



THE HERETICAL IMPERATIVE: CONTEMPORARY POSSIBILITIES OF RELIGIOUS AFFIRMATION, by Peter L. Berger. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979. Pp. xv+ 220. \$9.95.

An interesting phenomenon associated with last fall’s election of Ronald Reagan as president of the United States was the attempt to exercise political power by conservative Christian groups, many of which were identified under the banner of the “Moral Majority.” The extent to which such groups actually influenced the outcome of the election is debatable. What is clear, however, is the increased visibility and militancy of religious orientations of a conservative and fundamentalistic nature.

Against that background Peter Berger’s book goes against the grain. *The Heretical Imperative*, subtitled “Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation,” is a stimulating and provocative exploration of the primary ways in which contemporary believers have come to terms with their religious heritage and religious experience.

The thread of Berger’s argument can be briefly stated. Berger’s underlying conviction is that modernity has plunged religion into a very specific crisis characterized first of all by secularity, but more importantly by pluralism, which undermines the authority of all religious traditions. In such a situation those who wish to maintain the authority of any religious tradition are faced with three options. The *deductive* option is the decision to affirm the tradition in defiance of any challenges to it and to reassert its objective validity as if nothing has changed. The *reductive* option is to give the tradition authority by secularizing it. The inductive option is the attempt to uncover and retrieve the experiences embodied in the tradition. Of these three options it is Berger’s contention that the inductive approach is finally the only viable one. And, if the inductive approach is accepted, then the contestation between the major world religions—especially Christianity and those of western Asia and India—“should be a centrally important theme for theology and religious thought in the future” (xi).

Berger’s argument builds on much of his earlier work, especially his use of sociology of knowledge constructs and insights and his appreciation for the importance of experience which he dealt with in a more limited way in *A Rumor of Angels* (Doubleday, 1969). Berger is a sociologist; he is also a Christian of Lutheran orientation. He recognizes the compatibility of those commitments but helpfully distinguishes what is said as a sociologist from what is said as a committed Christian.

The title of the book reflects Berger’s contention that “heresy”—derived from a Greek word meaning choice—has become a modern necessity. Modernity pluralizes. Individuals today face multiple possible courses of action and multiple ways of thinking about the world. As the options for thinking and acting become more diverse, choice becomes inevitable and leads to more consciousness of self. The external world thus becomes more questionable—less determined and the inner world more complex—with the result that religion loses its hold on

both institutions and human consciousness. Berger states,

In premodern situations there is a world of religious certainty, occasionally ruptured by heretical deviations. By contrast the modern situation is a world of religious uncertainty, occasionally staved off by more or less precarious constructions of religious affirmation. Indeed one could put this change even more sharply: For premodern man, heresy is a possibility—usually a rather remote one; for modern man, heresy typically becomes a necessity. Or again, modernity creates a new situation in which picking and choosing becomes an imperative (28).

The discussion of modernity leads to a discussion of the relationship between religious experience, tradition, and reflection, a relationship which Berger concludes makes it possible, even necessary, to understand the inductive option as the

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only viable contemporary possibility of religious affirmation. To adopt the inductive option is to stand within the classical Protestant liberal tradition of Schleiermacher. It is an option that takes seriously the historical, the anthropological, and the experiential dimensions of life.

Berger sums it up in the following way.

On the contemporary theological scene a revitalization of liberal religion means a fruitful third option between the neo-orthodox reconstructions on the “right” (the deductive option) and the capitulation to secularism on the “left” (the reductive option). . . . Against the right, this position means a reassertion of the human as the only possible starting point for theological reflection and a rejection of any external authority (be it scriptural, ecclesiastical, or traditional) that would impose itself on such reflection. Against the left, the position means a reassertion of the supernatural and sacred character of religious experience, and a rejection of the particularly oppressive authority of modern secular consciousness (154).

The journey from a description of modernity to an affirmation of the inductive option is one that Berger travels with care and clarity. There are at least three reasons why contemporary Christians might wish to take that journey with Berger. The first is to become familiar with the categories of the sociology of knowledge; categories that, in my judgment, are extremely useful as a way of understanding and interpreting reality. The second is that Berger’s global consciousness can help us avoid the parochialism to which we are all too prone.

But perhaps the best reason for giving Berger a hearing is precisely because he challenges us to reconsider the importance of liberal theology at a time when a rather sterile form of fundamentalism seems to have attained a certain ascendancy. It is Berger’s contention that such a reconsideration may provide the basis on which the impasse in contemporary religious thought and experience between neo-orthodoxy, in whatever form it takes, and secularism can be overcome.

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PASTORAL COUNSELING AND PREACHING: A QUEST FOR AN INTEGRATED MINISTRY, by Donald Capps. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980. Pp. 156. \$8.95(paper).

In his book, *Pastoral Counseling and Preaching: A Quest for an Integrated Ministry*, Professor Donald Capps has continued the exploration that he started in his book, *Pastoral Care, A Thematic Approach* (Westminster, 1979). In that earlier book he attempted to make use of a thematic approach to counseling, à la Erickson, et al., as a way of providing a new theoretical basis for pastoral counseling. In *Pastoral Counseling and Preaching*, he has tried to expand slightly on his insights regarding pastoral counseling and integrate them with the major role of the minister, preaching.

The first two chapters describe several ways that preaching and counseling have been linked in the past. Then in chapter three, Capps moves into the meat of his own argument. “The most important structural link between preaching and pastoral counseling is the diagnostic interpretation” (62). Capps’ idea that preaching and counseling can be linked by their common basis in diagnosis is an interesting notion. If he can prove that contention, then preaching and counseling may indeed be integrated into a common theoretical framework.

In chapter four Capps applies the diagnostic approach to the process of preaching and arrives at six basic types, each of which is represented by a preacher of some stature. His six types of diagnosis in the preaching enterprise are easy to follow and, as a relative amateur in the history and art of preaching, I will have to assume, accurate. It is with Capps’ further application of the six theological types of diagnosis to counseling that I would like to spend the bulk of the review.

Type 1—“Identifying Underlying Personal Motivation.”

This first type of theological diagnosis is represented by Newman in preaching, and the psychoanalytic school in counseling. In both preaching and counseling, the task of the minister is to uncover *the* motive that is at the root of the

parishioner’s problem. The assumption is that there is a root cause, that it is discoverable, and its discovery will lead to a solution.

Type 2—“Identifying the Range of Potential Causes.”

Similar in its attempt to uncover buried motivation, this approach differs from Type 1 in that it is assumed that there are multiple causes and the task is to uncover the major *causes* of the problem. In preaching, Type 2 is represented by Wesley and in counseling by family theory.

Type 3—“Exposing Inadequate Formulations of the Problem.”

Represented by Tillich and depth psychology, this approach to theological diagnosis calls on the minister to help the parishioner reformulate the problem at hand at ever deeper levels until one finally discovers the underlying, supporting grace of God.

Type 4—“Drawing Attention to Untapped Personal and Spiritual Resources.”

Phillips Brooks and humanistic psychology are representative of the approach to theological diagnosis that assumes that the major task of the minister is to uncover areas of strength in the parishioner rather than focusing primarily on the problem and its causes.

Type 5—“Bringing Clarity to the Problem.”

Austin Farrer and a host of counseling techniques—including client-centered, reality and crisis therapies—work with the assumption that the clarification of a problem brings with it an answer as well.

Type 6—“Assessing Problems in Terms of the Deepest Intention of Shared Experience.”

While disclaiming any preference for the six types, it is obvious that Capps prefers this final amalgamation of preaching and counseling. (He concludes the book with a sermon by Schleiermacher, the preacher for Type 6; and Rogers, the counselor of the Type 6 persuasion, is the most frequently referred to among the therapists.) In Type 6 the focus is on the deeply personal experience out of which universal, or at least common understandings, develop.

Capps’ hope is that the individual minister who reads the book will choose, or more likely recognize, one of these approaches and use it to integrate preaching and counseling ministry with one another. Capps assumes that such an integration is a desirable end, but his assumption may not necessarily be correct. Let me briefly develop two counter arguments that speak against the desirability of Capps’ approach to an integrated ministry:

1) Most practicing psychotherapists find that it is impossible to limit themselves to one therapeutic approach and still work with a wide range of individuals and problems. While intellectual clarity and the minister’s role identity may benefit from a unified approach to counseling and preaching, the person to be helped may well experience greater benefit from a preacher and counselor who has mastered several different approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of problems via counseling or preaching and can therefore apply the one that is most appropriate to the person and/or problem at hand.

2) Capps seems to be implying that the integration of preaching and counseling style is desirable not only for the work of the pastor, but also for the person of the pastor. Depth psychologies, particularly those making use of the insights of Jung, would suggest that an integrity based on one’s style of diagnosis in preaching and counseling is a shallow integration (at the level of the persona, to use Jung’s terminology) and represents an illusory unity. Only an integration based on the core of the person—the Self—will supply true stability. Further, such a core, once discovered, allows for a wide diversity of stylistic expressions in counseling and preaching because one’s role expressions are not experienced as requiring unity.

As a text for seminary students or young pastors who are in the midst of role development as counselors and preachers, *Pastoral Counseling and Preaching* will probably serve as a useful text in practical theology. For the experienced pastor, however, the insights provided by Capps will probably prove shallow and perhaps even misleading. The integrity of ministers—as preachers and counselors, as well as in the myriad other roles they are called upon to perform—will not be found in an analysis based on structural similarities of these various roles, but only

on long, painful, joyful personal and spiritual growth that results in the achievement of an Integrated Self.

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SUFFERING, by Erhard S. Gerstenberger and Wolfgang Schrage. Nashville: Abingdon, 1980. Pp. 272. \$8.95 (paper).

Suffering is obviously a perennial problem for human beings as they struggle to find meaning and comfort in the midst of a world where human misery is all too common. We need all the help we can get. *Suffering* attempts to bring our biblical resources to bear on this important human question. It is a recent translation of a work written in 1977 in German. The first half, written by Erhard S. Gerstenberger from the Church Seminary in São Leopoldo, Brazil, is on the Old Testament passages which pertain to suffering. The New Testament half of the book is written by Wolfgang Schrage from Bonn, Germany. This reviewer found the New Testament section to be more helpful than the material on the Old Testament.

The major part of the Old Testament section is a listing of the kinds of unpleasantries which biblical folks had to endure. There is much effort to theologize about the accumulated data or to make pastoral applications. Gerstenberger presents and labels all the examples of Old Testament suffering that can be found by looking through the Scripture. We find out something about the various maladies which confronted those people (which may or may not resemble our present day list of troubles), but there is little effort to probe the questions of meaning that are raised by the biblical writers. Section III asks the question “Does suffering have meaning?” and Section V deals with “Hope in suffering,” but these are both short chapters compared to the piling up of data that goes on in the rest of the Old Testament section. The reader almost feels compelled to ask, “So what? What does that have to do with me, my own theological position, my own search for meaning and comfort?”

Though there are a few places where Gerstenberger raises the question of whether or not the Old Testament has much to say about our present day suffering, the effect of most of what he says is that it probably does not have much to say. If there are significant connections to be made between the biblical material as he presents it and our questions about suffering in our own lives, they will have to be made by the readers themselves.

The dominance of masculine, rather than inclusive, language throughout this half of the book is very annoying for a book that is written this recently. Perhaps that is partly the fault of the translator.

The New Testament section seems to be more helpful. Certainly, it is more theological in its orientation, though its emphasis on the “theology of the cross” may not be congenial to all readers.

Schrage begins his half of the book by listing New Testament experiences of suffering. My first reaction was that this was going to be a repetition of the same format, with the same shortcomings, as the Old Testament part of the book. Schrage quickly shifts his focus, however, to the sufferings of Jesus on the cross, and that shapes everything that he has to say in the rest of the book.

Schrage says that in Jesus’ suffering on the cross, all triumphalism, “know-it-all” theology, and theodicy is silenced. “God eludes our understanding and his faithfulness is concealed behind the mask of its very opposite” (175). As Christians, we are to conform to Christ’s sufferings. The suffering of Christians is, in fact, a constitutive mark of the church (184). Christians are invited to accept their own suffering and dying and to orient themselves to Christ’s example (187).

In a section on “Actual reasons for suffering,” Schrage deals with some specific kinds of

suffering which come to Christians as part of the calling to be a Christian. For example, the Christian mission will involve one in conflict with state or religious authorities, or may lead to economic deprivation, or may lead to alienation from other persons who have not made the same commitments to Christ and his mission.

In his section on “The meaning and interpretation of suffering,” Schrage plays down efforts to find objective meaning to suffering. He says, probably correctly, that the emphasis of the New Testament

is to explain suffering primarily from the perspective of Christ’s suffering (206). Nevertheless, there are several interpretations of suffering in the New Testament (he classified some as central and some as secondary), which are not to be absolutized or even harmonized. The real comfort and meaning for a Christian sufferer is in the vision of the suffering Christ.

In his final section on “The mastery and conquest of suffering,” Schrage speaks of our solidarity with sufferers and the ways in which we can share in the suffering of others.

In short, I do not think the Old Testament section of this book will be of much appeal. Most of it is rather tedious. It focuses too much on the question of what it was like back there and not enough on the theological or pastoral concerns that we all have when encountering experiences of suffering in ourselves or others. The New Testament part of the book seems more helpful, particularly for those who find a theology of the cross to be the best way to understand human suffering. Of course, by going with this approach, most of the difficult questions of apologetics and theodicy are avoided.

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PRISON OR PARADISE? THE NEW RELIGIOUS CULTS, by A. James Rudin and Marcia R. Rudin. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980. Pp. 168. \$8.95.

In the past five to eight years the spate of books about cults has more than kept pace with the ongoing proliferation of the cults themselves. No one knows for sure how many religious, political or self-help cults there are in the world today. Estimates of observers and researchers range from one to three thousand in the United States alone. Moreover, for most current observers, including James and Marcia Rudin, the list of cults is by no means diminishing. On the contrary, cults are on the rise in this country in terms of both numbers and intensity. Coming up with a standard list of cults to account fairly for the phenomenon is a task doomed to frustration, even failure, at the outset. Similarly, one would be hard pressed to develop a standard list of books dealing with the cults today.

Literature about the cults has ranged from a reporting of some of the bizarre activities of cult behavior that appeals to a reader’s appetite for the sensational to a more balanced analysis of the cult phenomenon that helps the reader develop a perspective through which to assess the cults religiously and culturally. The Rudins have done the latter in *Prison or Paradise?* They have selected nine of the more well known religious cults and used them to illustrate their thesis that

the new cults are not innocuous fringes of contemporary religious and cultural pluralism. These cults are indeed potential threats to such pluralism “because they claim to possess the one, only, and final truth” and to the social fabric of life within the major religious confessions and denominations “because they are authoritarian and antidemocratic.”

Nine cults are discussed in the bulk of the book: The Unification Church, The International Society for Krishna Consciousness, The Way International, Tony and Susan Alamo Christian Foundation, The Divine Light Mission, Church of Armageddon/Love Family, Body of Christ, The Children of God, and The Church of Scientology.

It would be difficult to establish criteria to be used in the analysis of all cults or even to ascertain features that would define a parameter applying equally to the nine cults surveyed in this book. To be sure, “hard data on cult membership is scarce,” and much of the past and present history of the cults is shrouded in mystery. Nevertheless, the Rudins have worked carefully with a list of 14 characteristics of cults and produced a brief but lucid statement about each cult considered. They analyze the far-reaching negative elements in the cults and offer a penetrating religious and cultural assessment of the cult phenomenon today.

Generally, the characteristics used by the authors include a description of cult leadership, the manipulative and deceptive techniques used in recruiting and maintaining cult members, the cults’ financial activities, the inner structure and expression of cultic group life, and

the goals and philosophies that motivate leaders and followers.

Throughout, the authors draw upon a wide range of research and use it effectively to support their judgments. At times, however, one wishes there was more documentation given for evidence adduced to support these judgments instead of just references to anonymous “cult observers” or to what the “critics say.” Yet, the absence of footnotes and the brevity of reported evidence contribute to a very readable style. Here is a book that will serve well those who find themselves involved with cults at many levels. It will be especially useful in parish ministry because of the way it seeks to incorporate the data about individual cults into a construct that can be assessed theologically and pastorally.

The final three chapters on “The Target is You! Who Joins and Why?” “Countering the Cults” and “Can Christianity and Judaism Meet the Challenge of the Cults?” are full of provocative suggestions for ministry that in themselves are worth the price of the book. If the authors had said more in these chapters they might have extended their discussion of deprogramming—“the most effective means of getting people out of the cults”—to include more about voluntary deprogramming from the work of Rabbi Maurice Davis. Voluntary deprogramming is often a more viable and pastorally effective way to reunite cult members and their families than involuntary deprogramming.

Books whose titles begin with a question are sometimes naive attempts to debate and belabor the obvious because the question is really answered in its asking. Not so with *Prison or Paradise?* The cults are not necessarily prisons either in theory or design. They are the promise of paradise that in fact becomes a prison, a prison all the more misleading and diabolical.

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THE TOTAL IMAGE OR SELLING JESUS IN THE MODERN AGE, by Virginia Stemm Owens. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980. Pp. 97. \$2.95 (paper).

This brief, seven-chapter book is an analysis of Christianity's involvement in modern culture, with special emphasis on the extent to which media—particularly television—can rightfully be used in proclaiming the Christian message.

“The Christian culturizers of today,” says Owens, “certainly deny that they support the values of the secular society in which they find themselves. But at the same time they are eager to adopt the methods and style of that very society they deplore.”

A free-lance writer and a frequent contributor to *Christianity Today*, the author evaluates programs such as the PTL Club and the Oral Roberts specials in rather graphic language and insists that they do not portray the Christianity of the Gospels. A sample of her writing:

The guest star for Easter 1978 is Vikki Carr. The master of ceremonies is Oral's son, Richard. He is handsome in a baby-faced way with a streak of grey down his pompadour that one cannot resist speculating about. (Hair seems almost symbolic in all these productions. The silver sculpture-cut of the host of the West Coast celebrity interview show 'High Adventure' inspires genuine awe.) Richard seems guileless and winning as he sings, introduces, and 'chats' with the guest star on Perry Como stools....Vikki Carr sings too. She certainly has no problem with *élan*. With the sound off or the words blurred, one could tell no difference between her delivery here or on any secular variety show. There is the same pantomime of passion, the identical intense body language (32).

To an outsider, says Owens, it must often seem that what commercial Christianity is promoting is a certain certified lifestyle, one that has little to do with dusty feet or lilies of the field. An unbeliever supplied with only this picture of the product, she says, “would not have an inkling that the original pattern these people profess to imitate was a vagrant celibate whose own seminar on happiness elevated the mourning meek rather than the smiling success....Our current notions of both evangelism and edification are borrowed from image advertising. The meek, the misfit, the poor in spirit, the suffering servant are not allowed inside the picture.”

Owens is concerned with the nature of

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media itself, whatever its content, and whether that nature is such that it can be “baptized” and made a faithful servant of the Kingdom. Not all cultural quirks can be infused with a new spirit friendly to humankind, she argues. “Some are so destructive that they must be abjured altogether by Christians.” She quotes Malcolm Muggeridge, who said, “It is a fallacy of our time that we can usefully participate in whatever exists.”

The author's strong comments are an antidote to those who insist that if Paul or Jesus were to return today they would obviously use television. God undoubtedly knew the difference in communication potential between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. So why was Bethlehem chosen as the birthplace of Jesus?

Nevertheless, Owens does engage in overkill. Much of what she says needs to be heard as

a corrective, but it is difficult to imagine that television cannot be put at the disposal of the Gospel as well as the printing press. It's mostly a matter of recognizing what it can do and what it can't do and how it can be used wisely.

Equally provocative are the author's insights into the relation between the Christian faith and culture in general. She decries our attempt to "rewrite the parables so that the grain of wheat falling into the ground need not die in order to be born to new life." She has a good word to say for the local church:

Local churches are notoriously slow, even languid. They get caught up in candles and Christmas pageants and what color to paint the kitchen. They do not, to the despair of ecclesiastical executives, take proper notice of world issues....In other words, the local church is a stubborn culture carrier....With due respect to the genius of McLuhan in first recognizing the power of media, a "global village" is a contradiction in terms. Cultures are not sustained globally but locally (97).

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ESSAYS ON BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION, by Paul Ricoeur. Introduction by Lewis S. Mudge. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980. Pp. 182. \$7.95 (paper).

Coming to the end of an essay or a book by Paul Ricoeur is always something of a mixed blessing. The experience of challenge, exhilaration and suspense is sustained, to be sure, but so are the questions, the problems and the disturbance which comes of knowing that there is yet more to be said, more to be probed, more to understand. But that fits well with Ricoeur's own insistence that knowledge (explanation) and understanding are not co-equal and that ultimate understanding rests with manifestation (revelation) which is not at our disposal. For that we wait, attentive and open.

Essays on Biblical Interpretation represents an attempt to bring the labors of French philosopher and theologian, Paul Ricoeur, now engaged in both fields at the University of Chicago, to the attention of those whose callings have them wrestling with the question of meaning and viable interpretation of biblical texts. In the areas of philosophy and theology Ricoeur's genius is to be recognized in several books, including *The Symbolism of Evil* (English translation, 1960), *Freud and Philosophy* (1965), *The Rule of Metaphor* (1977), and through many essays, twenty-two of which appear in *The Conflict of Interpretations* (1974). That Ricoeur's work might be shared with colleagues and students more generally led to a recent publication of an anthology of his work, *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* (edited by C. E. Reagan and D. Stewart, 1978). His specific contribution to biblical studies is marked by *Semeia: An Experimental Journal for Biblical Criticism*, especially the fourth issue (1975), "Paul Ricoeur on Biblical Hermeneutics." *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, a gathering of studies previously printed, but widely dispersed, recognizes the importance of bringing the latter contributions to public attention.

The preacher/teacher/theologian will be pleased and helped by the very fine overview by editor Lewis Mudge, and by the appreciative and imaginative reply by Ricoeur himself. Though some of us are a bit wary of abstract conceptualizations, Ricoeur brings philosophy to our service by showing us how its specific symbols may function “imaginatively to represent the limit beyond which the demand of conceptual knowledge for completeness cannot pass.” And with that “philosophy of the limit” in mind he

quickens our imaginations in pursuit of a transcendental inquiry that has to do with historical reality and an “interpretation of the Book” which corresponds to the “interpretation of life.”

Even this limited collection is broad in scope. His “Preface to Bultmann” brings us to a problem which runs the gamut of the whole book: “...the Word of God is, not the Bible, but Jesus Christ.” In other words, the kerygma is the announcement of a person, and the texts through which the Gospel of that person is expressed are already interpretations of the community’s faith. “These texts conceal a first level of interpretation. We ourselves are no longer those witnesses who have seen.” To get at that problem Ricoeur enters the hermeneutical circle with Bultmann, discerning and developing the several levels of his program of mytho-clarification, myth understood as “giving worldly form to what is beyond known and tangible reality.” The decision of faith lies at the center of that work. Ricoeur agrees. But he sees a fault in Bultmann’s work, occasioned in part by his failure to explicate the nature of the language of faith and in part by his insistence upon limiting faith’s horizon to the existential moment.

From there Ricoeur seeks to discover how a concept of revelation can be squared with a concept of reason—without coinciding, in living dialectic—and he does that by pointing to the category of testimony, a kind of “originary affirmation,” “indefinitely inaugural,” which in turn provides the horizon, the “stuff” of imagination, the text as Poem, revelation as “non-violent appeal.” Thus he leaves reason intact but humbled.

For the preacher “The Hermeneutics of Testimony” (which Ricoeur puts against any “philosophy of absolute knowledge”) will probably be the most exciting and exacting chapter. The dispositions of the audience and the character of the orator are brought into play as part of the technique of persuasion, not proof.

The book ends, appropriately, on the note of hope, a postulation of freedom, of immortality (“progress toward the infinite”), and of God. With Jürgen Moltmann, Ricoeur sees hope, in the face of evil, as hope of the resurrection.

Ricoeur’s work is for every preacher/teacher/theologian (not to mention philosopher) a must.

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PROPHECY AND HISTORY IN LUKE-ACTS, by David L. Tiede. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980. Pp. ix + 166. \$9.95.

In the process of developing the canon, the early church made it harder for Luke’s readers

to understand his two-volume work, because—for reasons we can only surmise—the Fourth Gospel came to separate the Gospel from the Acts. Although modern scholarship has discerned a great deal about both books, it too has not been notably successful in providing convincing access to Luke’s two-volume work. Historians of early Christianity faulted Luke’s accuracy, especially in Volume 2, and subsequently, existentialist Protestant theology faulted his theology, largely for writing Volume 2 at all. One German interpreter even asked whether one could preach authentically from this major work in the New Testament. Tiede’s new book harbors no such hesitation, but he writes with manifest appreciation of the complex theology which he discerns in Luke’s work.

Tiede, Professor of New Testament at Luther-Northwestern Seminaries in St. Paul, swims against a considerable stream of interpretation, for he argues that Luke-Acts is to be placed “*within* the Jewish tradition in the context of the Greco-Roman world” while at the same time being an interpretation of Christian origins with “paradigmatic value for succeeding generations” (14). Luke is said to write the story of Jesus and of the early church from “*within* the unlikely framework of Israel’s painful rejection” rather than from the standpoint of the outsider who does not share the pain of what Israel’s experience means for faith. In other words, Tiede invites the reader to appreciate Luke’s theological narrative by imaginatively stepping into Luke’s situation and by grappling with certain theological issues from within that circle.

Luke works in the medium of story and tradition, building a composite frame-

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work within which the lived experience of the community may be interpreted. And that community is still very much caught up in the pain and plight of post-destruction Jewish groups contending with their tragic history in light of their scriptural heritage (70).

Within that circle the dominant problem, Tiede argues, is the meaning of the fact that Israel has rejected God’s definitive agent and his subsequent representatives. Consequently, the focus is on those passages which bring this theme to expression. Chapter 2 explores the rejection of Jesus through the lens of Luke 4:16-30 (the Nazareth sermon); chapter 3 concentrates on Jesus’ words about Jerusalem, which the Evangelist uses to interpret its destruction for his own time. Chapter 4 concentrates on the necessary death of Jesus, while Chapter 5 is actually an epilogue, in which the author reflects—all too briefly—on the task of interpreting the Lukan theology today. Footnotes are at the back, as is a four-page Selected Bibliography limited almost exclusively to literature in English.

There is much in this book which one can applaud: e.g., the demand that Luke-Acts be read from the stand-point of the problems facing the author’s community and not simply in light of Mark or Paul (12, 98); the observation that “the speeches of Acts will frequently cite or refer overtly to the Scriptural texts and motifs thought critical to interpret and explicate issues that are still ambiguous but demonstrably crucial by their literary significance in the Gospel” (91-2); or that Luke “seeded” the Gospel narrative “with scriptural language and complex allusions, which are then harvested in the explicit argument in Acts and in accord with the hermeneutical warrants of Luke 24” (119); or the importance of Simeon’s oracle in Luke 2 (23-32), and the repeated

effort to read Luke-Acts in light of more or less current Jewish debates about Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem.

At the same time, Tiede is aware that “modern Christian readers have had an extremely difficult time recognizing the distinctive Lucan interpretation of Jesus’ death as occasioned by such historical circumstances and hermeneutical debates” (98). Indeed, many readers would be helped if Tiede had undertaken—even briefly—to relate clearly his interpretation of Luke-Acts to that of other major interpreters instead of scattering his observations throughout the book or consigning them to the notes. More important, the thesis of the book would have been strengthened had Tiede firmly set Luke and his community in place and time, and had *shown* that they were responding to contemporary Judaism. W. D. Davies demonstrated how fruitful this can be for Matthew, as did J. L. Martyn for John. No comparable demonstration is presented here, so that the key thesis remains as assertion, a proposal without sufficient warrant. Alternate possibilities are not focused or discussed. It is one thing to show the pervasive influence of the Septuagint in Luke, another to argue (or infer) that Luke’s readers were Jewish Christians struggling with the Fall of Jerusalem. Moreover, rightly being critical of much work which discerns an Evangelist’s theology primarily through analyzing changes made in the sources, Tiede seems to go to the other extreme of not attending consistently to the possible difference between Luke himself and the sources. Accordingly, one may question certain particular claims as well; e.g., that “the status of the gentile converts among the elect... *remains* at issue in Luke’s community” (50, *my italics*).

Because many astute and perceptive observations about the text can stand apart from the central claim of the book, this study of Luke-Acts clearly repays careful reading and re-reading. Preaching from Luke-Acts can be enriched by it, and scholarly discussion stimulated to look again at the text.

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COMMENTARY ON ROMANS, by Ernst Käsemann. Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980. Pp. 428. \$22.50.

After innumerable announcements of its appearance over a half decade or more, Ernst Käsemann’s *Commentary on Romans* has at last appeared in English. The path

leading to its translation and publication in this country is strewn with briars and brambles. First, Käsemann himself doubted that Americans, preoccupied with religious-historical matters, or, that Lutherans, following the Missouri Synod “debacle,” would have any appreciation for his brand of exposition. Still, Fortress Press took up the option to publish, and the editors of *Hermeneia* planned to include it in their series. Next, while Fortress retained its interest, the commentary was eventually rejected by the *Hermeneia* committee, which for twelve years had denied translation and publication to anyone else. Käsemann conceded the possibility that his exposition

of Paul's struggle against the *nomos* might be liable to the charge of anti-Semitism, though none from the *Hermeneia* group ever took the pains to indicate such, to say nothing of thanking him for mailing off his commentary. As he put it, "I've obviously put my foot in it (*ins Fettnäpfchen getreten*), and again made new enemies of old friends." One of those old friends writes on the dust jacket that "this...is clearly the best commentary on Romans available today." Where was he when his *Hermeneia* committee met? Meanwhile in Germany, the volume has sold out in under five months of its first year; in January of the following year it appeared in a second edition, and in October of the same year in yet a third, with twelve hundred amplifications and corrections. Meanwhile, the commentary had already been translated into Japanese. The coup de grace was delivered by Käsemann's own publisher, who reneged on his promise to accede to the author's request regarding English publication.

Now the volume's out, published by Eerdmans, and translated by Bromiley, who has spent a career putting Kittel into readable English. But this time, Bromiley hasn't given it his best. There are too many translation errors, too many pronouns without a link to their antecedents, too many instances in which technical terms belonging to the trade are rendered haphazardly. On p. 137, "otherwise *astheneia* would be attributed by Paul to Christians" should read, "elsewhere *astheneia*, etc." On p. 148, "unless he wanted in fact to teach original sin anthropologically and the church in salvation ecclesiologically" should read, "and the church ecclesiologically as collaborator in salvation." On p. 157, "if in relation to the latter" should read "if in relation to the *former*" (Bromiley turned round an earlier sentence and didn't match this one to it). On p. 159, "though this later" should read "though this *latter*..." On p. 160, "historical study has been inflamed" should read "has been *ignited*." On p. 173, "whereas speculation at its height in 5:12ff. does not find" should read "whereas speculation at its height does not find in 5.12ff..." On p. 179, the sentence "the judgment that nowhere in the epistle is much said about a matter without perceptible development of thought" should read "the judgment that nowhere in the epistle would so much be said on the same subject without perceptible development of thought..." On p. 195, "an event is committed to memory" should read "an event is called to mind..." Again, on p. 195, "assertion" should have been used in place of "result." On p. 203, the sentence "and yet it paves the way to a purely psychological" should read "paves the way *beyond* a purely psychological..." On p. 211 Bromiley translated "it would indeed be illogical if according to vs. 25a there were," but the sentence reads "if *after* vs. 25a there were..." On p. 328, "if his veneration takes place unspiritually" should read "irrationally"—else an important point in Käsemann's exposition of 12:1-2 is missed. On p. 341 "institutions" should appear in place of "work." On p. 382, "thus it points to their destiny" should read "points to *its* (i.e., scripture's) destiny..." Enough of translation errors. Where, oh where are the antecedents to the pronouns within these sentences: "The relating of the event of justification to the resurrection makes it clear that *it* constantly wins new ground" (p. 129); "the *doxa tou theou* is the fulfillment of the righteousness already given and *it* is anticipated in *this* in such a way that..." (p. 134); "the imperative of moral demand does not merely presuppose the indicative which speaks of God's gift; *it* paradoxically coincides with *this* to the extent that" (p. 174); "with that a person conceals the difficulty in which he is stuck, but *it* nevertheless emerges" (p. 195); "as mankind for the apostle represents the world, on the other side *it* is *its* exponent"

(p. 233); “if salvation history is understood as suggested and if God’s righteousness is *its* center, *it* is the worldwide dimension of *this*” (p. 256)? That last is a whopper, and reminds me of a sentence in O. M. Norlie’s *Christian Psychology*: “It is everywhere admitted that it is highly important to know childhood by itself and youth as such.”

Käsemann’s German is no easy matter for translators, and no flies on Bromiley, but he didn’t give it his best, even when a talented fellow from Dubuque gave him an assist. Publication might have been postponed yet another year until the text got the treatment it deserved, for it’s true as James M. Robinson wrote, “This commentary...is clearly the best.”

I’ve written it before: The scholar’s work is all here—translation; bibliography; attention to structure; the citing of religious-historical parallels together with the detailed exegesis, full of dialogue with interpreters early and late, the dangers of each exposition, including Käsemann’s own, duly noted. And beneath it all there’s that restive, seething Käsemann, armed to the teeth against *Heilsgeschichte* construed as an immanent process of development into which justification may be neatly fitted (that for Stendahl!); against an existentialist interpretation which reduces the text to matters of individual existence (and for Bultmann!); against mystical definitions of the relation between Christ and the believers in which members and Head are interchangeable (and for Schlier!); against “enthusiasm” which

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anticipated what is yet to come. And the weapon is justification, justification which dominates the *heilsgeschichtliches* schema, because only God’s faithfulness can create the continuum; justification for which the world out there is infinitely more than a theater for my decisions, because it is reclaiming the entire earth; justification as conformity to Christ as Lord, and justification by which the lost image is restored in a life bent to the cruciform.

What Julius Schniewind wrote of Bultmann long ago, that of all his contemporaries the Marburger alone stuck to the righteousness of God as the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*, can with precious few exceptions be said of Käsemann now. I take off my hat to this feisty scholar, his career drastically curtailed by a horrible war, in perennial dutch with a church in love with security, plagued by poor health and the memory of a daughter murdered in Argentina, everlastingly swimming against the tide, breaking lances with his old teacher, Bultmann, reopening the quest of the historical Jesus, hammering away at the apocalyptic strain at the core of primitive Christian preaching, possessed, fanatical with theological interpretation while the rest of the guild putters with stuff that never requires a “no” from unbelief or a “yes” from faith! Never mind the errors, never mind; this book’ll take you into the next decade, and then some!

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THE AGE OF REFORM 1250-1550: AN INTELLECTUAL AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF LATE MEDIEVAL AND REFORMATION EUROPE, by Steven Ozment. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980. Pp. 438. \$25.00.

This attractive volume is an impressive, wide-ranging and clear presentation of a highly important segment of church history. Embellished with generous reproductions of representative

art, it deal with issues and events, intellectual and spiritual accomplishments, with theological insights and social influences and with the various current interpretations of its history by leading contemporary scholars of the later Middle Ages and the Reformation. Lucidity of thought and precision of expression together with an attractive style of writing make reading this book a sheer delight.

Steven Ozment sees the Reformation as both “a culmination and a transcendence of medieval and religious history” (xi). He therefore explores the ecclesiastical events and the intellectual and theological developments of these centuries to substantiate the above claim, doing so with a thoroughness and expertise that are informative and inspiring. In reading about the different developments in the Middle Ages, whether they pertain to scholasticism or mysticism or ecclesiastical affairs, one comes to recognize gratefully that one is sharing in the results of the most recent scholarly investigations in that area of historical research. For example, Ozment calls attention to the thesis of Walter Ullman, professor of medieval ecclesiastical history at the University of Cambridge, who posits both an “ascending” and a “descending” view of power in the medieval community at large. The first view asserts that power originates from the people and ascends from below, from the many to the one. The other view holds that power rests with the supreme sovereign, descending from him to subordinate members within a great hierarchy of being. The chapter on “The Spiritual Traditions” is especially informative and insightful in its characterization of the varieties of mystical experience and its assessment of their teachings and impact on society.

The age of the Reformation receives careful and detailed treatment with interpretations of Max Weber, Ernst Troeltsch, Wilhelm Dilthey, Eric Erikson, George J. Williams and others being duly noted in the proper context. Anabaptism as the left-wing development of the Reformation is presented in all of its variety with scholarly objectivity. One observation is noteworthy: “Where sectarians of the sixteenth century seem to have been most novel is not in their separation of church and state...but in their willingness to put religion and society asunder” (351).

In the final chapter, “The Legacy of the

Reformation,” this rather dismal conclusion is reached: “The Reformation did not reform the whole church, much less European society, and well before midcentury it needed reform itself” (431). Even though later in the chapter the author concedes that “the Reformation was an unprecedented revolution in religion at a time when religion penetrated almost the whole of life” (435), his final verdict is that “the Reformation foundered on man’s indomitable credulity” (438).

Such a negative evaluation is apparently arrived at in the light of “the impossible ideal” (438) which the Reformation pursued. This value judgment is based on false criteria. The significance of the Reformation era is measured almost completely in terms of its intellectual and social effects and not from the perspective of its central concern and accomplishment, the recovery of the gospel in its fullness and power as “the true treasure of the church” (Luther). Despite this serious misapprehension, the book, with its admirable scholarship and penetrating insights, makes for rewarding reading, leading to a heightened awareness of the crucial importance of the Age of Reform.

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SCIENCE AND OUR TROUBLED CONSCIENCE, by J. Robert Nelson. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980. Pp. 173. \$5.25 (paper).

I enjoyed reading this book; I read it twice, in fact, and recommended it to a physicist friend who also promptly read it. It is attractively presented in a glossy cover, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, with the quality print and paper we have come to expect from Fortress—a step up from most paperbacks. In it, one of the World Council of Churches' "old hands" reports, in a comprehensive and Christianly concerned writing, the results of many conversations and consultations "at the top." Over the last thirty years, the World Council, under the directorship of Paul Abrecht, has sponsored high-level conferences of

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men and women of competence and authority in the natural sciences, social sciences, and related disciplines, along with the leading theological thinkers of the churches. These highly regarded conversations, particularly those held during the past decade, culminated in a Science and Society Conference at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1979. The real value of this book for me was to gain entrance to those conversations, guided by the thoughtful observations of a master-teacher, Professor Robert Nelson of Boston University.

The topics of the six chapters are familiar ones, if complex: 1) the profound experience we are having with the continuing technological revolution; the ambiguous good and uncertain future of technology; (2) the comparability and compatibility of science and faith as ways of knowing and judging; (3) ecology: humanity's place in and responsibility for nature; (4) genetic engineering, eugenic programs, and the study of dysgenics; (5) techniques affecting conception and birth; and (6) nuclear power and alternative energies. Each chapter contains a thoughtful, well-informed discussion of an issue, richly illustrated with the ideas of the intellectuals involved in the current debate, suffused by the gentle yet certain moral vision of the theologian. The book should be well-received by those who also preach. I took from it numerous passages for sermons in preparation, and discovered from it the journal, *Anticipation* (Geneva: World Council), which from now on will sit next to *Zygon* on my shelf as a valuable resource for religion/science issues.

After reviewing alternative ethical positions in each chapter, Nelson presents his own considered judgments, which read very much like a kind of "Christian" consensus reached by church leaders represented by the World Council of Churches. He is critical, yet optimistic about the potential of technology. He is respectful of the interaction between Christian faith and the array of modern sciences. He advocates the careful exercise by all human beings of dominion over creation as the given privilege held in trust from the Creator, with kudos to the Whiteheadian theologians and to metropolitan Paulos Gregorios for their mutual emphasis on the belief in the integral unity of humanity and all creation. He adheres to the "nearly, but not quite," absolute value of each human life as it is threatened, controlled, modified, or enhanced by emerging techniques. These positions are, in turn, empowered by a keen moral-Christian ethic, a

moral demand to share the resources of the earth, to allow people to share in the decisions that affect their lives, to preserve for the future a sustainable earth.

A few critical notes: My physicist friend thought that Nelson dismissed the complementarity concept prematurely (53). If Nelson agrees with the statement he quoted from *Faith and Science* (Fortress, 1979) that "...in science and Christianity in different ways, it is a vision of a wider truth and coherence which lies within our reach" (56), he does not offer us a cohesive concept. Surely it is not adequate to say that theories of cosmology and entropy on the one hand, and creation and eschatology on the other, are truths of a different order (53).

Moreover, my friend thought that Nelson missed a chance to describe the energy crisis as an entropy crisis; he thought that Nelson should read Rifkin and Howard's *Entropy: A New World View* (Viking, 1980) and rewrite the last chapter to the effect that the energy crisis is a second law crisis.

Finally, he thought that Nelson overstressed anxiety as a source of the science/religion discussion at the expense of pure intellectual excitement. But he joined me in thinking this is a very good book.

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CALLED TO FREEDOM, by Daniel L. Migliore. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980. Pp. 130. \$6.00 (paper).

The attempt to translate liberation theologies from one context to another is fraught with difficulties. The rich understand social reality in a way very different from the poor; the task of theology is seen by some as moving from theory to practice and by others from faith/action to theory. Some would even argue that a theology of liberation belongs only to the poor and is inappropriate for others. (Rich

churches need a theology of relinquishment.) Can those of us who live from the benefits of a culture that exploits the weak and who enjoy its economic, academic and ecclesiastical privileges be expected to receive or understand those who radically question both the context and content of our theologies?

Daniel Migliore, a professor of theology at Princeton Seminary, believes that liberation does speak to the whole church including North American Christians; and the word it speaks to all is "freedom." He believes that in listening to the cry for freedom of the poor and oppressed, Christians in rich countries can discover their own freedom and can reformulate their beliefs in ways that inform faith and practice.

The author brings several concerns to his task: (1) liberation theology is a necessary task of the church and not a passing fad, (2) it must be approached critically and seen both as gift from God and a human endeavor, (3) it must involve more than professional theologians and (4) reinterpretation must be for the sake of responsible Christian witness and life.

Called to Freedom explores five basic doctrines: the authority of Scripture, the ministry of Jesus, the trinity, spirituality and eschatology. After analyzing the approaches to Scripture of

biblicism, historicism and privatism Migliore explores the theme of liberation in the Bible and finds there both authorization for and a continuing criticism of liberation movements. The authority of Scripture is “the liberating power of its message which centers in Jesus Christ” (42). Not the understanding of liberation that we bring identifies Jesus, but “it is Jesus who incarnates and clarifies true liberation” (45). In Jesus God expresses in a concrete way what it means to be free for others.

Not only must we liberate our understanding of Scripture and of Christ’s ministry from restricting formulations, we must also liberate our understanding of God from assertions that deform the human. How we understand the divine shapes our understanding of the human and vice versa. “Metaphysical definitions of God as absolute, solitary, immutable, omnipotent are deeply intertwined with our egocentric ways of life and our oppressive social orders. Such conceptions of God support rather than challenge human bondage and misery” (78).

Liberation theology has been identified in the minds of many with political upheaval and violence. Therefore it is refreshing and instructive to read Migliore’s chapter on “A Spirituality of Liberation.” The author is very critical of much of American traditional spirituality which is self serving, escapist and eventually on a collision course with human liberation. “We need a new spirituality that refuses to acquiesce to the spirit of conquest, possession, and consumption that characterizes the ethos of our society...(and) will open us increasingly to a life of solidarity with others, especially with the poor” (88-89). Prayer and meditation are political and therefore dangerous for they lead us to actual deeds of solidarity with the poor. Finally there is liberation from the bondage to death. Christian hope points the believer beyond self fulfillment, social utopias and specific political solutions to confidence in the ultimate victory of a loving and just God concerned with the healing of the whole creation.

Migliore informs us about liberation theology not by dealing with it as such but by reinterpreting Christian doctrine in a liberating way. His clear and persuasive manner commends this book for use in the parish as a text in basic Christian teachings. His affirmation of and fresh insights into classic Christian doctrine will make this volume a helpful introduction for many who have been reluctant to become seriously engaged with liberation theology.

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JUSTICE CHURCH, by Frederick Herzog. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1980. Pp.176. \$6.95.

Justice Church, written by Frederick Herzog of Duke University and advocate of North American Liberation Theology, focuses upon a contemporary theological struggle concerning the function of the church in North America. “Only gradually,” writes Herzog, “is it dawning on us that the struggle...is over the church immersed in history vs. the church separate

from history” (9). Herzog in *Justice Church* interprets the Church as the community which finds itself identified and participating with God who struggles within the bloody turmoil of history to establish justice for the human family.

The Justice Church is grounded in Messiah Jesus. Herzog's reading of the New Testament focuses upon Jesus as Jew who, emerging from the despised and forgotten powerless and the religiously nonprofessional element of society, claims in the name of God power for himself and for the "rabble" who now also are claimed to have a rightful place as daughters and sons of God. In Jesus this new power distribution (power and justice for the despised and powerless) found momentum to persevere in history. Furthermore, in Jesus as a Jew the true structure of selfhood was acknowledged. Herzog at this point presupposes the biblical view of corporate selfhood and is arguing that in Jesus as Jew the "marginal peoples" of society were acknowledged as part of the true self. This redistribution of power to the powerless and reinterpretation of self is a radical denial of usual understandings of power and self within the power establishment of Jesus' day as well as within western culture. There the value of self depends upon acquiring power over one another. In claiming redistribution of power and new selfhood Jesus challenges the power establishment of his and our day. Jesus was crushed in this struggle for justice; however, "the cross, in the light of the resurrection was viewed as sustaining corporate selfhood through and beyond death" (45). "From Jesus' corporate selfhood, interdependent with Cross and Resurrection, power breaks forth that empowers human beings to create decent (just) power structures" (46).

In Jesus, Herzog argues, one finds Christology being transformed into Christopraxis. Through Christopraxis (Jesus' just power struggle) God enters history. In the continuing proclamation of the crucified and risen one as "Messiah Jesus" the spiritual power of New Testament metaphorical language continues to create structures for overcoming injustice, pain and meaninglessness. Messiah Jesus as metaphorical language creates the church as the body of Christ or introduces Christopraxis as the essence of the church. Herzog states,

Faith seeking understanding makes sense now in terms of praxis seeking justice. Faith is certainly not excluded. But it finds a new quality: "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me; if any person's will is to do God's will, this person shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority (John 7:16ff)" (51).

Within the context of this analysis of Jesus as Jew, Messiah Jesus, and Church as Body of Christ and Christopraxis, Herzog spells out implications for the contemporary justice church. The volume is filled with creative insights particularly for those of us who may have forgotten or neglected the biblical mandate for social justice. Perhaps a few examples will encourage a thorough reading of the volume.

The Justice Church is always and primarily to be the Church of Christopraxis. In Messiah Jesus the Church is continually identified with the poor, the oppressed, the forgotten, the despised and is involved with them in the struggle for justice.

The Justice Church is not the ground of the justice struggle. "It has to be understood at this point that *God* is fighting the battle. We will never be able to accomplish much while assuming it is we who are battling *for* others. The strength in recreating values lies in struggling *together with God and together with* others...God wants us to be creative co-workers in justice" (117).

Theology within the Justice Church will avoid focusing upon the culturally "elite minority" and focus rather upon identification with the "voiceless poor." Theology will be

grounded in Christopraxis. “Solidarity with the oppressed is thus not an afterthought for the theologian, but belongs to the first thought” (133).

The Justice Church will unite with the Jewish community in Christopraxis. “It does not take Jesus to get Jews involved in Christopraxis....It takes Jesus for God’s self-realization in history to occur, so that the Gentiles be included” (49).

Within the Justice Church baptism is death to “pure spirituality” as well as “flesh” in order that resurrection into par-

ticipation in historical struggle may take place. The Lord’s Supper deepens participation in that struggle through identification with Messiah Jesus.

Herzog’s presentation includes dialogue with Latin American liberation theologians as well as Marx, analyses of contemporary North American culture and its socio-economic structures, as well as a very practical discussion with his own denomination, the United Church of Christ. One may argue that the Gospel and Church are richer and more multidimensional than Herzog’s vision of Justice Church, but it is clear that the Christian community can never be less than the Justice Church. This book will be widely read.

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WHAT’S HAPPENING TO CLERGY MARRIAGES? by David and Vera Mace. Nashville: Abingdon, 1980. Pp. 144. \$4.95 (paper).

Veteran marriage counselors David and Vera Mace have written a useful new book about clergy marriages. Their chief audience is clergy couples and their chief goal is “to increase the happiness of ministers and their wives...and by so doing to release for them new resources of love and creativity as they pursue their vocations together” (11). It is essentially a self-help book, with an appendix added with recommendations for denominational leaders.

As the title suggests, this book is, in part, a sociological analysis of the marriages of clergy couples. The authors decided to confine their study to the traditional and predominant pattern of clergy couples: a clergy husband and a lay wife. They recognized at least two other patterns—a clergy wife married to a lay husband and a two-clergy couple—but they decided to concentrate on the most typical and numerous group of clergy couples.

The authors combined their own extensive counselling experiences, some original research and a survey of available literature in the field to address the needs of such couples. The research was done in conjunction with a number of conferences and retreats led by the authors and involved more than one hundred fifty couples. The respondents are people already committed to marriage enrichment and their responses provide some helpful insights into the particular problems and opportunities which confront clergy couples. The research isolates some clusters of concerns. At the top of the list is the handling of negative emotions. Also receiving major attention were communication problems, difficulties in resolving conflict, and matters

relating to satisfying social life.

With that research as basis, the authors turned to practical subjects such as congregational expectations, time management, "Parsonages and Moving Vans," and financial pressures. For each topic there is first a situational analysis and then an exercise geared for home use and intended to aid in clarification, growth or resolution. These suggested exercises will be particularly helpful to couples who do not have access to Marriage Encounter programs or pastoral care specialists. The exercises manage to be incisive without becoming too threatening to be used by a couple or a group of clergy couples. In fact, these may be the strongest reasons for reading this book.

A final section attempts to address marriage as vocation and as model. This material suffers from the kind of understanding of clergy and family which is endemic in American congregationalism. For example, it casts clergy in a modelling role, even while questioning the right of others to place clergy and their families on pedestals. The authors suggest the possibility that "there is no more powerful way in which a minister can preach the gospel than in the witness that he and his wife offer through their marriage" (92). That sort of thinking either minimizes the power of the gospel or maximizes the modelling import of clergy marriages. Similarly there are occasional non-contextual applications of scriptures to fit counselling situations. But fortunately the theological problems in the book are only occasional and peripheral to the main message.

A more serious problem is the tendency of the authors to endorse the aspirations of clergy couples for self-

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fulfillment and satisfaction without a corresponding appeal to self-discipline. What historian Christopher Lasch has described as *The Cult of Narcissism* receives covert endorsement, as it often does by people who place client needs above societal ones. The reader needs to remember that some of the current dissatisfaction of clergy couples is an extension of the self-indulgence which characterizes our age. But that does not negate the positive contribution this book makes to the identification of issues and the development of alternatives. It is worth the reading!

One final note about audiences. While the book is clearly for clergy couples, I think it could be helpful reading for those lay congregational leaders who have responsibility to enable effective ministry by their pastor. The format and content could build the kind of understanding a pastor's support group needs, if it is to mediate between congregational expectations and pastoral realities. The book has a place in a congregational library as well as in a parsonage.

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GALATIANS: A COMMENTARY ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCHES IN GALATIA, by Hans Dieter Betz. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979. Pp. xxx+ 352. \$27.95.

American biblical interpreters have played a significant part in the unheralded work of translation in the Hermeneia series. The commentary by Betz is the first volume in this OT and

NT series that is not a translation of a previously published commentary. Betz has set a standard for further contributions to this series, and we can hope that this is a harbinger for future originally commissioned commentaries. This volume continues the useful format of the series which allows for a wider interpretive audience than other “critical and historical” commentaries. Where the biblical languages are included a translation is provided by the author.

Betz has not belabored introductory issues in Galatians, but has provided a measured response to these issues together with references to further discussion. As an interpreter of the NT, he draws upon the primary sources in Greco-Roman literature and Judaism. His extensive work in the Greco-Roman art of rhetoric has led him to apply the genre of an “apologetic letter,” which arose in the 4th century B.C., to the Galatian letter. This provides a helpful interpretive insight not only into the structure of Paul’s letter, but how it would have been heard by its recipients. In place of his physical presence and oral defense, Paul relies on the rhetorical style of an apologetic letter to present his case: Paul (the defendant) presents his case to the Galatians (the jury) in the presence of his opponents (the accusers).

The epistolary framework of Galatians, the prescript (1:1-5) and postscript (6:11-18), surround the body of the letter which includes the rhetorical elements of *exordium* (1:6-11), *narratio* (1:12-2:14), *propositio* (2:15-21), *probatio* (3:1-4:31) and *exhortatio* (5:1-6:10). Similar literary divisions have been common in outlines of Galatians, and a question raised by the proposal would be the division between *exordium* and *narratio*. In Gal 1:11, as in Phil 1:12, Paul uses a verb “to know” to move into the body of his letter. In Galatians this is followed by a series of negatives, “not...neither...nor” (1:11-12), which would question whether a major division ought to be made in the midst of this argumentative style. The characteristic style of negatives followed by the adversative, “but,” is a significant rhetorical device used by Paul several times in Galatians: 1:1, 11-12, 16-17; 2:6-7, 4:14; 5:6; 6:15.

Amidst the strengths of this volume there are theological issues of interpretation which deserve discussion: Paul’s understanding of Torah; the Christology present in the letter; and, the nature of the Spirit’s manifestation.

For Paul to deprecate Torah in the presence of the jury and his accusers would have been unthinkable. As a Jew, Paul treasured Torah as God’s gracious revelation for Israel; however, Torah was

also capable of abuse. That which was instituted as a means of relationship between God and his people, signifying Israel’s dependence upon God, could also be used by Israel to assert independence from God as a means for establishing self-righteousness. Since Israel’s tradition proclaims that righteousness is not established by “works of the law” but by faith (Ps 143:2 cited in Gal 2:16), how could the false teachers delude the Galatians into thinking that gentiles could be made right with God by subscribing only to a selected law, circumcision? The “whole” law must be kept (Deut 27:26 cited in Gal 3:10), in light of which Israel also knew that “the righteous one shall live by faith” (Hab 2:4 cited in Gal 3:11). It is from the totalitarian claim of the law that Christ has delivered his people (Lev 18:5 cited in Gal 3:12), having become a curse for all (Deut 21:23 cited in Gal 3:13). If Torah was gracious revelation for Paul, it also had a temporal function for Israel and is positively understood by Paul as that which kept God’s people in covenantal relationship: the law revealed transgression until the “offspring” (the Messiah) was to

come (3:19-20); the law was that which was not against the promises of God, for it dealt with the power of sin, but it could not make alive (3:21-22); the law was like a guardian that kept God's people in the way "until" the Messiah (3:23-24). In all these ways Paul reflects a positive understanding of Torah in Israel's life as God's gracious revelation and its temporal place until the coming of the Messiah.

For Paul to deprecate Torah in the presence of the jury and his accusers would have been to accept their misunderstanding of Torah. However, Betz interprets Paul as having an "entirely negative view of the Law,...up to 5:12" (274), and the limitation of the Torah "in time or function" as "the only positive thing that Paul can say about the Torah" (149). To agree with this appraisal of Paul's understanding of Torah in *probatio* (3:1-4:31) is to cut out the heart of Paul's positive theological connection to the "whole" law (3:10; 5:14) in the *exhortatio* (5:1-6:10), where Paul proclaims that the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18 cited in Gal 5:14). The only two times the verb "to love" occurs in the letter (2:20, 5:14) indicate Paul's theological connection of law with Christian ethics and its foundation and expression in Christ's love. Paul's theology is dependent upon Jewish theology and we would disagree with Betz that he could "do well without it (Law)." We would agree that he could "not avoid the matter" (175), but this is the point of Paul's argument. Paul has not played into the hands of either the jury or his accusers by deprecating the law. Paul has rather given testimony to the intention of God's Torah in Israel's life and how God's gracious revelation has been brought to fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Gentiles have been incorporated into Israel's life as the children of Abraham and Sarah by promise and faith. This is the covenant of "the gospel proclaimed beforehand" (Gal 3:8) which cannot be added to by circumcision or annulled. It is because Paul's accusers have presented an incomplete and erroneous understanding not only of the Gospel, but also Torah, that Paul must reestablish both Gospel and Torah to their rightful place with the jury (the Galatians). Gentiles have been made heirs to Torah *only through the "whole" law of love brought to fulfillment in Christ* (Gal 6:2). This is Paul's tour de force witness and understanding of Torah and that which provides consistency throughout his theological argument.

Paul's positive understanding of Torah provides the foundation for his Christology which would *not* be a call to an "imitation of Christ" (199). For Paul the radical newness has come in Christ's fulfillment of the Torah and the call to live in the freedom which Christ has made possible (Gal 5:1). So also Paul would *not* view the work of the Spirit among the Galatians as "an ecstatic manifestation" (29), nor does the letter support the hypothesis of "an enthusiast's or ecstatic experience" (132). It would also appear that the goal of the paranesis is *not* just to "induce self-examination and self-criticism" (292), but there is a basis for Christian ethics in the movement from self to the other, brought to fulfillment in Christ's love and manifested in the fruit of the Spirit. Again there is consistency in Paul's argument and his response and witness to the jury and his accusers have *not* separated what

Judaism joined together, "Possession of the Spirit and observance of the Torah" (31). Paul's testimony in this apologetic letter has argued clearly that God has brought both together in Christ, who has come as the offspring of the gospel proclaimed beforehand to Abraham and the fulfillment of Torah graciously given to Israel by God.

The Galatian letter is a carefully constructed argument throughout and Betz has done us a service in his rhetorical analysis. So also is the letter a valuable theological document toward understanding the relationship of Jew and Gentile in the 1st century and its important implications for mutual relationships in the 20th century.

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