



DEUTERONOMY, by Patrick D. Miller, Jr. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990. Pp. 276. \$21.95.

Patrick Miller, the distinguished Professor of Old Testament Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, has written a very readable narrative exposition which brings out in a fresh and vital way the theological treasures in the book of Deuteronomy. According to the design of this series, Miller writes for those who desire to teach or preach this portion of Scripture in the context of the church. Although the exposition does not provide detailed textual, historical, critical or literary information, the reader is periodically aware that the author's knowledge of this information is guiding him to significant decisions. (For example, the exclusive loyalty to one's king, which is demanded in the ancient political treaty structure, informs his understanding of the theological demand of total commitment to God in Israel's covenant [10-11].) At times, not having this information can be frustrating, because interpretations are made without a full explanation (why, for instance, does the double reference to the "torah" in 27:1-10 mean that this section was added later [190]?).

Critical matters are addressed in the introduction to the commentary. It is evident that Miller is very conversant with scholarly research on Deuteronomy. He traces the origins of the traditions in the book back to the northern nation of Israel at the time of Hosea. He believes the majority of the book took form around the time of Josiah's reform in 621 B.C., but also finds later additions coming from the period of Babylonian exile (3). Miller surveys suggestions that Deuteronomy was written in prophetic, priestly, or wisdom circles and demonstrates its covenantal structure, which gets to the heart of the matter (13). Deuteronomy is presented as a series of sermons which use the political covenant structure to call a group of people to order their lives in ways that demonstrate their loyalty and allegiance to God alone.

In his comments on the text of Deuteronomy Miller does not provide a laborious verse-by-verse exegetical survey of opinions and problems. Rather he gives a rich feast of theological insights on the message of the book. He picks up key theological themes in each section, explains the theological implications of each, and frequently draws attention to how these ideas are used in the New Testament. Miller explains that the land in Deuteronomy was promised (God's oath to Abraham); it was given (a divine gift from God that was not earned); and it was taken by Israel through holy wars, though God gave the victory. However, to enjoy the blessings of life and rest on the land God gave, it was necessary for the Israelites to adopt the guidelines for holy living which God provided in the Torah stipulations (26-27, 44-53). The law is seen positively as a source of wisdom, life, and righteousness and as a means of showing people how to maintain a close covenant relationship with God. Miller provides an outstanding discussion of the theology of the sabbath (79-83) and uncovers connections between Israel's testing in the wilderness (Deut 8) and Jesus' experience of testing as recorded in the New Testament (117). Miller appropriately finds the heart of Deuteronomy's theology in the great commandment to love God with all one's

heart. This is a call to establish a personal, intimate, and trusting relationship with God that is nothing less than total commitment.

Although chapters 12-26 are more closely tied to the detailed cultural and historical setting of Israel itself, Miller repeat-

edly manages to find theological principles that give the text eternal significance. The sabbath year of release (Deut 15) is a call for freedom from the burdens that create slavery, for compassion toward one's brothers and sisters, and for generosity to those in need. Instructions to the leaders (king, priest, judge, and prophet in Deut 16-19) emphasize the need for submission to God rather than gaining power or control over others. In the end (Deut 27-30) Moses calls the people to make the choice of life with God under the covenant, or death and the curses of God. If they will see with eyes of faith the glorious things that God has done and promised, God will be their king and they will be God's people.

At times Miller may push the interpretation too far. Do chapters 12-16 anticipate the eschatological kingdom of God and contain "seeds of the Messianic banquet" (131-32)? In what sense is it legitimate to suggest that Moses functioned as a "suffering servant" in Deut 3:12-29 (43)? Are the two explicit references to things done "in secret" (27:15, 24) sufficient evidence to conclude that this secret nuance is "probably implicit in all" the contexts of the curses (195)? These questions are a testimony to the boldness of Miller's interpretation as well as his sensitivity to details.

The strength of this commentary is the extent to which Miller has creatively capitalized on the theological richness of Deuteronomy. His sensitivity to the major theological issues in each section will enable preachers and teachers to open up the heart of faith in the Old Testament with renewed impact and dispel old misunderstandings which completely oppose law and grace. Some will wish for more detailed exegesis of individual verses, but the limited amount of information stems from the purpose of this book as a theological rather than an exegetical commentary. If it is used in concert with a solid exegetical commentary, the value of this more synthetic and theological approach will be evident and most rewarding.

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INTERPRETATION AND OBEDIENCE: FROM FAITHFUL READING TO FAITHFUL LIVING, by Walter Brueggemann. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991. pp. 304. \$14.95 (paper).

Those who find themselves amazed by Walter Brueggemann's ability to generate a rapid stream of well-written and thoughtful books may take some comfort in the realization that this recent book consists not of new writings but rather of fourteen lectures and essays delivered or published by the author between 1984 and 1988. However, such solace does not survive the reading of the book. By integrating these writings and placing them under the larger rubric of interpretation and obedience, Brueggemann weaves a coherent pattern relative to what he regards as the primary tasks of contemporary biblical interpretation in western society.

The warp and woof of this verbal fabric consist of two converging concepts articulated in the book's introduction. The first is *obedient interpretation*, a term meant to describe the interpretive challenge of perceiving "how the Bible authorizes, evokes, and permits a world that is an alternative to the deathly world of our dominant value system" (1). Brueggemann maintains that biblical texts, by virtue of their ability to evoke an alternative world in the experience of the listener, function, on the one hand, to empower those who participate in the realm of imagination and, on the other hand, to delegitimize and subvert the certitude championed by conventional sources of authority in society. This transformative character of the texts, wrought by God and worked through imaginative speech, empowers liberated private and public imagination and a new public ethic shaped by the covenantal intentions of the God of the Bible. Participation in the alternative world leads to *interpretive obedience*, the second organizing concept of this book. The latter term signifies the hermeneutical acts which make it possible for the interpreter to demonstrate how the non-negotiable intentions of God, articulated most clearly in the Decalogue, are to be perceived and enacted in a contemporary situation which differs dramatically from the social context and historical setting of the Bible.

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The book is arranged in four parts. In the first section, "Interpretation as an Act of Obedience," the author is primarily concerned to establish the biblical warrant for the already mentioned distinction between the world as it is and the text's world of imagination, as well as to sample the implications of an imaginative reading of the texts for epistemology, hermeneutics, and questions current in the discussion of canon. Brueggemann asserts, for example, that the alternative epistemology evidenced in the narratives of the former prophets empowers a perception of the world according to the reality of God's rule even as it disputes the inexorability of political or economic domination and, by extension, self-interested theological or moral orthodoxies. This same epistemology, founded on the affirmation of the governance of Yahweh, legitimates and defines the role of a sectarian hermeneutic as the community of faith's tradition of suspicion against a dominant rationality unwilling to cede that constitutive principle. Sectarian speech has, moreover, a transformative potential for public/political discourse, since the avowal that Yahweh rules the world de-absolutizes every partisan claim—including those made by Israel!—even as it affirms the legitimacy of public/political conversations in which all partners are under the same divine governance. In a final essay in this section Brueggemann maintains that the imagination-creating capacity of biblical texts establishes the authority of the texts themselves. It is the *content* of this literature (not theological claims of authoritative norm within a field of certitude) which gives voice to the marginalized, evokes a new imaginative reality, and establishes canon as a field of authorized interpretive possibility within any given context.

A brief second section treats the Decalogue both as the foundation of Israel's covenantal existence as well as a commission for ongoing interpretation of the commandments by the community of faith. The observation that within the Bible itself the commandments are presented as absolute and non-negotiable and yet characteristically available and open to reinterpretation in new social contexts informs the hermeneutics of *interpretive obedience* featured in the book's third major division. Here the author discusses an assortment of pastoral and social concerns facing the church, e.g., the agenda of pastoral ministry, the role and legitimacy of lament, peacemaking, the use and abuse of land, and hospitality to the stranger. These issues share in the

adverse effects of domination by a cultural imagination fed solely by images of production, consumption, possession, and control. Against this Brueggemann calls for pastoral care that evokes a counter-imagination and “the practice of the biblical memory in ways that transform our presumed world. That concrete, rooted memory feeds, legitimates, and evokes alternative imagination which permits alternative persons in alternative community” (175). Such a transformation is made possible, he avers, through the regular practice of liturgies in which the community of faith nurtures an alternative set of biblical images, memories, and metaphors as normative and non-negotiable. Participation in such liturgies evokes the realm of imagination for the community and empowers its members to live out that new vision in the world. A final section, comprised of a single sermon, strives to contextualize interpretation and obedience vis-à-vis the biblical theme of God’s world-ending and new-world-making.

The approach of the book throughout is heuristic: the author resists prescribing a specific method either for undertaking obedient interpretation or for interpretive obedience. Instead he successfully evinces the need for a new angle of vision for both interpretation and obedience within the western church and provides examples of ways in which such a vision or unleashed imagination might be brought to bear on this society. However, the success of this construction is due in part to Brueggemann’s willingness to dismiss from his consideration texts which view in a more positive light those institutions representing the status quo, especially the monarchy, the temple, hymns, and scribal wisdom traditions. He makes plain the rationale for this decision:

We need monopoly of a theological kind to keep life centered against the chaos.
No doubt we need times of gathering around

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the monopoly. But my sense about our, Western cultural situation, with its enormous repression and denial on the one hand, and its frightening monopoly of symbols on the other, is that the tradition of scattering is now most urgent for us. (199)

It is clear from this statement that, when reading the biblical texts, the obedient interpreter needs to exercise a sensitivity to the *Zeitgeist* of the present age. What remains less obvious is the criterion by which those institutions and agents representing a monopoly of imagination are to be so judged and whether or not they might nonetheless be appropriated by means of a hermeneutics of imagination. Might not Israel’s hymns, for example, be understood to serve some other function than the advancement of “the monopoly of social power and social goods that is present and legitimated in the community” (192)? The concern about criteria can likewise be raised when considering those texts which Brueggemann regards as conducive to the evocation of an alternative world. For example, in discussing the ways in which covenant faith in God legitimates the public discourse of both the nation that knows itself to be under divine regency as well as those that do not, it is not clear that the enthronement psalms generally serve to demonstrate that Israel’s “temptation to sectarian privilege is overcome” (75) even if Psalm 96 can be so read. In connection with that same discussion, it is difficult to understand the author’s claim that in the tradition of First Isaiah God deals with other nations without the mediation of Israel, since in Isaiah the activity of Yahweh with respect to the nations is everywhere predicated

upon God's election of Zion and the Davidic monarchy.

None of this is to say that Brueggemann is incorrect in his analysis of western society's malaise. To the contrary, both the description and the solution he proposes ring a gospel truth and make this book an important contribution to the life of the church. Just as one who is interpretively obedient has ever before him or her the hard work of devising societal systems and structures which reflect the alternative imagination, so the task of devising a methodology of obedient interpretation remains a work in progress.

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MARK, by Donald H. Juel. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990. Pp. 239. \$13.95 (paper).

Donald Juel's new commentary provides laypeople, students, and pastors with an excellent close reading of Mark's gospel. As such, it fulfills admirably the intentions of the Augsburg Commentary series. It will serve as a helpful resource for home Bible study, as well as for lesson and sermon preparation by church professionals.

To describe the commentary as a "close reading" (Juel's own term) is to indicate how the book will prove useful. Juel does not treat Mark's gospel primarily as a sourcebook for deriving historical information about Jesus and the early church. Instead, he regards the gospel as a communication event, as a story that makes a claim upon its reader. The commentary intends to elucidate this claim by helping the reader to hear the story the way it is intended to be heard.

The term "close reading" comes from modern literary theory, to which Juel is clearly indebted. His commentary is not, however, an exercise in narrative criticism comparable to those of Kingsbury (*Conflict in Mark* [Fortress, 1989]) or Rhoads and Michie (*Mark as Story* [Fortress, 1982]). The latter studies devote chapters to plot, characters, settings, and so on. Juel follows the more typical format of a verse-by-verse commentary, attempting to focus attention on the narrative's literary facets as the story unfolds. Thus, the book can easily be used as a reference tool for insight on a particular passage but will prove most useful if used as a guide for reading the gospel from beginning to end.

Juel does not allow his appreciation for Mark as literature to eclipse traditional historical concerns. Questions related to source, form, and redaction criticism are addressed as appropriate, though not in detail. In-depth exegetical treatments of

words, phrases, and other thought units lie beyond the scope of this series.

According to Juel, identification of the historical author of Mark is impossible and, at any rate, is less significant than description of the narrator, who writes "from God's perspective" (20). Juel's vision of the audience (or "implied readers") addressed by this narrator is significant. He challenges traditional portrayals of Mark's community as a beleaguered minority composed of Christians from the lower class. Instead, Juel suggests, this gospel assumes an audience of persons who have tasted success, whose problems include the dangers of self-satisfaction, competition for leadership, and taking the gospel for granted. This notion is developed

throughout the commentary in discussion of passages dealing with discipleship.

Structure is an important consideration for literary/narrative studies. Juel follows a simple three-part outline based on the geographical movements of Jesus (Outside Jerusalem, 1:1-8:21; Toward Jerusalem, 8:22-10:52; Jerusalem, 11:1-16:8). This outline assumes that the structure for the story has been determined by its content. Other outlines proposed recently for Mark have suggested rhetorical schemes, through which the story is made to fit a preordained pattern (cf. e.g., Bilezekian, *The Liberated Gospel* [Baker, 1977]; Standaert, *L'Évangile selon Marc* [Stichting Studentenpers, 1978]).

Conflict analysis is another important part of modern literary study. With regard to Mark's gospel, the most important conflicts are between Jesus and the Pharisees or other Jewish leaders. Throughout his commentary, Juel seeks to avoid Christian stereotypes by interpreting these controversies in light of what appear to have been the genuine concerns and interests of the groups involved. While this is laudable in one sense, I fear something is lost in the process. Jesus' opponents are portrayed in a stereotypical way in Mark in order to present the reader with a literary personification of a point of view contrary to God. Of course this representation is a caricature, but unless the caricature is accepted (for the sake of the story), the story will not work.

Juel's treatment of Mark 13 (the "little apocalypse") and of the passion narrative draws from his previous works, *Messiah and Temple* (Scholars, 1977) and *Messianic Exegesis* (Fortress, 1988). The tearing of the temple curtain (15:38) recalls the tearing of the heavens at Jesus' baptism (1:10), suggests an interpretation of Jesus' death as an atoning sacrifice, and anticipates the end of the temple and the order it signifies.

The final words of Mark's gospel have stymied many interpreters. If, as Mark says, the women who ran from the tomb on Easter morning "said nothing to anyone" (16:8), then how did Jesus' disciples ever learn of the resurrection? Juel is content to leave this question unanswered. Numerous statements in the gospel assure the reader that the disciples will have a role in the post-Easter community (10:39; 13:9; 14:28), but we are never told how their transition from apostates to witnesses is effected.

In addition to the works cited above, Juel is the author of *Luke-Acts: The Promise of History* (John Knox, 1983) and of the Augsburg Commentary on *1 Thessalonians* (Augsburg, 1985). He is professor of New Testament at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary.

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THE GOSPEL AND THE GOSPELS, ed. by Peter Stuhlmacher. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991. Pp. 412. \$35.00.

The present volume comes out of a symposium of leading scholars from Germany, Britain, and America, held in Tübingen in 1982. It is a translation of *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1983), although the articles by Ellis, Guelich, Stanton, Marshall, and Dunn were already in English in the original volume. The members of the symposium were convinced of the need to "address the historical-critical questions about the Gospels as literary documents" (xvii). All but three of the essays were delivered at the symposium and later revised in light of the discussion. The book itself is dedicated to

Professor Otto Betz, who is also one of the authors. There are sixteen essays (two by Peter Stuhlmacher), an introduction by Robert Guelich, and a conclusion by Peter Lampe and Ulrich Luz. The introduction by Guelich (xiii-xvii), unique to the English volume, provides a helpful summary of the articles and should be read first. The articles include the following:

Peter Stuhlmacher, "The Theme: The Gospel and the Gospels" (1-25), seeks to demonstrate a continuity between Paul's use of the term "gospel" and the ministry of Jesus who understood his mission in light of Isa 61:1f. (22). Included in the article is a critical summary of recent form critical and "quest" studies.

E. Earl Ellis, "Gospels Criticism: A perspective on the State of the Art" (26-52), is a critical analysis of recent gospel criticism and the presuppositions upon which it is based. Although sympathetic to the "Swedish School" of Riesenfeld and Geerhardsson, Ellis argues that Jesus' ministry was unique and that "no analogy fully suffices, but in the realm of his teaching and its transmission the prophetic dimension is of decisive significance" (50).

Otto Betz, "Jesus' Gospel of the Kingdom" (53-74), seeks to demonstrate that no major tension exists between Jesus' gospel, and Paul's by tracing the use of the term "gospel" in the OT, and particularly in Isaiah.

Birger Geerhardsson, "The Paths of the Gospel Tradition" (75-96), maintains that, the gospel traditions were transmitted in the early church independently, i.e., as "isolated tradition" (76), and traces that transmission back to Jesus and the Twelve. He argues that the various forms and genres of the gospel materials do not reflect different *Sitz(e) im Leben* and that a distinction should be made between the transmission of gospel texts and the varied uses made of those texts. Geerhardsson continues to maintain that "*as far as external form is concerned*" (85), Jesus taught the Twelve in a traditional, i.e., rabbinic, style.

Athanasius Polag, "The Theological Center of the Sayings Source" (97-105), argues for the existence of a written Q but against recent trends which see Q as representing a rival and passionless "gospel" or as possessing a unique theology. Rather, Q reflects the teaching activity of Jesus and "gives us the words of Jesus with the least amount of editing in comparison with other strands of tradition" (100).

Rudolf Pesch, "The Gospel in Jerusalem: Mark 14:12-26 as the Oldest Tradition of the Early Church" (106-148), is essentially a defense of the thesis, stated in his two-volume commentary on Mark, that Mark 4:12-26 acquired its present form in the Aramaic-speaking church of Jerusalem about 37 A.D. and that the death of Jesus was as central for the Jewish church in Jerusalem as it was for Paul.

Peter Stuhlmacher, "The Pauline Gospel" (149-172), asserts that the origin and even the content of Paul's theology (christology, justification by faith, mission to the gentiles, etc.) must be traced to his "conversion and calling" on the road to Damascus. Paul, however, shares with the early church various traditions such as 1 Cor 15:3ff., 11:23-26; Rom 3:25-26, 4:25, 8:3; Phil 2:6-11, etc., and only with respect to the implications of Christ's atonement in regard to the law do differences emerge between Paul and his opponents.

Robert Guelich, "The Gospel Genre" (173-208), maintains that although Mark was not the creator of the material found in his gospel nor of the narrative form for expressing it, he was probably the creator of the literary genre of gospel in that "formally and *materially* the Gospels do stand without adequate parallels in the literary world" (xxiii). This thesis, however, is

rightfully challenged by several other essays in the volume. The gospels share enough features with ancient literary works to call Guelich's claim into question, and Hengel points out that "no one in antiquity thought that the Gospels were a literary genre of a quite new and special kind" (212).

Martin Hengel, "Literary, Theological, and Historical Problems in the Gospel of Mark" (209-251), provides essentially a survey, a most useful one, of present-day Markan studies. He argues against the disjunction between kerygma and history and states that "a *radical* redaction-critical approach cannot do [Mark] justice" (213) because he "is not writing a theological

treatise...but is narrating history...in a manner that can well be compared with a biography" (211).

Graham Stanton, "Matthew as a Creative Interpreter of the Sayings of Jesus" (257-272), discusses fourteen passages and seeks to demonstrate that Matthew was creative but not innovative, i.e., he was an exegete rather than a Christian prophet (271).

I. Howard Marshall, "Luke and His 'Gospel'" (273-292), argues for the unity of Luke-Acts, the purpose of which was "to confirm the kerygma/catechetical instruction heard by people like Theophilus" (291). In so doing Luke seeks "to bind together what happened before and after Easter" (283) and thus show the continuity between the story of Jesus and the preaching and mission of the early church.

James D. G. Dunn, "Let John Be John: A Gospel for Its Time" (293-322), argues that to understand the Gospel of John one must recover its historical context, the apocalyptic and merkabah mysticism of the first century. Yet the value of basing the more accessible (the meaning of the present text of the gospel) upon the less accessible (the hypothetical reconstruction of the situation of the evangelist) is highly questionable. Dunn, however, is correct in seeing that the christology of John is clearly one "from above" and that there is "a closeness of continuity between Father and Son which is more than simple identity of will or function" (313).

Otfried Hofius, "Unknown Sayings of Jesus" (336-360), discusses various possible *agrapha*. He defines an *agraphon* as a saying attributed to the earthly Jesus (not the preexistent, risen, or ascended Jesus) not found in the accepted text of the canonical gospels. He accepts only nine of Jeremias' eighteen *agrapha* (*Unknown Sayings of Jesus*) as being worthy of consideration, and only four of these does he consider certain. He concludes by quoting Jeremias with approval, "The real value of the tradition outside the Gospels is that it throws into sharp relief the unique value of the canonical Gospels themselves" (360).

Albrecht Dihle, "The Gospels and Greek Biography" (361-386), points out some of the differences between these two literary genres. He argues that in general they have a different perspective. Nevertheless, even though the gospels are theological-historical and Greek biographies are anthropological-moral, we can still "with some justification, call the Gospels biographies of Jesus...[although] we must nevertheless keep the idea of the specific Greek art of biography at a distance" (383).

The material in this volume has been available to scholars since 1983, and it is unfortunate that the translation has taken so long. Nevertheless, it is good to see all this material now made available to pastors and students. Unfortunately, the price of this volume is somewhat high. The value of a collection of essays is always mixed, for some are more important and helpful than others. I personally found the articles by Stuhlmacher, Ellis, Gerhardsson, and

Hengel most valuable; least so were the articles by Feldmaier (“The Portrayal of Peter in the Synoptic Gospels”) and Abramowski (“The ‘Memoirs of the Apostles’ in Justin”). It is difficult to recommend this book for a pastor’s personal library, but spending time with a library copy would be quite rewarding.

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THE ‘I’ OF THE SERMON, by Richard L. Thulin. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989. Pp. 93.

THE SPOKEN WORD, by Sheldon A. Tostengard. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989. Pp. 93.

Richard L. Thulin, Professor of Preaching at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, and Sheldon A. Tostengard, Professor of Pastoral Theology, Ministry, and Homiletics at Luther Northwestern, have produced very different but exceedingly helpful books on preaching. Books on the authority and personality of the preacher are not uncommon, but Thulin’s work addresses the more complicated matter of the role of the preacher *in* the sermon. Contemporary preaching is deeply involved in modernity’s “turn to the subject,”

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that is, the rebellion against cognitive, propositional attempts to establish objective truth in the sermon. With its confidence in objectivity shaken, preaching has embraced what George Lindbeck terms the “experiential-expressive” mode of discourse. This entails the expression and validation of doctrine or, in the case of preaching, the text, by means of the preacher’s personal experience. In the early 1960s lay respondents to Ruel Howe’s questions about their ministers’ sermons revealed a deep hunger for more personal revelation on the part of the preacher. That hunger has been satisfied with a vengeance in contemporary preaching. Thulin does not pass judgment on this development; he simply takes it for granted. *The ‘I’ of the Sermon* provides an extremely useful set of criteria and guidelines for the presentation of the preacher in the sermon.

In his chapter on “Types of Personal Story,” he categorizes the guises under which the preacher makes an appearance. In a succeeding chapter Thulin offers prescriptive guidelines for self-portrayal in the sermon. In the course of this discussion he repeats several preachers’ warnings against self-aggrandizement in the pulpit, though I am not sure he fully appreciates how even negative self-portrayal in the pulpit, including a preacher’s allusion to his or her failings, is often self-serving in the end. He surveys the legitimate roles the ‘I’ plays in Christian preaching, including the

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preacher’s mandate to witness and to speak prophetically.

One of the helpful features of this book is the author’s familiarity with a broad range of

homiletical literature. He provides many examples and illustrations of autobiographical preaching, drawing on the work of Leslie Weatherhead, Edmund Steimle, John Vannorsdall, Martin Luther King, Jr., and many others. He does not talk *about* sermons, but he analyzes sermons and takes their texture seriously.

Although not within the scope of this work, it would be interesting to hear the congregation's appraisal of their pastor's self-disclosures in the sermon. Hans van der Geest has provided valuable data in this regard, but his work needs to be duplicated in an American setting. If one could wish anything more of this useful study, it might be a critical assessment of the developments in theology and homiletics that have made a book on the role of the 'I' in the sermon necessary.

Sheldon Tostengard's book is an informative summary of homiletics' developed appreciation of the word and especially its oral nature. Along the way he draws on Susan Langer and Walter Ong on the importance of symbolization and orality respectively. His use of these thinkers is not novel, but the book nicely summarizes their contributions to preaching. In his discussion of Luther the author begins to trace a theology of the word that will be congenial to Lutheran preachers. He rightly identifies Luther's understanding of the word as both oral and personal and then reflects on the relation of dynamic spoken word to the word "fixed in print." Tostengard surveys the main issues in exegesis and interpretation, including the perennial problem of moving from What it Meant to What it Means.

I found Tostengard's brief comments on the use of language in the church's worship the most useful part of the book and the most welcome, since it is the church and its worship which are most often omitted from contemporary considerations of preaching. To the extent that Thulin's work focuses on the persona of the preacher, it runs the risk, at least, of overlooking the communal nature of the language of preaching. In the same vein, Tostengard's concern with the abstract properties of "the word" also endangers the centrality of the church in preaching. That he includes a final chapter on the word in the church is a welcomed addition to the book. *The Spoken Word* may not provide the immediate help many preachers seek, but the mini-systematic character of its discussion of the word will remind us all of what we're about in the pulpit.

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ONE CHRIST—MANY RELIGIONS: TOWARD A REVISED CHRISTOLOGY, by S. J. Samartha. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991. Pp. 206. \$39.95/16.95 (paper).

THE NEW UNIVERSALISM: FOUNDATIONS FOR A GLOBAL THEOLOGY, by David J. Krieger. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991. Pp. 231. \$39.95/16.95 (paper).

Samartha and Krieger have each provided us with a timely reflection on the meaning of pluralism and its challenge to theological reflection and praxis. More specifically, Samartha has suggested the directions of a revised christology, while Krieger has offered some philosophical foundations for a global theology. Despite their rejection of traditional missiologies, Samartha and Krieger should not be dismissed *a priori* without careful examination—not least of all because of their respective sobering analyses of how pluralism calls for a radical reformulation of

the exclusive claims for Christianity.

From the outset, Samartha boldly announces that the underlying conviction of his work “is that, in a religiously plural world, a christology that is biblically sound, spiritually satisfying, theologically credible, and pastorally helpful is both necessary and possible—without making exclusive claims for Christianity or passing negative judgments on the faiths of our

neighbors” (ix). Samartha’s overriding conviction is arresting: in a religiously plural world exclusive claims for Christianity are untenable! Indeed, they are oppressive and do not witness to the truth of the gospel of Jesus the Christ in “an ecumenical setting” which includes “not just Christians but neighbors of other faiths as well in God’s *oikoumene*” (xi). In light of the pressing need for global justice and in the conviction that the global community “is the object of God’s love and justice” (xii), Samartha calls for a revision of the formulations, but not the substance, of Christian faith. No culture, Samartha insists, has normative priority over all others. Christians make this shattering discovery only in the common struggle for justice “with neighbors of other faiths and secular convictions.” Christians discover thereby that there are “liberative streams” in other traditions besides the Bible, which is then placed alongside of, not above, “the ascetic spirituality” of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and other Asian religions. Samartha insists that it is possible “to do justice to the values of compassion and justice in the kingdom of God...without in anyway compromising or betraying Christian commitment to God in Jesus Christ” (xii).

Samartha calls for a revised christology committed to parity in interreligious relationships, in recognition of the fact that in contemplating “the depth and complexity of Ultimate Reality” religious plurality is inevitable. Consequently, not one human response but a plurality of human responses are authentic homage “to the inexhaustibility of the infinite” (4). Samartha is convinced that in the religiously plural world in which we live this quest for a revised christology is both necessary and possible without making negative judgments on the faiths of our neighbors. Over against any “uncritical acceptance of all religions as they are,” this revised christology is a rejection of

the a priori notion that Christ is *against* any religion and that the struggle between truth and falsehood is between Christianity and other religions. That struggle is going on constantly within every religion, and Christians participate in it in the name of Christ. (95)

Samartha’s context is religiously and culturally plural Asia, more particularly India. Having worked in both Geneva (as the first director of the WCC’s Dialogue Programme) and India, he is ably qualified to reflect critically on Christian faith as a western transplant and on the world religions of the East. The reader is also deeply aware of Samartha’s profound commitment to using the multi-religious heritages available to enhance inter-human justice. The fragmentation of humankind and the very threat to global survival make it all the more urgent that scholars of different religious traditions pursue in greater depth “the implications of interreligious dialogues for more just human relations in the global community” (42).

In Samartha’s revised christology, the needs of Asia are paramount. The religious stories of the neighbors of other faiths in Asia and the insights of other religious scriptures, which are

considered to be as revelatory as the Christian scriptures, form part of that rich tradition which Asians reflect upon and use in their movement from “self-centredness to God-centeredness within their own religion” (101). Indeed, one does not have to know Jesus Christ in order to know God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of all humanity. Samartha’s christological approach recognizes “that while there is only one Jesus, there can be many christologies” (103). In a pluralistic world the function of christology “is not to claim uniqueness for Christ by proving that all others are wrong or false, but to confess, explain, and help Christians live in obedience to the truth manifested to them in Jesus Christ” (104). Samartha insists that a revised christology is necessary for healing the divisions, oppression, and exploitation in the world which, wittingly and unwittingly, traditional, exclusive christologies have promoted and sustained. In Samartha’s revised christology there are multiple avatars, and behind and within these avatars, including Jesus Christ, is God the Ultimate Mystery. It is only to Christians that Jesus is decisive and unique.

Samartha’s revised christology covers well-rehearsed ground. His proposal is filled with contradictions; his revision of the formulations of Christian faith reads

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more like a revision of the substance of Christian faith. He does not demonstrate conclusively how one can read the New Testament and not conclude that the uniqueness and decisiveness of Jesus Christ as Savior of all, not just of Christians, is at the heart of the gospel. His doctrine of God sounds more like ancient modalism—God behind the Trinity (96). Despite these and other serious pitfalls, Samartha’s proposal of a revised christology merits our considered reflection, not least of all because of its provocative insistence on the parity of other religions with Christian faith.

Observing that cultural relativism is the inevitable consequence of the rise and fall of colonialism, and that the cultural supremacy of the West is an unquestioned assumption of the past, Krieger asserts that “the task of theology can be seen to be that of a theology of religions within the horizon of a radical pluralism.” Further, “*both* Christian and Secular Humanist thought share the same basic structure, which may be called *apologetic universalism*.” In this new postmodern situation, “truth is many and not one” (3f.). Krieger points out that it was Tillich who, in his last public lecture, acknowledged that in this new global situation, “Christian theology can no longer define itself in terms of the apologetic struggle with Secularism, but rather, has to open itself in a non-apologetic way to the entire spectrum of the religions of humanity.” For this task to be appropriately recognized and expedited, “the theologian must decide to overcome an orthodox-exclusivism which regards all religions other than its own as false,” and “one must free oneself from the temptation to see all religions from the universal, but indifferent, stand point of a secular science of religions which denies the claims of revelation altogether” (9). Rejecting both Barth’s neo-orthodoxy and “Troeltsch’s mediating liberalism” as inadequate solutions, Krieger summarizes the problem facing Christian theology today: “How can the absolute truth and universalism of Christian symbols be understood and expressed in a situation characterized by radical pluralism?” (28).

Nothing less than a global theology of religions is called for in a world in which every significant problem is a global one. Krieger argues that in the unprecedented “conflicts of worlds” we have three specific options of response: *jumping-back*, *jumping over*, and *jumping-*

in-between (35). But neither jumping-back out of fear into the culture in which we were originally rooted, nor jumping-over one's culture, from which one then becomes cut off, is salutary. For Krieger, the only way forward is jumping-in-between, whereby different worldviews are brought into dialogue "by placing them into a horizon of encounter so that they can come into a fruitful and transforming contact with each other" (37).

It is in Raimundo Panikkar's concept of "diatopical hermeneutics" that Krieger finds fruitful, creative, and illuminating potential for a theology of religions. In contrast to exclusivism and indifference, diatopical hermeneutics opens up a horizon of encounter in which not one but all parties experience genuine conversion. "Diatopical hermeneutics stands for the thematic consideration of understanding the other without assuming that the other has the same basic self-understanding and understanding as I have. The ultimate horizon, and not only differing contexts, is at stake here" (49). Summarizing the task of diatopical hermeneutics, Krieger writes:

[It] is to go through the logos, as mere sign, *towards* the mystery *by means of* the symbol. Insofar as it goes through and beyond the self-understanding which a religion has of itself at any given time, diatopical hermeneutics comes into an area which is truly *between* the various religions and which may therefore be called a *horizon of encounter*. This area between the religions, which is the authentic place of dialogue and mutual understanding, however, can only become accessible when a new myth, or horizon, is disclosed within which religions can meet each other. Diatopical hermeneutics is a movement of discourse *through* given beliefs, through the world-boundaries which systems of belief define, *towards* a myth which transforms and unites them. (67)

Krieger finds the philosophical groundings for his use of Panikkar's diatopical hermeneutics in Wittgenstein's "ideal of a universal language," which leads Wittgenstein to posit a "*pragmatic semantics*" (109). Krieger

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concludes his proposal of "the New Universalism" with an informative discussion of the Gandhian concept of *satyagraha* ("holding on to truth"), which is not reducible to non-violence, for the aim of *satyagraha* "is a *mutual conversion* of all parties involved in a conflict. *Satyagraha*, therefore, is a procedure for what may be called *methodological conversion*" (159f.).

There is no question that Krieger's work is a valuable contribution to the discussion of genuine global inter-human encounter in a religiously and culturally plural world. He has made some very difficult material available to the scholar who regards faith as legitimate and not inimical to genuine understanding. There are, however, some shortcomings in his work: his exposition at times lacks clarity; the meaning of conversion in his text remains ambiguous; his discussion of *satyagraha*, though creative and suggestive, offers in the end a hermeneutic which is still essentially extrinsic to the Christian gospel. Perhaps that is the task ahead which needs to be pursued with no less rigor than Krieger's. I suspect that some have already taken up the challenge!

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NAMIBIA: LAND OF TEARS, LAND OF PROMISE, by Roy J. Enquist. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1990. Pp. 174.

When I visited Namibia in November, 1990, our group of North Americans had the privilege of an audience with Deputy Speaker Zephania Kameeta. This thin wisp of a man ushered us into an assembly room where he meets now as a member of the Namibian government. In a soft voice he described the difficulty of reconciliation with one's enemies. It has been very hard to sit across from those who have denied me my freedom, my humanity, he said. But God has made it possible. God has given us our liberation, and God gives us the grace to forgive. Together we must build the new free nation of Namibia.

When, at the invitation of then President Zephania Kameeta, Roy Enquist visited Paulinum Seminary in Namibia (1975-76), he was struck by a historical curiosity: How had the conservative Lutheran churches, planted by apolitical nineteenth-century European pietists, produced religious leaders so actively engaged in the struggle for political liberation? What were the theological sources for Namibian religious activism? What was the context that had transformed a spiritualized piety into a holistic union of faith and action, religion and politics?

The biblical and reformation resources which aided Namibian and South African Lutherans were at least four: (1) a rediscovery of Luther's identification of suffering as a mark of the church ("The Councils and the Church," 1539); (2) the Africanization of the two-kingdoms theory in a recovery of the necessity to preach both law and gospel, judgment and grace; (3) a reinterpretation of Romans 13 to understand the state as divinely ordained to serve the good of the people—where this function is subverted, judgment is required; and (4) creation for freedom in *imago dei*, especially in the theology of Zephania Kameeta.

The book, *Namibia: Land of Tears, Land of Promise*, published on the eve of Namibian independence in 1990, is a valuable exploration of the tortured history of the Namibian Lutheran churches from their colonial origins as German South West Africa to the birth of liberated Namibia. It eloquently conveys the suffering and tears as well as the hope and the promise of this land where Lutheran Christianity took root on fertile African soil and grew in ways the German and Finnish missionaries could not have envisioned. The surprise is only ours, however. For African Christians the separation of religion and politics is unthinkable. Everything in God's creation is connected to everything else. The dualisms that have plagued western Christianity have never infected Africa, with the consequence that the witness and theology of the southern hemisphere can now be a powerful teacher for the north. The book also documents the concrete ways in which Namibian Lutherans have not merely received the message of the gospel and the European Lutheran

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doctrines but have also reinterpreted, rediscovered, and corrected the inherited theology in light of their own experience and historical context. In this ongoing process, the Namibian church continues the unfinished Lutheran reformation.

The Namibian story, as Enquist narrates it, is a tale of oppression and of hope, of guns

and Bibles, of genocide and liberation. The author's purpose is to help make known the "remarkable record of a beleaguered people" and to consider whether their hard-won understanding of faith speaks to the "moral plight" of the world. The author's specializations in ethics and theology, as well as his work as director of the Lutheran House of Studies in Washington, D.C., make him more than casually interested in the development of an African Lutheran ethic in the Namibian context. "Religious faith," writes Enquist, "sometimes seen as the great reconciler of the oppressed to their oppressions, is also capable of serving as the fundamental subverter of structures that violate faith's promise" (18). Enquist argues that "in spite of itself, the European presence in Namibia has managed to leave a legacy...a deposit of religious faith [which] intended by some to quiet the inhabitants of the land, has now proved unpredictable. Within a mere century, it has come to provide both catalyst and energy for nothing less than a fundamental reconstruction of the nation's identity" (17). That national identity is both thoroughly religious *and* thoroughly political in this tiny country of a million and a half people, 95 percent of whom are Christian, and more than half of whose Christians are Lutherans.

In the first of the book's three sections, Enquist traces the history of the Namibian people, pointing out that it was only the Stone Age San who were original inhabitants. The Nama, Herero, Ovambo, Damara, and a century later, the Rehoboth Basters became the country's "first settlers," living as nomadic peoples, struggling among themselves for access to grazing lands in the harsh, arid country. Although frequently in conflict with one another, they established a clearly defined culture of social and political structures based on common ownership and the primacy of the community.

When the first European missionaries came in the nineteenth century, they did not bring belief in God or a concept of political authority to Africa for the first time. "The common assumption among nineteenth-century Europeans that the African people were 'uncivilized'...was fundamentally mistaken" (46). Enquist outlines the belief system of, among others, the northern tribes in Namibia: belief in a "high" God, reverence for the spirits of ancestors, and a legal tradition expressive of community solidarity.

The book's central theological problem, the relationship between church and state, is addressed in a discussion of German colonialism in the first section and then given extensive attention in the second section entitled "Missions, Churches, and Politics." The Rhenish mission, established in 1842 in the south, was unable to hew to its simplistic understanding of Luther's distinction between God's two kingdoms. Believing a strong imperial presence would bring German culture to the African "savages" and help terminate the tribal warfare, the Rhenish mission, says Enquist, "abandon[ed] its own reformation roots by assuming a natural connection between evangelical and imperial concerns" (49). Church and state "working hand in hand" would prove tragically naive. The state would be "removed from evangelical judgment" and the mission, while claiming to be acultural, would in practice require the "substitution of European for African norms for the Christian life" (50). Criticizing Friedrich Fabri, head of the Rhenish mission, Enquist writes:

One moves in neo-Lutheran pietism from a posture of a theoretical separation of spiritual and political concerns to a selfcontradictory policy which, while claiming not to be an ally of any government, yet demands uncritical obedience to whatever policy any specific government proposes even if legislation violates the most fundamental of human rights. (51)

Of course, the most obscene violation of human rights was the German/Namibian war of 1904-07 against the Herero and the Nama. It was an act of genocide. Having already lost more than half their land to the

colonists, the indigenous people revolted. Of this tragic and horrifying era, Enquist writes:

Decimation is, of course, far too weak a word to describe such losses. Holocaust, we have been rightly reminded, should not be used to describe a massacre less severe than that suffered by the Jewish people during the Nazi period, when one third of world Jewry was destroyed. In Namibia early in the twentieth century, however, 81 percent of the Herero and 51 percent of the Nama were annihilated and no one thought to whisper, holocaust. No less incredible, surely, is this: the academic community, the political fora, the mass media, and the churches, seem to have agreed. It is permissible to forget Namibia's genocide. (44)

Enquist avoids "missionary-bashing," however, and takes pains to point out the positive achievements and strengths and the quite different histories of the German mission in the south and the Finnish mission in the north. The missionaries brought the gospel, first and foremost, the good news of personal salvation "that would work a psychological revolution, transforming the traditional culture irrevocably" (46). They brought literacy, translating the Bible into the indigenous languages. They built schools and hospitals. In the north, all medical care was provided by Finnish nurses for nearly fifty years, and most important, because Finland was not a colonial power, "its missionaries [were not] compromised by attempting to represent the interests of both church and empire" (57). "The dignity and authority of the tribal leaders were not undercut by the mission" (58). The fruitfulness of the Finnish work is shown in the size and strength of the church in Ovamboland. It is the largest in the country. "While pietism can preach both a message of patience in the face of suffering and an apolitical indifference bordering on irresponsibility, it can also, as among the Ovambo, serve to champion the oppressed, recognizing the legitimacy of a community's natural leadership as a creation of God. It is not entirely accidental, perhaps, that the nation's primary liberation movement SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) would spring from Ovambo soil" (59).

"Is it believable that nineteenth-century pietism, transplanted to Africa, could generate a religiously profound liberationist posture?" the author had asked in his Preface. "Can one preach a theology of the cross and at the same time be a freedom fighter?" In the final chapter of his book, Enquist answers these questions resoundingly in the affirmative with an examination of the African theology arising from the sufferings of the people. "[Here] we see something of the consequences of believing that the Word of God is not primarily a collection of documents, but a sustaining presence in a history of sorrow, a word that connects human misery and human hope with a God of inexhaustible grace" (10). This constructive section is titled "An African Vision."

As Namibia passed from political domination by Germany, then Britain, and last, South Africa, the churches finally found their voice. In amazing declarations and open letters, the Lutheran churches called their members to repudiate apartheid as a heresy and to condemn oppressive rule as a frustration to God's will that the state be a servant for the good of the people.

In speaking prophetically to an oppressive government, the African churches of southern Africa recovered the traditional reformation insistence that it is the obligation of the church to witness to divine demands for social justice.

In a "Litany for Southern Africa," Zephania Kameeta had written: "Let the day break when all, regardless of their race, language and color / will join hands / and sing in harmony / the song of liberation, love, and righteousness. Lord Jesus, we hope in you: hear our prayer" (131). That prayer has been heard and answered. In his splendid book on Namibia Roy Enquist gives us a compelling picture of a people whose lives are a powerful witness to their trust in God. For planting the seeds of this remarkable faith, the missionaries must be praised.

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