



**THE THIRD REFORMATION? CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS AND THE LUTHERAN TRADITION**, by Carter Lindberg. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1983. Pp. 356. \$24.95.

This is a bold book. It is an “historical-critical” study written in the interests of a “respectful but critical dialogue” with charismatic Lutherans. As a work of history it reckons with traditions of renewal which span five centuries and several continents. As a contribution to a conversation among Lutherans, it takes part in a difficult and volatile discussion. It also shoulders up to pressing ecumenical responsibilities. It is an impressive study: imaginatively conceived, broadly researched, and skillfully written. It is a rare and welcome book because it evades the chronological, geographical, and ecclesio-political rubrics that often straiten histories of Lutheranism.

Lindberg makes a question out of the claim that the charismatic movement is a third Lutheran reformation. In search of an answer, he asks whether the Lutheran pietism of the seventeenth century was the second reformation it is sometimes said to have been. He tackles the questions synoptically by comparing the early Lutheran encounter with the so-called spiritualists with pietism, and with the charismatic movement among contemporary Lutherans. It is his thesis that the charismatic renewal movement has “lines of continuity in the sense of leitmotiv” reaching back to pietism and the radical reformation. All three movements, in Lindberg’s judgment, make positive contributions to the reform of the Lutheran tradition but also modify that tradition and defect from it in crucial moments.

Opening sections place Lindberg’s book in its ecclesiastical, ecumenical, and scholarly contexts and then detail his method. A first chapter covers familiar introductory ground, offering among other things a concise summary of key themes in Luther’s thought and a short but nuanced statement of that addictive topic, Luther and the mystical tradition. A second chapter discusses Luther’s adversaries, the spiritualists, focusing on Karlstadt, Müntzer and other important figures, notably Caspar van Schwenkfeld. The briefest of Lindberg’s historical chapters is reserved for the pietists who are thought of as bridging figures who stand between spiritualists and charismatics. Arndt, Spener, A. H. Francke, and Gottfried Arnold receive sustained attention and the traditions of the movement as a whole are analyzed. A concluding historical essay, “The Third Reformation?” surveys the contemporary charismatic movement. This chapter may be especially valuable to readers from the United States because it introduces the global shape and dimensions of the movement. He also covers the North American scene in depth.

Two final chapters move from historical questions to explicitly normative and practical ones. The first of these is a closely written evaluation of Lutheran charismatic theology based on the work of representative authors. The second draws some conclusions and suggests how they might be put to work by Lutherans.

So ambitious a book is bound to prompt questions. Some are historical. Lindberg's treatment of pietism is brief and appears to lean heavily on secondary sources, particularly on the influential work of Martin Schmidt. These two factors may account for a lean and somewhat tendentious rendering of the history of pietism. If Lindberg had relied on Emanuel Hirsch, for example, would his reading have been different? Hirsch argues that the pietist focus is on justification and not on rebirth, as Schmidt would have it. From this perspective—and there is much to argue for it—would it have been as easy to see the pietists as linking spiritualists and charismatics? It is possible that the pietists might rather have been seen as among the ancestors of another tribe, the Lutheran awakeners of the nineteenth century. And that raises

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another question. Can a book about traditions of religious experience and the renewal of the church among Lutherans omit the European awakening of the nineteenth century? Some of the awakeners styled themselves reformers and they rang changes on Lindberg's themes. Can this trajectory be traced without a place for Harms, Scheibel, Grundtvig, Beck, Hauge, Johnson, Rosenius, Laestadius, Ruotsalainen and their like? The typology may not be as tidy as Lindberg would have it, but they belong in the picture.

Other questions touch more explicitly theological matters. Lindberg does not directly engage the difficult issue of Lutheran theological identity. His book might have been stronger had he done so. He speaks, for example, of “dialogical plurality.” What is it and what are its limits? With respect to these issues, his use of Luther's theology as a point of reference raises interesting questions. Why the theology of Luther rather than, for example, the Pauline corpus or the Lutheran Confessions as the comparative benchmark? Some historical reasons may be taken for granted, but a fuller rationale would have been worthwhile. One wonders here whether the historical and theological problematic of North American Lutheran identity in its most recent form is not exercising invisible influence. Would theologians from Europe or the Third World take on the underlying question (What is Lutheran?) in the same way? Would Luther's theology have been put to the same use? Lindberg makes only passing reference to this constellation of questions.

*The Third Reformation?* is a capacious, provocative, and illuminating book. Those who need to know about the charismatic movement among Lutherans will want to read it.

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**THE SHAPE OF SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY**, by David L. Bartlett. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984. Pp. 171. \$8.95 (paper).

The nature of Scriptural authority has provided an arena of discussion for many years. David Bartlett, a Baptist minister, adds this helpful book to the discussion. Having been influenced by Paul Ricoeur's essay, “Toward a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation,” Bartlett attempts a descriptive and prescriptive examination of Scriptural authority.

Bartlett's method is to examine the major forms of biblical literature. Instead of

approaching authority through a doctrinal or monolithic conception of revelation, he proposes to categorize the forms of Scripture. He is also concerned with authority, and not inspiration. Too often, Bartlett claims, an investigation of inspiration becomes an argument for divine dictation, which is a notion external to the Scriptures.

Throughout his analysis, Bartlett stresses the importance of a community of faith. The Bible grew out of such a community, and it then gave birth to subsequent communities. Even though the Scriptures have self-authenticating aspects, it is finally the community which gives authority.

In chapter two, “The Authority of Words,” Bartlett discusses the role of the prophets. Their authority came not only from the God who called, commissioned, and sent them, but also from the group which supported them and preserved and edited their words.

The word is self-authenticating insofar as it can claim to be a true word, a crucial word, and a word which applies directly to the one who hears. Scripture suggests that the proper response to such a self-authenticating word is to listen, trust, and to act. (35)

In chapter three, “The Authority of Deeds,” Bartlett stresses the importance of historicity. Were there no historical reality, there would be no basis for evaluating the deeds of Jesus. The Word became *flesh*, Bartlett argues, and not just narrative or proclamation, as Frei and Bultmann would have it. Historicity and faith must come together.

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Even so, mere knowledge of the historical reality does not evoke faith. The biblical stories have authority because they do not only convey history, but proclaim the activity of God. Consequently, the story cannot only be illustrative or representative. It must be proclamatory with its roots in a historical context.

What happens in Scripture is that we are told the story of what God has done in the past and how this has implications for what God will do in the future. Authority then comes with the appropriation of the story. Bartlett writes, “The authority comes from the story’s ability to involve us, to entice us, to question us, and finally to shift the way in which we see ourselves and the world and the way in which we puzzle about God” (71).

Chapter four deals with “The Authority of Wisdom.” Since wisdom literature is based on observation about God’s activity in the world, Bartlett argues, “the deepest wisdom is also a kind of piety. It is a piety which acknowledges the limits of human wisdom before the boundless and inscrutable purposes of God” (92).

Wisdom is common sense, and with that common sense we quickly find that our wisdom pales against the wisdom of God. Wisdom always points beyond itself to God. Wisdom does have limits. To understand the world is not to understand God. Wisdom is important, but it is not the fundamental guide to understanding God’s activity.

“The Authority of Witness” (chapter five) comes from both word and deed. Using the language of the courtroom, a case is presented. The questions center around the truth and trustworthiness of the witness. Consequently, Bartlett argues, witnesses must lead lives which witness. He writes, “What is said is important and valuable, but its importance and value depend

in large measure upon who says it” (121). Throughout Paul’s letter to the Galatians, Paul argued that there was a continuity between his life and message. Bartlett writes that Paul’s witness is this: “Here is what I claim. Here is what I am. Test what I claim by what I am; I am confident you will see that the two coincide” (123).

In the final chapter, “Canon and Community,” Bartlett argues that biblical authority is not an existential question. Biblical authority always happens within the context of a community of believers who decide what is authoritative.

Bartlett stresses that the entire canon, with all its diversity, is authoritative and essential for the church’s reflection. He argues that there is no single theme running throughout both testaments which helps with canonical interpretation. The motifs or prophecy/fulfillment, the mighty acts of God, the covenant, the revelation of the hidden God, the teachings of the historical Jesus, or the good news of Jesus Christ are all too narrow to understand the canon in its entirety. Choosing a single interpretative clue ignores the testaments’ rich relationship. Bartlett writes “One thing which holds the church together, beyond the grace of God and loyalty to Jesus Christ, is the acknowledgement of the particular role of canon and the willingness to debate its interpretation” (147).

Lacking in this book is any emphasis on the intrinsic capacity of the Word to liberate us from the law, sin, and death, and yet we all need to hear one of the messages of this book: that the lives we lead witness to the authority of the Scriptures. This book is helpful for organizing one’s thoughts about the shape of Scriptural authority, and offers a well-rounded vehicle for doing so.

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**EDUCATION MINISTRY IN THE CONGREGATION**, by Norma J. Everist. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983. Pp. 240. \$9.95 (paper).

I wondered as I looked at the book I’d been given to review—Would this be another one of “those”—a ponderous, “I-have-to-wade-through-this-step-by-step-how-to-manual-on-one-more-‘new’-approach-to-Christian-education”? However, from the moment I read the first page until I finished the last paragraph, I was delighted, captivated with this author’s refreshing and stimulating way of dealing with one of our most vital tasks—passing on the Good News of

God’s grace, freely given in Jesus Christ to people of all ages, all intellects.

In her book Everist explores ways of teaching the Gospel by dealing with eight different “ways we learn from each other,” eight different teaching/learning styles. They include “presentation,” “individualized learning,” “confrontation and clarification,” “experiential learning,” and “journal keeping.” These teaching/learning styles are not meant to be new ways to teach the faith. The author incorporates a mixture of tradition and innovation, applied with good, solid common sense, and a deep sensitivity to the dimensions of faith and personhood.

The writer develops each of these styles in a clear, concise manner, using words and

phrases which lend vivid color and imagery to her treatment of the subject. For example, in her introductory remarks the writer exclaims, “The curriculum cannot be purchased! The curriculum is God and God’s people gathered together at a certain place and time in history. All else is resource” (13). Later in dealing with conflict and clarification (Chapter 6), Everist explains the value of confrontation. She explains, “We (Christians) are change agents and care givers, empowered with new life in the Spirit. Such new life in Christ, by its very nature is action; and action invites reaction” (143).

The writer has a great understanding of the human condition: that all stand in need of God’s grace; that teaching and learning, too, are bound by the reality of sin. Yet she rejoices,

To live in grace in the Christian teaching/learning community is to know the depth and complexity of the problems of learning and to be set free in new Spirit-filled relationships to learn and grow as we were created to do. (95)

The eight styles of teaching/learning are explained in ways that are easy to understand, using concrete, practical examples which have worked for her and others—no abstract theories here! For example, in the chapter concerned with inductive study, most specifically the section dealing with inductive Biblical study, Everist describes a session she had with a group of teenagers. As she entered the class, the students were talking about their favorite soap opera characters and their latest affairs. Pastor Everist drew their attention to 2 Samuel 11 which relates a Biblical account of adultery. The class compared the biblical time with the present and had a fruitful discussion on topics ranging from deceit to repentance and forgiveness. She explains, “Almost any section of Scripture is rich with meaning for life” (117). She stresses that as a person of any age becomes familiar with the Word, it “grows and meets him again, always where he is” (117).

Everist also draws upon her knowledge of other well-known authorities: Lawrence Kohlberg and his theory of moral development, Erik Erikson’s psycho-social stages, and Piaget’s work on cognitive development are among those included as the author comes to grips with how their contributions have enhanced the Church’s understanding of educational ministry.

I highly recommend this book for all people involved in various areas of Christian education: pastors, church school superintendents, teachers, anyone dealing with any aspect of teaching and learning. This work would be an excellent resource for discussion. It is a treasure chest filled with illuminating anecdotes, tender-hearted, yet stimulating and challenging stories of God’s people—teachers and learners alike involved in the ongoing struggles and joys of “being curriculum,” living out their faith in the Lord of Easter who called them to be in the first place. As the reader becomes absorbed in the pages, he or she will discover a woman of faith who has been embraced by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and is eager to share the liberating Good News with the people of God so they, too, can teach and learn from each other.

I conclude this review with these thoughts from Professor Everist. They reflect her understanding of the overall thrust of educational ministry.

The goal of Christian education is that by God’s grace people come to new life in Christ and that they be Christ’s people in the world.

Christian education is for mission, for engagement with the world....(146)

The purpose of Christian education is to equip the Christian community to be in

the world—speaking the Word in love, acting with mercy and justice. (147)

Educational ministry is no small task!

This book can significantly help us all to be about our tasks of “being curriculum,” and letting others experience the Gospel in the flesh!

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**CALLED TO TEACH: IDEAS AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR TEACHERS IN THE CHURCH**, by Kent L. Johnson. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984. Pp. 128. \$4.95 (paper).

Does teaching in the church have a greater purpose than watching kindergartners color pictures, or surviving an hour with rowdy seventh graders, or listening to adults take turns reading? Pastors, teachers, education committees, parents and even students want the answer to be “yes.” *Called to Teach* provides guidance and inspiration to make the “yes” a more likely reality.

Kent Johnson combines an orderly biblical approach with an awareness of the practicalities of operating a church school. The book begins with the biblical assertion that teaching is a call to ministry. With this introduction, Johnson confronts a casual or desperate approach to selecting and training teachers. The seriousness with which he perceives the influence of teachers is expressed in his declaration that:

Unless teachers were willing to locate their calling and responsibility there [being in Christ], it was far better that they not teach....Only in faithfulness to the gospel would their influence contribute to the life of the church and the well-being of those who learn (10).

Passages from 2 Peter provide a structuring of the book’s contents. “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18) is quoted as the purpose of Christian education. Johnson applies the balance of affirming persons and challenging them to grow both as students and as teachers.

The remainder of the book describes the qualities of a true teacher. Six chapters expand on the phrases in the following passage.

...supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. (2 Peter 1:5-7)

Johnson interprets virtue as the pursuit of excellence. The tension between knowledge and faith, and learning and entertaining, are examined under the title of “Common Sense.”

Johnson confronts readers with the subtle ways they may communicate that Sunday School is unimportant. Then he gives practical guidance for teacher recruitment and for lesson planning. In the area of self-control, the effects of teachers' attitudes and behaviors are explored, urging a sensitivity to students' needs while preserving the teachers' sense of self worth. The importance of stability in curriculum materials, organization, and staff is illustrated. Teachers being an example of godliness is the basis for discussing the effectiveness of learning by doing. The qualities of brotherly and sisterly affection and love are contrasted to those of teachers who have no allegiance except to their own desires.

Johnson's use of 2 Peter creates an effective parallel. The biblical author wrote in opposition to false teachers. Johnson's words can enable and inspire today's teachers to confront the worldly influences which oppose the claims of the gospel.

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**1 SAMUEL**, by Ralph W. Klein. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983. Pp. 327. \$19.00.

Good commentaries on Samuel rarely appear. Yet within a span of three years, Old Testament students rejoice in the publication of two: one by P. Kyle McCarter in "Anchor Bible" and now a volume by Ralph W. Klein in "Word Biblical Commentary." The volumes appeared far enough apart to allow Klein to consider and benefit from the work of McCarter. Still, the two commentaries re-

main distinctive contributions to Samuel studies.

Both scholars provide a fresh translation replete with philological notes. Each provides help for the deciphering of numerous copying errors and omissions in Samuel. McCarter includes more extensive textual and linguistic notes, but Klein also lists a distillation of such finds in his brief notes.

The format of Word Biblical Commentary, however, allows more space for theological comments and historical critical work. Klein packs the Form/Structure/Setting sections with numerous archaeological and philological insights. He discusses questions of history and history of tradition, and performs genre analysis. He often assesses passages as to their structure and the role of the deuteronomist and/or other redactional activity. He is not afraid to commit himself where he finds evidence such as deuteronomistic language. Perhaps his finest contribution lies in his comments on geographical issues. His references to archaeology and place names of modern Arab sites will prove very instructive to readers. The commentary provides very helpful bibliographies.

Through narrative and theological summaries, Klein ties together each pericope and relates it to parallel themes, strands or events elsewhere in Samuel and the rest of the Bible. These brief, tantalizing statements provide a basis for explicating the texts as a whole. With this technique, Klein provides enough information for adequately understanding an isolated pericope without reading the whole commentary.

Within his comments Klein consistently resists speculations beyond the evidence. He criticizes McCarter at several points for accepting too readily readings from the Septuagint (LXX) over against the Massoretic text. Klein resists postulating a change in the text without textual evidence.

Klein neither denies nor speculates on the nature of miraculous events. He takes them seriously and attempts to express how the traditions originally understood them. He does not explain the illness of Saul beyond information given in the Bible and does not question the phenomenon of the witch at Endor. Instead, Klein places such events within their proper setting and helps a reader understand what is happening. For instance, he explains necromancy by dealing with the technical words of 1 Samuel 28:3 (270). And, the evil spirit which possessed Saul is said to be a malady “whose theological diagnosis lay in his being possessed by an evil spirit” (165).

The commentary produces a number of literary and historical insights. Klein accepts the view that 1 Samuel received its final shape from deuteronomistic redactors. The Song of Hannah he recognizes probably had a separate existence from 1 Samuel 1-3 as did the Ark narrative, 1 Samuel 4:1b-7:1. He expresses ambiguity as to whether 2 Samuel 6 was ever included in this narrative. Though he struggles with the limits of the document, he also follows Leonhard Rost in calling 1 Samuel 16 through 2 Samuel 5 “the history of David’s rise” (xxx-xxxii, 159). He recognizes that from the beginning the traditions were structured to demonstrate the superiority of David’s spirit endowment and the theocentric character of this sovereign choice. Chronology, therefore, remains a secondary concern. In this regard he concludes that Judah did not fully belong to the early confederacy of Israel.

True to its goals the commentary discusses at length issues in 1 Samuel 17 such as: what Philistine giant did David kill (172-174)? Klein deals extensively with the tensions caused by a shorter version of the text on this event preserved in LXX<sup>B</sup>. In his translation the sections omitted by some manuscripts are set in a different type face. Instead of positing an “independent account” (McCarter) hypothesis to solve the textual variants, he proposes: “The Hebrew text has been expanded in 17:12-31, 50, 55-58 and 18:1-5 by a series of excerpts from one or more alternate accounts” (174). Klein does his best work in this passage of marshalling historical, linguistic and textual evidence to deal with difficult issues. He continues this format through 1 Samuel 18 (184-191).

Though the value of the commentary lies in its thorough treatment of the passages themselves, at times the commentary falls victim to its own desire to discuss the theories of historical criticism. The author summarizes so much evi-

dence in a compact area that some readers may have difficulty analyzing the issues and isolating key exegetical points of a passage. Many readers may find themselves exploring only the summaries of a pericope.

Klein is at his best on 1 Samuel 31:1-13, the death and burial of Saul (286-291). He links this pericope to other incidents, the history of David’s rise, the deuteronomist, and 1 Chronicles 10:13-15. His sensitive writing style enhances the heroic quality of the account of Saul’s death. This section evokes a deserved sense of pity on the tragedy of the life and death of Saul.

The commentary offers much to the casual reader, pastor, theological student and scholar.

However, expectations of either sermonic material or outlines will be disappointed. Nevertheless, the commentary does offer solid evidence for making an informed exegetical decision on what the text actually says and how that passage is related to its larger literary, theological and historical context. For that significant guidance, generations of Christian leaders will be grateful.

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**HOLINESS AND POLITICS**, by Peter Hinchliff. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983. Pp. 206. \$7.95 (paper).

Peter Hinchliff is an Anglican who lived in South Africa for a number of years, a fact which provides an added dimension to this book. He now is fellow, chaplain, and tutor of Balliol College. Eight of the book's nine chapters originally were the 1982 Bampton Lectures at Oxford; Chapter 3 was a paper delivered elsewhere in England in 1979. While much of the book refers to British or South African life, there are only minor references which will mean little to an American.

Much of what Hinchliff has to say can jog our thinking about many aspects of the relationship of faith to politics. Are politics dirty? How are western Christians both subjects and rulers in democracies? What can the Church as institution and denomination do? If the Church speaks, must it speak primarily in the negative? Can the Church act in politics? Must Christians be involved in politics? How are "ideals" different from destructive absolute "principles" and "regulations"? What are the pitfalls of "political theology," e.g., liberation theology? What does one do when one faces a choice between evils? In struggling with these questions and many more Hinchliff renders a real service.

The way in which the author resolves many issues is illustrated by the following quote, which depicts perhaps the most fundamental thesis of the book:

...if society is imperfectible because man is sinful, then forgiveness is the primary way to deal with it....That is the heart of what saintliness is. The saint is not the impeccably pure human being, but the forgiven sinner. And saintliness, as I have argued, is what the Christian has to strive for in politics as in every other aspect of life....He or she is...the forgiven and forgiving sinner, possessing an inner integrity and a firm grasp upon what is good; striving to live by ideals but willing to face the agonizing and costly business of grappling with human imperfection (including his own); trying nevertheless to serve society and to move it towards what it ought to be; challenging accepted consequentialist pragmatism by the unexpectedness of his vision. (200-201)

Though Hinchliff seems quite unaware of major tenets of the Reformation which apply to his work at various points, Lutherans certainly might note the very compatible stance with *simul justus et peccator*.

The quotation above illustrates Hinchliff's persistent emphasis on the Christian individual as the primary point where holiness and politics intersect. He believes that it is

“almost impossible to conceive of any way in which the actual Church, expressed in terms of organizational structures, *could* take direct political action” (126). The reality of such American phenomena as the black church and civil rights and the so-called “Moral Majority,” Roman Catholics on abortion, the political activism of liberation theology—all are ignored or dispensed with on other grounds. Hinchliff argues that it is the in-

dividual who acts, not the institutional Church. (His explanation for the absence of a confessing Church in South Africa is both fascinating and saddening from this point of view: cf 104ff.) Hinchliff is very helpful in discussing the shortcomings of ecclesiastical pronouncements. We need more than this, however, to get beyond what appears to verge dangerously on a pietistic, romantic individualism.

It is unfortunate that Luther’s brilliant insight into the two kingdoms had not been brought to bear on Hinchliff’s discussion. One of the chief flaws of the book is its uncritical confusion of Law and Gospel. Law itself is hardly discussed; “policies” are. Surely there is theological naiveté at best in describing the essence of the Church this way:

I have been concerned to assert repeatedly that the prime function of the Church is to ask critical questions about the nature of our society. (192)

or regarding faith and works, revelation and sanctification, to write thus:

Faith is something *lived*, not merely thought or talked about, and *how* one lives—morality—is, therefore, the primary affirmation of faith. (57)

We start out on life as sinners and the business of life, for the Christian, is to come to self-knowledge and to God *through* the battle to live by ideals and through the agony of one’s failure to do so. (60)

Another troubling characteristic of this work must be noted. Repeatedly, one gets the impression that politics for Hinchliff really is dirtier than other spheres of life (even though he goes so far as to say that a Christian who does not care about politics is not a Christian at all! (183)):

...it is difficult to avoid the impression that the acquisition and exercise of power requires a toughness that is difficult to reconcile with those Christian moral principles inherent in the concepts of love and community....Part of the dissonance of politics and Christian morality arises from the fact that Christ’s victory is the victory of a man who will die rather than surrender his integrity: the successful politician is the one who wins at whatever cost. (67)

I do not believe there is a necessary incompatibility between the moral and the practical in politics more than there is in any other aspect of human life....What makes politics a difficult sphere in which to struggle towards that goal is the fact that violence, manipulation and other invasions of the dignity and worth of men and women seem to be unavoidable. (203)

Assuming that power is differential, can we nevertheless assume that politics is either more or less evil than law, economics, corporations, the media, and—yes—the Church itself? I find such a view totally unacceptable, and indeed harmful in casting aspersions on what both Greeks and Hebrews understood to be one of the highest callings of all. This bias of the book is exacerbated by the total indifference to the distinguished contributions that many non-Christians and radically secular groups have made through politics to the common good, be it a Gandhi or feminists or environmentalists or the Jewish population in the United States. A proper theology of the two kingdoms would have helped Hinchliff recognize that “holiness” in politics is not confined to Christians.

Despite the unsatisfactory and incomplete character of Hinchliff’s work, and despite a style and convolution of thought inappropriate either for lectures or a book, the wonderful value of *Holiness and Politics* is that it really does force one to wrestle with some of the most urgent issues of our day.

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**THE NAKED PUBLIC SQUARE: RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA**, by Richard John Neuhaus. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984. Pp. viii + 280. \$16.95.

We are in the grip of an illusion about American politics, says Richard John Neuhaus. We mistakenly think that our regime is secular both in principle and practice. We believe that the sphere within which we now conduct our common business, “the public square,” is

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“naked” in the sense of having been almost completely purged of any official connection with religion. This is one of our “taken-for-granted truths” (4), certainly for those of us who have somehow acquired conventional opinions about “the separation of church and state” along the way, but also for some of our earnest theologians who identify the church with the “world” and its agenda. However, it is just such truths that we should scrutinize most carefully; and Neuhaus’s provocative book can help us in this undertaking. He argues that it is “demonstrably false” to think that we have a secular regime, and he argues that the “ideology of secularism” is an “exceedingly dangerous” dogma (vii).

Why is it dangerous? Because of something about our democracy that we seem largely to have forgotten, though the American Founders often remind us of it. Namely, the United States of America is an “experiment”; further, the results of this, as of any experiment, are uncertain. Our political freedom is one such result; but it would be endangered by the “ambitions of the modern state” (vii) were our public square ever to be truly naked of religion. Why? Because the naked public square would be a “vacuum waiting to be filled” (86) by the state in the guise of the institution that gives meaning to our lives, as the church once did (86-87). Religion offers the only alternative to this scenario, according to Neuhaus: “of all the institutions in society, only religion can invoke against the state a transcendent authority, muster popular support for that invocation, and thereby limit the state” (155). The case of Poland illustrates the point: “Beyond

reasonable doubt, it is the presence of the Catholic Church in the Polish public square that prevents the regime from realizing its ambition for total control” (88).

And in what way is the claim that ours is a secular regime “demonstrably false”? The crucial importance of religion as the transcendent support of our experiment in democracy has always been recognized, first by our founders and in the constitutional interpretation, until very recently and temporarily, when that importance has been denied. “Temporarily” because, at the level of practice, “the values of the American people are deeply rooted in religion” (21) and constitutional interpretation cannot deviate long and in fundamental ways from popular practice. If, as Neuhaus says, quoting G. K. Chesterton, “America is a nation with the soul of a church” (115), then constitutional interpretation must be congruent with that fact. These days, the chief evidence that our values have the rootage Neuhaus ascribes to them is found in the public doings of our “moral majoritarians.” A becoming feature of this book is the attempt to engage their argument without condescension, yet without concealing his disagreements with it.

Neuhaus not only takes on questions of constitutional interpretation but other complexities as well, such as the subject of civil religion, the theory of moral sentiments, the “is-ought” question, and the question of modernity, of what is distinctive about the modern age and its politics. Neuhaus will probably hear from specialist critics for having been bold in this way. For example, he speaks of the “modern state” and its “ambitions”; but there are, of course, many modern states and one of them particularly (our own) is contrived in such a way as to thwart the most dangerous ambitions of its office-holders, and this by means of institutions that are secular: see *The Federalist* and its explanation of our constitutional system. Or there is the subtle and powerfully argued claim of Leo Strauss that the modern doctrine of natural rights, the basis of our constitutional system, is fundamentally incompatible with biblical religion: see his *Natural Right and History*, p. 184, for instance. If Strauss’s claim is sound, then biblical religion and American democracy are less easily reconciled than Neuhaus seems to suggest.

At one point, Neuhaus describes the aim of his book as being to reinvigorate “appreciation of the democratic idea among Christians in America” (90) and this with a view to the “larger movement of liberal democracy,” rather than to narrower partisan politics (9). He reaches this aim precisely because of the questions that his book stimulates. It is not dull; and it is not dull because it is unconventional. But there is more to his interpretation of American politics than its unconvention-

ality, for he refers now and then to such biblical principles as freedom from self and from bondage to history; and these references suggest what the larger context of his enterprise is. He is persuaded by these principles; and those who are so persuaded are not simply creatures of their time and place. This finally is what makes his book lively, for it proceeds from a fact that he makes known when he introduces himself to his readers: “I am a Lutheran.”

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**LECTIONARY**, edited by Dieter T. Hessel. Philadelphia: Geneva Press, 1983. Pp. 283. \$10.95 (paper).

This volume is intended as a companion resource for clergy and congregations using the three-year cycle of the “consensus lectionary” of readings (slightly different from the “ecumenical lectionary”). While the 32 contributors represent a wide diversity of traditions, the Presbyterian origins under Dieter Hessel’s direction remain apparent. The book’s stated purpose is to identify socially significant themes in the lectionary, as a way to counteract the traditional individualistic and spiritualistic reading of texts. In this urgent task it succeeds well, and provides a rich resource for those who study and use it.

The book’s outline follows the church year, and for each season there is: a) A complete list of the lectionary readings for that season, b) Thematic essays (3-4) which probe the primary theological/ethical themes of the readings, both Old and New Testament, c) A wholistic approach which offers specific suggestions for congregational praxis in worship, education, and witness. This format is helpful.

The thematic essays are the primary stimulus for preachers and teachers. They often uncover new dimensions for the Biblical texts that can undergird their sociopolitical relevance for our time. Here are a few of the best. For Advent/Christmas, Rosemary Ruether’s “New Year—A Time for Renewal” attacks religious and social privilege, yet is full of grace and repentance. For Epiphany, R. McAfee Brown offers a sermon gem on Luke 4:16-30 and the unexpectedness of God’s coming; John Yoder gives a challenging interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount and its call for non-discriminating love; and Dorothee Sölle in “Fools in Christ” outlines a liberation method of Biblical interpretation worth using. For Lent/Holy Week, Paul Lehmann’s essay is a profound theological interpretation of Jesus’ temptation and transfiguring as uncovering “The Power of Weakness and the Weakness of Power.” Walter Brueggemann, as usual, stimulates fresh reflection on old/new covenant themes. For Easter, Walter Wink’s “Sexual Politics in the Resurrection Witness” argues “the Lord first appeared to Mary,” and Justo and Catherine Gonzalez interpret the church in Acts as a sign of the new order and dawn of the promised Kingdom. Finally, for Pentecost Neill Hamilton rightly terms the many synoptic texts “a safety net strung under a church tempted to spiritualize its task and avoid the call to justice” (he also interprets the two most misused texts, “the poor are always with you,” and “the Kingdom of God is within you”); and Larry Rasmussen stresses “Pentecost Economics” as a community which shares a common table and a common purse. As a whole, the essays open up new possibilities for preaching and praxis that is socially liberating and faithful to the Gospel.

Of course, not all the articles fare so well. The Christmas gospel becomes lost in the “Rachel” figure, and Jesus’ baptism is not grasped as a call to mission in the power of the Spirit. During Lent/Holy Week, where Christians focus on the cross as God’s radical gift of undeserved grace for a lost world, the article on the parable of the Prodigal finally makes grace conditional upon repentance (“if we do our best, God will do the rest”), and Ruether’s second article goes astray in a bland universalism and an arbitrary reading of the NT message of sin and grace and suggests Christianity can be reduced to salvation through obedience

to the Noachian code. All this In Lent! The editor admits this volume is not meant to give a

balanced exegesis, only concentrate on social themes. But this cannot excuse eisegesis or the ignoring of basic motifs in a text. Mostly this was avoided, yet the danger of overloading texts with social implications appears, as well as the concomitant danger of ethical moralism and ideological bias.

The practical suggestions for a wholistic approach to worship—education—witness are often creative and imaginative. If worked on by a congregational committee, they would enrich the community's life. However, by the end of the church year, these suggestions became repetitive and oftentimes overly complex. They are best as thought-starters.

A final word. As a bonus, part II of the book offers a stimulating critique of the lectionary itself by James Sanders. He discusses both advantages and disadvantages of the lectionary, and concludes forcefully that in the present lectionary the calendar “subordinates, if not tyrannizes the canon.” He thus calls for an alternate lectionary that will allow the whole sweep of God's story to be heard and proposes a storyline lectionary that uses both weekend *and daily* readings. A response by Horace Allen answers some of Sander's concerns, and concludes that for both Catholic and Reformed this lectionary is a “potent instrument and symbol of our unity and call to mission.”

Especially for those of us habituated to a lectionary, this discussion is eye-opening, since it raises some issues we seldom reflect on given our obedience to calendar. I think Sanders does not give due credit to all the advantages of a lectionary. But he does point out the danger in making the lectionary our only Bible in worship, and the need for placing our Christocentric faith within the whole sweep of God's story on behalf of our world.

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**LUTHER IN MID-CAREER, 1521-1530**, by Heinrich Bornkamm. Ed. by Karin Bornkamm. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983. Pp. 730. \$36.95.

After having made an already massive contribution to Luther studies, Heinrich Bornkamm left behind at his death an unfinished manuscript in the same proportion. Edited by his daughter and now appearing in translation, it will undoubtedly become a standard work of Luther biography.

Bornkamm's objective is a sequel to another classic, Heinrich Boehmer's *Road to Reformation: Martin Luther to the Year 1521*, which finally appeared in an English translation shortly after World War II. Bornkamm takes up where Boehmer leaves off, right after Luther's appearance at Worms. Bornkamm follows Luther through the 1520s from the Wartburg to Coburg, where in 1530 Luther waited impatiently for word on the negotiations involving the Augsburg Confession.

Though they haven't gripped historical imagination in the same way as Luther's earlier adventures, the middle years of his life are even more important to his legacy. Between 1520 and 1530, he began his translation of Scripture; removed himself from the Wartburg to Wittenberg to take leadership in the reform; fought with a series of opponents—Latomus, Erasmus and Zwingli; became implicated in the Peasants' War; married and began a family; and saw the

movement he led and sometimes followed taking root in congregations throughout eastern and northern Germany. Here is Luther in full step as preacher, teacher, and prophetic leader.

Bornkamm tells the story with Germanic thoroughness, rich in detail. He is not as interested in the personal or political dimensions of Luther's middle age as he is in the major works of this time. He provides both personal and political analysis to set writings such as *Against Latomus*, *The Bondage of the Will* and the catechisms in context. But the focus always comes back to Luther's writings. There are extended summaries along with discussion of major scholarship in the footnotes, giving Bornkamm's analysis the quality of a primary reference work.

This is the kind of biography that has long been needed. For more popular reading, Roland Bainton's *Here I Stand* and the more recent translation of Peter Manns' *Martin Luther* are the best. But behind them, offering more detailed and scholarly analysis, there has been emptiness. Now Boehmer's work can be supplemented with Scott Hendrix' *Luther and the Papacy* to fill in the early years. Bornkamm takes care of the middle. And we have only to wait for someone, perhaps in another generation of scholars, to do something more than H. G. Haile's collection of anecdotes concerning Luther in his later years.

But if Bornkamm's work is to become a standard for scholarship, another edition will soon be needed. Both Karin Bornkamm, herself an excellent Luther scholar, and E. Theodore Bachmann, the translator, are to be thanked for their work with the manuscript. The notes give access to the best of German scholarship. But they are already dated and are somewhat provincial—there are Scandinavians, Americans and even some English who have something to contribute. Bachmann has helped the situation somewhat by adding references to important English language sources, but there are notable omissions, both old and new.

This does not detract from the overall value of the book, however. It is a major source that will stand with Boehmer for years to come as a benchmark.

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