

NINETEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The 1967 Annual Meeting of The Evangelical Theological Society, held from Wednesday, December 27th, through Friday, December 29th broke a nineteen year old precedent: instead of convening on some campus in the United States, our members travelled to Toronto and joined with their fellow-members north of the border in celebrating Canada's Centenary. Dr. Stewart Boehmer and his colleagues at the Toronto Bible College were the epitome of efficiency and courtesy, providing an ideal environment for weighty discussion and stimulating fellowship.

Early in January, Dr. Gordon Lewis, who serves on our own faculty at Denver, shared with our students his impressions of the Toronto Convention. Graciously he has granted me permission to include his comments in this report which I am making to our Society. Here, then, is his resume of the outstanding program arranged by Dr. Kenneth Kantzer and his committee:

Recently at a school openly disinterested in academic prowess Billy Graham told the student-body: "If I were in your shoes I wouldn't pray for a passion for souls; I'd pray for a passion for study." In an editorial on the same need Carl Henry wrote, "Personal work may seem especially compelling the night before an examination, a time when academic tenacity should properly exercise spiritual priority. The war of ideas demands full disciplined judgment. The condition of the classroom may well become the condition of the nation, and indeed, of the world. This is no time for playboys on campus or for dullards at the desk." The 19th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society likewise underscored the need for Christocentric scholarship and evidenced that the need is being at least partly met.

Thus in a public address entitled, "Where is Theology Going?" Dr. Henry traced significant contemporary developments. We have seen the collapse of the three major theologies: modernism, neo-orthodoxy and existentialism. The survival span of alternatives to evangelicalism is shrinking. Modernism lasted thirty years (1900-1930), neo-orthodoxy 20 years (1930-1950), and Bultmann's existentialism reigned for ten years (1950-1960). Since the dominance of Bultmann's thought European theology has disintegrated.

Significant on the American scene has been the emergence

of the death of God theology and its acceptance in the ecumenical dialogue. Mistakenly, in Henry's judgment, Bonhoeffer has been regarded a prolegomenon to religious positivism. The ontic death of God has destroyed all divine transcendence. As a result there is growing awareness of the depth of the present theological chaos or crisis. Herzog calls it an *aporia*: the present salemate is *without passage*. In addition is the realization that the force of the biblical view of God has been broken by a too limited view of revelation. A twiggy theology was built on what turned out to be little more than a skeleton. A mini revelation led to a mini theology. Theology, to change the metaphor, was trying to take off on a runway too short to become airborne. Whether revelation was viewed in terms of the quest of the historical Jesus, natural theology or divine human encounter, it left out biblical assertions and so collapsed. In place of sound formulations, our contemporaries adopt the modern spirit of the age and call it biblical.

Three patterns of thought are arising as options to evangelicalism: (1) sociological redemption (Cox, Van Buren), (2) cosmological salvation (Teilhard de Chardin), and (3) attempts to combine the two (A. M. Ramsay). All see reality as one layer and accommodate transcendence only within immanence. The transcendent is located on the frontiers of social change. The consequences? Loss of God as other, loss of once-for-all revelation and incarnation, loss of a distinction between right and wrong, loss of a final judgment and loss of a discrimination of the righteous and the wicked. Modern prejudices become determinative of God.

The case for theism is now up for grabs! So many senses are given terms that institutional Christianity is a modern tower of Babel. We are forced to decide for a distorted word or a disclosed word. Denial of the words of the prophets and apostles leads to the denial of a self-revealing God. When theology loses Scripture as a norm to test the spirits, theologians leave themselves open to consort with demons (Bishop Pike).

With the unprecedented confusion in theology is an increasing recognition of the limitations of scientific method. The new eight volume *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* has only four pages on the scientific method, the upshot of which is that each field determines its own.

So a new prospect for systematic theology and a comprehensive worldview is at hand. Three live options can carry off the spiritual fortunes of the twentieth century and all hold to knowledge of ultimate reality: communism, catholicism, and evangelicalism. Evangelicalism does not assert a ghetto epistem-

ology, but a truth-claim for all men everywhere, based on the incarnation and inscripturation of the Word. The really influential theologians are not the itinerates who know what to pick and choose, but classroom teachers acquainted with historical and recent thought who formulate a comprehensive system. We need fewer \$2.95 paperbacks on the whole problem of God, and more extensive productions of the proportions of Barth and Bultmann.

The other sessions were devoted to two major problems in the formulation of an evangelical world-view: the relationship of faith to history and the method to follow in formulating a distinctively Biblical theology. The diversity of perspective on both issues showed the possibilities of varied approaches within the ranks of those who believe that "The Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety is the word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs." Much of the discussion on faith and history centered around the issue of whether historical evidence necessitates a distinction between revelation and non-revelational material in Scripture with inerrancy predicated only of the former. Several papers showed the correlation of the biblical records with recent investigation. The general position taken was that historical and scientific data must be fully considered, but where a choice is required, the biblical statement is to be held in preference to the conclusions of historians or scientists.

The question of how to structure a systematic theology culminated with a panel chaired by Carl Henry including all who had read papers previously. Dr. John Gerstner of Pittsburgh Seminary defended a traditional natural theology and Christian evidences approach. Dr. Robert Knudsen of Westminster Seminary advocated a Van Tilian perspective denying any common ground in our concepts of God, maintaining that all must be distinctively Christian. Dr. Arthur Holmes of Wheaton College emphasized the contributions of analytic philosophy in the use of models, rather than deductive or inductive reasoning. Dr. Grounds suggested that we remember the biographical account of our own conversions and the motive behind our own adoption of an evangelical stance. Since Dr. Gordon Clark could not be present because of illness, I had read a paper concerning his apologetic and therefore participated in this panel. I attempted to show how all the suggested elements could be synthesized in an apologetic of systematic consistency and a theology based on the Scriptures as the primary source and test of truth.

Two days back from Israel, G. Douglas Young, President of the American Institute for Holy Land Studies in Israel reported on recent events there. Having driven an ambulance under fire during the five day war, he said, "It was a poor year

for archeology!" But the prospect looks much brighter since the Israeli government is sponsoring a complete archeological survey and encouraging the excavation of several sites.

The liberals, Dr. Young declared, had nothing to say about the five day war and left a vacuum in place of a Christian witness. Evangelicals who have earned the right to speak should fill up that vacuum. Young stressed that the time is ripe for dialogue. An evangelical contribution in Israel is crucial now.

One of the matters discussed in business-session was the joint meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society and the American Scientific Affiliation in Jerusalem. A tour has been arranged during June and July 1968. Members who participate in the tour and are willing to prepare papers for this joint-meeting should contact Dr. Kenneth Kantzer at their earliest convenience. Further information concerning the program will appear in the next *Bulletin*.

The statistics which were reported (they are published elsewhere in this issue of the *Bulletin*) indicate that our Society is continuing to grow though membership has not yet reached 800.

Announcement was made regarding the special program which has been arranged for our 20th Annual Meeting at Westminster Theological Seminary. Though some details have yet to be confirmed, the anniversary program will be devoted to the theme "An Evangelical Contribution to Old Testament Studies" and will feature addresses by scholars from overseas as well as from the United States and Canada. The Program Committee also plans to publish these papers in a volume which will be a sort of milestone, commemorating our Society's twenty years of service to Christian truth and witness.

The following resolutions drafted by Bert Hall and William Lane, were adopted:

WHEREAS we have been stimulated to greater thought and interest through the excellent papers and devotions of this conference, while recognizing the continuing need for evangelical publications, therefore be it,

RESOLVED that we offer thanks to those who have labored diligently and that each member of the Evangelical Theological Society commit himself to the preparation of at least one article suitable for publication in the forthcoming year.

WHEREAS we have been the recipients of the gracious hospitality of the Toronto Bible College backed by the Evangelical Theological Society of Canada, therefore be it,

RESOLVED that the heartfelt thanks of this body be communicated in letter by the secretary to President Stewart Boehmer and the

staff of the Toronto Bible College and to the President and members of the Evangelical Theological Society of Canada.

WHEREAS we recognize the close integration between the papers presented and the panel discussions, the implementation of the program by the invitation of suitable scholars to pursue the research required, and the orientation of the total program toward the biblical and theological interests of the Evangelical Theological Society, therefore be it,

RESOLVED that our thanks be extended to the Executive Committee of our society and especially to the Program Committee which has been responsible for the new format of the annual meeting.

WHEREAS we recognize the sustaining grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in undergirding the labors of the members of this society during the past year, in giving a keen interest in Evangelical faith and scholarship and a willingness to participate in its endeavors to an increasing number of younger scholars who have taken their stand with the society, in producing a healthy ferment within Evangelicalism as evidenced in projects of Bible translation, the production of commentaries and scholarly monographs, and the maturing of our own journal, in granting the unusual sense of unity experienced in these meetings, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Theological Society stand to a point of prayer expressive of its thanksgiving and its renewed dedication to joyful service of our Lord.

Elected as officers for 1968 were: President, Dr. Kenneth S. Kantzer; Vice-President, Dr. Carl F. H. Henry; Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Vernon C. Grounds; and Editor, Dr. Samuel J. Schultz.

Vernon C. Grounds, Secretary

SUMMARY OF TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance on Hand as of Annual Meeting 1966	\$1,178.49
Receipts during 1967	5,453.60
	<u>\$6,632.09</u>
Disbursements during 1967	3,465.74
Balance on Hand as of December 21, 1967	<u>\$3,166.35</u>

SUMMARY OF
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

	Members	Associates	Students
Active as of last year's report	506	178	84
Withdrew or Dropped	—11	—16	—6
Deceased	—5		
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	490	162	78
Reinstated	+4		
Transferred	+8	+4	—12
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	502	166	66
Received during 1967	22	11	27
Active Membership December 1967	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/> 524	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/> 177	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/> 93

**ATTENDANCE AT THE NINETEENTH
ANNUAL MEETING**

Members

D. E. Anderson
James D. Bales
W. Gordon Brown
G. Lloyd Carr
John J. Davis
Millard Erickson
William R. Foster
Burton Goddard
Louis Goldberg
Thomas M. Gregory
Vernon C. Grounds
Bert H. Hall
Andrew Helmbold
Milford F. Henkel
A. F. Holmes
John Honeyman
Alan F. Johnson
Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.
Robert D. Knudsen
William L. Lane
Gordon Lewis
Richard Longenecker
W. Harold Mare
Arthur Mercer, Jr.
John K. Michelsen
Richard C. Mitchell
Paul Nevin
Roger Nicole

William H. Pardee
J. Barton Payne
William S. Sailer
Samuel J. Schultz
Joseph R. Schultz
E. L. Simmons
Bruce Stark
Harold Stigers
Robert B. Strimple
Merrill Tenney
Charles A. Tipp
Marvin R. Wilson
John M. Zinkand

Associates

George Bradford
Henry Fast
Paul Loth
Theoren Smith
Gordon Stephens
Terrance Tiessen

Student Associates

Dwight P. Baker
Steven Clinton

Visitors and Canadian ETS—53