

EDITORIAL

A "basic concept characteristic of modernity ... is the sense of the relativity of all things to one another," asserts Langdon Gilkey in his recent publication, *Catholicism Confronts Modernity* (p. 70, The Seabury Press, 1975). Stating that this is a "presupposition that lies back of all our theological and religious reactions," he points out that nothing that intervenes from the outside—documents, concepts, laws or propositions—has absolute value. Applying this to religious matters Gilkey states,

Still, even Jesus, most moderns believe, shared the Judaic consciousness of the first century, and thus, whatever we may wish to affirm theologically of his deity, few modern theologians would deny that he might well have been in error about many things we know now.... The Bible for modern criticism is a congeries of relative viewpoints, not a proclaimer of a single absolute one.

How small the group of "few modern theologians" and those who do not maintain that "the Bible for modern criticism is a congeries of relative viewpoints ..." may be difficult to ascertain. However, it was a concern for such a minority in current biblical and theological scholarship that gave vision and reality to the organization of the Evangelical Theological Society in 1949.

In 1955 Burton Goddard of Gordon College and Seminary shared with those attending the first joint meeting of the American Scientific Affiliation and the Evangelical Theological Society some of the early developments (cf. *Journal of the ASA*, 1955, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 5-8). The basic concern was for an organization that "would have a common faith and which would approach problems with a common religious attitude—one of accepting the Bible as the Word of God, of coming in faith and with humility to study and discuss what God has to say!" There was also the concern to "stimulate and foster the development of theological studies along conservative and evangelical lines so that there might be an impact upon the world in which we live which would bring glory to God! There was also the thought that we needed more of a body of evangelical theological literature." With these basic ideas permeating the group of concerned scholars meeting in Cincinnati in December, 1949, they agreed on the name as the Evangelical Theological Society for an organization that would offer opportunity for providing fellowship and continuing scholarship on the "common basis which honors the Scriptures as the inspired, inerrant Word of God."

Today the Evangelical Theological Society continues to offer opportunities for making a positive constructive contribution in a religious climate where the presuppositions of relativity reflect basic attitudes towards God's revelation to the human race. The pivotal points that form the continental divide are the divine revelation through Jesus Christ and the written Word. Hopefully a commitment to Jesus Christ as the God-man offers a basis for responsible stewardship of scholarship that respects the Bible as a divine-human book.

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