



JESUS AND HIS ADVERSARIES: THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF THE CONFLICT STORIES IN THE SYNOPTIC TRADITION, by Arland J. Hultgren. Foreword by Reginald H. Fuller. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979. Pp. 223. \$6.50 (paper).

Jesus and His Adversaries will be welcomed not only by scholars who are interested in the development of early Christian thought and literature but also by parish pastors and others who wish to relate that early Christian thought and literature to the life of contemporary Christian congregations.

The concluding statement of the book, entitled “Christian and Jew in Light of the Conflict Stories,” is a good beginning point for the reader who wishes to use the conflict stories to address issues of our day. In this brief Afterword, Hultgren tells us that we are not simply to transfer the Jew-Gentile controversy from the first century to the twentieth century but that we must translate the more basic conflict into modern terms. He asserts that “it is a vice, not a virtue, to continue to portray Judaism in the negative terms of these stories, even when it is so portrayed in these segments of the Scriptures of the Christian church,” and declares that “the adversary of today is any mind-set either in the Christian tradition or secular society which seeks to maintain positions, prejudices, or mores which will not allow the characteristic freedom witnessed to in these stories to have its way with us....” (200-201).

The centrality of Jesus is emphasized not only in the hermeneutical concern of the Afterword but also in the historical study of the conflict stories themselves. The creative impulse for the form of the conflict story is Jesus. “Some of the conflict stories contain traditional sayings of Jesus concerning the issues of his time; a few of them, furthermore, present vivid scenes out of his ministry. Others, in which no traditional sayings of Jesus can be found, have nevertheless been shown to express the attitude of the historical Jesus” (198).

Although Hultgren has an interest in the contemporary relevance of the conflict stories and sees them as developing out of the life and ministry of Jesus himself, the study is done within the framework of form critical research pioneered by Rudolph Bultmann and Martin Dibelius. He assumes the major postulates and follows the procedures of the form critics in classifying the stories, attempting to relate the genre to contemporary forms, reconstructing the primitive form of each of the stories and the setting in which its formation is appropriate, and tracing the history of the stories from their use in the pre-gospel period through the use made by Mark, Matthew, and Luke.

While Hultgren works within the general critical framework provided by the early form critics, his work is also informed by developments in redaction criticism and marked by freedom in terms of specific critical judgments. The term “conflict stories” is used by Hultgren for the material designated “controversy dialogues” by Bultmann, “paradigms” by Dibelius, and “pronouncement stories” by Vincent Taylor. The term “conflict story” is chosen to characterize these pericopes, for Hultgren sees the materials as narratives within which controversy dialogues

are set and which conclude with a pronouncement of Jesus.

The relationship of the concluding statement of Jesus to the narrative is a key in the analysis of the stories. Some narratives are indispensable for the closing saying of Jesus, while other narratives have been composed to create conflict stories out of originally independent sayings. This observation causes Hultgren to divide the conflict stories into two main categories: unitary conflict stories in which the saying is comprehensible *only* in terms of its contextual situation and non-unitary conflict stories in which the question of the opponents and the narrated scene are secondary.

The unitary conflict stories (the Ques-

tion About Authority, Paying Taxes to Caesar, the Question About Fasting, the Healing on the Sabbath, the Sinful Woman at a Pharisee's House) are very old, being formulated at the earliest stage of the tradition and containing information about actual conflicts between Jesus and his adversaries. Nevertheless, the stories cannot be considered stenographic accounts of conflicts in the life of Jesus preserved for historical purposes. The common function of the unitary conflict stories is to "offer for the primitive church a justification for its beliefs and practices in response to Jewish criticism" (88). In each of the conflict stories, however, the primitive church draws on traditions about Jesus' attitude and conduct "to affirm that the new life offered between the resurrection of Jesus and the parousia has a legitimacy grounded in the prophetic activity of Jesus" (88). The stories do not center in law but in Jesus and his conduct and attitude.

Seven non-unitary conflict stories seen by Hultgren are: the Beelzebul Controversy, the Healing of the Paralytic, Eating with Tax Collectors and Sinners, Plucking Grain on the Sabbath, the Tradition of the Elders, On Divorce, and On the Resurrection. In these the opponent's question and usually some narrow developments are constructed to give a setting for a saying of Jesus which originally circulated independently. As was the case with unitary conflict stories, these stories, which were formed in both the Palestinian and Hellenistic churches, do not have a common *Sitz-im-Leben* of rabbinic-type disputations on points of law or simply preserve a statement of Jesus useful for preaching. In the stories, the churches are (1) responding to Palestinian Jewish criticism by appealing to Jesus' attitude and conduct; (2) responding to the criticism of Hellenistic Judaism in the Diaspora; (3) answering questions of converts concerning moral and doctrinal matters; and (4) dealing with the problem of admitting those who had originally been hostile to Jesus in his earthly ministry but who are now converts to the faith.

Hultgren not only deals with the form and function of the conflict stories at the time of formation, he also deals with the function of the stories as they were transmitted, collected, and used by the evangelists. The source behind Mark 2:1-36 was formulated as a collection of conflict stories in the Galilean church of the fifth decade and served as response to Pharisaic criticism. Mark's redaction of traditional conflict stories gives evidence of two concerns of Mark: to show continuity between the early conflicts of Jesus with his adversaries and the final conflict in Jerusalem and to show continuity between the victories of Jesus over his adversaries in verbal combat and his victory over supernatural hostile powers. Matthew transposed and edited conflict stories and formulated additional conflict stories so as to present Jesus as teacher to the church in which Matthew worked. Hultgren sees this as a church which had to develop its own doctrinal self-consciousness apart from the contemporary rabbinate. Luke made distinctive use of the

conflict stories in two major ways: for a thematic purpose within the travel narrative and for his redemptive historical and political-apologetic purposes.

The work of Hultgren is significant for scholars because it is the only volume since the work of Martin Albertz which is devoted exclusively to a study of the conflict stories. The volume will be particularly useful to scholarly ministers as they benefit from insight into the ways the church related the conduct, attitudes, and words of Jesus to changing historical situations and as they receive encouragement to see the profound and continuing significance of the conflict stories and to relate this message to their own day.

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FAITH AND PROCESS: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PROCESS THOUGHT FOR CHRISTIAN FAITH, by Paul R. Sponheim. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979. Pp. 351. \$12.50.

A kind of typology has been emerging to help “locate” people and work within the highly varied field of process theology. Whitehead’s own work has both deep empirical and rational strains. The first is disclosed in his awareness of the complexity of experience which keeps it always somewhat impervious to reason; his sensitivities to processes of resistance

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(sin, evil); and his affection for the temporal. The second is disclosed in his driving passion for structural elements, in the feeling that there is reasonable chance of conceptualizing the ontological structures of things; and in a preoccupation with pursuit of the best (rather than of a better). Process theological formulations tend to be colored more by one orientation than by the other (though neither appears entirely alone). I find Paul Sponheim’s *Faith and Process* tending more to reflect the empirical temper.

Further, there are some who seem to use process modes of thought to help establish Christian claims, for example, those who feel that Jesus, as the Christ, is fundamentally a disclosure of the character of God, which character can also be independently ascertained through philosophy (Hartshorne’s impact is marked here). In contrast, there are those who stress that the concrete particularity of God’s initiative eludes abstract speculation about the general character of the world. That particular divine initiative first makes its claim; then philosophy may be invoked to help render the claim more intelligible and plausible. Sponheim’s work fits the second type; he uses philosophy to elucidate, not to establish, the claims of faith.

The first chapter of *Faith and Process*, “Part I. Authorization,” is a convincing apologia for philosophical theology under four rubrics: tactical wisdom, conceptual wisdom, ethical wisdom, and constitutive wisdom (more on these later). The next two chapters, “Part II. Orientation,” present (chapter 2) a discussion of presuppositions and basic tenets of process metaphysics; and (chapter 3) a more detailed discussion of the process philosophy of God and religion, and some recent theological appropriations of these modes of thoughts (e.g., Cobb, Ford, Ogden, Griffin, etc.). Here especially (but throughout the book), Sponheim is straightforward in presenting some of the difficulties which Whitehead’s critics point out (e.g.,

Neville's criticism of Whitehead for making creativity rather than deity the philosophical ultimate).

"Part III. Construction," is the core of the book's constructive theology. Chapter four deals with metaphysics as faith's servant, offering to theological reflection tactical and conceptual wisdom. Tactical wisdom refers to "some service (that) is to be garnered as the Christian searches for means to achieve ends clearly in faith's view" (25). Here Sponheim uses process metaphysics to help give an accounting of human responsibility, and then suggests some tactical wisdom for counselling and teaching/preaching. Metaphysics offers conceptual wisdom as well: a systematic world view, within whose matrix of understandings and meanings Christian claims may be significantly heard. Here Sponheim suggests "that the process understanding of action may point the way toward a less competitive reading of how the divine and human were together in Jesus than tends to be found in a 'two nature' framework" (201).

"Chapter 5: Metaphysics as Faith's Colleague," begins with ethical wisdom: how metaphysics can illumine the setting for action, and how it may guide the discovery of the "ought" within the "is," and how process metaphysics perceives God's purposes in the world (the production of beauty), yet can defend the genuine freedom of each individual, even as God's purpose is at work. Because novelty is not necessarily good, Sponheim does well to stress God's efficacy in respect to creativity rather than simply in respect to the emergence of novelty. In this section, he is also somewhat in the mood of Bernard Meland in stressing an aesthetic ethics directed to the transformation of relationality, rather than an ethical goodness that is simply the result of non-badness. "Beauty 'intensifies' this immediate togetherness of felt relationships" (221). Given the aesthetic texture of Whitehead's philosophical intuition, I think I might have expected more attention to the notion of beauty in the second chapter which dealt with Whitehead's metaphysical vision.

The second half of chapter five I take, in many ways, to be the pivotal section whose influence pervades the concerns of the rest of the book, backward and forward. Sponheim's concern here is with the constitutive contribution of metaphysics to a theology of justification. Here metaphysics is not only the handmaid of theology, but helps constitute our theological understanding of justification. He follows Whitehead closely on a number of critical issues. (1) Divine and worldly agencies are functionally unequal but

equally necessary. Every entity is a co-production of both God's efficacy and the efficacy of its own self-creation, each of which is 100% necessary. Thus, the gratuity of God's saving action is fully respected, while the need for creaturely response is also clearly affirmed. (2) The question is not only about human justification, but about the whole world: "how can the worldly be justified" (230). Thus, the question is cosmological as well as historical/existential. (3) While evil is not symmetrical with good, it emerges primordially from the character of creaturely finitude. Justification for finite creatures, therefore, cannot depend upon the elimination of evil, but upon the action of God in response to its steady worldly presence (*simul justus et peccator*). (4) Since evil is a dis-order, the ordering efficacy of God is essential to justification (i.e., the primordial nature of God). (5) And since the existence of any thing which has achieved some goodness does not seem justified if it is simply to perish, its preservation is requisite to justification. Thus, God, in his consequent nature, saves all the goodness that is to be saved.

If I read Sponheim correctly, the Christological centrality to justification is not contingent upon the salvific merits of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, but upon the free choice of God to express his justifying activity in this particular way: "God chooses to receive the world in Christ"(251). The functional relation between Sponheim's Christological model (cf. chapter 4) and the justificational character of Jesus as Christ is not made clear (and perhaps that would exceed the aims of the book). I find myself wondering whether Professor Sponheim would find Whitehead's description of "peace," in *Adventure of Ideas*, an acceptable image for justification as he has presented it.

The final chapter is, in large measure, an extended comment upon methodology, upon the principles and practice of dialog between reason and faith, philosophy and theology. The last pages are an interaction with disbelief. The last chapter is richer and more deserving of comment than these few sentences, but there isn't space, since I chose to interact more at length with the theological construction.

If I were to fret a little, it would be over the virtual absence of any integral discussion of the Holy Spirit in a presentation of the Judaeo-Christian sense of God's efficacious and salvific immanence in history. This is the case not only with Prof. Sponheim's recent book, but generally for process theology whose preoccupations with logos Christology have resulted in the ignoring of spirit Christology. And in many ways, this same tendency is also something of a malaise in the Western Christian tradition.

In my judgment, this book deserves careful study for its articulate consciousness about the methodology of philosophical theology (which seems applicable not only to process theology). One seldom observes a theologian so attentive to his methodology throughout his actual doing of theology! And the book deserves careful study as well for its constructive theology. Those parts of the book are evocative suggestions rather than full systematic treatments—but the suggestions are fertile. It's a very good book. It moves process theology forward.

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WHY CONSERVATIVE CHURCHES ARE GROWING: A STUDY IN SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION, by Dean M. Kelley. Second Edition, New York: Harper and Row, 1977. Pp. 179. \$3.95 (paper).

Dean Kelley's *Why Conservative Churches are Growing* is by now an old friend. Since publication of the first edition in 1972, it has undergone examination not only in the usual theological journals but in the national press as well. *The Christian Century* numbers it among the best books of the decade. Certainly there is little need for another review. But in this first issue of *Word & World* on the subject of evangelism, it might be well to look at our friend once again. While good books do not die, they often fade away. This one should not.

Kelley begins his argument not with a theological idea but with a fact of church statistics. Whereas mainline churches such as United Presbyterians, United Methodists, and both ALC and LCA Lutherans have lost members steadily since the late 1960s, often at an alarming

rate, other churches of decidedly more conservative bent such as the numerous Pentecostalist groups, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Seventh-Day Adventists are doing quite well. In some cases these churches are increasing membership at a rate faster than the growth of the general population.

As a United Methodist minister and an executive of the National Council of Churches, Kelley inquires humbly after the reasons for this contrast in membership trends. I say humbly because Kelley, unlike many in the leadership of major denominations, is willing to be instructed by the practical success of religious groups with which he is in theological disagreement. Indeed his liberal credentials are impeccable. Therefore we ought to heed what he says.

On the basis of careful sociological analysis, Kelley asserts that conservative churches do well because of their unambiguous witness to their faith and their seriousness about the demands they place on members. Unlike society at large and more liberal denominations which reflect society, conservative churches are dogmatic in belief and strict in behavior. These traits make them strong social groups. They are able to harness the energy of their followers and exercise an influence on society which is disproportionate to their actual size. Most importantly, they are especially effective at carrying out what Kelly calls "the indispensable function of religion:" to explain the meaning of life in ultimate terms. That is to say, these churches are adept at the crucial task of clarifying for their members the whys of human existence. They provide values to live by and a hope which answers the riddles of suffering and death. They are able to bring the realm of the sacred into the midst of people's lives, thereby engendering firm commitment to their creed and morality.

While Kelley in no way argues that true Christianity is sect Christianity, or that a church should be measured by the sole criterion of membership growth, he does claim forcefully and polemically that there are lessons to be learned. If mainline churches are to arrest their decline, they must realize that they are determined by two central sociological realities, realities on clear display in the success of conservative churches. First, all churches are obligated to provide for the religious needs of their members. The person who occupies the pew, serves on the boards, volunteers services for bazaars and social projects, seeks from the church first of all a way through the mystery of life. Kelley puts it quite well:

The religious structure at its best praises and perpetuates the reliable continuities of life; it has helped its members through difficult hours of trouble and tragedy; it has bound them together in strength and mutual reinforcement when beset by chaos and catastrophe, peril and persecution; it has upheld them in the face of disease, disaster, and death, and they look upon it as a trusted bulwark against the storms of life. That is its basic business: to be a sustaining and enabling community for its members in confronting the elements in life that are both unpleasant and unavoidable (151).

A church which ignores or downplays this essential religious function will lose people.

The second reality to be learned from conservative churches in Kelley's view is the need to pay attention to the quality of membership. The social health of any church is dependent on the commitment of its people. Therefore clear standards for joining the church and retaining

membership must be set and adhered to. Again, let Kelley speak:

Both new groups and old must find an effective yet humane way to exercise the only power a voluntary group possesses to preserve its integrity: the power of the gate. They must be willing and ready to exclude those who do not measure up to the group's standards, whatever those may be. Many groups have high and admirable standards but when it comes to enforcing them against specific offenders, they lack the will—the seriousness—to do so. It is not necessary to be cruel or harsh about such enforcement, nor to condemn the offender as worthless or abhorrent. He has simply failed to meet the qualifications of the group and is therefore no longer a member; it is as simple as that, but must not be blurred or glossed over. In or out: upon this distinction the survival of any serious group depends (178).

Dear pastor, dear seminary student, dear downtown executive, dear theologian at your desk—all of you who take

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pride in your modernity, who are committed to social progress, who are uneasy with the talk of another world at the expense of this world—listen to what Kelley is telling you. You know that he is right. Don't turn from it but face it and speak to it in your preaching, teaching, and writing. You will not thereby distort the gospel!

By the way, the latest figures from the Lutheran Council are these: Lutheran Church in America, 2,942,000, down 25,000; American Lutheran Church, 2,376,000, down 13,000. If you haven't done so, please read Kelley's book.

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BILLY GRAHAM: A PARABLE OF AMERICAN RIGHTEOUSNESS, by Marshall Frady. Boston: Little, Brown, 1979. Pp. 546. \$12.95.

Today's resurgence of interest in the born again movement emerges from a wide variety of sources. These include the conversion stories of national celebrities such as in the Carter-Colson-Cleaver syndrome. No celebrity, however, has contributed more, nor better reflected the several faces of the born again phenomenon than has Billy Graham. To those who first heard him during their teen years (such as myself, in 1950), it seems incredible he continues 30 years later to be the energetic, commanding presence for mass evangelism around the world that he is. Despite sharp and often cogent criticism of his theology, his business methods, and his finances, Graham continues to dominate the American and world evangelistic scene. Not even the disclosure that the Graham home office was not publicizing a \$23,000,000 reserve fund to the general public, nor his being badly duped for publicity purposes by Richard Nixon, has shaken his pre-eminence. In the annals of revivalist preachers in America, he has lasted longer, survived

more adversity, and made himself vulnerable to criticism more than any comparable leader. He is truly one of a kind; we will never see anything close to his presence again.

Such power and so unique a personality has, obviously, attracted a wide variety of biographers seeking to explain this man. Certainly the most ambitious, the most carefully researched, and among the best qualified to write such a study is Marshall Frady. The son of a Southern Baptist minister himself, a proven biographer of Southern leaders already, and a careful yet gifted story teller, Frady has produced the best answer yet to why Graham continues to lead.

Frady states freely his deep admiration for Graham as a person and an evangelist; he has no special animosity against Graham as do several earlier biographers. Frady's major thesis is, however, bluntly critical of Graham. To Frady, Billy in sum is best understood more as a tragic figure, a man of righteousness. This quality imparts a superficial and naive understanding of the true nature of evil in our society. Despite the fact that Graham is truly upright, clean-cut, pious, and dedicated, Frady argues, he is also eager to please, untouched in his own faith by doubt or confusion, and ready to interpret any moral dilemma in the most optimistic manner. Frady writes, for instance, about Graham and his close associates, "Their only sense of any mystery in life ranges no farther than incessant reports among themselves of wondrous and pleasant coincidences."

This righteousness and naivete, Frady insists, is genuine. Billy is no Elmer Gantry or power hungry charlatan. But Graham does not realize that it is his personality, his righteousness, that makes him so attractive and persuasive to millions of followers. The followers do not see that, in Frady's harshest judgment, Graham is in reality a "marcelled tupperware Isaiah." While using the language of the Old Testament prophets exhorting their people to repent and turn back their foolish ways, Graham has also unfortunately identified the consumptionist culture of middle America with the will of God. He perpetuates the centuries-old myth of America as the chosen nation to do God's will, thus endearing him to those millions who want to hear so respected a leader tell them what they want to believe about their nation and themselves. Frady does point out Graham has taken a more critical and courageous stand on some issues; he did criticize racial segregation early on, and recently he

has called for an end to the arms race. But in toto, his record has given revivalism the overly close identification it has with American secular culture.

To make his point, Frady has, for contrast, a superb vignette on Will F. Campbell, the freeform Southern preacher whose theology, strategy, and common sense is effectively contrasted to the same qualities in Graham. Frady, however, loses his sure touch at other points; his prose becomes convoluted feeding back on itself rather than the subject. For instance, in talking about Graham's first love, Pauline, Frady writes that her life with the man she eventually married "proceeded as an uninterrupted thirty-year gambol of champagne receptions in Singapore patio gardens, sundown parties on the jasmine-spilled terraces of Kuala Lumpur." That is nicely written, but is like the billiards player on the TV beer commercial, "just showin' off."

Graham's ministry has been, is now, and will continue to be fair game for continued, critical scrutiny. Frady's work helps us find at least temporary answers to the questions about the "Hour of Decision" preacher from rural North Carolina. For instance, is Graham really best understood more as a product of his times than as a shaper of those times? Much in the record

says yes. Graham himself admits he has changed positions on controversial issues, such as Joe McCarthy, or where Russia was going to drop H-bombs on America. But in his sermons he also tells us “The Bible says...” and we wonder why the same Bible said different things to the same preacher.

One may also ask whether his influence is in large part due to his highly efficient system of business operations. The Grahamites would answer that since God has put computers, television, high speed presses and the like into this world, then it would be foolish if not immoral to ignore using them to advance the Kingdom. Graham’s critics would reply that the whole milieu of the Evangelistic Association exudes an aura of organized, minutely planned, technologically-up-to-the-minute efficiency rather than one of sinners struggling to know and do the will of God.

One wonders also whether Graham (as well as the other celebrities in “the electronic church”) have not diverted much needed funds from the local congregations and channeled them to national revivalist extravaganzas. Even more fundamentally: Is mass revivalism an adequate introduction to the Christian walk? Graham points to the testimonies of the converts who say yes. What we do not know is how many others were repelled or lost in the crowds or undernourished in a moment of personal anguish. We simply have no way of knowing if the Graham ministry has made more than a small, temporary dent wherever crusades are held.

It is this reviewer’s contention that Graham has held on to his leadership for so long for the reasons Frady lists, and also because so long as this man of righteousness continues his ministry, the American people will support him because they see Graham as proof that there is still enough niceness and piety in America to create and sustain a Billy Graham. Americans now, as in the last 30 years, have wanted visible proof they have not lost those values they believed their ancestors showed in their lives. Graham’s power is proof that nostalgia for a long-past past is not wishful thinking; such a past did produce a Billy Graham. Therefore, somewhere, someone must be doing something right. The presence and power of Graham is convincing evidence that we as a people still believe we are ready to turn back Satan by individual affirmations to revivalism’s altar call.

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WOMANSPRIT RISING: A FEMINIST READER IN RELIGION. Edited by Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979. Pp. xii + 287. \$5.95 (paper).

This is an excellent collection of essays which surveys, both historically and topically, a new area in religious studies which has come into its own in the last decade—women and religion. Edited by two scholars whose individual and collective work in this area is well known to those who have watched the development of the section of the American Academy of Religion called “Women and Reli-

gion,” *Womanspirit Rising* brings together in an inexpensive anthology the key journal articles

which have become the small “classics” in the study of women and religion. As such, the volume will probably become standard for use in college and university courses. But it may also serve another purpose. It is a very helpful introduction for ministers and lay people who want to know more about this multi-faceted area of religious reflection and who are interested in the ways the feminist movement has influenced the study of religion. In *Womanspirit Rising* one sees the variety of approaches to the question of feminism and religion and discerns an underlying unity as well.

The variety is apparent in the distinction the editors make between “reformist” and “revolutionary” positions. Some women scholars are concerned with re-envisioning traditional Judaism and Christianity, finding within those historic traditions a religious core that serves as a criterion for criticizing the more apparent patriarchal doctrines and practices which they abjure. Others find these traditions hopelessly antithetic to the authentic concerns of feminist women, and so seek to move beyond their traditional patterns. Another perspective on the variety of selections is afforded by the editors’ distinction between criticism of past and present religious tradition and the more difficult task of *reconstruction* of tradition or *construction* of the new.

The book’s four parts illustrate these differences in approach. The first section, “The Essential Challenge: Does Theology Speak to Women’s Experience?” contains three important essays. The first is Valerie Saiving’s “The Human Situation: A Feminine View,” dating from 1960, generally recognized as a landmark analysis which appeared a decade ahead of its time. And it remains one of the most perceptive studies on the question of Christian theology and the experience of women, as it explores the theological notions of sin and grace as prideful assertion of the will and loving self-sacrifice. Saiving argues that such a theological understanding of sin and grace (e.g. in Anders Nygren and Reinhold Niebuhr) corresponds with male experience in western culture which encourages men to willful assertion. But since culture has more often discouraged women from self-assertion, their form of sin may be precisely the opposite: self-negation and a too readily chosen self-sacrifice. Rosemary Ruether’s article, “Mother-earth and the Megamachine” sets out in brief space her important theory that sexism has its source in the dualistic world-view that emerged from the religious upheavals in classical civilization of the first millennium B.C.E. It is this theory of dualisms (male-female, mind-body, culture-nature, spirit-matter) that informs Ruether’s books and articles on various aspects of liberation theology and which connects, in her thinking, the liberation of women with that of oppressed minorities, the ecology movement, etc. Both Saiving and Ruether are persuaded that their own Christian traditions have a liberating core which is at odds with sexist aspects of their theologies. Not so with Mary Daly, in “After the Death of God the Father,” who argues that it is not particular sexist statements and practices which are oppressive in the Christian tradition, but rather its core symbolism of God the Father and the male Christ. These symbols, despite theological disclaimers that God transcends sexuality and that Christ redeems all of humanity, nevertheless provide images of, and legitimate, male rule in society. Thus it is necessary to transform this symbolism (as Daly attempted in her 1973 book *Beyond God the Father*) or abandon it altogether (as in her recent *Gyn-Ecology*).

The second section, “The Past: Does It Hold a Future for Women?” presents both reformist and revolutionary perspectives on the study of religious history from a feminist point of view. Among the reformist articles are Phyllis Trible’s “Eve and Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread,” Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza’s “Women in the Early Christian Movement” and Eleanor McLaughlin’s “The Christian Past.” They are similar in that each demonstrates how overlooked

aspects of biblical and historical data can highlight the equality and significance of women in Jewish and Christian history, and thus radically change one's reading of the Bible and church history. Most intriguing is Elaine Pagels' "What Became of God the Mother?" in which the feminine symbolism for God (e.g. the Trinity as Father, Mother, Son), and a principle of equality between men and women in political and social roles in

ancient Gnostic texts is studied. Pagels shows that two very different patterns of sexual attitudes emerged in orthodox and gnostic circles and suggests that "further research might disclose how Social and cultural forces converged to suppress feminine symbolism—and women's participation—from western Christian tradition." Other essays by Sheila Collins and Merlin Stone argue for a different view of religious history as "herstory" and search back beyond Jewish and Christian history to describe the position of women in the goddess-worshipping cultures of the ancient Near East.

The third section, "Reconstructing Tradition" presents a series of essays on theology, spirituality, religious language, and worship or celebration in both Christian and Jewish contexts. Naomi Janowitz and Maggie Wenig offer "Sabbath Prayers for Women," Judith Plaskow a ritual for "Bringing a Daughter into the Covenant," and Aviva Cantor "A Jewish Woman's Haggadah," indicating the centrality of worship, not theology, in Judaism. Elizabeth Fiorenza argues for a feminist Christian spirituality in the Catholic framework, Sheila Collins offers suggestions for a "Theology in the Politics of Appalachian Women" and Nellie Morton, in "The Dilemma of Celebration," deals with the problems of worship, beyond mere changes of sexist language.

In the final section, "Creating New Traditions," the reader is introduced to the most revolutionary aspects of current writing on women and religion. Here one moves from Judith Plaskow's provocative rewriting of the myth of Lilith to Mary Daly's philosophical argument for the necessity of God (or Goddess) language; from Naomi Goldenberg's discussion of dreams and fantasies as revelatory sources to Penelope Washburn's description of menstruation as life crisis and spiritual experience; and from Carol Christ's reflections on "Spiritual Quest and Women's Experience" (in literature) to aspects of witchcraft (as a positive, not an evil, phenomenon) by Starhawk and Zsuzsanna Budapest. A final article, "Why Women Need the Goddess" by Carol Christ, ends the volume with a powerful statement of the Goddess figure as symbol for the psychological and political concerns of the women's movement in religion.

It is in this final essay that the reader can discern the unity at the heart of all the diversity in recent writing on feminism and religion. Using Clifford Geertz's definition of religion as "a system of symbols which acts to produce powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations," Christ argues for the importance of symbol and its diversity of meanings (over theology or explanation). The symbol of the Goddess, she writes, is that of the "newfound beauty, strength, and power of women" as they "struggle to create a new culture in which women's power, bodies, will and bonds (of sisterhood) are celebrated." This theme is pervasive in all of the essays in this volume and aptly describes the heart of the issue at stake in "feminism and religion."

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INNER GROWTH/OUTER CHANGE: AN EDUCATIONAL GUIDE FOR CHURCH RENEWAL, by John H. Westerhoff, III. Introduction by Dieter T. Hessel. New York: Seabury, 1979. Pp. xii + 164. \$4.95 (paper).

John Westerhoff has combined here in a challenging and insightful way a programmatic statement for the reform and renewal of today's church with a model for educational planning in the community of faith. Westerhoff moves quickly and programmatically from one theme to another as he suggests the wide range of reflection and action that needs to characterize the Christian's life in the world. Westerhoff writes clearly and concisely in setting forth the church's call to witness through "word and deed to its faith in the transforming power of God's good news."

The call for church renewal Westerhoff makes here is radically different from what we have come to associate with the renewal movement spawned in the wake of World War II and the Korean conflict. Then renewal aimed at an inclusive, comprehensive, united and modern church with a program fit for all! The proclamation of the church shaped by such aims was a witness to structure and organization. Evangelism largely meant the

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church's efficient, professional presence in and to the world. Faithfulness meant keeping the distinctions clear between private piety and individual secularity.

For Westerhoff the streams of renewal run deeper than ecclesial structure and organization. Taking as his model for personal renewal the sixteenth-century saint, Teresa of Avila, Westerhoff argues convincingly that the Word and Sacrament which shape the inner life and meaning of the church need to be heard and celebrated at a depth where spiritual growth is engendered and from which can come, as a result, prophetic action in the name of Christ in the world. Renewal in the sense of outer change in individuals and in society is faithful response to the Gospel only as it issues from a deep, personal, spiritual renewal—from inner growth that takes place in the community of faith. "Piety without politics is barren," Westerhoff argues, "while politics without piety is soulless."

Westerhoff bases his theological framework in Part One, "Foundations for Faithfulness," on the biblical confession of God's faithfulness to his covenant and our call as God's people to live faithfully and hopefully towards God's future. The biblical realism that disavows pessimism in the face of sin and blind optimism in the wake of human achievement is at the heart of Westerhoff's contention that only transformed lives will be able to fulfill the mission of being Christian in the world, that the God of the Christian faith is the God "who calls the world into covenant with him that his will might be done."

The last chapter in Part One is about "Making Moral Decisions." Although positively raising the issue of Christian social action based on the Christian's ultimate authority in the Word or action of God in Jesus Christ, Westerhoff argues here that direction for one's actions can be found in the Gospel even though one cannot find there any detailed information on how one is to act. Moreover, the chapter suggests that ethicality does not depend so much on the clarity of perception as on the sobriety of judgment. One wishes Westerhoff had explicated further the implied ambiguity of value judgments and moral decisions even as these judgments and decisions are illumined by the Christian message. Human response in the form of social action is

a *sine qua non* of Christian fidelity. But social action is just as much a hermeneutical task as it is a contextual reality. As such it is always subject to the prayer: *Kyrie eleison*.

In Part Two, "Forms of Faithfulness," Westerhoff explains the method that is the foundation for his educational planning design in Part Three. That method he calls catechesis. Catechesis is

a process intended to both recall and reconstruct the church's tradition so that it might become conscious and active in the lives of maturing persons and communities; a process by which persons learn to know, internalize, and apply the Word of God in daily individual and corporate life (57-58).

Catechesis asks the fundamental question, "How can we be Christian together in community and in the world?" This section of the book argues powerfully for a familiar appeal in Westerhoff's writings, namely, that the faith community is the proper context for religious education and catechesis. When religious education is experienced in that context through that method, the church school as we know it can make an important contribution to church and world.

The caveat announced at the beginning of Part Three, "Pathways to Faithfulness," is that the aid for educational planning set forth there is not a "bag of tricks" ready for use and sure success." It is rather a model illustrating the process of catechesis and the theological framework that precedes. As an aid for educational planning this model needs to be altered to fit specific congregational settings and contexts.

Although Westerhoff insists that his model for educational planning needs to be contextualized and adapted for use in particular congregations he does not identify reasons and ways for that adaptation. The reader would assume that adaptation is necessary just because each Christian congregation is comprised of different people. Certainly this is a major reason for adaptation. But adaptation has to take place often because of obstacles that are quite different from contextual individuality. It would have been helpful if Westerhoff had spoken about obstacles to faithful response that go beyond personal differences so that one might anticipate and appropriate the struggle for faith and faithfulness at all levels of interaction with

the church's tradition and with one another in the faith community.

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THE BIBLE IN THE PULPIT: THE RENEWAL OF BIBLICAL PREACHING, by
Leander Keck. Nashville: Abingdon, 1978. Pp. 172. \$4.95 (paper).

It cannot be an accident that so many books are being written about preaching these days. This particular one is by a New Testament scholar who is Dean of the Yale Divinity School. Professor Keck, along with many others, is convinced that the Christian Church in this country is in desperate need of renewal. Such a renewal, he quite rightly concludes, must be centered in

preaching; most particularly, in biblical preaching. The book is a clear, carefully presented argument for the possibility and necessity of such preaching. There are some helpful homiletical insights, such as Keck's contention that sermon structure can sometimes be modeled on the stoic diatribe. The bulk of the book, however, is a good compendium of traditional assertions about why biblical texts can and must be preached.

Keck has good insight into the present problem of biblical preaching. Our contemporary thinking has been thoroughly "historicized." This means that the dominant approach to the scriptures in leading seminaries has been biblical criticism as it has developed since the 18th century. On the one hand, this biblical criticism has produced better and more intensive research on the Bible than ever before; on the other hand, it does not seem to be contributing to solid, biblical preaching the way it should. The problem is made particularly acute because of the many ministerial candidates who do not have a strong background of Christian nurture. For them biblical criticism often does "not establish a life-nourishing relationship to the Bible or to its real subject matter." Keck is by no means interested in getting rid of modern biblical criticism; rather, the main contention of the book is that biblical criticism itself "can provide a mode of understanding that will release the Bible into the life of the Church."

The author correctly sees that there are many factors apart from modern biblical criticism that stand between text and biblical sermon. He deals with some of these factors. There have been controversies within American Christianity over the place of the Bible, and some particular areas of confusion among Protestants. These days the preacher must preach to the people who are affected by a general revolt against authority and people who sense an incongruity between an orderly presentation of the sermon and their own experience. In all of this, one senses Keck's sympathy for the daily struggle of the preaching pastor. He knows that the struggle can be made much lighter if the pastor has a strong vocational identity as a biblical preacher.

Keck is convinced that if the preacher can see that the Bible is not an alien authority over the church and that preaching has an intrinsic continuity with it, biblical preaching will be renewed. The Bible is an historical event because the canon was made by and for the church. This makes it possible and necessary to say that the Bible is both inspired and fully historical. The opening of the canon leads naturally to preaching; proclamation is inherent in the literature itself. It is also natural and proper to bring historical criticism to bear on this literature. This reviewer finds those arguments for preaching which stress the oral character of the Bible and the process of making the canon helpful. That argument, however, can be made for all sorts of literature. It is more accurate to root preaching in the command of Jesus and the nature of the Gospel.

The author begins his last chapter with a long and delightful attack on the moralizing which often characterizes preaching that pretends to be biblical but is not. In this chapter he also develops two productive ideas of how preaching can be truly biblical: when the context of the text governs the content of the sermon and when the function of the sermon is analogous to that of the text. Here he offers his most creative ideas for moving from critical exegesis to the sermon. He speaks of the "event of the text repeating itself" and of the "intuitive, imaginative, venturesome, spontaneous quality of all interpretation." Unfortunately, these remain hints without full explanation.

contemporary meaning overmuch. I came away from this book thinking that this fear had paralyzed him enough so that the book is primarily a solid defense of critical exegesis rather than a creative solution to the problem that he tackles.

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A HISTORY OF AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY 1950-1975, by Adrian Hastings. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979. Pp. 302. \$34.50/\$9.95 (paper).

Occasionally a book is published that fills a long-felt need, and fills it well. This book by Fr. Hastings is such a book. In a lively and lucid fashion (at least for a rather straightforward history) Fr. Hastings sets forth an overview of the situation of Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa from 1950-1975. These have been years of tremendous ferment and change in Africa for Christian missions from the West, the churches, and the societies in which they are located. This book helps us to understand the ferment and change, perhaps not so much in terms of indicating where this is leading Africa and Christianity in Africa as in terms of helping us to understand the changes that are continuing to take place. However, Hastings does provide us indicators for the future as well.

This is not a history of the church, but a history of Christianity taken in broad terms, and of Christianity in its cultural and social setting. In order to accomplish this, he structures the book so that it is really three books in one. One book is concerned with the theme of the Church and State, a second the development of the historic mission churches and a third independency in African Christianity. However he deals with his material chronologically, his first chapter being titled simply "1950," in which he seeks to establish a base line for his three themes, showing where Christianity was in 1950 in sub-Saharan Africa in respect to church-state relations, the development of the mainline mission churches and independency, and what the major formative factors were in getting it to this point. Each of the three themes is dealt with in a separate section in this and subsequent chapters in which he covers eight-year spans of time—1951-1958, 1959-1966, and 1967-1975. Thus it is possible to follow church-state relations, the historic churches or independency through the 15 year period without dealing with the other themes in the book. This manner of organizing, together with a well-developed index, makes the volume very usable for reference purposes.

The picture that Hastings portrays of African society is one of considerable uncertainty. In 1950, Africa was largely under colonial domination or under the white minority regime in South Africa. The mission churches likewise were largely dominated by the missionaries and the mission agencies that supported them. In 1975, the last bastions of colonial control were crumbling, and only the white minority South African government still seemed securely in place from the colonial era. The leadership of the historic churches has meanwhile passed over into African hands in most cases, while still depending to a considerable degree on aid from the Western churches and mission agencies. This change Hastings chronicles, and attempts to indicate what its meaning may be for Christianity in Africa.

Of particular help is his pointing out that the independent African nations have tended toward some kind of totalitarianism, seeking to eliminate all potential structures of opposition

(187). This has been true whether they seek to legitimate their rule through a tie with the past (authenticity), or through the canons of revolution provided by Marxist socialism, the one notable exception to this being Nigeria. With the development of a one-party state, only the major churches remain with an independent organization of considerable significance. Under these circumstances, it is almost inevitable that there be tensions and even considerable conflict between the major churches and the African governments, a situation that is likely to continue for some time. He points out that as a result the smaller churches have tended to be effectively banned by the governments, or have be-

come apolitically quiet as the price for their survival. In this respect, he sees the independent churches as becoming less important in the larger society, except in those cases where they have become a major church through their growth and the establishment of a stable organization no longer so directly dependent on the charisma of the leader.

While Hastings tends to be cautious in his historical judgments, he does occasionally get carried away by his enthusiasm. For example, he sees the Tanzanian Arusha Declaration and the writings of Julius Nyerere that immediately followed as marking a new beginning for Africa. While I share Hastings' regard for Nyerere as a leader, and would not wish to seek to refute the claim that the Arusha Declaration has had an immediate significant impact on the continent of Africa, we are still too close to the event to say with any confidence that it "marked a new beginning for Africa." In fact, Hastings' later careful qualifications indicate that he himself is not all that sure.

Taken as a whole Hastings gives a picture of Christianity firmly established on the continent of Africa, while living in situations of uncertainty about the directions in which both African societies and the churches will go. He sees Roman Catholic and Protestant churches complementing one another to some extent, as they have different strengths and weaknesses. He sees the social and political ferment that spawned the thousands of independent churches now working in favor of the historic churches, while admitting that one cannot really be sure. Speaking of the present social and political situation and the churches' position in it, Hastings comments:

The storm has arrived and for a time at least the churches in many lands can but live with the faith they cherish which transcends politics but also with a pragmatism which may not wisely venture beyond the horizon of the next six months (223).

It should be noted that the title is slightly misleading, since he deals only with sub-Saharan Africa. Some also regard the Malagasy Republic as part of the African scene, and he provides no material on the development of the church there. However, with the exceptions of North Africa and Madagascar, he has succeeded in providing a remarkably comprehensive and balanced perspective on Christianity in Africa during this period in a relatively brief book. Some of the smaller countries may not have received adequate attention, although it is unlikely that one will find a major oversight in this carefully researched book.

For one who has lived through this period in the life of an African church, this is an

exciting book, and pulls many loose ends together. For one who comes to the book with little knowledge of Africa and the church in Africa, the many names and places may sometimes be confusing and overwhelming, and may disrupt the flow of the narrative. However, for one who wishes to gain clearer insight into many of the issues confronting Africa and the African churches—racism, Marxism, poverty, development, dependency, to name a few—this book is worth careful reading. In addition, as a ready mine of information on this most significant period in the formation of African Christianity, this book is presently one of a kind.

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TRAJECTORIES IN FAITH: LIFE STORIES OF MALCOLM X, ANNE HUTCHINSON, BLAISE PASCAL, LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN, AND DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, by James W. Fowler and Robin W. Lovin. Nashville: Abingdon, 1980. Pp. 206. \$6.50 (paper).

Fowler and Lovin have three aims in their *Trajectories in Faith*: to introduce the reader to faith development theory; to tell five life stories; and, to apply the theory to the stories as a means of understanding the life journeys described in them. The latter, of course, is the actual reason for the book. While the book, as a whole, is not far off in achieving its purpose, it is rather uneven in its parts.

The Introduction is crucial for those who have little or no background in the work of Piaget, Kohlberg, or Fowler—especially that of the latter in the Research Project on Faith and Moral Development. Knowing themselves to be working in an area that could generate argument, the

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writers devote a good bit of the Introduction to a rationale and justification of psychohistory, space that might better have been used to amplify the theory and its faith stages.

Profiles, rather than life stories, might better describe the material that serves as the basis for the trajectories. Obviously, with five stories to tell, none could be dealt with in great detail. It seems that the writers presume a good knowledge of each person's story—and that what is needed in this book is a highlighting of significant events along the journey in faith. Nevertheless, the stories are well written and interesting...without belaboring the concern for proving that developmental theory is the precise way by which to understand the lives of these five people.

While being appropriately cautious in their claims for having proved the value of faith development theory, the reader should not be surprised that in the conclusion Fowler and Lovin are convinced that, given their definition of faith, they have succeeded in their primary purpose. The difficulty is that this conclusion is based on a limited survey of several lives, a too brief summary of the stages of faith development, and a definition of faith that may not be acceptable to many.

The brief life stories of the five persons allowed little opportunity to examine the specific

context and content in which the person lived. For example, Bonhoeffer was portrayed as a confessional Lutheran in the context of Nazi Germany. But what did it mean, theologically, to be a confessing Lutheran? What were the doctrines, what were the issues that formed his theology and that of the church? As Fowler and Lovin point out, they are not overly concerned with those kinds of questions, or with the more typical religious issues of suffering and death. But, at least in the case of a Bonhoeffer, can one speak of a faith journey without addressing those issues?

Though the Introduction is no more than a primer on faith development theory, it could have served the reader better if it had pointed out the significance of stage four and the transition to stage five. In the Conclusion that significance becomes apparent. The transition seems to be comparable to a “leap” of some sort that few succeed in making...perhaps not by all surveyed in the book. In any case, the reader should give careful attention to the Introduction before proceeding to the life stories.

Finally, Fowler and Lovin understand faith in terms that fit their own developmental schema. For them, faith is a “human universal,” it is the way the mind operates in thinking about whatever it focuses on. It is comprehensive and always in process. To quote the authors: “Faith is the attempt to organize complex and conflicting experiences into a universe, a whole and coherent reality” (189).

Though one may appreciate both the effort involved in bringing developmental research to bear upon issues that are of concern to the religious, and that of providing an all-encompassing schema by which to understand what might be called religious thinking, I am not at all sure that the authors’ use of “faith” as a means to accomplish those ends is helpful. There must be other terms that would serve as well and would not carry connotations that are so important for the biblical tradition.

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DOCUMENTS FOR THE STUDY OF THE GOSPELS, by David R. Carlidge and David L. Dungan. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980. 298 pages. \$14.95/\$8.95 (paper).

Carlidge and Dungan, the editors and, in most cases, the translators, had one basic purpose in assembling this collection of documents: “to provide the educated reader with a better understanding of the way the early Christian portrayals of Jesus Christ called gospels arose, and what they might have meant to those who read them at that time” (9). Following an introductory essay, “Savior Gods in the Mediterranean World,” eleven documents are presented to illustrate the variety of Christian portrayals of Jesus Christ besides those in the New Testament Gospels. The second major section of the book, “Greek, Jewish and Roman Parallels Illustrating the Milieu of the

Gospels,” contains excerpts on topics such as “Birth and Youth,” “Miracles,” “Sacraments,” “Apocalyptic predictions,” and “Ascension.” The third part consists of abridged translations of spiritual biographies in non-Christian literature which are often cited as the closest parallels to the early Christian Gospels.

This is not simply a reprint of Cartlidge and Dungan's *Sourcebook of Texts for Comparative Study of the Gospels* which went through two editions at Scholars Press. This is a thoroughly revised edition and supercedes the prior publications. This is a very useful book for anyone interested in the Gospels and the early church.

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