out the “shaky planks” of the critical approach.

In the second section, “The Old Testament and Theology,” Kaiser presents in summary fashion his arguments for “promise” as the center of Biblical theology (chap. 4). He goes on to deal with the OT as a “Messianic Primer” (chap. 5) and as the “Plan of Salvation” (chap. 6). These chapters lay the foundation for a consistent, Christian approach to the OT. Their themes and materials should be integrated into every pastor’s preaching and every Sunday school’s curriculum.

The third section, “The Old Testament and Life,” focuses on the practical application of the Hebrew Scriptures. In chap. 7, “The Old Testament as a Way of Life,” he deals with the question of how Christians can derive principles from the specific commands of the law. Chapter 8, “The Old Testament as an Object of Proclamation,” provides encouragement and direction for expounding the “77 percent of the Bible located in the OT” (167).

Although not as groundbreaking as the three previous books in Kaiser’s *Toward* series, this volume makes a significant contribution by providing a solid basis for teaching, preaching, and living the great truths of the OT. The footnote citations of recent articles and extensive bibliography reflect the fact that Kaiser is in touch with a broad spectrum of OT disciplines. Authored by one of America’s foremost evangelical scholars, the book presents issues that every thinking Christian must wrestle with.

J. Carl Laney

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The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance. By Bruce M. Metzger. New York: Oxford University, 1988. 326 pp., \$55.00.

This volume completes a trilogy of books by Metzger and is therefore best read with access to *The Text of the New Testament* (2d ed., 1969) and *The Early Versions of the New Testament* (1977). The present work is a scholarly yet readable study of the development of the NT canon. Teachers, pastors and students will gain helpful insight into the process of the development of the canon in the

Church. What gives this volume particular value is that Metzger writes both as a scholar and a churchman. He is keenly aware that the NT is more than just a book for academic study. It is the authoritative source for matters of faith and life for the Church.

The first section is a veritable gold mine of bibliographic information on canonical studies, the type of information one expects from Metzger based on his other books and articles. Here his aim is to summarize the viewpoints of many scholars from 1696 to 1986. The only weakness in the bibliography is the lack of breadth from 1980 to 1986.

The second section, which forms the bulk of the book, deals with the formation of the canon. Metzger shows how the recognition of the canonical status of the books of the NT was the result of a long and gradual process. Side by side with the Jewish canon, but affected by geography, historical situation and theological issues, there developed a group of books that were deemed authoritative by the Church. The history of the process of canonization is not easy to sort out. Differences in the canonical status of particular books are noticeable between east and west. Metzger reviews the major NT Apocrypha, the gnostic writings, and the comments of Church fathers (both east and west) with regard to the authority of various NT books. He is able to show that after the period of the apostolic fathers a greater interest developed in asserting the authority of the various books. The process began with the gospels, shifted to the letters of Paul, then focused on the Acts, the Revelation of John, and finally the catholic letters and Hebrews. The influences Metzger notes that certainly affected the development of the canon were gnosticism with its authoritative books of special revelation, Marcion's attempt to fix the number of authoritative books, severe persecutions under Diocletian in A.D. 303, and the early adoption of the codex by Christians.

In the east (Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Egypt) the process of canonization took longer and produced more divergent results. Some books, such as the Apocalypse of Peter, enjoyed an aura of authority for a time. But the conscious decisions of the Church both by the fathers and councils reflected the *de facto* actions taken by the churches. The Muratorian Canon (c. A.D. 200) reveals the importance of these criteria: whether the book was received by the churches, whether it was read in public worship, and whether authorship was by those who had been witnesses to the events. Although attempts to close the canon can be seen earlier than Athanasius of Alexandria's Festal Letter of A.D. 367, his list of the 27 books accepted today as canonical is most significant. But Athanasius did not have the final word in the east where debate continued over Revelation, 2 Peter, Jude, and 2 and 3 John. The case was much different in the Latin-speaking western Church where there were clear lines drawn between canonical and noncanonical books and more uniform agreement on what books were authoritative.

The third section of the book focuses on the historical and theological problems concerning the canon. Metzger concludes that the criteria for inclusion of a particular book in the canon were the book's conformity to the rule of faith, apostolicity (directly or putatively), and continuous acceptance and usage in the Church at large. Metzger also discusses matters like inspiration and variation of the textual tradition of the book (which apparently had no impact on the canonical process), which part of the NT was first recognized as authoritative (the gospels), whether the canon is open or closed (it is closed), and whether the canon is a collection of authoritative books or an authoritative collection of books (it is the former). The volume concludes with appendices on the word "canon," variations in the sequence of books in the NT, titles of the books of the NT, and early lists of the books of the NT. There is also an index.

Overall this book is a valuable study in unraveling the issues surrounding the development of the NT canon. It would have been enhanced by a map and by some photographic plates (e.g. of the Codex Claromontanus list of NT MSS and the Muratorian Canon). My greatest disappointment is the book's high price, which will put it out of the reach of many people who would otherwise benefit from it.

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The Canon of Scripture. By F. F. Bruce. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988, 349 pp., \$19.95.

Bruce tackles the question of how the canon of Scripture was formed and gives an answer that will satisfy the historian but not the theologian. This is not to say that he failed in his purpose, because his aim is to trace the historical development of the concept of the canon—a closed list of books deemed to be divinely authoritative—and not to defend theologically the final product of that process.

Only one-third of the text concerns the OT canon because for Christians that issue is settled primarily by the testimony of Jesus to the authority of the books delivered to the Church from Israel. While Bruce does not propose that the Church should include the Apocrypha within the OT canon, he seems to argue for its inclusion in the Bible. He praises the early Reformers' "moderate and reasonable" (107) attitude toward the books as valuable for "instruction in godly manners" but not to confirm doctrine, and he suggests that "the heirs of the Geneva Reformation would have been well advised had they maintained this balanced attitude to the apocrypha" (108). This is where the theologian confronts the historian: If the Apocrypha is not inspired (God-breathed) literature, why should it be bound with that which is? Neither the test of age nor of profitability is sufficient because there are many old and helpful writings that could then qualify, and the number increases all of the time.

The majority of the book takes up the issue of the NT canon, and it is as profitable an introduction to both familiar (but little-known) and unfamiliar Church fathers as it is to their attitudes toward the canon. Bruce rightly maintains that "authority precedes canonicity" (123). It was because the writings were recognized as authoritative that they were collected, not vice versa. He detects six elements that contributed to the recognition of authority in the collection: apostolic origin, antiquity, orthodoxy, catholicity (universal recognition among the churches), traditional use, and inspiration.

For the student of hermeneutics the book has bonuses. An appendix contains Bruce's "Primary Sense and Plenary Sense," the Peake Memorial Lecture of 1976. "Primary sense is the sense which the author intended by his words, the sense which he expected his readers or hearers to understand by his words. Plenary sense is a richer thing than that" (318). Based on that distinction, he argues, "the exegete's first responsibility is to establish the primary historical reference of the author and his original readers, and then to decide how far visions or oracles whose primary sense is thus ascertained can be related, by implication or in principle, to later situations" (320). He clearly wants exegesis to control both theologizing and Biblical application.

Yet this conservatism contrasts with other remarks, such as that the seer of Patmos "could bend the most recalcitrant material to serve his purpose" (317),

that Jesus and the gospel writers had different purposes in the telling and the recording of some parables (322-323), that the account of Jacob's wrestling with an angel may have had a mythological background (326-327), and that the writing of Genesis included both a Yahwist and a final editor (327). It seems obvious that his view of the inspiration of the text is at variance with the mainstream American evangelical view.

The text of the book suffered from poor proofreading. It had several typos, one (41) that altered the sense of the argument by substituting the word "written" for "oral." The beginning student would do well to read N. L. Geisler and W. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, as a companion volume, and also S. L. Johnson, *The Old Testament in the New*, for a different perspective on exegesis by NT authors.

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