



**MODERN AMERICAN RELIGION, VOLUME ONE: THE IRONY OF IT ALL, 1893-1919**, by Martin Marty. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1986. Pp. 386. \$24.95.

Make room on the shelf for all four volumes. If the first is any indication of what will follow, we will be stimulated, opened and led to deeper understandings of modern America and its religious textures by a master teacher. The University of Chicago Divinity School's professor of the History of Modern Christianity has begun a two decade long project which will be his most significant and lasting contribution to scholarship generally and religious-cultural understanding specifically. Each of the first three volumes will cover about a generation of the fifth century of what we call the United States. Apparently the last volume's nature and scope is yet to be determined. He is conscious of the importance of undertaking "the first coordinated history of twentieth-century American religion," and anticipates that, if successful, "it can help change public understandings of what is usually called secular culture" (9).

This volume may surprise Marty's regular readers. Its scope, style, format and method is far different from any of his other forty books and innumerable articles. The wit, insight into people and situations, ability to make crisp summaries and knack for apt phrases which we have come to expect from him are all there. So, too, are a mature erudition, profound grasp on movements and motivations, genuine respect for the traditions and persons he presents. He deals with a raucous, critical time in the nation's history, handling complex material and surfacing elements in what may appear at first to be trivial but becomes important under his hand. Marty is one of the first to give serious consideration to the involvements of women, Native Americans, Hispanics and Blacks in the story of religion in America.

Some advice and caution. Marty knows how, as Barbara Tuchman advised historians, to keep the reader eager to turn the page to find out what happened next. But do not expect an easy book. More than any of his other works, the author pulls the reader into a complex as well as fascinating account. He orders and interprets his material in a manner that makes sense only if the reader spends time in the introductory section to get some of his ground rules and definitions straight. Instead of a chronology, Marty takes transverse slices of material across places and times. There is, then, a weaving quality to the method by which he works the materials apart from and into one another. Next, avoid scanning or hopping around in the book. It is a narrative that builds from part to part, demanding concentration and patience. Each of the five major parts and each chapter within the parts opens with a helpful thesis statement about what will follow and concludes with penetrating summaries. The conclusion wraps the whole together so as to bring the reader back to the introduction with instructed eyes and a mind eager to find out what Marty will do in the next volume.

The architecture of the volume is a key to the author's interpretations. He takes a slightly cockeyed view of America, so he sees the period at odd angles, angles which give readers unexpected opportunities to understand what is happening in these decades when America is

moving over a “hump of transition” into the modern world. Marty begins by relating the volume’s “plot” and title to four of Aristotle’s categories: the time is modern, the space is American, the substance is religion, and the quality of situations and outcomes is irony. Space and substance are clear enough, but quality and time call for special attention. In using “irony” he deliberately recalls Reinhold Niebuhr’s *Irony of American History* and probably lesser known works by Hayden White and Richard Reinitz. The initial discussion

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of irony is critical for gaining his incisive angle into American history. Accepting Gene Wise’s definition that “an ironic situation occurs when the consequences of an act are diametrically opposed to the original intention” and when “the fundamental cause of the disparity lies in the actor...and his original purpose,” Marty runs with the theme of irony for 1893-1919 (often slightly beyond) and thinks he can continue with it in the future volumes. “Modern” is a central term which characterizes and is used to contrast the book’s five parts: the theological modernists, the intellectual moderns, modernity, conservative and reactionary countermodernism, and wholistic and unifying transmodernism.

Three quick comments about the volume’s contents may be in order. First, the choice of 1893 as the starting point for American religion’s plunge into the modern period. What a year! Marty starts with and frequently returns to the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religion, Columbian Exposition (with its sessions on evangelism and the Evangelical Alliance), the Catholic Conference of Bishops, arrival of an influential papal legate, Turner’s Exposition speech on the closing of the American frontier and the Panic with attendant depression. The year after the Armistice, 1919, is a natural point to pause, but Marty handles the natural with such skill as to make it even more relevant, although he did not really deal with its racial turmoil.

Second, Part Three: Modernity, will have special meaning for Lutherans in search of “inclusiveness.” The chapters deal with “peoplehood as cocoon,” and “denomination as canopy.” Here he illumines the racial-ethnic cocoons which protect and also allow for the transformation and emergence of Asians (not restricted to Christianity), Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, Jews, various Orthodox Christians and Roman Catholics. The canopy image is very helpful in understanding the openness which exists below the label. Again, there is a breathtaking scope of denominations, and Marty covers the front well and gracefully. Lutherans are discussed in terms of the midwestern experience. Part Two sets the tone for a subsequent and brilliant chapter on the “Carapaces of Reactive Protestantism.”

Third, Marty discloses a humane sense of humor combined with a prophet’s exposition of social-religious situations. He and what must be an army of graduate researchers marshal an impressive array of often devastating quotes and incidents, yet he uses the ironic perspective to keep from slipping into despair or cynicism. He cherishes human freedom while he illumines the ironical results of our noble dreams and intentions.

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**WITHOUT GOD, WITHOUT CREED: THE ORIGINS OF UNBELIEF IN AMERICA,**

by James Turner. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1985. Pp. 316. \$26.50.

**THE PAGAN TEMPTATION**, by Thomas Molnar. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987. Pp. 201. \$11.95 (paper).

It is typical of good books that they keep popping up in discussion. James Turner's, *Without God, Without Creed* is such a book. It has been favorably reviewed in the national press. In a recent visit to America, a prominent European theologian spoke of it highly as an insightful guide to American religious culture. In a symposium in *dialog* not long ago, Turner's argument was pressed into service by one intelligent Lutheran observer to explain the dismal failure of yet another denominational social statement to defend the normative claims of scripture and the Christian tradition over against contemporary trends in secular thought.

Turner, who teaches history at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, offers the surprising thesis that widespread unbelief—that is, disbelief in God as an accepted, enduring cultural option—did not take hold in America until the mid-nineteenth century, and then only with the help of intellectual and pastoral leadership of dominant, mainline Reformed Protestantism. In the effort of

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liberal theology to accommodate Christian belief to secular culture, faith in God became a superfluous appendage to a system of values rooted in the conviction that humanity is the center of all things. Religion caused unbelief. Unbelief was not something forced on religion by the processes of modern secularization. Turner writes:

In tailoring belief more closely to human understanding and aspiration, however, many religious leaders made a fatal slip. They were not wrong to think that any significant faith would have to express itself in moral practice. But they often forgot that their God's purposes were not supposed to be man's. They were not mistaken in believing that any resilient belief must ground itself in human thought and experience. But they frequently forgot the tension that, by definition, must exist between an incomprehensible God and the human effort to know Him. They were hardly fools to insist that any God must be lord of this world, but they did not always remember that this world could not define Him. They forgot, in short, that their God was—as any God had to be to command belief over the long term—radically other than man. (267)

If this thesis intrigues you, then I suggest you explore the details of Turner's formidable argument. His claims are grounded in a wealth of historical detail. If he is right, then the history of modern theology will require rewriting. Not Newton and Darwin and the like, but the clergy abandoning the core of Christian beliefs bear responsibility for the decline of Christianity in modern Western culture.

As a brief description of this decline, consider the following passage from Thomas Molnar's *The Pagan Temptation*:

The scene in any city in the Western world, and increasingly in the countryside as

well, persuades us that religion has been thoroughly and systematically excluded from the active life of the citizenry. Old churches look like museums, new ones like factories. Priests and nuns look like busy bureaucrats, particularly since they hardly ever display signs of their sacred calling. Sermons, like newspaper editorials, deal with political, social, and economic issues. Christian schools imitate secular ones in inspiration and curriculum. Public life itself is consecrated to the idols of ideology. (163)

Molnar, who is described on the book cover as Visiting Professor of Philosophy at Yale University, calls this phenomenon of declining Christianity “desacralization.” By ignoring its credal tradition, by falling to the rationalistic reinterpretation of the Christian message, Christianity has allowed the ancient foe, paganism, to return to the center stage of cultural life. “The pagan temptation” is the belief that the universe is the product of chance, that humanity is governed by the blind forces of fate, and that, therefore, men and women must make their own way in the world as best they can. For mass culture paganism takes the form of vigorous occult practices by which people seek to come to grips with harsh reality. Countless therapies, gurus, exotic oriental ideas, even astrology are evidence of paganism in the popular realm. For the cultured elite paganism takes the form of spiritual self-reliance, dedication to art, and Stoic interpretations of nature and history which emphasize the tragic dimension that engulfs all reality. Orthodox Christianity’s twin affirmations of the transcendence of God (Nicea) and the Incarnation of God (Chalcedon) reject this pagan world-view. Christianity exposes the failure of human self-reliance while, at the same time, affirming that life is not beset by tragic fate.

Anybody who has drunk deeply of the ideas of an Emerson, Marx, or Nietzsche knows the power that pagan ideas hold in the modern world. If confirmation is required I suggest you take a close look at the surprising bestseller, *The Closing of the American Mind* by Allan Bloom. Further, anybody with any sense has witnessed the sad spectacle of Christian theology’s almost slavish obedience to ideological forces of various stripes in recent years. It is clear that the debate between the church and its pagan foe has not been to the advantage of those who stand on the side of the angels. This fact makes Molnar’s book not only timely, but urgent.

In summary, Turner and Molar have written serious intellectual essays. Neither is a denominational hireling turning out “relevant” social statements. Rather each is a scholar making his way in the midst of secular culture. Each knows how precious and how different Christian truth is. Each knows the cultural impact

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and significance of the Gospel when it is presented with confidence and forthrightness. In short, each author has written a book in the heavyweight division.

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**RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND THE MODERN PSYCHOLOGIES**, by Don S. Browning.  
Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987. Pp. xiii + 268. \$22.50.

The church of today is a church involved in counseling. The training of pastors includes education in psychotherapeutic methods. Church members receive and practice counseling in a plethora of psychological styles. Clergy and laity alike may experience liberation and healing through a particular therapeutic school and wonder how to square this with their religious beliefs.

There is reason for some confusion here—"traditional religion and modern psychology stand in a special relation to one another because both of them provide concepts and technologies for the ordering of the interior life" (2). How are they to be distinguished and evaluated? Are the psychologies value-neutral techniques for the resolution of psychological disorders or are they cosmologically descriptive, morally prescriptive, and possibly in conflict with the tenets of Christian faith?

A major difficulty in attempting to answer these questions is that the world views ("deep metaphors," "metaphors of ultimacy") and the ethics ("principles of obligation") of the modern psychologies are not obvious.

It is often thought that the modern psychologies are basically scientific and to this extent do not provide answers to life's meaning. But it is my argument that most of the more prominent modern psychologies, in addition to whatever scientific value that they may have, do indeed cross over into what must be recognized as types of positive cultures—cultures, indeed, which possess religio-ethical dimensions. (5)

Browning's intent is to discern the implicit cultures in some of the major modern schools—Freud, Skinner, the humanistic psychologies (represented by Rogers, Maslow, and Perls), Erikson and Kohut, and Jung—and to critique them through the theology of Reinhold Niebuhr and the philosophy of religion of William James and Paul Ricoeur. He proposes to focus on the moral evaluation of these implicit cultures, testing the adequacy of their ethics by a "rational core of morality," a principle based in the work of James and given content by Browning as the ideal of mutuality and equal-regard (Chapter 6).

Browning discovers four general cultures in the psychologies he examines. The culture of detachment, which he associates with Freud, sees the world as basically hostile and instinctually mechanistic, with little to be expected from humans except a cautious "ethic of respect" or reciprocity ("Love thy neighbor as thy neighbor loves thee," 51). The culture of control, as implicit in Skinner, sees the world in terms of natural selection and environmental reinforcement with no real human freedom, issuing in a rigid utilitarian ethic centered on communal survival. The culture of joy, in which he classes the humanistic psychologists and Jung, enjoins upon humans the free actualization of all their potentialities, implying that there is "a kind of preestablished harmony in the world that functions in such a way as to assure that 'what is to one person's advantage coincides with what is to that of all the others'" (75). The culture of care (Erikson and Kohut) has a world view similar to that of the humanistic psychologies, but includes as a necessary factor in self-actualization "generative care," the care for succeeding generations that "finds a place for both self-love and self-transcending love for the other" (6).

There are areas of agreement between the Christian world view and ethics and those of the modern psychologies. Belief in the basic goodness of creation can be seen in the humanistic psychologies and in Erikson and Kohut. But it is not balanced here by the recognition of human sinfulness. An ethic of self-actualization and self-love, even when extended to include a degree

of self-transcending love for the next generation, is not adequate in face of human sin. The reality of sin requires self-sacrificial love, the *agape* ideal

of Christian faith. And while there are ethical demands in the psychologies, they are not supported by a view of the world as governed by God, the Christian “deep metaphor” which lends Christian ethics their authority (“moral seriousness”) and promises the resources (“grace”) which enable right action. The interesting comparisons here are not provided by the use of the “rational core of morality” test, but are found on the level of the Christian “metaphors of ultimacy.”

Browning calls on the psychologies to bring their implicit religio-ethical dimensions to the surface for such critical testing as he has undertaken in this volume. And since his testing, he claims, has been accomplished by a rational method that the psychologies might be persuaded to acknowledge, he goes so far as to hope that theology, with such a tool in hand, will have a role to play in the development of critical psychological theory.

There is, however, a difficulty here at a fundamental level. As a basis for his comparison of the Christian world view and those of the psychologies, he describes the latter as “scientific myths” born of these psychotherapeutic traditions, and claims that “these scientific myths (and their metaphysical implications) and the myths, metaphors, and stories of the Judeo-Christian tradition are at this point on equal logical footing” (122). But the “scientific myths” and the Judeo-Christian one are not at all the same sort of thing. The Judeo-Christian myth comes as revelation and brings its authority with it; it begins as authoritative image whose meaning and ethical demands are gradually unfolded. The scientific myths are reconstructed by Browning as he delves into the implied underpinnings of the psychologies he analyzes, and while he may be correct about what he finds there, these “myths” carry no authority other than the human ingenuity that developed the psychotherapies. This is too great a difference to pass over, and it puts the rest of his enterprise in question. This problem is further exhibited in his treatment of Jung, since making such distinctions between religious myth and science are at the core of what Jung does, and Browning seems unable to perceive this.

Browning’s work is helpful in raising some very important questions, especially for Christians involved in counseling ministries and those receiving psychotherapeutic care. But in order to understand the differences between religious thought and the modern psychotherapies we are going to need work that penetrates to much deeper levels of our human reality than Browning has shown us.

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**THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN PASTORAL COUNSELING**, by Wayne E. Oates. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1986. Pp. 132.

As I started reading Dr. Oates’ book, I recalled a statement on preaching made by the former president of the American Lutheran Church, Dr. Kent Knutson. I paraphrase Dr. Knutson’s statement, “Preach Christ, not about Him. Let forgiveness ring, don’t talk about it. Proclaim the present day of the Lord, don’t just allude to it. Make the Gospel real and present.”

That is the feeling I had in reading this book. Dr. Oates is imploring the pastoral counselor to invite God into the counseling session. The active presence of God in the counseling room is a reality in this book.

Wayne Oates, at the very outset of the book, cuts past all the present varieties of “pop-religion” and takes us to the roots of Judeo-Christian faith. He brings up the Old and New Testament scriptures, together with church history as the ground of his thesis. The scriptures become the case material he uses to let God’s presence be active. He quotes liberally and lets those ancient stories ring into the present, giving depth to the common predicaments and anguish of our counselees.

In a section of his book entitled, “The Presence of God in Family Conflict,” Oates uses and retells the story of Jacob and Esau, with Rebekah using her guile against Isaac to gain the birthright for Jacob. Talk about family dynamics! “The sweaty crucible of pastoral counseling with a whole family presents powerful family conflicts and rivalries. These, like this classical Old Testament story, make

soap operas of both the afternoon and evening varieties on television seem tame, boring and shallow in comparison” (58). One begins to see that it is not simply a family in conflict with one another, but rather a family wrestling with God.

This skilled pastoral counselor quickly turns to his other armament, the world of clinical psychology. In reflecting about the Jacob and Esau story, Oates quotes Karen Horney: “Life itself is the great therapist. It is the only one that does not ask those being treated if they will take the treatment” (59). Throughout the book he uses the finest of theologians and psychologists to amplify his position.

This short book has chapter headings and sub-headings that outline the material and give clues to the direction the author is taking. A few of them are as follows: “Some Meanings of the Presence of God”; “The Presence of God as Creator”; “The Presence of God in Listening, Silence and Community”; and “The Presence of God in Darkness.”

Each chapter is prefaced by excellent selections of scripture that set the tone for the chapter.

One of the strongest chapters of the book, not surprisingly, is “The Presence of God: The Lasting Center of Pastoral Counseling.” In this chapter, the author states his purpose. “My purpose in this book is twofold: (1) To reflect briefly with you on the transient, temporary, unreliable centers of pastoral counseling; and (2) to explore with you the difference it can make if you and I make the Presence of the Eternal God the central dynamic in our dialogue with counselees. In essence, I want to move from dialogue to triologue in pastoral counseling” (23). He concludes the chapter with a veritable credo: “To me, only an explicit and articulate concern for the appearing of the Presence of God in the pastoral counseling relationship is an adequate centering of pastoral counseling” (34).

One of the unspoken benefits of the book is its utilization of the uniqueness of pastoral counseling in contrast to counseling by a Christian therapist. Twice in his book, Oates discusses the issues of transference and counter-transference. Oates alludes to the opportunity for the counselee to seize the moment to see in the pastor the representation of God and to work some things out with God. This opportunity is not as readily available to the counselee in a non-

pastoral relationship.

Oates does not spend much time in his book dealing with a methodology for assisting the counselor in invoking the presence of God into the therapeutic moment. It is as though he assumes that that occurs in and of itself, and well it may. The author speaks often of the mystery of the presence of God, and that God comes when and how God wills. He does talk of the role of silence in setting the stage for conversations with God and for “spiritual waiting.” Other than this, his book is not a “how to” book but rather a position paper, one with much more substance.

Every pastor who does a significant amount of counseling, and especially those that are in the specialized ministry of pastoral counseling, are well advised to read this book. It is rock solid stuff! It is grounded in faith and the scriptures, time tested and realistic. It will also call us to the richness of our own theology, as an alternative to becoming centered in what may be the vacillating field of therapy.

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**AGING: A TIME FOR NEW LEARNING**, by David J. Maitland. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987. Pp. 133. \$9.95 (paper).

David J. Maitland, former chaplain and professor of religion at Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, has written an insightful and helpful book. Maitland’s thirty years as a campus pastor and teacher have combined with his deep reflections upon both the message of scripture and his own personal experience of aging to produce a work that speaks directly to all who ponder seriously the meaning of life. Indeed, the contents of the book are so substantive that this reviewer found it both necessary and rewarding to re-read many portions in order to grasp more completely what the author is saying.

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Maitland quotes from the psalmist: “So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:12).

He suggests that the poet is clearly asking for a new learning, a heart of wisdom, a wise heart. Chapter 1 of the book considers the ways in which God instructs us toward gaining a wise heart. Chapter 2 identifies several deeply held societal attitudes that can discourage positive thinking about the realities of growing older. Chapter 3 describes how as we move along in years we are called beyond productivity as the basis of self-understanding. Chapter 4 discusses that there is mature wisdom in aging’s increased attention to maintenance—of physical objects, of human relationships, of relationship with God. This task is imperiled by the societal attitudes that everything is disposable and that launching new ventures is preferable to maintaining what already exists.

Chapter 5, speaking of “longevity’s tutelage,” emphasizes the importance of learning the lesson of limitations, a balanced attitude toward which is basic to successful aging. Chapter 6 states that “coming to terms with the journey of one’s life is the central spiritual task of aging” (80). This task involves the ability to *embrace* the passing things and events of one’s life and to

have a positive relationship to those things and events. Essential to accomplishing this is the image of God as forgiving.

Chapter 7 stresses Jesus' insistence that "the life of love, which is the human destiny under God, inescapably involves an outgoing relationship to God and neighbor and a positive relationship to oneself. The wise heart will understand the interconnectedness of human life. One of the functions of church and synagogue is to include in their ongoing life men and women of all of life's stages" (102), to appreciate the diversity of lives, and to resist all efforts to marginalize any sectors of society, especially the aging.

Finally, Chapter 8 points to our need for usable images to assist us to make something of the later years. The key, writes the author, lies in the ancient Hebrew conviction that persons are made in the image of God. This conviction is "the source of all human dignity; it informs the ways in which, under all circumstances, human beings are to deal with each other; it is the source of that freedom distinctive only to human life" (122).

At the end of his book Maitland repeats the question he had posed at the beginning: "Is it for nothing that we grow older?" (v and 131). He sums up his answer by speaking of the twofold and belated agenda for the later years: "to reacquaint ourselves with what, in fact, has been our gradually unfolding story and to embrace the reality that we have grown old and will die" (131). "Gladly affirming this wisdom will make all the difference in the world" (133).

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**THE FORCE OF TRADITION: A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN PRIESTS IN SWEDEN,**  
by Brita Stendahl with an Appendix by Constance F. Parvey. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. Pp.  
208. \$19.95 (paper).

Although this is a book about women pastors in the Church of Sweden, it will have many interested readers in the United States and elsewhere. Stendahl addresses herself to an ecumenical problem of vast dimensions and writes her book for a wide audience.

The force of Christian tradition, she argues, makes it "uniquely difficult for many churches to accept women in the priesthood precisely because the church for centuries has formulated, preached, and practiced the subjugation of women." In reckoning with the situation of women in the Church of Sweden and in a culture profoundly influenced by one version of territorial Lutheranism, she has come to think that "the highest threshold for women to step over in their struggle to gain recognition as authentic human beings is indeed to obtain entrance to the priesthood." For Stendahl, therefore, her topic is anything but provincial. The Swedish experience "laid bare unresolved tensions that do exist, though more covered, in other churches and in Western society at large." Consequently,

her purposes are missionary. "I perceive the study," she says, "to radiate signals both to other churches that ordain women and to women who seek ordination in churches that do not ordain women."

*The Force of Tradition* is written in six chapters. The first includes verbatim reports of interviews with six clerics, three men and three women. Two of the women were among the first to be ordained in the Swedish church. Two of the men are bishops, one favoring the ordination of women and the other opposed to it. Chapter 2 sketches the place of church and clergy in Sweden during several centuries. It includes reports of interviews with contemporary women pastors. The following chapter introduces the theological, ecclesiastical, and political intricacies of the debate leading up to the 1958 decision to ordain women and the adoption of the so-called “Conscience Clause,” which permitted bishops to refuse ordination to women and allowed clergy and other functionaries of the church to refuse to cooperate and collaborate with women pastors. Chapter 4 discusses debate following the decision to ordain women and the organization of a movement to resist the consequences of that decision.

Controversy in Sweden continues, with polemical energies activated by the abolition of the Conscience Clause and agitation for a free synod opposed to the ordination of women. Chapter 5 of *The Force of Tradition* interprets responses to a questionnaire distributed among both women and men serving as pastors in this turbulent setting. (An appendix offers a detailed reading of the results of the survey.) Chapter 6 is a brief retrospective piece. A second appendix includes a lengthy essay by Constance F. Parvey, “Stir in the Ecumenical Movement: The Ordination of Women,” focusing on discussions in the World Council of Churches.

Some of Stendahl’s findings will instruct but not surprise American readers. Opponents and advocates of the ordination of women in Sweden rehearse familiar arguments, going the gamut from biology to the Bible. Readers on this side of the Atlantic will not be bowled over by Stendahl’s discovery of impressively effective “old boy” networks in the Swedish church. Nor will anyone be taken aback by a Swedish version of the argument that the ordination of women would inhibit relations with Anglicans as well as with the Orthodox and Roman Catholics.

There are, however, important wrinkles in this story that readers outside of Sweden will want to think about in reading Stendahl’s book. Five, among others, might be mentioned in a brief review.

(1) An increasingly egalitarian society and an aggressive government appear to have pushed the Swedish church toward the ordination of women and the abolition of the Conscience Clause faster than it otherwise might have moved. That ought to invite a renewed consideration of the Constantinian legacy among Lutherans as well as prompt discussion of Christ’s meeting with culture in this context. What happened here and why?

(2) There have been able bishops on both sides of the fence in this controversy. Some bishops helped in the fight to ordain women. Other bishops—most notably Bo Giertz and a successor in the see of Göteborg, Bertil Gärtner—have been formidable opponents. Under Gärtner’s leadership, Göteborg remains a stronghold of resistance. A hierarchical structure, the practice of episcopal ordination, and the endowment of bishops with substantial practical authority in the Church of Sweden have all permitted extraordinarily effective opposition to the ordination of women. Opponents, led by influential bishops, remain deeply entrenched in its structures.

(3) The most effective opposition to the ordination of women has resulted from an informal alliance, unlikely on first thought but perfectly comprehensible on reflection, between advocates of high church traditionalism and biblicism. While romantic traditionalism and biblicism take particular and potent form in the Church of Sweden, readers elsewhere will want to consider the possibility of a coalition like this on other soil. Opposition to the ordination of

women among American Lutherans, for example, is usually argued either on the ground of biblical literalism or of catholic tradition.

(4) One of the most startling of Sten-

dahl's findings is the degree to which the women clergy of the Church of Sweden have assimilated themselves to prevailing hierarchical and sacerdotal models of the ministry. Women pastors in Sweden, Stendahl's findings indicate, have not by and large been advocates of reform, but have rather poured themselves into old molds. The issue of sexist language, for example, potentially volatile in so verbal a tradition as Lutheranism is, seems to have been much ignored. This raises an important question for other churches. In what things have women advocated reform and in what have they accommodated themselves to inherited patterns? It is a question that transcends the problem of how to evaluate feminist theology.

(5) Speculation about the ecumenical implications of women's ordination was particularly important in Sweden because of relations between the Church of Sweden and the Church of England, which continues to deny ordination to women. Although dark murmurings were heard in Sweden and across the North Sea, the decision to ordain women did not lead to a breach with the English church. Yet, for Swedes and others, debate about the ordination of women remains a crucial element in ecumenical conversation.

Constance Parvey's essay is an excellent introduction to the shape of this debate. The key problem for ecumenists was implied as early as 1916 by William Temple, later to become archbishop of Canterbury, who said that he favored the ordination of women but thought that it would impede the reunion of Christian churches, a cause more important to him than the ordination of women.

The ordering of ecumenical priorities has often been debated in the World Council, and in recent years talk of the ordination of women has occupied an increasingly important role in the discussion. Parvey is an informative guide to those conversations and a perceptive theological analyst of the argument. She is particularly instructive on Anglican equivocation, and Orthodox and Roman Catholic opposition to women's ordination. Her final pages detail the current status of the question with special attention to *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, of which a Roman Catholic theologian quoted by Parvey has said: "The exegetical, doctrinal and pastoral questions arising from the admission or non-admission of women to ordination were not tackled by this document. This is undoubtedly a real limitation in this new text which is intended to make it possible for churches to reach a truly common concept of ministry."

Despite its obvious strengths, there are some troublesome moments in this book. Stendahl, for example, suggests that an ecclesiology based on the sufficiency of Word and sacrament as marks of the church will inevitably lead to a hierarchical, sacerdotal notion of the ministry, but gives us neither argument to substantiate her claim nor more than vague hints about an alternative model. And not only feminists will wonder about her assertion that what the women have to give the church are their inherited skills at "enabling and community building." In *The Force of Tradition*, Stendahl is probably better at description and provocation than at theological construction.

Of Constance Parvey one might ask precisely what "the acknowledgment that differences may be irreconcilable but not necessarily divisive" means. What, for example, are we finally to

make of BEM? Can churches that ordain women accept BEM without substantial alteration? And what, in turn, would that alteration mean for the Orthodox and Roman Catholics? Does a division of opinion over the ordination of women indicate that there is a basic difference among us? Parvey approaches answers but, in the end, retreats into an ecumenical tact at once praiseworthy and problematic. She might reply that answers would be premature, although others would insist that they are long overdue.

In the end there will have to be answers, not only because many Christians are not prepared to compromise on the ordination of women, but because it is a crucially important theological topic with vital connections to other topics. As Hervé Legrand and John Vikstrom of the international Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue have said of the ordination of women: “As we consider this, we indeed also, like it or not, take a stand on the

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status and role of Scripture and of tradition; the relationship between creation and eschatology, between Christology and pneumatology, and between the local church and the whole church. We also adopt a position on Mariology, on the relation of man and woman, and on the roots of Christianity in history... We make theological decisions about the nature of the ordained ministry itself” (*The Ministry in the Church*, Geneva, 1982, 100).

Stendahl and Parvey have given us an important book. In it they invite us to ponder and ponder again what the presence of women among the ministers of the church means. *The Force of Tradition* radiates powerful signals indeed.

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**VOICES FROM THE HEART: FOUR CENTURIES OF AMERICAN PIETY**, by Roger Lundin and Mark A. Noll. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987. Pp. xviii + 396. \$19.95.

I have never really considered John Updike and William Faulkner to be among those “voices from the heart” who reflect the piety of our American thought through the past four centuries. Nevertheless those names are there, and their writings are included in this mind-stretching sampling that is edited by Roger Lundin and Mark A. Noll, to the dismay perhaps of some and to the delight of others. I count myself among the latter.

I think that I was surprised to find Faulkner, Updike, Niebuhr, O’Connor and others like them among those whose selections were included because of the definition of “piety” that had taken shape within my thinking. The “pious” had become for me those especially religious people whose faith was so completely “heaven-centered” that they were no “earthly good.” It was my perception that these same people immersed their entire being vertically, to the exclusion of the horizontal. Through a very careful and inclusive sampling of 55 of these American thinkers on prayer, reflection and action, *Voices from the Heart* successfully challenges readers like me to stretch beyond our previous perceptions of piety and to listen carefully for that which might be missing. In the introduction the editors write: “Through the selections (we have chosen) we intend to highlight the authenticity of private devotion, but never as a category separated from

public faithfulness” (xviii). In my estimation that goal was successfully accomplished.

The selections that the editors have chosen range from samplings of the thinking of William Bradford and Roger Williams in the earliest period all the way to such well-known modern writers as Henri Nouwen and Thomas Merton. They include the classical writings of such well known names from American literature as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Emily Dickinson, Herman Melville and Flannery O’Connor. From the public and political realm there are excerpts from Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson and Charles Colson. Among those included were also the easily recognized evangelists on the trail and in the city who have been so much a part of our religious heritage here in the United States, names like Francis Asbury, John Woolman, and Dwight L. Moody. There were all those kinds of names, ones that I recognized at once, but also included were names of less notoriety and fame, all of them a part of our rich religious heritage.

Most of the selections are brief. Some are prose, and some are poetry. Some are selections from journals and autobiographies, and others from novels and short stories. None of them, however, are so brief as to fail to lift us beyond our own carefully defined theologies and religious experiences, to the places where both pain and wonder have led others. The book beckons us to “try them on for size,” and to enter those “places of the heart” where we may not ever have chosen to enter.

Though it was sometimes arduous, I plodded through those thinkers from our early American history. Even though I may not choose to read them again, I came away with a renewed respect for the historical and personal hardships which so profoundly influenced their piety. As William Bradford, for example, shared

the wretched conditions which shaped the pilgrim’s voyage-though it troubled me to hear his explanations and understandings of the Providence of God there was a new appreciation for the experiences which brought him to that place in his thinking. As he relates an incident of a profane young seaman who had made them especially miserable by cursing and condemning the people for their sickness and their weakness and threatening to throw them all overboard, Bradford was not afraid to say:

But it pleased God before they came the half seas over to smite this young man with a grievous disease, in which he died in a desperate manner, and so was himself the first to be thrown overboard. Thus his curses light on his own head, and it was an astonishment to all his fellows for they noted it to be the just hand of God upon him. (12)

Yet it was that same theology which could lift up the Grace of God that upheld him and his people through a perilous adventure:

God it seems would have all men behold and observe such mercies and works of his providence as these are to his people, that they in like cases might be encouraged to depend on God in all their trials, and also to bless His name when they see his goodness toward others. (19)

If we have considered piety to be nothing more than “pie-in-the-sky,” we need to take another look. *Voices from the Heart* can help us do that. There is little in these selections that would confirm such a shallow understanding. Each reading is prefaced by a biographical sketch of the contributor. I found this to be most helpful in preparing me for the writings that followed, mainly because in some cases I knew very little about that person, or else again, my preconceived notions cast a shadow of suspicion over them. The biographical sketch brings us into

the themes of each person's journey, and we quickly and clearly learn some of the pain, the searchings and the struggle that set the stage for their offerings.

We are all searching for ways to take the abstractions of the Christian faith, and give them flesh. In *Voices from the Heart* you have a unique opportunity to enter fifty-five ways that some of the giants of our history have sought to do that.

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**HOMILETIC: MOVES AND STRUCTURES**, by David Buttrick. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987. Pp. 544. \$24.95.

*Homiletic* is not a book you pick up and read casually. It is 498 pages of text, written by a professor of homiletics who specializes in the phenomenology of language. He uses a very complex language structure and often forces a person to reread a paragraph two or three times in order to begin to comprehend. No, this is not an easy book. By contrast, if a pastor reads the preaching textbooks by Craddock, Achtemeier or Steimle, the words and thoughts of these authors flow smoothly and you quickly comprehend the direction of their arguments. Not so with Buttrick. To read this book takes patience, time, work, and a good dictionary.

But it was worth it. I learned from David Buttrick. He did what none of his colleagues have attempted to do: to think slowly and write carefully about rhetoric—about the organization of language so that it makes an impact on human consciousness. I am aware that the many current books on homiletics usually have sections on language and the structure of linguistic thought; but it appears to me that David Buttrick has thought and read more carefully in the field of rhetoric than his colleagues.

I will briefly summarize some of his major arguments. He divides his book into two parts; the first titled “Moves” and the second titled “Structures.”

“Moves” are blocks of thought on a “single notion” or a “single conceptual idea.” Buttrick contends that a congregation cannot concentrate for more than three or four minutes on any “move.” Within the three or four minutes of a “move,” there is a weaving of three different strands of thought: (1) theological reflections; (2) “oppositions” or intellec-

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tual blocks in the minds of the congregation; and (3) experiences which we all share in common. A “move” consists of interweaving these three types of strands. Of fundamental importance is that a single idea is to be “imaged”; that is, the single idea will not be remembered until an audience “can see what you are speaking about.” In order to image ideas so that they can be seen (and therefore imprinted into consciousness), the preacher uses examples from congregational experience, illustrations from outside of congregational life, and metaphors or analogies. For a sermon to last twenty minutes means that it will have five or six “moves.” The moves are joined by pauses and brief connecting transitional paragraphs.

Buttrick has several fine chapters about “moves” and their component parts: “Speaking in Moves,” “Developing Moves,” “Conjoining Moves,” “Introductions,” “Conclusions,” “Image

and Metaphor,” “Examples and Illustrations,” “The Image Grid,” “Language,” and “Style and Preaching.” In the introduction to his book, he limits his focus to “homiletic design and procedure—the making of sermons.” “I do not discuss the delivery of sermons, the preacher’s character, congregational psychology, or

the setting of preaching in worship” (xi). This book is about how to design and write a sermon.

Buttrick is also a superb teacher of how to use language vividly. As you read paragraphs from his example-sermons, his words are on fire with aliveness. His words are not beautiful like Achtemeier’s in her *Creative Preaching* nor like Brook’s in his *Lectures on Preaching*. He doesn’t want us to become “verbal artists.”

Rather, he suggests that the average seminary graduate has a vocabulary of 12,000 words; an average congregational member uses 7,500 words; we share 5,000 words in common for preaching; and he wants us to use our ordinary vocabulary in “astonishing ways.” The following paragraph is an illustration of his use of vibrant language:

We all die. Starved hospitals may bustle about to keep us going, pump the heart like a bellows, or spoon-feed us intravenously, but we will live lifelessly, zombies. Sooner or later an accident will shatter us. Or, maybe we’ll slowly run down like worn-out clockwork, and stop. People who love us will wail like hurt children or wonder why, or struggle with our struggling breath or simply walk away empty of us. (191)

What Buttrick does is to teach us, his readers, how to use language. He talks about the power of verbs and the weakness of adverbs; the effectiveness of short sentences and the necessity of oral patterns of speech. From my reading of the homiletical literature published during the past twenty years, Buttrick appears to me to be the best teacher of rhetoric. For an example, he writes a dull paragraph with dull language and then writes a lively paragraph, changing key words and phrases. By comparing the two paragraphs, he teaches us how to write and speak more evocatively.

I didn’t find the second half of the book to be as helpful as the first. In fact, in the second half, I became downright irritated with his obtuseness. It was in this section that I had to read and reread paragraphs several times, and even then I didn’t always comprehend his thoughts.

In the second half of the book the essential point is about “plotting”:

All speaking is structural and, therefore, may be termed plotting....Because preachers are not merely expressing themselves—gushing forth—but are concerned with the forming of a congregation’s faith consciousness, they will be fairly deliberate in designing the plots (moves) of their sermons. (293)

Buttrick often referred to the “old homiletics” which would organize sermons in the following manner: an introduction, three points with illustrative material, and a conclusion. Buttrick wants another form of sermon design which is based on the plot of the text. For an example, the following is his “plot” of the story of the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19):

1. The lepers cried “Have pity!” and we can understand.
2. How does Jesus answer? With a commandment, “Go!” Isn’t that just like God?
3. Well, they went: Faith is doing the word of Jesus Christ.
4. But if faith is only obedience, it can turn into dead law.
5. One came back to worship: Christian worship gives thanks.
6. So the Christian life is both obedient faith *and* worship. (340)

Buttrick then takes this basic plot outline and expands each point into a three or four minute “move” consisting of theological reflections, oppositions, lived out experiences, and using examples, illustrations, metaphors, and analogies. He separates each “move” with a pause and a transitional paragraph. The consequence is that the structure of the sermon follows the structure of the text. He believes that this form of preaching is “intrinsically exciting,” more so than the traditional model of introduction, three points with illustrations, and conclusion.

One final word of appreciation for this book. The author had a way of pricking pastoral piety and pomposity. The following are some examples of his needle:

...many preachers pursue a cult of naturalness, and come across in casual chatter as if they were slightly laid-back talk-show hosts. (77)

Personal illustrations are in vogue lately. Almost every sermon preached seems to contain personal material drawn from a preacher’s own life experience....We are suspicious of the current trend....Congregations will always remember the illustration as a disclosure of the preacher’s

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character (more than the point to be illustrated). (142)

The reason why much officially promoted evangelism aborts is that the world views it as thinly disguised institutional self interest, which, of course, it usually is. (229)

...we have confused pragmatics with truth. For many pastors, truth may tend to be defined as “whatever is therapeutically helpful” or more crassly, as whatever works in my parish....We are apt to judge “true interpretation” of scripture by the category of “helpfulness” to people in our parishes. “Truth” and “efficacy” are two different kinds of judgements. (270)

Unfortunately, in this brief review, I did not have time to react to the theological substance of *Homiletic*. This is a “heavy” theological work which will require effort and concentration, but the book is well worth a pastor’s time and energy.

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**HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION**, by Wilhelm Maurer. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986. Pp. 464. \$24.95.

**THEOLOGY OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS**, by Friedrich Mildenerberger. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986. Pp. 272. \$19.95.

**THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION: A COMMENTARY**, by Leif Grane. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987. Pp. 272. \$14.95 (paper).

The book by Maurer is the most significant of the three books on the Lutheran Confessions here under review. It is, in fact, the best single volume historical-theological commentary on the Augsburg Confession available. The great merit of the study is its rigorously historical character. It breaks important ground on the historical origins of the Confession (based on various journal articles by Maurer). The Confession is consistently placed in its political and theological context. This is especially evident in the method of exacting textual study which traces the language and meaning of the articles from part three of Luther's *Confession* (1528), through the Marburg Colloquy, the Schwabach Articles, the Torgau Articles, and the earliest versions of the Augustana. For the more theological articles the context is extended to include writings of the 1520s, especially Luther's, for Maurer recognizes that it is Luther's proclamation and theology which is being defended at Augsburg.

Maurer's work is divided into two parts: the first regarding questions of orders, the second on theological problems. Controlling the first part is Maurer's carefully argued thesis that the form of the Confession is due to the strategy devised by the Saxon theologians and statesmen for defending the evangelical cause at Augsburg. The strategy is designated the "compromise plan" and is most evident in the second part of the Confession. The compromise proposed that if the imperial-papal party would recognize marriage of clergy, communion in both kinds, and an evangelical mass (CA 22-24) that—in exchange—the evangelical authorities would permit the restoration of a reformed episcopacy (CA 28).

Behind the plan major forces are at work. First, what it seeks is to gain recognition of much of the new church organization which has abolished the medieval structures. Second, a sharp distinction is being drawn between spiritual and temporal authority (in Article 28). The office of bishop has power only in the spiritual realm. Third, the bishop to be recognized is thus one reformed, whose power comes only from the gospel. Fourth, as expressed explicitly in the Torgau Articles, if the bishop will not ordain to an evangelical ministry, the evangelical authorities will provide their own ordination.

Luther agreed to this plan, but as the negotiations at Augsburg proceeded, he became more and more uneasy at concessions by Melancthon to the papal and imperial parties. He had from the first doubted that the emperor would recognize the evangelical claims and now his doubts were being confirmed. Responding to this situation Luther wrote several tracts in mid-summer in which he revealed how far he "had distanced himself from the historical episcopacy." He pictures a territorial church in which bishops no longer would have a role. Even if bishops were still to be allowed

they cannot rule by coercion. Melancthon, however, conceded to bishops—by human, not divine law—the right to demand obedience.

Maurer makes clear that CA 28 is not a self-contained dogmatic statement; it cannot be understood apart from the whole political situation. By the end of the proceedings the whole

compromise plan had come to nought.

Another important argument of Maurer concerns CA 14 on the regular call of clergy (*rite vocatus*). He maintains that it is directed to a varied situation created by Anabaptists, peasants, sacramentarians, and Bucer; it says basically what is said in CA 5. It is affirming the *Predigtamt*: ministry is ministry of the Word not of the sacramental system. Already in 1524 Luther had rejected the sacrament of ordination. Call and ordination are to proclamation. For public ministry there must be a regular call. The Word is the means of grace; the Spirit does not come directly. Thus Article 14 does not maintain that *rite vocatus* means episcopal call and ordination. It means that in this new situation there must be a regular (albeit not episcopal) call.

Part one of the book deals with temporal as well as spiritual and ecclesiastical order. Specifically, the author deals with government, war, property, and marriage and family—natural orders, or the social ethical realm. Here he rests his commentary more on Luther's than Melancthon's writings. He argues that Luther's views draw more from the dynamic of biblical thought in regard to creation and history and to the sense of love and forgiveness operating in society. Luther's views relate much more significantly to statements of political and social issues in our day. Melancthon, instead, posits a more static view of society and the good; this reflects his greater dependence on Aristotle and a concept of natural law. He understands government to rule by law and force which produce obedience because of fear. In this whole section one misses reference by Maurer to Luther's *Large Catechism* which has a wealth of material on the areas under discussion.

In the second part of the book, the author deals with four theological areas: classical church dogma, sin and free will, faith and good works, and church and sacraments. Again he draws heavily on the writings of both Luther and Melancthon of the 1520s, leaning more heavily on Luther. The hermeneutical principle is sound. The interpretation of the Confession must be grounded in the immediate historical setting of the previous two years and in the theological writings of the previous decade. However, how does one decide which materials? Maurer's selection is good, but there should be some principle of selection. Various writings are omitted which would have enriched the presentation of the theological *loci* given so briefly in the Confession.

In considering classical church dogma Maurer shows perceptively that the first articles of the Confession are not just a verbal repetition of the ancient creeds; instead, they grow out of the whole Reformation theological renewal. Luther can be impatient with some of the language of the trinitarian and christological controversies, but he is so because the static philosophical categories conflict with the dynamic realism of biblical faith. Knowing Christ and the trinity can best be described as a knowing of involvement—the knowing of the relationship of faith. The Confession's opening articles confirm the catholic faith but reflect the revived biblical thought and language.

In the discussion of faith and works, Maurer credits the statement on justification to Melancthon, since Luther did not develop this doctrine formulaically, but exegetically. Maurer does not accept Holl's thesis that the two Reformers had different views of justification. Yet he does acknowledge the much greater significance of law in Melancthon's view and his sharper separation of justification from sanctification in contrast to Luther.

Maurer consistently connects Luther's understanding of church with the Word in creation and in the history of salvation. The Word stands over the church judging it at the same time as it is the gift to the church in proclamation.

The whole second part of the work is a sound and even brilliant introduction to early Reformation theology. It can only be tasted at a few points in this review.

This book demonstrates conclusively that the Augsburg Confession cannot be interpreted apart from the immediate historical situation from 1528-1530 nor from

the whole development of Lutheran theology in the 1520s. To limit interpretation to the text alone violates it, wrenches it out of interpretive historical context, and would seek to understand it at crucial points only with reference to canon law.

The question controlling the exposition of Mildenerger's volume is: What is the Lutheran confession? How is this confession expressed in the confessional writings related to the Christian confession, and expressed in the contemporary situation?

To identify the confession is also to pose problematic issues. On the one hand, the confession is expressed in the confessional writings yet not identical with them. On the other hand, the Lutheran confession must also be the Christian confession—and this involves a contradiction between the universal Christian expression and a particular tradition. Exposition of the confession in the confessions is not writing a dogmatic theology—although the confessions do constitute a *corpus doctrinae*. This *doctrina*, however, is always a teaching or preaching of the gospel; it is not a dogma demanding subscriptional belief as, say, the defined formula promulgated by Vatican I.

The Lutheran confession is identified as confessing that God works all in all: justification by faith. The author is aware that at present it is the doctrines of church and ministry which seem to separate Roman Catholics and Protestants, but he argues that it is still the doctrine of salvation which is divisive—as it was during the Reformation. He maintains that Roman Catholic theology is still a theology of human freedom and responsibility. The religious and the moral are on the same plane: “by receiving grace we are able to act morally” (37). In contrast, the Lutheran confession affirms that the faith whereby we receive grace and are united with Christ is God's work. Faith is not a work or a decision to accept God's salvation. The imputation of Christ's righteousness is never a process. These views are protected by acknowledging that the time and place of faith are God's work; we do not manipulate the time and place emotionally. The terrified conscience is the time and place. The doctrine of justification by faith will be despised except by those who have experienced the terrors of conscience.

The author then examines the teachings of the confessions to determine their consonance with the confession. The Augustana does not have the feeling of a confession because of its attempt to be—also—a basis for religious and political negotiations. It demonstrates that the main result of the Reformation is not a new theology but a reformation of the religious life and the church. The Smalcald Articles are recognized as having the fullest expression of the Lutheran confession—but in language which impedes acceptance. The Formula of Concord, while wanting to return to Luther, keeps expressing the crucial issues in terms of law, not gospel or grace.

The argument of the book next moves to the contemporary period by attention to the Barmen Declaration. It is regarded as more than a response to the German Christian movement; it is a rejection of the church's attempt, by way of natural theology, to legitimate various functions in society which go beyond the gospel but give the church power and influence—concessions to the state and culture of the day. Barmen is still relevant; it is an expression of the confession

which does what CA 7 is no longer able to do.

Finally the author moves to other modern issues, among them historical biblical scholarship. The question is how Scripture can be a witness to the gospel, when the scientific method demands total objectivity. It is the question of two different kinds of truth. Appeal is made to Bultmann's distinction between reading the documents to ascertain the historical part and reading in order to address the existential present. The latter occurs, according to Mildenberger, in the church where the Spirit brings about agreement of interpretation. This is the process of interpreting and encountering the Word of Scripture.

This is a provocative book. It is not limited to historical and theological introduction to the confessions, but raises basic and disturbing questions about the nature of confession. But it does not carry through on closely reasoned responses—especially in dealing with modern issues. Its definition of the Lutheran confession is so restricted that the richness and

creativity of the initial Lutheran achievement is never revealed.

Grane's book grew out of a course of lectures on the Augsburg Confession at a university theological faculty. It is a textbook, and its organization and content are appropriate to such a work.

After a good historical introduction which details clearly the stages leading up to the Confession, the author examines each article in sequence. His method usually proceeds in the following way. First the text of the article is quoted; this is followed by a one page summary which explains crucial terms and phrases. Then comes an exposition of the meaning drawing most basically on the theology and writings of Luther. The Confession is understood to be a defense of evangelical theology and Luther is the primary interpreter of the text. In addition, derivation from the Marburg and Schwabach Articles is explained, and the ways the article opposes—in one direction—views of the enthusiasts and the Swiss and—in the other direction—Roman theology. There follows the criticism in the *Confutation*, Melancthon's defense in the *Apology*, and finally the position defined by the Council of Trent. The reader is thus given a rich body of material, in succinct form, for understanding the text.

An example of this approach is the treatment of article seven. Luther's view of the church is presented and then explained in relation to the double front of the enthusiasts and Rome. The enthusiasts are offended by the external sign of church, Word and sacraments; Rome ties Spirit to the sign of the church. Both really want the "supernatural character of the church" externally visible through a possession of the Spirit which removes the church from the world; they reject the incarnational character of God's presence. There follows the *Confutations'* critical insistence upon the necessity of the rites of the church and Melancthon's defense (from the *Apology*) that these rites—being humanly ordained—cannot be made mandatory. The chapter concludes with reference to Melancthon's later writings where the idea of the priesthood of all believers is lost.

There are no new historical and theological insights here (that is not the purpose of the work). But in both respects the presentation is usually sound. Any reviewer will make certain exceptions. Surely article three is not directed so much against Zwingli as Grane suggests, and article fourteen's "double front" needs to be understood with reference to the Torgau Articles. The views of the opponents are sometimes given in too traditional a way; what is at stake for them is not handled with insight. These comments should not detract from the fact that this is a

most useful introductory commentary on the Confession.

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**MARTIN LUTHER: AN INTRODUCTION TO HIS LIFE AND WORK**, by Bernard Lohse. Trans. by Robert C. Schultz. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986. Pp. 304. \$26.95; 16.95 (paper).

**MARTIN LUTHER: THE MAN AND HIS WORK**, by Walther von Loewenich. Trans. by Lawrence W. Denef. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986. Pp. 448. \$24.95.

**LUTHER THE REFORMER: THE STORY OF THE MAN AND HIS CAREER**, by James M. Kittelson. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986. Pp. 320. \$24.95.

Each of the three volumes before us presents an excellent general introduction to the life and thought of Martin Luther. They are comprehensive and up to date with respect to major issues of modern Luther research, though there are obvious differences of focus. Kittelson's "primary purpose...is to tell the story of Martin Luther to readers who are not specialists in the field of Luther studies" (14). Lohse's book seeks to give "a basic overview of important problems and dimensions of Luther research," while at the same time encouraging others "to undertake [their] own personal studies of Luther" (xv). Finally, von Loewenich is convinced that "it is rewarding to study Luther seriously...[because] Luther has a message for the church and world today" (Preface).

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Lohse's "Introduction" (*Einfuehrung* in the German) is in reality a guide, designed to lead the reader into the major avenues of Luther's life and theology. This endeavor, along with its frequent references to important discussions among Luther scholars, is an imposing task. Yet, Lohse pulls it off since he is so intent upon asking questions and raising issues about the reformer. Because *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work* is intended to encompass so much in one volume, it could easily have resulted in a lifeless narrative that would have misrepresented the essential vitality of the reformer. Although there are points at which the book does read somewhat like a telephone directory, Lohse does not allow the encyclopedic aspects of his volume ultimately to define the work. He sticks so closely to the unfolding of Luther's theology in its 16th century context and his aim is so intensely focused on Luther himself that the excitement of the story is retained.

It is precisely this dynamic story of Martin Luther that serves also as the focal point for von Loewenich and Kittelson, both of whom have written biographies along more traditional lines. Kittelson places his volume in the tradition of Roland Bainton's *Here I Stand* (14). The result is impressive; the book is readable, scholarly and theologically responsible. In fact, one of the distinctive features of this book is its attention to the ongoing development of Luther's thought. This emphasis on the process of Luther's lifelong theological development, consistently interpreted in light of its historical content, makes *Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career* an excellent resource.

Von Loewenich traces the life of Luther with an eye on current events and trends. He

intends to interpret Luther for the modern world and therefore sets up a dialogue between the 16th and 20th centuries. *Martin Luther: The Man and His Work* shows that the reformer's concerns and his statements relative to those concerns have continued import for contemporary discussions. Von Loewenich adroitly correlates the situations and reactions of Luther with the concerns of our day.

In each of these three volumes, there is something for both the historian and the theologian. All three mention Luther's work and his life in their titles. This is significant inasmuch as it is necessary always to interpret Luther and his theology in light of their historical situations in life. There has been an unfortunate tendency in Luther research to separate history from theology. It is of critical importance, if one is to understand another person *theologically*, to identify the circumstances which give rise to that person's speech about God. This is certainly true in the case of Martin Luther. All three authors recognize this and thus provide us with analyses of the reformer which are basically accurate as to both Luther's theology and historical milieu.

Another methodological emphasis in each book is the balanced attention given to the so-called "old Luther." The last 15 years of the reformer's life have often been treated summarily or simply neglected by biographers. Von Loewenich, Lohse, and Kittelson represent a fairly recent trend in Luther scholarship, exemplified by the work of Mark Edwards, H. G. Haile, and others, that draws attention to the significance of Luther's last years. Kittelson speaks for this school when he writes that he intends "to bring the latest scholarship to bear on Luther and to treat all of his life with reasonably equal coverage" (15).

Obviously, these works represent some very impressive scholarship. Von Loewenich's volume, which seeks to make Luther speak to, or in, contemporary categories and circumstances, cites some 1500 quotations from Luther. Such annotations indicate von Loewenich's commitment to historical exactness. Yet this is significantly more than an accurate biography. The dozens of references to items of current theological debate present a dynamic and vibrant picture of Luther. Although it is easy to imagine that this work would look much different if written even a few short years from now, von Loewenich is essentially true to the life and thought of Luther—and that is the basic criterion by which one evaluates a volume like this. Von Loewenich's work, published in German in 1982, makes very worthwhile reading. How-

ever, keeping in mind the book's focus on Luther's implications for today, it is best read sooner, rather than later.

Kittelson, by the nature of the task he sets before himself (i.e., "to pluck the fruit of scholarly discussion for the benefit of general readers" (14)), must make some difficult decisions. He must choose which open questions among Luther specialists are too esoteric for the "general reader." Nonetheless, in the interests of historical fidelity and scholarly fairness, more indication of open questions could have been included without necessarily interrupting the book's well-conceived prose. Two events in particular, both of which lend themselves to the making of a good story and a bit of romanticism, illustrate Kittelson's lack of overt attention to ongoing, scholarly debate. First, Kittelson does not mention the discussion regarding the "nailing or mailing" of the *95 Theses* (i.e., when, with respect to the outbreak of public debate, did Luther send a copy of his call for disputation to his ecclesiastical superiors? Were the *95 Theses* ever

really tacked to the door of the Castle Church ? Cf. 106ff.). Secondly, American biographers of Luther, because of Baintons's influence, ought to indicate the questionable authenticity of Luther's famous "Here I Stand" remark at Worms. Kittelson's account quotes this line without reference to its exclusion from the earliest records of eye witnesses (161). Certainly these matters are small in the overall scope of the reformer's career, yet left unexplained they tend to give a picture of dubious accuracy.

Lohse, at the outset of his analytical guide to the life and work of Luther, admits that "another author would undoubtedly have chosen differently at many points" (xv). The large scope of Lohse's book makes this admission more than a polite appeal for understanding or sympathy. Lohse has given us a first rate piece of scholarship that makes the interpretation of Luther's insights and actions more accessible to modern researchers. However, if one keeps in mind Lohse's intention to survey the vast array of Luther materials, both primary and secondary, the format chosen for the English edition shows itself to be rather curious. The relatively comprehensive bibliographies of the original German publication (organized according to subject headings at the end of each chapter) have been transformed and scattered among endnotes and a "Select Bibliography of Works in English," at the close of the book. This work can still be very helpful to the thoughtful inquirer; however, in the English edition its utility has been unnecessarily reduced.

These volumes seek to interpret Luther for the late 20th century. One can certainly appreciate the efforts represented here—especially when the results are so fulfilling. In the end, Kittelson, Lohse, and von Loewenich execute their tasks with such clarity and insight that one cannot help but be rewarded by careful attention to these books.

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