



LUTHER AND HIS MOTHER, by Ian Siggins. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981. Pp. 96. \$4.95 (paper).

The wide notoriety which Erik Erikson's *Young Man Luther* gave to Luther's father made the publication of a book on Luther and his mother inevitable. Fortunately, this work was undertaken by a historian who carefully investigated the sources and was already familiar with Luther's theology. The result is a nice little study which adds to our knowledge of Luther and corrects the skewed perspective of Erikson's book.

In spite of the immense body of literature on Luther, it is still difficult to pin down certain details of his early life. Among these is the family of Luther's mother: Was she a Ziegler or was she a Lindemann? Siggins not only determines that Hanna Luder's maiden name was Margarethe Lindemann, but he also shows how both names found supporters among Luther scholars and how the incorrect name originated as an attempt to counter stories about the dishonorable circumstances of Luther's birth. In the process we learn interesting facts about some prolific anti-Luther propagandists and catch a whiff of the polemical atmosphere of the sixteenth century.

Up to this point Siggins has performed a useful service for Luther biography, but he wants to do more. The fact that Hanna Luder was a Lindemann and not a Ziegler, says Siggins, “strikingly changes our picture of the dynamics within the Luder household, both socially and psychologically” (46). The Lindemanns were a prominent Eisenach family whose members made significant contributions to public life. Martin's father thus married above himself and the ideals for his son were as much those of Hanna Luder's background as of his own. During his school years in Eisenach young Martin lived among his mother's people and their patrician values influenced him more than the legendary personal attention paid to the poor schoolboy by figures such as Ursula Cotta. Siggins points out that her relationship to Luther is supported by no good evidence, and his reconstruction of the Eisenach milieu is enlightening.

Less convincing is Siggins' contention that the traditional portrait of Hanna's sanctity may reflect accurately a piety which left a lasting impression on Martin. Specifically, Siggins believes that the sermons which Luther heard during his adolescent years in Eisenach were crucial for his religious development. The emphasis on contrition and death in late medieval preaching contributed to Luther's decision to enter the monastery and had more to do with his emergence as a reformer than did his academic training. While it is certain that Luther “became a reformer out of urgent pastoral concern” (54), it is only conjecture to maintain that Luther “was driven forward not so much by the abstruse formularies of the schoolmen as by the potent and insistent appeals of the preachers” (70). We do not know what Luther heard from the pulpit in Eisenach or how it affected him.

The precise contribution of Luther's mother and her relatives to Luther's religious formation also remains obscure. The new profile which Siggins gives to Hanna Luder does suggest that Erikson's view of Luther's development as an exclusively masculine story is surely out of balance. Siggins attempts to correct this imbalance by identifying masculine and feminine

archetypes both in Luther's own personality and in his view of faith. While it may be reassuring to hear that Luther was better balanced than Erikson claimed and more receptive to feminine qualities than heretofore realized, the brief analysis by Siggins mainly demonstrates that psychohistory holds a fascination which even good historians find hard to resist. But even if the psychological consequences remain as unclear as ever, the

portrait of Luther's mother as clarified by Siggins does increase our knowledge of the social reality in which Luther grew up.

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CREED AND PERSONAL IDENTITY: THE MEANING OF THE APOSTLES' CREED, by David Baily Harned. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981. Pp. 120. \$7.95.

THE NICENE CREED ILLUMINED BY MODERN THOUGHT, by Geddes MacGregor. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981. Pp. 149. \$7.95 (paper).

These two volumes, commemorating the Council of Constantinople of 381, make a nice, complementary pair of studies of the two ancient creeds. They are complementary not only because each deals with one of the two creeds but also because they take different approaches. Geddes MacGregor, emeritus distinguished professor of philosophy at the University of Southern California, examines the credibility of the affirmations of the Nicene Creed in the light of modern thought, more particularly, of modern science; David Harned, president of Allegheny College, presents an interpretive account of the Apostles' Creed as an expression of Christian self-identity. Some of the questions that, accordingly, come to the fore in MacGregor's book (such as that of what sense a "creation out of nothing" might have) occasion no discussion in Harned's, just as some of the linguistic and hermeneutical considerations in Harned's book (e.g., what is affirmed by the different emphases of "*God* the Father Almighty," "*God the Father* Almighty," and "*God the Father Almighty*") play no role in MacGregor's. Harned's account will seem to be the more idiosyncratic of the two, and occasionally somewhat opaque; MacGregor's, the more traditional, always lucid, and often witty. But both of them are contemporary reflections on the meaning of the Creeds worth reading; both of them combine an appreciation of the tradition with a freedom to differ with it.

Harned interprets the Apostles' Creed not as a set of belief-statements or as a loyalty oath but as "first of all an identity avowal" (19): "This 'I believe' denotes the most decisive relationship the self knows and, because its sense of identity is formed through and reflects its relationships, the words become a confession of who the self is" (19); and "no matter how differently it is understood, the Creed always remains a confession that the self has finally been freed from preoccupation with itself and enabled to see the splendid contours of reality that hitherto had been obscured" (59-60). To show how the Creed functions in this way, Harned uses the ideas of "master image" and "root metaphor," along with some related ideas. The master image—the one that dominates the many particular images which represent to us who we are (23)—contained in the Creed is that of "child of God," supplemented by the other master images, which give it a direction and result from the inner dynamics of the image of child

(namely, the images of inheritor and deputy), and by those images that come from the New Testament story of Jesus (the images of sufferer and player). The final master image (that of the player) conveys, according to Harned, what the images of child and sufferer cannot directly express—the “permission to live ‘as if...as if not’” (115). The “root metaphor” justifying the master image is that of God the Father (28). It is a root metaphor in the sense that the fatherhood of God is the identical element within the diversity of Christian theologies.

Theologically, Harned takes his stand in the Protestant tradition by viewing the second article of the Creed as the basis for the other two—one knows God only through the knowledge of Christ (13, 32). This introduces a certain unclarity into the intention of the identity avowal because what is not made clear is whether this Protestant affiliation is itself part of the avowal or something prior to it. Similarly, the use of the term “root metaphor,” taken from Stephen Pepper’s *World Hypotheses*, raises a problem if it is true that the fatherhood of God is not really a metaphor at all (31) and if the way it is arrived at is not the same as the way described in

the quotation from Pepper given on page 29. But these are technical questions that do not detract from the movement of the whole interpretation.

MacGregor’s intention, with respect to the Nicene Creed, is different. He undertakes to examine the credal affirmations on the basis of contemporary scientific understanding—particularly in physics, existentialism, and parapsychology—and to show how this twentieth-century thought is more favorable to those affirmations than the science of the Enlightenment. His task, he states, is to show how “surprisingly ready for marriage” are the ancient symbol and the new ways of scientific thinking (xiv). This approach does not rule out some negative judgments. About the concept of substance, for example, MacGregor notes that it is an “outmoded metaphor” (46). But, in the main, the accent is on how recent thought makes it possible to appropriate the Creed’s affirmations. Some of the most interesting observations are made in connection with the effort to understand resurrection on the basis of what, in parapsychology, is called the “body of light” (66, 83, 85). Other points on which contemporary thought can be of aid are perhaps more familiar—for example, that, as modern physics shows, we need no longer think in dualistic terms of mind and matter. Through all of the particular observations runs the suggestion that modern thought, like the thought of the Nicene authors, is not bound by the metaphysics that dominate so much theology.

Chapter 7, on the Virgin Birth, exhibits well MacGregor’s careful use of modern science. He does not conclude that, just because parthenogenesis now seems a biological possibility more than it did a couple of decades ago, the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus is made more secure by scientific discovery. On the contrary, he is careful to show the difference between the science and the theology of the doctrine.

Theologically, MacGregor turns the interpretation of the Creed in the direction indicated by an earlier book *He Who Lets Us Be*. It is the direction of a kenotic theology which sees the self-denying or self-emptying quality of the divine not merely as part of Christology but as an integral part of theology itself, a view which has revolutionary implications for Western metaphysics.

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STAGES OF FAITH, by James W. Fowler. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981. Pp. ix + 323. \$10.95.

For those familiar with Fowler's earlier books and articles, there is little mystery about what his latest book is all about. It is *the* theme which has occupied his research and writing efforts for almost a decade. For those who don't know Fowler, and who think of faith in theological terms, this book may seem a bit disconcerting and difficult. Yet, it is one that is certainly worth reading.

Stages of Faith may be disconcerting, especially for pastors, because it claims to avoid doing theology. Fowler makes that assertion early in the book and concludes by arguing that he has done just that—avoided theology. Apart from the fact that Fowler is not all that successful in achieving that aim, he is asking a great deal of pastors who have developed a theological perspective that permeates their thought. He doesn't make matters easier by referring to sources—Tillich and Niebuhr to name but two—that pastors often think of as theologians. The vocabulary Fowler uses serves to compound the problem, words such as transcendent, polytheism, radical monotheism, and most especially, faith. The central theme, that of faith, would seem to be, of all themes, one that is appropriate for theology and the theologian. How can Fowler avoid theology and encourage his readers to suspend their theological thinking as they read his book?

Fowler gives several reasons, the most important being his definition of faith as "...a person's or group's way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives" (4). Since this meaning of faith does not require any religious connotations, he insists that the faith that he has described in this book must be sepa-

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rated from the religious and/or theological. Further, he states that his "...concern is primarily with the human side of faith" (32).

As he concludes the book, Fowler notes that his stage theories can provide a "...normative model in relation to which the adequacy of our particular ways of being in faith can be assessed and faced" (293). All of which is to say that there are definitions and a scientific objectivity to Fowler's work that may be disconcerting to the theologian's understanding of faith. He realizes that and attempts to avoid problems by eliminating the theological dimensions of his work. That effort, primarily the focus of Part I, may result in discouraging many from continuing with the book. For that reason, I encourage those who have difficulty with Part I to skip to Chapters 21 and 23. In those chapters Fowler openly deals with many of the objections that may arise from the reading of Part I, and candidly deals with the theological issues that relate to his research.

Stages of Faith may also be disconcerting for other reasons to varying groups of people. His use and understanding of Luke 18:8 in his concluding chapter may be suspect from an exegetical point of view. Others will react to his conviction that runs throughout the book that "... the normative image of adulthood envisioned in Christian faith leads out toward Universalizing faith..." (295). Some may be relieved to find that Fowler places Hal Lindsay close to the entry levels of the stages of faith and that Robert Schuller does not go far beyond him (301). On the other hand, some of that relief may dissipate with the discovery that the modal stage of faith for Lutherans is one stage below that of Unitarians. For Lutherans who have been

nurtured on the doctrine of “faith alone” and who have looked upon Unitarians as particularly rationalistic in their orientation, this could, indeed, be disconcerting.

The pastor may find difficulty not only with Fowler’s ideas, but with the way that he expresses them. *Stages of Faith* does have some difficult passages, especially for those with little background in developmental theory. The foundational work of Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erikson, upon which Fowler builds, has its own peculiar vocabulary. Sometimes the words come in torrents such as in the sentence: “The solution requires implications, disjunctions, and exclusions, which belong to propositional operations and which presuppose both a combinatorial system and coordination of inversion and reciprocity” (71). Of course, the sentence is taken out of context, but it does illustrate a style that is identifiable with Fowler. The author’s introduction to Part V (218), with its assertion that what follows may require new ways of thinking and therefore may take several readings before it is understood, may be descriptive, at least for some, of several other places in the book.

If *Stages of Faith* can be disconcerting and difficult, it is still a very important book and well worth reading. Several positive things need to be said about it. First, alongside of the notion of its difficulty needs to be placed the excellent organization of the book. Fowler seems to be aware of the difficulty in what he has written and works hard at addressing objections, explaining terms, and introducing and summarizing his material. Each part of the book is woven into that which has preceded in an effort to help the reader discover the background of Fowler’s research, his present understanding of what he has found and where problems and questions are leading him in his continuing research. Not only is the book well organized, but Fowler also uses a wide variety of sources to illustrate his research and conclusions. Allusions to plays, novels, short stories, along with references to more academic types of research, fill the pages of the book. He has a good facility for using anecdotes and comments which he has picked up in his experiences as a teacher. Interviews and dialogues, both actual and fictional, are found throughout the book and add their own particular dimension of reality and drama.

Second, and more specifically, this book is worth reading because of the current developmental theory that it summarizes and interprets. The research and writings of Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erikson fill volumes. Fowler attempts to summarize them in forty-five pages, and does a good job. (It’s a bit humorous that he thanks the participants in the fictional conversation “...for the balance they are

striking between comprehensiveness and economy of presentation in their remarks” [62]. That’s a balance that Fowler himself provided.) The research of these three, plus that of Fowler which is carefully presented in this book, has already had a profound effect upon curriculum materials and teacher training in public education. Its effect in Christian education is already considerable, and will probably grow. (Note the Parish Teacher Packet, Vol. 5, Augsburg, 1981.) Though pastors need not be experts in this field, some knowledge about it would be advantageous as they carry out their functions in both the public and congregational educational programs where they find themselves.

Finally, *Stages of Faith* is valuable in that it affords a way of getting outside of one’s own presuppositions in order to examine the nature of one’s own faith and the faith of others. There may be times when the reader will thoroughly agree with Fowler as he criticizes those religious movements that seem to be destructive of people and faith. At other times readers will, I think, ask themselves what a particular piece of information means for them in terms of their

faith. That may be a bit disconcerting, and even uncomfortable at times, but that just might be the greatest value of the book for the individual reader.

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WHEN GODS CHANGE: HOPE FOR THEOLOGY, by Charles S. McCoy. Nashville: Abingdon, 1980. Pp. 255. \$7.95 (paper).

Charles S. McCoy declares himself to be at odds with conventional theology. He adds voice to the growing chorus of those who find the traditional frames of reference eroding. He not only criticizes, but also points the way to a renewal of theology and ethics. Drawing from Tillich, Polanyi, William James, H. R. Niebuhr and Jürgen Moltmann, McCoy constructs an alternative theological model.

The thesis of *When Gods Change* is that religious pluralism in our world is not to be feared but embraced. We live in a world where there is a plurality of gods; there are old religions, new religions, various and changing conceptions of God within a religion, and even the ultimate concerns of “unbelievers” function for them as gods. We live in a “global marketplace of competing loyalties, commitments and faiths” (118). It is this new *context*, namely pluralism and the “globalization of culture,” which renders the classical model of theology inadequate.

McCoy asserts that what is needed if Christians are to be faithful to the mission and message of the gospel is first of all a new perspective, or “shift of paradigms,” and he takes to task the “Constantinian paradigm,” the dominant theological perspective in the West since Augustine. Theologians who work within this paradigm have tended to (1) limit the scope of religious study to institutionalized Christianity, (2) restrict the discipline of theology to the ecclesiastical sphere alone, or more narrowly to a single religious community, (3) borrow method and style from one or more Western philosophers, and (4) arrogantly proclaim their theology in the “imperial mood,” as if no other Christian tradition has the Good News straight and no other religion witnesses to truth at all.

McCoy avers that this traditional model of theology is collapsing and applauds its demise. He says that too often the Christian witness has been intolerant of other truth claims and quick to exercise judgment on other religions. He reminds all people of faith that theology is done on earth not in heaven; all knowledge of God is mediated through human experience.

Affirming that Christian theology needs to be liberated from this stifling paradigm if the gospel is to be heard as truly good news, McCoy calls for a transformation in theological *method* as well as *perspective*. “Liberation” is the key concept in McCoy’s alternative paradigm. He advocates a federal paradigm, building on the assertion of William James that “the pluralistic world is more like a federal republic than an empire or kingdom” (48). A federal paradigm is keyed to the history, commitments, and loyalties that constitute the fabric of human communities. It aims to discern the changing patterns of faith. Therefore, liberation is both

a process and a goal. The ideal society would be one in which “a variety of groups with different ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual consciousnesses maintain their own identity, develop their

own traditions or special interests, and participate in a common society from their own distinct perspective.”

With liberation as a key concept it’s not surprising that McCoy finds power and promise in Liberation Theology. In the closing chapters of his book McCoy weaves together themes from Moses, Moltmann, and Marx, calling Christians to join the worldwide struggle for human liberation.

When Gods Change does not present a detailed and precise argument, nor is that the author’s intent. Rather, McCoy aims to “evoke multidirectional interaction among the variety of disciplines and perspectives needed to deal with the fascinating problems of theology in the global culture” (81). Nevertheless, a lack of clarity and precision creates confusion. He acknowledges that it may be strange to speak of many gods, and I did find it so. He writes, “the persons of other religious beliefs believe, not in illusion, but rather in what they understand to be reality” (32). And elsewhere, “a god becomes God in human believing” (198). Might not someone believe that a god is real, yet be mistaken? Christians claim that God is real and exists prior to the experience of knowing him. Is there any reality to a god apart from someone’s belief? Even though McCoy only argues for a functional plurality of gods, I was never sure what the difference was between the God known through Jesus Christ and other gods.

McCoy says that all people believe, even unbelievers have their own ultimate concerns, their own gods. Is this true? What of those who seem content to drift along in life without ultimate concerns? There seem to be more than a few such people.

Finally McCoy rejects the help that philosophy, more specifically metaphysics, can give to theology. “Contemporary theologians...do not seem to think it is possible to do theology without relying on some particular philosopher” (81). This is unfortunate, because a metaphysic which offers a convincing view of reality could help us understand the metaphysical implications within past theologies and guide in the development of future frameworks of meaning. A coherent and convincing vision of the whole is needed more than ever when theology is in a period of transition.

McCoy repeatedly borrows insights from process theology, but rejects the Whiteheadian metaphysic. This is troublesome, because the significance of process theology is dependent upon the soundness of the metaphysic. McCoy criticizes metaphysics for being rationalistic and speculative. However, Whiteheadian metaphysics is empirically anchored. If the Whiteheadian description of the real world is convincing, then the metaphysic can help faith understand and communicate its claim that God is real and known through the world. This help is needed, as the confusion and contradiction in the preaching of the gospel today derives from an inability of teachers and preachers to speak coherently and persuasively about God.

In a time when change shakes the foundations of inherited traditions, McCoy does offer hope and guidance for the theological task. Not content to point out the inadequacies of past formulations for the present, McCoy offers a new context, perspective, and method for understanding our world. *When Gods Change* is a book worth reading for anyone striving to let the Word speak to the world.

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EARLY ARIANISM, A VIEW OF SALVATION, by Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981. Pp. 209. \$24.95.

This highly impressive work of scholarship is the first serious work on Arianism to appear in almost forty years. In it the authors challenge the traditional view that Arius and his followers began with a view of monotheism and a cosmology which sought to safeguard the unity and monarchy of God, and that their inspiration came from Platonic philosophy instead of the Scriptures. Gregg and Groh

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argue convincingly that Arianism was primarily informed by its doctrine of salvation and it relied almost entirely upon its exegesis of the Scriptures for its formulations.

In the Arian scheme of things, all creatures, including the redeemer, were ultimately and radically dependent on a Creator whose sole method of relating to his creation was by his will and pleasure. The Son was not an extension of the divine nature but a creation of the divine will. Whereas salvation for the orthodox (i.e., Athanasius) required the Son (and Jesus Christ) to share in the divine nature, salvation for Anus was effected by the Son's identity with the creatures. Therefore the Arians instinctively gravitated to those scriptural texts which emphasized the commonality of the redeemer's characteristics with those of other creatures. Christ gained and held his sonship through his own growth in obedience through the exercise of his will. Adoption as a Son of God was the reward for making progress in obedience. The Good News for other humans was that since one of their own kind was capable of such growth, it was also possible for them. Grace, like adoption, was something bestowed by God because one's virtuous conduct merited it. One attained grace through moral diligence and discipline.

Likewise the Son of God, the Logos, though he pre-existed all other creatures, was willed into existence by God. God was God from eternity, but he can be called Father only from that moment the Son was willed forth. Therefore the Logos does not share in the divine essence. He is not a biological or ontological Son, he is an adopted Son.

The Athanasian party, on the other hand, viewed salvation in terms of deification, effected by the incarnation of a fully divine Son who offered the empowerment of grace to humans. Whereas the Arians found comfort in the changeability and possibilities for growth in the redeemer, the Nicene party strenuously defended the immutability of the Son and placed their reliance for salvation on this divine attribute.

This book offers impressive documentation for the fact that the Arian controversy was above all a conflict over Biblical exegesis, hermeneutics and soteriology. The authors also have demonstrated that the Athanasian group was not always fair to their opponents, either misrepresenting their position or ignoring salient features. This work also canvasses the question of possible antecedents to Arius' theology by rehearsing the arguments involving Paul of Samosata, Lucian of Antioch and many earlier theologians. The conclusion is that, although both Athanasius and Arius can be said to appeal to earlier Christian writers, each position at Nicea, the Arian and the orthodox, represented something of a novelty in the church.

A most intriguing chapter is that which offers an analysis of Athanasius' *Life of Anthony*. It would seem that Arius' soteriology, having to do with growth in perfection, would be most congenial to the monks. Therefore a battle was also being waged for the support of the numerous monks who populated Egypt in the fourth century, and Athanasius' *Life of Anthony* "must be regarded as a major battle in that offensive." There is evidence that sources other than

Athanasius' portray Anthony in a far different light than does the *Life*, which was probably written to engage the monks in the Athanasian cause by injecting the orthodox soteriology and Christology into it. The authors offer evidence to suggest the patriarch of Alexandria may never have met the desert monk.

The book has offered this reviewer massive documentation for the hunch he has taught seminarians for many years, that the issue at Nicea in 325 was not the doctrine of God or Trinity, but that of salvation, and the Arian party had a system of theology and precedents equal to that of the orthodox. Therefore it underscores for modern theologians again the questions: what does salvation mean, what is the relationship between the redeemer and the redeemed, what is the path toward holiness, and what is the relationship between human action and divine initiative? The book is also a caution not to dismiss too easily the ancient (modern) 'heresies' with catch phrases or generalizations without an attempt to give them a fair hearing. The authors make no value judgments on either party, other than to

suggest the Athanasians did not do justice to their opponents. Yet having digested the inner workings and exegesis of the Arians, this reviewer would find the Arian salvation difficult to accept in terms of striving for holiness and perfection.

Gregg and Groh have produced a model piece of scholarship, promoting a healthy reflection on the accepted forms of anti-Arian dogmatism passively transmitted over the centuries.

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THE HOLY SPIRIT, by Eduard Schweizer. Translated by Reginald H. and Ilse Fuller. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980. Pp. 138. \$9.95.

Written by the distinguished contemporary scholar, Eduard Schweizer, Professor of New Testament Theology and Exegesis at the University of Zurich, this book is *multum in parvo*. Thorough but not pedantic, it should appeal to many a reader.

The book consists of five chapters, the first and last having very similar titles, "What is the Holy Spirit?" and "What, then, is the Holy Spirit?" respectively; the other three chapters deal topically with biblical and inter-testamental evidence. Schweizer begins with a consideration of views about the Spirit from various periods of history, from the first century to the twentieth. Proposing to consult the Bible itself to find out how its authors experienced the Holy Spirit, Schweizer states we shall want to keep four basic points in mind: the Spirit's strangeness, the Spirit's creation, our knowing, and the future consummation. The fifth chapter summarizes.

Chapter Two gives "the witness of the Old Testament," with the data marshalled under the several headings listed above. Whether by prophets or others in the Old Testament, God is encountered "as the completely Unexpected" (14), always creating. The major prophets point to a world beyond what is normally seen and recognized, where the Holy Spirit reigns. Not only is final judgement foreseen, but a new world and a new humanity.

Chapter Three, "The Spirit in Inter-Testamental Judaism," includes a consideration of how being under foreign rule, especially "Hellenistic," affected Israel's outlook. Topics

discussed include those of evil, flesh and spirit, “immortality of the soul,” Messiah, and resurrection.

The heart of the book is Chapter Four, “The Holy Spirit in the New Testament.” Much evidence is here, cited with the recognition that the work and person of the Holy Spirit were revealed only step by step through the experiences of many witnesses in various idioms. Scarcely speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jesus simply counted on the Spirit. Bearing God’s Spirit, he brought God’s reign.

Drawing especially from Paul, John, and Luke-Acts, the author demonstrates how the Spirit is the power of Jesus’ resurrection (55), the revealer of the Crucified (78 f.; 96-98), and the One who effects a “new creation” within and encompassing believers (69-73).

Incisive and balanced is the section based on Paul, “The Manifold Variety of the Gifts of the Spirit” (89-96). Opening with a statement that the primitive Church’s core confession, “Jesus (Christ) is Lord” is the criterion of all gifts, it closes centering on the crucified Jesus whom the Spirit conveys to the believer’s heart. Every member of Christ’s body is vital since each is gifted to build up the other. Gifts are of shifting importance, “depending on which one God needs at any given time” (93). Administering and serving are as authentic as glossolalia and prophecy. In a section on John the author calls attention to emphases differing from those of Paul.

The final chapter deals with the various accents in the New Testament regarding the Spirit, and with six marks of the Holy Spirit, concluding with openness for God and God’s future. There is much more in this book, e.g., a fine section on sanctification as a gift (87 f.). It is first-rate. Stimulating and informative, the book lends itself to careful perusal and permanent reference.

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WOMEN AND RELIGION IN AMERICA, VOLUME ONE: THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, ed. by Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981. Pp. 352. \$14.95.

At the mid-point of the 19th century, the English poet, Alfred Lord Tennyson, delineated roles for the sexes in his poem “The Princess”:

Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
Man for the sword and for the needle she:
Man with the head and woman with the heart:
Man to command and woman to obey; All else confusion.

Although written by a poet of England, these lines, to many of us, describe roles for men and women in 19th century America as well. Our common stereotype of sex roles a century ago portrays them as separately—and strictly—defined. Human experience was divided into a masculine and a feminine sphere: the masculine was worldly, rational, and authoritative; the feminine, domestic, emotional, and submissive. Both the poem and our stereotype, to some extent, present an apt image of sex roles in 19th century America.

To explore, among other things, such roles for men and women in 19th century America,

Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller—faculty members at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, and codirectors of the Institute for Study of Women in the Church—have edited the first of a three-volume study entitled *Women and Religion in America*. From the late 18th century until the 20th, women and religion have, in America, been intimately related. This is due, in part, to the policy of separation of church and state which emerged after the Revolutionary War. It ruled that church and state were to occupy separate spheres. When this policy combined with the culture's roles for men and women—which were, predominantly, as Tennyson defined them—a curious alignment evolved. The state, the public and authoritative realm, became the sphere of men; for, the sword, the head, and the law were, according to the dictates of the 19th century, in men's arena. And the church, the attendant of the inner person and the admonisher of submissiveness, became the sphere of women. In fact, during the 19th century, women and religion became so intertwined that historians speak of “the feminization of American religion.” Furthermore, many of the great leaders of Women's Suffrage—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony—were devout Christians; they articulated their Christian faith as the impetus for their advocacy of women's rights. Thus, it is appropriate that Ruether and Keller focus the first volume of their study on the 19th century.

What emerges from this volume is a vast and detailed picture of women's religious involvements in the last century. It was first in revivals that women exercised leadership, and eventually preached from the pulpit. The first chapter, “Women and Revivalism,” by Martha Tomhave Blauvelt, traces women's increasing participation in an active revival ministry. Influenced by the notion of the complementarity of the sexes—as presented in Tennyson's poem—Revivalism upheld the perfectionist view of femininity, which regarded woman as spiritually superior to man. In “Women in Utopian Movements,” Rosemary Radford Ruether examines utopian and millennialist sects that shared this view and attempted, through communal living and perfection of the feminine, to create a new, redeemed humanity.

In her chapter on “The Leadership of Nuns in Immigrant Catholicism,” Mary Ewens attempts to remedy past treatment of Catholic nuns by church historians. Nuns were, she claims, active and autonomous, and instrumental in introducing Catholicism to America. While Ewens' thesis is sound, this essay is, for me, the one weak chapter of the book. Generalizations and oversimplifications hamper its argument. For example, when speaking of the nuns' Civil War work, Ewens observes: “Surgeons, doctors, officers, and patients were all impressed by the devotion of the sisters to the sick” (102); and again, when discussing the nuns' role in education, Ewens claims that, “Sisters' schools won friends for the Catholic Church wherever they were established...” (102). Weakened by such generaliza-

tions, this essay seems an idealized portrayal of Catholic nuns.

The fourth chapter, “The Jewish Woman's Encounter with American Culture,” by Ann Braude, examines the experience of Jewish women in America. Unlike their Christian sisters, who were aligned with the realm of the religious, Jewish women were to work in the secular world so that their husbands and fathers would be free to study the Torah and worship in the temple. Consequently, Jewish women's religious struggle was for entrance into the temple sanctuary and participation in worship. As a result of their involvement with the secular world, Jewish women—such as Annie Nathan Meyer, who founded Barnard College—started and supported significant philanthropic endeavors in such fields as health and education.

Barbara Brown Zikmund considers “The Struggle for the Right to Preach,” which began

with women's leadership in Revivalism and received further impetus when Antoinette Brown Blackwell became the first ordained woman, in 1853. Rosemary Skinner Keller examines "Lay Women in the Protestant Tradition," a movement which expanded throughout the century until, in the last decades, women were operating mission societies with million dollar budgets and influence around the world. In the last chapter, "Women in Social Reform Movements," Carolyn De Swarte Gifford shows how women in these movements—Angelina and Sarah Grimke, Laura Haviland, Amelia Bloomer—advocated not Tennyson's complementary view, but an egalitarian view of the sexes, and to this end, made social reform their religious endeavor.

The methodology of this book is noteworthy. Each chapter begins with an essay by an historian which sets forth the telling issues of the subject at hand and analyzes them. Following each essay are photographs of the principal women involved in the chapter's issues. And then, at the end of each chapter, are primary source documents—letters, speeches, tracts, diaries, sermons—that exemplify 19th century discussions of issues related to the chapter's subject. These documents not only substantiate the essay's theses, but they allow one to read and analyze first hand significant and fascinating primary source material.

In the end, this book attests to the presence of more debate about sex roles in 19th century America than Tennyson's poem would indicate. Although roles for men and women, as Tennyson delineates them, prevailed throughout the century, several strands of challenge to these roles existed in the 19th century and continued on into the 20th to influence our own discussions and redefinitions of roles for men and women. One of these strands accepted Tennyson's complementary view of male and female and endorsed the different spheres for the sexes; but gradually, throughout the century, woman's sphere of hearth and heart expanded from the homefires to include the homes of the entire world, and, thus, generated women's world mission work in the 19th century. Another strand criticized Tennyson's notion of the complementarity of the sexes, and instead, perceived male and female as equals, a view that inspired numerous reforms for women, from the wearing of bloomers to the vote. In a comprehensive, responsible, and compelling way, *Women and Religion in America: The Nineteenth Century* presents these various and tense strands of the last century. I believe they are vital for us today, because they weave the beginnings of our own debates about sexuality and theology and the roles of women and men in the church. This volume offers a greatly needed perspective for those of us who are today attempting to realize the fullness with which we are blessed as God's created ones, made in God's image.

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A BIBLICAL BASIS FOR MINISTRY, edited by Earl E. Shelp and Ronald Sunderland. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981. Pp. 238. \$9.50 (paper).

One would assume that all credible theological education, all academic efforts to study biblical literature, would directly and indirectly affect parish ministry in some way. That assumption is challenged simply by the "necessity" of this book which contends throughout that the vital link between scholarship and the daily

Five respected scholars provide those in parish ministry with scriptural insights, but more than that, they divulge, for ministers, the pastoral concerns of those in scholarly work, and an invitation (if not also a hoped-for inclination) to those in ministry to probe the biblical disciplines so necessary for the carrying out of parish duties. The two “concerns” are “indissolubly linked,” contends Paul J. Achtemeier of Union seminary in Virginia (145).

Along with Achtemeier’s fine article, “Resources for Pastoral Ministry in the Synoptic Gospels,” are four equally distinctive treatments of scripture found more often in Reformed methodology than in, say, Lutheran. James A. Wharton, a Presbyterian minister and former Old Testament professor at Austin, deals with the concept of covenant in ways which, for this Lutheran reviewer, made the book worth the price and the time to get into it. The book needs some “getting into” and Wharton’s article, first in a line of five, provides the reader with sufficient interest for the task.

All the articles attempt to deal with biblical ideas about ministry (especially Wharton, Rabbi Samuel E. Karff’s excellent and insightful article “Ministry in Judaism: Reflections on Suffering and Caring,” and Victor Paul Furnish’s “Theology and Ministry in the Pauline Letters”). The fifth contributor, D. Moody Smith, New Testament Professor, Duke Divinity School, was heavier on Johannine scholarship, leaving less space for the otherwise well-developed connecting links to ministry. The editors provide the reader with an epilogue which identifies questions for both disciplines, with the hope that the “conversation” will not only grow but also deepen.

While the contributors all acknowledged the need for extensive conversation between “theology” and “ministry,” a few issued warnings that left no doubt as to which of the disciplines should charge the other. Achtemeier strongly suggests to pastors that “attempts to deduce from a Gospel account the psychological motivations,” as well as other more or less “pious imagination” which the preacher may utilize, come close to a reversal of Paul’s “dictum that he preached Christ as Lord, and not himself” (148). The book, however, rarely “speaks down” to the minister.

My favorite “treatments” were Achtemeier’s on the Beatitudes (153f), Karff’s on Suffering (74f), and Wharton’s on God’s freedom and vulnerability (25ff).

Patient explanations and—for the most part—less than strained applications of scripture to ministry make the book good reading.

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FAITH AND THE PROSPECTS OF ECONOMIC COLLAPSE, by Robert Lee. Atlanta: John Knox, 1981. Pp. 170. \$6.95 (paper).

WHERE FAITH AND ECONOMICS MEET: A CHRISTIAN CRITIQUE, by David M. Beckmann. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981. Pp. 154. \$5.95 (paper).

ECONOMIC ANXIETY AND CHRISTIAN FAITH, by Larry Rasmussen. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981. Pp. 124. \$3.95 (paper).

Economic uncertainties have become the preoccupation of the nation, from presidential politics to lunch-counter conversations. Three recent books attempt to relate Christianity to economic concerns, with varying success. None constitute substantial contributions to the

discussion of professional Christian ethicists; the books are written for popular consumption, perhaps suitable for church study groups. That is not an implied criticism but simply a description of the genre. Discussion of economics and ethics does little good if it remains confined to the inner circle of professional ethicists.

Robert Lee, professor of social ethics at San Francisco Seminary, has written about “Faith and the Prospects of Economic Collapse.” Like the other two authors, Lee wishes to initiate a dialogue about “what a Christian response might be to issues

that have for too long been ignored or disdained by religious believers, who resent the intrusion of material matters upon their spiritual vision” (9). Lee’s particular treatment is crisis-focused. If one has heard passing talk about economic doomsayers but has never really investigated the bases for their fears and arguments, Lee provides a primer. He believes that “the economy is vulnerable to collapse on a scale comparable to the 1930s” (11) and builds his case with descriptions of a national credit binge, a banking system that fuels inflation, excessive federal debt, and a weakening of the traditional work ethic. The book includes striking statistics and disturbing historical parallels, but the discussion is clearly selective. Consideration of the implications of federal debt, for instance, sounded very much like one side of the debate in the last presidential campaign. Could we not expect at least an acknowledgement of alternative perspectives, followed by an evaluative discussion of each?

The real failure of the book, however, is its weak integration of faith perspectives with economic analysis. Lee comes perilously close to reducing faith to a secularized “confidence,” which is admittedly vital for almost any economic system but is hardly a full delineation of Christian faith and its economic implications. Most of the discussion of faith is restricted to a final, isolated chapter, where Lee advocates honesty, community, simplicity (restraint), caring, and hope, in order to produce a shift from (in terms he has coined) “ego-ethics” to “eco-ethics.” But the most basic issues are not addressed. Lee hopes for a reversal and recovery which will “make for a healthier economy” (157), but what *constitutes* a healthy economy, in the light of Christian faith? Does it presuppose growth, “progress,” free enterprise?

The other two books offer a more searching examination of values and goals. David M. Beckmann is both a Lutheran minister (from Christ Seminary, St. Louis) and a World Bank economist (educated at the London School of Economics). His writing of *Where Faith and Economics Meet* is a personal attempt to integrate his own life. “I started writing this book,” he says, “because of my own need to make coherent sense of my perspective as an economist, my exposure to different countries, and my Christian faith” (9). Beckmann argues that modern economic culture is built upon six Enlightenment ideals which are partially rooted in the Bible: this-worldliness, progress, reason, liberty, equality, and fraternity. Tragically, what could be “holy materialism” frequently has become a dangerously twisted affluence, especially when the Enlightenment social values (liberty, equality, fraternity) are neglected.

Essentially, Beckmann is a chastened capitalist. He mentions the East German Christian notion of “critical solidarity” and would like to apply that perspective to the capitalism of his own background, appreciating the freedom and creativity encouraged by capitalism but dissenting from the inequality and greed which often accompany them. He provides a helpful outline of arguments for capitalism and socialism and the values fostered by each, and concludes that Christians “should embody the best intentions of both the Left and Right” (75).

Against those who detect an end to world economic growth or who argue for less growth

and more redistribution, because of limited world resources, Beckmann exudes confidence. "I don't agree that the long climb to world affluence since the Industrial Revolution is or should be coming to an end," he writes, later adding, "I expect that existing resources, along with technological innovations, will allow gradual increases in standards of living worldwide into the foreseeable future" (19, 97). With the exception of one supporting footnote, they appear to be statements of faith rather than arguments.

That comment suggests a general dissatisfaction. For reasons difficult to articulate, the book seems limp. Beckmann shares his convictions, but without the provocative data and quotations of the other two volumes reviewed here. In addition, the author seems so concerned to "have it both ways" that one longs for a bold statement. The book is a little like an over-generalized sermon without illustrations; much of what was said may be valid, but it is delivered with no punch or power.

Larry Rasmussen, professor of Christian ethics at Wesley Theological Semi-

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nary, provides what would be my choice of the three books for a church study group. *Economic Anxiety and Christian Faith* provocatively raises an impressive variety of issues. What are the assumptions characteristic of American culture, and how do they relate to Christian values? How should Christians evaluate the values of capitalism and socialism? Are wealth and poverty the result of God's blessings and curses, human ambition and laziness, or unjust social structures? Is this an expanding economic world in which we can bake ever bigger pies with larger pieces for all, or is it a limited world in which we must slice the pie more equally? Written more expressly for study groups than the other two books, each chapter concludes with a "study project."

My only complaint is that the chapters are too brief, teasers which simply get one started. Perhaps that is appropriate for the genre, although I suspect that we often underestimate the laity of our churches and deprive them of challenging, substantial materials. Yet if this kind of popular study guide prompts Christians to read further, such as Rasmussen's own *Predicament of the Prosperous* (with Bruce Birch), or Philip Wogaman's *The Great Economic Debate*, there may be hope for closing the gap between Christian reflection and economic life.

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OLD TESTAMENT WISDOM: AN INTRODUCTION, by James L. Crenshaw. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981. Pp. 285. \$9.95 (paper).

It has frequently been observed that the perspective which dominated biblical studies for the past generation found it difficult to accommodate the kind of literature in the Old Testament known as "wisdom." As a result, there was for a long time a relative scarcity of scholarly publications treating this literature, and especially of works which would assist the non-specialist in becoming acquainted with it.

While wisdom literature continues to impress the reader with its distinctive qualities, the more varied perspectives of recent biblical scholarship have stimulated greater interest in this somewhat neglected area, and the last decade or so has seen the appearance of several books intended to supplement their older counterparts. With these in mind, James L. Crenshaw begins

the introductory chapter with the assertion that “students of Israelite wisdom have at their disposal a number of significant studies dealing with particular aspects of the phenomenon, but no really satisfactory introduction exists at this time” (11). This book is intended to fill the gap.

Near the outset, Crenshaw proposes a definition of wisdom:

...formally, wisdom consists of proverbial sentence or instruction, debate, intellectual reflection; thematically, wisdom comprises self-evident intuitions about mastering life for human betterment, gropings after life’s secrets with regard to innocent suffering, grappling with finitude, and quest for truth concealed in the created order and manifested in Dame Wisdom. When a marriage between form and content exists, there is wisdom literature. Lacking such oneness, a given text participates in biblical wisdom to a greater or lesser extent (19).

He identifies as the literary corpus of wisdom the books of Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), and Wisdom of Solomon, along with certain Wisdom Psalms. Although he discusses wisdom influence beyond this corpus, Crenshaw deplors the tendency to claim large portions of the Old Testament for the sages; such claims “rest upon circular reasoning” and threaten “to distort the meaning of wisdom beyond repair” (41).

The general arrangement of this book makes good sense. The first chapter, “The World of Wisdom,” considers the identity of Israel’s sages, their goals, and the language and literary forms by which they pursued them. The central and persistent emphases examined in chapter two, “The Sapiential Tradition,” include the role of Solomon as Israel’s greatest sage, the international character of Israel’s wisdom, the setting for her sapiential activity, and such features as the “pursuit of insight” and the search for “Life.” These features anticipate the subject of chapter eight, “Wisdom’s Legacy,” which provides a

description of what Crenshaw considers notable contributions made by wisdom to ancient Israelite thought.

The intervening chapters, three through seven, review in turn each of the books previously identified as the literary corpus of wisdom. The first of these, which deals with the book of Proverbs, proceeds systematically from literary analysis to theological synthesis. Similar concerns inform the treatment of the other wisdom writings, but are not as systematic in their procedure. The final chapter is a survey of Egyptian and Mesopotamian Wisdom literature.

The usefulness of this introduction is greatly enhanced by the numerous endnotes which document the dialogue being carried on with other scholars, and by the indexes of biblical passages, authors, subjects, and Hebrew expressions. The bibliography is exceptionally extensive for such an introduction, running to well over 150 items; it would have been helpful, however, if these had been grouped into categories such as general works in Old Testament, books about wisdom in general, commentaries, monographs, and journal articles.

In this book, Crenshaw provides an excellent summary of the present state of scholarship in wisdom studies. Beyond that, he enters vigorously into debate over controverted matters; one may note, for example, his trenchant rejection of “the common assumption that old wisdom, as it is usually called, lacked religious content altogether” (92). Finally, his summary comments often convey provocative insights into the accomplishments of Israel’s sages.

I close with two brief instances of such insights. One is from the chapter on “Wisdom’s Legacy,” much of which is devoted to the development of the claim that a major contribution of wisdom was the growth of skepticism in ancient Israel.

What, then, did these skeptics accomplish?...they refused to take confessional statements concerning divine control of human events at face value, and they insisted that boasts about human ingenuity also be taken *cum grano salis*. Pressing the interrogative mood thus placed linearity in jeopardy,...but it also showed the inadequacy of the critical tool by which divine purpose was discarded (208).

The other instance concerns the object of the search undertaken by Israel’s sages.

Invariably, Israel’s seekers, whatever their goals, arrived at a closed door that resolutely refused to swing open. Behind this door lay profound mystery, but none held the key to this room except God....At times this restriction of what could be known caused considerable chafing, but in the end it gave birth to marvelous reflection concerning a gracious opening of the door by God, primarily through means of Dame Wisdom. The tension between self-reliance, on the one hand, and hope in divine mercy, on the other, bestows great pathos upon biblical wisdom. Indeed, one can even say that the relentless search oscillated between these two extremes, trust in one’s ability to secure existence, and dependence upon God’s mercy. Divine compassion has the final word... (63-64).

This book can be recommended heartily to seminarians, pastors, and serious lay students as a thorough and stimulating orientation to this previously somewhat neglected strand of Israel’s tradition.

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THE PHILOSOPHER IN THE CITY: THE MORAL DIMENSIONS OF URBAN POLITICS, by Hadley Arkes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981. Pp. xiv + 465. \$27.50; \$6.95 (paper).

This book is a rarity. It is a graceful essay on city politics, one that is well written and for that reason alone a pleasure to read, as few of its kind are. The reader does not hear in its pages the dull thud of social science prose. And it gives pleasure in other ways as well, for it has other graces. Its author is fully conversant with the history of political philosophy, a fact that distinguishes him from most of those who write professionally about the city, and he is thus able to discuss his subject in ways that are philosophically interesting. Conversely, he has an arresting sense of detail and always begins his discussions with the things that are “first to us,” with cases in law and specific contro-

versies over public policies. By doing so, he gives his book a lively particularity. He offers his

book as “a blending of the philosophic and the prosaic” (ix), with the purpose of showing that they do intersect in our public life; and it must be said for Hadley Arkes that in this he succeeds admirably.

His carefully developed argument begins with a question that arises under the First Amendment, the question of whether it is ever possible, in a civil society worthy of the name, to restrain freedom of speech. On the other hand, it might seem that civility occasionally requires such restraints. It is, after all, a sad fact of our national life that racial and religious groups are sometimes subjected to the most hateful kinds of speech, speech so vile and abusive that the words themselves might well be thought to constitute an injury (read “injustice”) that no citizens should have to suffer, that they should be protected against under law and by the courts. But what if, on the other hand, such speech incited no violence (other than that supposedly conveyed by the words themselves) and thus inflicted no material injuries? And is it possible for an individual to be libelled through speech directed against the group of which he is a member? How could it be shown, for example, that a particular black citizen suffers materially from speech directed against blacks generally? These questions suggest the terms of a familiar argument about the First Amendment guarantee of free speech, however repugnant that speech may be: especially in a democracy, any restriction of free speech is potentially dangerous and can be justified only if it is worse than repugnant, only if it results in injury to property or person.

Hence there exists the dilemma of thoughtful citizens, when they are caught between their aversion to morally distasteful speech and their regard for the lawful protection of it under the Constitution and by the Supreme Court. Is there a way out of this dilemma? According to Arkes there is, for the dilemma depends upon the questionable attempt to separate morals from the law, with the assumption that law can justly reach only to questions of material injury but never to the moral concerns of citizens. The virtually unqualified defense of our First Amendment freedoms is at odds with the requirements of the kind of civil society that we otherwise seek. Granted that hateful speech in the form of group libel neither picks a pocket nor breaks a leg; yet it is categorically wrong, wrong as a matter of principle, because it implies that individual members of the group under attack necessarily have the characteristics attributed to the group. This is to deny in effect that those individuals are morally autonomous citizens (47-48), as the citizens of a republic must be assumed to be. The political community is bounded by such a principle and maintains itself by maintaining the principle, as it does by enforcing the law of group libel.

But this book treats a number of other topics in addition to the topic of group libel. Arkes discusses our urban disorders of recent but not blessed memory, the manifold problems of the public schools, the political organization of our cities and its effect on public policy, urban housing, the vices (e.g., pornography and prostitution), and virtue (the virtue required of republican citizens). Under each topic, a similar pattern of argument emerges: in the most important areas of our public policy, as with the question of freedom of speech, we are at odds with ourselves. And understanding the incoherence of our practice in restricting private choice makes possible a more coherent understanding of our regime, one that is more Aristotelian than American, so to speak. As Arkes says, his book offers “a perspective on the city” (x); and that perspective is supplied by the history of political philosophy, which enables him to reflect with greater care than is usual on the principled basis of our political association.

Some of his readers might then wonder if the tireless search for “community,” as it is carried on by theologians and others, does not proceed on the wrong footing for ignorance of the

perspective that he so richly provides. Still other readers may be grateful to him for having shown that civility, properly understood, is directly related to the most fundamental questions about our regime; that civility is not merely an affectation of the fastidious. In doing this, he can be said to

have given his readers a detailed American gloss on those two great parables about politics and the decline of civility, Mann's *Mario and the Magician* and Hemingway's *Che Ti Dice La Patria?* The inhabitants of almost any American city should understand, as will (alas) anyone who has recently lived in London.

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FROM THE UNDERSIDE: EVANGELISM FROM A THIRD WORLD VANTAGE POINT, by James Armstrong. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1981. Pp. 93. \$4.95 (paper).

This little book should be read along with the myriad of books currently flooding the market on evangelism and church growth. It offers a perspective that is usually missing in such books, namely the vision of God's *shalom* for the whole human family which must be the context for any style or program of evangelism that would claim to be biblical.

James Armstrong is the Bishop of the Indiana Area of the United Methodist Church and was recently elected president of the National Council of Churches. It is interesting to note that the subtitle of the book, "Evangelism from a Third World Vantage Point," should have been chosen for a book written by a middle-American, mainline denominational executive. It is actually an attempt by an American church leader to challenge acculturated American Christians in local congregations to do their evangelism with the Third World in their field of awareness. It is not a book about doing evangelism in the Third World, nor is it by someone from the Third World offering suggestions about how evangelism might be done in the United States.

Armstrong's purpose is to raise the questions that he thinks must be dealt with if evangelism is to be faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the foreword José Míguez Bonino states the issue that the book deals with by using a quote from Gutiérrez: "How to announce God as Father in a world where there are no brothers?" (x). Bonino also puts the question in his own words:

Can we really equate New Testament conversion with the "joining the church" that is frequently the goal of liberal evangelism, or with the emotional experience that promises to give a person peace and strength to pursue even more ardently the same goals of power, success, and wealth of the world that is offered in much so-called conservative evangelism? Is not our problem in the affluent world that we expect religion to "satisfy" us, not to transform us; to "compensate" for our frustrations in the world, not to give us the power to transform the world?" (xi).

Armstrong's method is an interesting and effective combination of theological statement and story telling. At times he makes an assertion followed by a story taken from his experience

with Third World churches or peoples and at other times he uses a story and then in a few brief remarks underscores the points he thinks should be seen. The result is that his arguments come across with an evangelical flavor to them and not as a heavy-handed attempt to induce guilt. Because he uses a descriptive method, Armstrong invites the reader to use his/her imagination to apply the author's insights and suggestions to his/her own situation.

Armstrong argues for a balance in evangelism that does not abandon critical facilities. Even as he lifts up the concerns of the world's oppressed, hungry and poor and uses Third World Christians and churches as models, he calls attention to how they, too, become entrapped in their cultures. Such fair treatment should enable his arguments to be heard by many who get turned off by literature which is critical of the United States or of our churches and is often less than equally honest about how sin manifests itself even in other nations and churches.

This little book finds its strength not in the facts that it gives us about the Third World, nor in some new way of interpreting Scripture, nor in laying out a surefire method for doing evangelism. Its appeal rests in its call to see in Christ the fulness of God and of his will for the world. This is a challenging and disturbing little work because the author knows that "the

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wholeness of Christ's message dealt with the wholeness of life—and that was and is the rub" (10). Anyone concerned about evangelism in the church today needs to consider the issues this book raises.

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THE ETHIC OF DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM: A MORAL REASSESSMENT, by Robert Benne. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981. Pp. xi + 267. \$10.95.

Traditionally, issues of personal morality have been more likely to claim the attention of Lutheran ethicists than have questions more broadly social or political in character. Even the rather intense interest in problems in the social order evidenced by the churches during the 1960s did not lead to much systematic reflection on social issues from a Lutheran perspective. Thus, Robert Benne's assessment of the possibilities of democratic capitalism is a welcome contribution to the area of social ethical investigation, an area often neglected by those within the Lutheran tradition.

It is a valuable contribution as well. Not everyone will agree with his assessment, but even those who understand matters quite differently can appreciate his carefully written and clearly argued position and can benefit from entering into dialogue with his perspective.

Benne's purpose in writing the book is to redress what he considers to be the unfair evaluation that democratic capitalism usually receives from its critics, including some entries from within the churches. His thesis, as stated in the preface, is that

the combination of democracy and market economy peculiar to the United States is a morally defensible arrangement. Further, it has a good deal of promise in dealing with its many challenges if it proceeds in accordance with gifts and possibilities inherent in democratic capitalism. (vii)

His argument “is particularly directed at those who seem to have so little sense of proportion in their judgments of American society” (viii).

Appearing in the fall of 1981, Benne’s argument could conceivably be seen as a defense of President Ronald Reagan’s approach to the national economy. However, the fact that his book was completed in 1979 before Reagan took office as well as the fact that he finds many of Reagan’s policies deficient with respect to the value of justice—one of the main values Benne is concerned about—makes such a relationship problematic. Yet, Benne’s perspective seems to be similar to that of the current incumbent of the White House in several important ways. And it raises similar questions about a certain bias toward the great middle and upper-class of American society and less of a passionate concern for the “have nots.” The problem may be as much one of tone as of substance, but it is nonetheless troubling.

The thought of Reinhold Niebuhr, especially Niebuhr’s anthropology and his understanding of the nature and character of groups, forms the basis for Benne’s normative moral perspective as supplemented by John Rawls’ philosophical reflections on the meaning of justice. What emerges out of this combination is a restatement of the importance of the three basic principles of classical democratic theory—liberty, fraternity and equality—on the foundation of a realistic appraisal of human nature and social groups.

Those three principles in their reformulated form are understood to be the essential principles of social justice. Together with the values of efficiency and growth—necessary but not sufficient conditions for a just society—they establish an ethical perspective which transcends democratic capitalism and provides a ground for criticism. The

Niebuhr-Rawlsian perspective embraces a society in which power is as diffuse as possible and in which the natural balances are exploited for all they are worth. And they are worth a great deal in fostering both liberty and equality while at the same time realistically limiting the idolatrous tendencies of the state. On the other hand, we affirm a strong role for the state in pursuing the common good, which includes a strong redistributive thrust among many other important functions. These two affirmations guard against both tyranny and anarchy, the rocks through which the ship of social justice must pass. (80)

Part II then presents the case for democratic capitalism as practiced in the United

States, and it does so by noting how the democratic capitalist society approximates the principles of social justice that have been elaborated out of the Niebuhr-Rawlsian perspective. There are, of course, critics—predominantly Marxists and leftists—who charge that democratic capitalism does not really exist: that monopoly rather than competition predominates economically and that democracy is more formal than substantial politically. Both charges are refuted.

Our economy can accurately be called “competitive” in the classical capitalist sense, though not perfectly competitive. Our polity can and does allow major interests to be expressed through the democratic process that are independent of the wishes of large corporate centers of power. We have a social system that can accurately be called “democratic capitalism.” (119)

The argument that Benne wishes to make is a realistic one: not that democratic capitalism is perfect, but that it is better than its critics understand it to be and better than other available alternatives. And better in this context means in relation to the principles and values that are necessary for social justice.

Having presented the case for democratic capitalism in Part II, Benne then concludes his assessment by looking at the serious challenges that still remain. Those challenges are discussed as the challenges surrounding the values of efficiency and growth, challenges to the realization of the principles of justice, and challenges to the underlying framework of meaning and value. In each instance Benne wishes to point to the possibilities inherent in or consistent with democratic capitalism for addressing these challenges. He recognizes that such possibilities may seem inadequate—witness his comment when discussing the challenge to growth that such “strategies no doubt seem terribly partial, incremental and reformist,” even “complacently optimistic” (194-195)—but they operate within the continuities of democratic capitalism and thus represent real possibilities.

Benne’s argument is well-constructed and well-written. He is able to anticipate objections and respond to them in a clear, reasonable way. He has done an excellent job of lifting up the merits of democratic capitalism without pretending that it has solved all of its internal contradictions or the external problems that it has helped produce. It is an argument for the relative merits of a particular social system that he fears is being under-valued and undercut.

For those individuals within the church who would identify themselves in some sense as liberals—in the hazy but commonly accepted use of that term—his argument is especially provocative and challenging. It makes a lot of sense.

And yet some persistent doubts remain, at least in the mind of this reviewer. To some extent, Benne’s argument exhibits what is a rather common characteristic of Lutherans when dealing with social ethical issues—the tendency to avoid extremes in favor of a balanced middle way. It is reasonable but not passionate, and Benne’s sense that no great systemic injustice exists for those in the lower middle class and up may unduly comfort precisely those who could be effecting the changes that will aid those who are not comfortable but are in fact disadvantaged. Thus, there is value in looking at Benne’s argument alongside the argument of someone whose concern for social justice is as great but whose perspective is quite different. Jack Nelson’s *Hunger for Justice* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1980) comes to mind as an interesting companion piece.

A concern then is the effect that the argument will have on its readers. In spite of all protestations that there is no reason to be complacent, conclusions about the *relative* merits of democratic capitalism are likely to be as exaggerated in the minds of the readers as the charges against democratic capitalism are in the minds of the critics against whom Benne contends.

Considering the massiveness, the messiness, and diversity of American society, the efforts at more justice by political means have not been distressingly ineffectual. We have made more progress than many nations who are much smaller and homogeneous. But there is no room for exultant self-congratulation. Extremely serious challenges remain. (173)

Granted, and Benne does well in laying out those challenges, but there is a sense in which the challenges all appear manageable. Perhaps they are for those who are among the majority in our culture.

Benne states, “For the great middle of American society we should let the market deal out its rewards for contribution. This arrangement preserves both freedom and initiative” (229). But what about the poor and disadvantaged, those for whom justice has been so elusive?

Here the strongest doubts are raised when one looks at what is happening politically and economically under the current administration. Benne’s argument suggests that free market economic policies lead to a rough natural equilibrium which must be supplemented by political intervention at various points in order that justice might be served. In the past such intervention seems to have worked reasonably well to assist those who most needed help. As Benne suggests, “Political intervention has ensured that the inequalities of the marketplace will work to the benefit of the least advantaged” (169). Thus, the peculiar combination of democracy and capitalism which is democratic capitalism appears to promote the principle of justice precisely for those who need it most.

There is, however, some doubt that such an argument can continue to be made. For example, the policies of the Reagan administration suggest just the opposite: namely, that it is the benefits of the least advantaged that are threatened—Medicaid, food stamps, Head Start programs, for example—by political intervention. It is obviously unfair to suggest that Benne’s re-assessment of democratic capitalism stands or falls on the basis of how the current administrators of democratic capitalism carry it out. At the same time, there is cause for concern when an administration as firmly committed as the current one is to free market economic practices and limited political intervention ends up proposing programs that detract from rather than contribute to justice for those who are most in need. It may be that the problem is with the current administration, but it is also possible that democratic capitalism is more problematic than Benne allows.

This is an issue worth debating and Benne’s statement is an important part of the discussion.

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ACTS, by Gerhard Krodel. Proclamation Commentaries. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981. Pp. 118. \$3.95 (paper).

Krodel’s work has three parts: (1) a treatment of the title, theme and structure of Acts, (2) a commentary on the text, and (3) a survey of selected historical problems which Acts poses. A glossary, bibliography, and chronological table round off the book.

Though the identity of the author is unknown to us—we know only that he was probably a profoundly Hellenized gentile—his purposes are clear. Steeped in O. T. traditions he writes to remind a predominantly gentile church of its roots in Old Testament tradition, of its mission to the whole world (including Jews), of its share in the benefactions of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, of its link with the apostolic church, through Paul, and of God’s encouragement and comfort to a church facing rejection, harassment, and failure. The author did not write to defend Christianity against charges of treason brought by outsiders nor to offer a defense of Paul at his protracted trial.

The structure of Acts, according to Krodel, is twofold: (1) the ministry to Jerusalem,

Judea and Samaria (2:1-9:43) and (2) the witness to the ends of the earth (10:1-28:28). Following the scholarly consensus, Krodel sees the speeches as the creation of “Luke,” offering clues to the *author’s* rather than the *speaker’s* intentions. (Krodel steers a middle course finding both historical and unhistorical elements in Acts.) Peter’s speech at Pentecost, for example, follows this pattern. God’s control of history according to his “plan and foreknowledge,” the division among the Jews effected by the gospel, the witness to the resurrection by the disciples and apostles, the preaching and prophecy of anonymous believers, the universal mission, and the guidance the Spirit offers the church all delineate persistent themes in Acts (25). Likewise, in the miracle stories cast in the mold of those performed by Hellenistic miracle workers, a common theme emerges—namely, God’s presence with his apostles and the benefactions they render as servants of Jesus.

In the second part of Acts “Luke” deals with the witness beyond Jerusalem and its attendant problems. In his thrice re-

peated account of the “conversion” of Paul, the story of the belief of the Samaritan, the acceptance of the Ethiopian eunuch, the agreement struck at the Apostolic Conference, and the threefold allusion to Peter’s vision interpreted to mean that no person should be called “common or unclean,” “Luke” repeatedly affirms the divine endorsement of the gentile mission, *but not to the exclusion of the Jews*. On this final point Krodel takes a minority position—the mission to the gentiles, he argues, is not a result of the mass rejection of the gospel by Jews. Siding with Karris, Krodel argues that one of the primary purposes of Acts is to urge the church to continue its mission to the Jews.

The success of the gentile mission, and the numerical superiority of gentile over Jewish Christians accounts at least in part for the writing of Acts. In light of the growing gentile majority, how was “Luke’s” church to understand the destruction of the temple, the relationship of the church’s worship to Judaism, the continued harassment by Jews, and the place of Jesus in salvation history? “Luke’s” intent is to enable this predominantly gentile church to understand its continuing mission, the continuity of its history with Israel, the share it had in the benefactions of the exalted, *contemporary* Christ, and to take courage from the assured success of God’s mission.

Krodel’s contribution to the series is an exciting book. Daring at times, independent elsewhere, and acutely sensitive both to “Luke’s” situation and to our own, this is an excellent resource for preaching. Because it is so bold, the commentary necessarily raises a host of questions. The reader will want to know why Krodel thinks the “we” statements represent the beginning of pseudonymity in Christian literature and would like more discussion of the view that the agreement struck at the Apostolic Conference for the division of the mission field collapsed soon after (92). Krodel’s conviction that Paul abandoned Pharisaic piety (contra “Luke,” 93), that the Jerusalem church spurned the collection brought by Paul (91), and that one of the main purposes of Luke was to encourage the church to continue its mission to the Jews will certainly provoke thought even if not complete acceptance. Krodel’s explanation of “Luke’s” contradictions as an attempt to write *biblical* history or to paint in a playful spirit (15) will be unsatisfying to many. How then, failing this explanation, are we to understand those contradictions?

A few colloquialisms are distracting (e.g., “two-bit”), and the one attempt at humor miscarries (the reference to the first “church sleeper,” 67), but the work deserves strong praise.

The treatment of problem passages is substantive; the exegesis is original and insightful. Nowhere is the book burdened by the dullness that frequently afflicts commentaries. For the minister, theological student, or inquiring layperson this work can be enthusiastically recommended.

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GOD'S KINGDOM: A GUIDE FOR BIBLICAL STUDY, by George V. Pixley. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1981. Pp. 116. \$5.95 (paper).

The kingdom of God is a central symbol of biblical faith. As a “tensive symbol” (Perrin), the concept is ever filled with meaning and is the subject of countless interpretations within and without the Bible. George Pixley, an Old Testament Professor at Seminario Bautista in Mexico City, makes a modest yet provocative contribution to the discussion of the concept as he applies a socio-political, liberationist critique to the varied uses of kingdom in the Bible.

Pixley's thesis is that the Kingdom of God should be studied in the context of particular “historical projects” rather than as an abstraction or ideal. His intention is to examine how the concept can “guide us toward salvation—real, concrete, historical salvation.” He seeks to describe the socio-political agendas of the various eras of biblical history in order to aid the “working people of Latin America.” His agenda is clear and straightforward.

He proposes that Yahweh's kingdom first became important as the ideology of the political project of the Israelite tribes. He pictures the tribes as an antimonarchist movement in the hill country struggling for existence against the urban

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kings of Canaan. The classic revolutionary Israelite perspective on kingship is the confession that there is to be no King but YHWH as Pixley sees it. The Exodus provided Israel with faith in YHWH who demanded exclusive loyalty from his people in the covenant which is the “constitution” of Israel. This movement as a class struggle to establish YHWH's Kingdom in Canaan was necessary, says Pixley, because the Asiatic mode of production meant the state required tribute from the villages and insisted on slavery. The tribes, ever in battle with their enemies, were able to develop a classless society (cf. Exod 22:21-24) and that feat must be recognized as “one of the greatest moments in human history.” The society put equality and justice above technology and civilization as Pixley views it.

With the coming of Philistine power, the tribes could no longer hold out, and the monarchy was established. While David carefully respected the traditions of Israel, it was for Solomon to destroy the revolutionary nature of the “classic” understanding of YHWH's kingdom. Solomon turned the kingdom notion into the royal ideology. Pixley finds it difficult at times to uncover the real truth of the faith of Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures because much editing was done by the Jerusalem priests who promoted the royal ideology. Following the Exile it was the priests who became the new hierarchy with only occasional references to the anti-statist and anti-hierarchical revolutionary ideals permitted.

The Jesus movement is seen as a protest against the temple and the class structure it supported. Jesus was, of course, not notably successful in establishing a “political kingdom.”

After Jesus, Pixley sees kingdom as a political term fall from importance and the spiritual and personal sides of kingdom come to the fore. He leaves as an open question whether the message of the kingdom will have historical significance for the poor today.

Pixley's major contribution to an understanding of kingdom is his insistence on taking into account the socio-political circumstances of Israel as it moved through history. Biblical criticism has long needed to work more carefully with its assumptions about the socio-political *Sitz im Leben*. Too often scholars have ignored their own socio-political bias and projected their understanding into biblical accounts not recognizing the political setting of the texts. The Liberation school of theology has called our attention to the need for such analysis.

Unfortunately, while the effort of Pixley is suggestive, he uncritically projects his own understanding of contemporary life back into the biblical eras. There must be a way to combine such interests in the political realities of the biblical periods with more critical views of the interpreters' own ideologies. For example, there have been times in the history of interpretation when the monarchy was seen as the high point of the Hebrew nation, especially when monarchies were popular. To seek now a re-creation of another conjectured "Golden Age" of Israel's history seems only to substitute one ideology for another. If Pixley guides a reader to a deeper understanding of the necessity for viewing biblical history in the light of an understanding of the poor, then he will have accomplished much. Those of us who sit in comfortable study chairs and do not take into account the plight of the poor in our interpretation and understanding of the faith are shortsighted indeed. On the other hand, to reduce kingdom to politics and not include the fullness of the kingdom symbol in our educational and homiletical work is to limit our view of God. While God's revelation always occurs in a socio-political setting, God is not simply politics.

While Pixley's book exhibits wide reading and an informed perspective, the scholarly apparatus is not adequate to retrace his steps. One must take his ideas and do one's own research. He does not claim that he has exhausted the case, but he opens up possibilities for new explorations. One often needs this kind of provocative overstatement to prod the mind to work through material in new ways. After reading Pixley one will not be able to pray "Your Kingdom come" or discuss God's Kingdom in relation to contemporary politics quite so easily.

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FOLLOWING CHRIST IN A CONSUMER SOCIETY: THE SPIRITUALITY OF CULTURAL RESISTANCE, by John Francis Kavanaugh. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1981. Pp. 167. \$6.95 (paper).

Being a practicing Christian in twentieth century American culture is difficult at best. The difficulty arises from the tension between Christianity and American culture. The assumptions about persons and destiny are opposed to each other. Both lay ultimate claims on persons; however, one leads to life, the other to death. The tension is heightened as Christians realize that their faith is on a collision course with American culture.

John Francis Kavanaugh, a Jesuit priest and associate professor of Philosophy at St. Louis University, presents in this work an acute discussion of the relationship between

Christianity and present-day culture. Although it might be possible for culture to be appropriate to Christianity, it is not. What Christians experience is a culture that is threatened by those perspectives on life, those activities that promote human worth which Christians deem of value.

Kavanaugh discusses his thesis by presenting the competing views of anthropology and consequent life-style exhortations of the two forms, Commodity Form and Personal Form. The underlying assumption of the Commodity Form is that human life is fulfilled in possession, in the accumulation of things. In order to gain meaning and value, persons must acquire power and possessions. Human worth is measured by status and acquisitions.

The consequent actions from such a life perception result in dehumanization, the “thingification” of all life. “Once self-worth is defined in terms of appropriation, the cultural myth will relentlessly be one of materialism, property, consumption, buy-power, competition, and greater economic exploitation” (35). In fact, what occurs is the transformation of humans into things; the worshiper of the commodity becomes a commodity, an inanimate thing. Kavanaugh has some sharply critical observations about capitalism and its inherent thrust in this direction. The poverty of Marxism is noted as well.

The Personal Form has an anthropology which is opposed to that of present culture—persons are irreplaceable, they are of intrinsic worth. Humans are incomplete and ontologically yearn for fulfillment and completion. This physical and ontological incompleteness drives persons to seek to assuage the thirst, fill the hunger.

Kavanaugh indicates that the way to satisfy this yearning is so different in the Commodity Form and Personal Form that they are in fact opposed to each other. The Personal Form, as revealed most adequately in Jesus, is a way of dependence on God, of relationship. True personhood is in the acceptance of our own poverty rather than in trust in power, or escape or the acquisition of possessions. Jesus shows that there is no shame in being a frail or contingent person. “In acknowledging his weakness, [Jesus] finally reveals his greatest strength—the life of God living in his precarious faith, hope, and love” (90).

Because the Commodity Form is opposed to the Personal Form, Christians need constantly to resist the enticements of following the Commodity Form. Living Christianity in the midst of a culture that has been idolized will mean that Christians are alert to ways of supporting their own commitment to God and humanity. Prayer as life-centering, an increasingly less-consumptive life style, collaboration with others, education in and work for social justice in at least one area, and being in touch personally with the dispossessed are means through which one can develop the Personal Form.

Christianity is finally counter-cultural. The attitudes and values of Christianity toward race, sex, relations with others and commodities are quite different than those of this culture which affirm distinctions according to race and sex and hold wealth and position as signs of worth and value. Living in this culture, Christians find themselves in the position of resistance.

Kavanaugh describes the issue very well. The ultimate challenge of this culture to worship the commodity is strong indeed. The challenge to live in the Personal Form is clear and helpful. The distinction is made clearly and one gets a sense of where one would like one’s commitment to be.

Kavanaugh boldly challenges some important myths: the goodness of capitalism, the total wrongness of Marxism. Straight-forwardly, he presents the challenge to Christians to be Christian. Were this challenge followed, there may finally be a lessening of the complaint that

“the only problem with Christianity is that it hasn’t been tried” (151).

My reactions to the book are positive, and I recommend its reading. The book is not pleasant reading—our attachments to church, nation, and culture are laid bare. The book addresses clearly and helpfully a long-standing debate in my own mind regarding the personal, societal and political implications of the gospel. Kavanaugh shows clearly where hope, love, and trust are to be experienced: in poverty. “Our incompleteness is indeed our poverty, but it is only in touching and living at the edge of this poverty that we may reach the fullness of our true power and destiny” (95).

Some years ago a friend, commenting on the issue of *shalom*, said that we Americans have a choice between doing well and doing good. “You can’t have it both ways,” he said. This same challenge is set before us in this book.

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