



LUTHER: ON MINISTERIAL OFFICE AND CONGREGATIONAL FUNCTION, by Gert Haendler, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981. Pp. 110. \$9.95.

This timely book, timely in reference to issues of the definition of ministry and congregational authority which will be central issues in Lutheran unity discussions, was written by Gert Haendler, professor in the Theological Faculty of the University of Rostock, East Germany and published in Germany in 1979.

Haendler has chosen this topic for a number of reasons, not the least of which is to provide some historical research for those who seek to formulate a Lutheran doctrine of the office of the ministry. The author states his purpose clearly: “I want to show that interest in the congregation does indeed have very much to do with Luther” (19).

Using historical research Haendler seeks to set Luther’s seemingly contradictory statements on ministry in historical context. This aspect of the book is very helpful because it is true that Luther tends to get quoted to support quite opposing views of ministry. Knowing the context of such statements is very important in our contemporary consideration of this topic.

Before he presents Luther in context Haendler has a short chapter on the history of the ministerial office. The thrust of this chapter is summed up in his comment on the development in the early church: “The office of the ministry gained importance; the congregation lost significance” (22).

Luther, according to the flow of Haendler’s material, sought to restore the significance of the congregation. In seeking to restore the power of the keys to the congregation Luther relied heavily on Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. The variety of gifts for ministry within the congregation was emphasized by Luther. I Peter 2.9 is another of Luther’s biblical resources in his uplifting of the priesthood of all believers. The priest or pastor, therefore, is one *office holder* in the midst of many gifted and priestly people. Luther opposed the idea that ordination was a sacrament which gave a new indelible character to the ministerial office. Once a priest was out of his office, he was a layman again as far as Luther was concerned. Ordination admitted one to an office; it did not permanently alter one’s character. “...the office of the ministry grows out of the priesthood of all the baptized and...the minister serves in the name of the congregation” (39). All baptized Christians are priests, but only one so authorized by the congregation of priests may serve in the office of ministry. Without this kind of authorization there would be chaos in the Christian community.

Luther saw the decisive factor to be the task of the ministry, not the office itself: “The priestly office is really nothing but service to the Word—to the Word, I say, not of law but of Gospel” (40). All questions of ministry were to be settled, according to Luther, on the grounds of what best served the interest of the gospel. A congregation that has the gospel has all that it needs to make proper decisions about its life and ministry. It should be noted, however, that Luther could come to different practical conclusions in different contexts because it was always the

cause of the gospel that concerned him.

In general Luther believed that a congregation with the gospel had what it needed to make decisions. In his dialogue with the left wing reformation, however, it is clear that Luther did not have much confidence in the decision-making process of rural, peasant congregations. One gets the unfortunate feeling that more than theology was at stake in Luther's dealing with the radical reformation on this issue.

Haendler draws only one conclusion from his study. He finds himself

page 192

“...particularly close to the Luther, who, between 1522 and 1524, accepted and supported an active role on the part of various congregations” (102). This qualified conclusion clarifies our struggle within the Lutheran tradition on the matter of the nature and function of the pastoral office in relationship to the priesthood of all believers (the congregation). Which Luther shall we support in our present day discussions? Can we harmonize Luther's views in order to bring a single conclusion to our discussions? Haendler notes that if we want a harmonized view of Luther then Regin Prenter's statement is the best we can find: “The general priesthood can survive only through the work of the office of the ministry; only the gospel, which is given to the general priesthood, can proclaim the office of the ministry” (19).

It would appear that the issue of the ministerial office is so complex in Luther and the Confessions that Lutherans will simply have to continue to live in honest disagreement on the subject. Gert Haendler's book is a useful guide in the discussion but the final outcome in our own day must be worked out in careful dialogue.

Richard Jensen
Lutheran Vespers
Minneapolis, Minnesota

BORN AGAINISM: PERSPECTIVES ON A MOVEMENT, by Eric W. Gritsch.
Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982. Pp. 111. \$5.95 (paper).

This book falls somewhere between the discipline boundaries of historians, theologians, biblicists, and sociologists. It is some of each, but beholden to none exclusively. Hence the word “perspectives” in the subtitle is the key for what to expect: some history, some theology, some scriptural analysis, some sociology. This gives Prof. Gritsch considerable flexibility, appropriately for a very flexible subject. He presents here a running commentary drawing from several sources on a question on which everyone has some answers, but none heretofore have brought them together in so systematic away as does the author.

As to a definition, Gritsch suggests the born again movement “has discernible historical roots and...is held together by a relentless quest for membership in the ‘kingdom of God’” (9). At its center the movement rotates around “the Nicodemus factor,” what the seeker must do to enter the kingdom. Gritsch presents a splendid exegesis of the appropriate texts here, showing clearly how the born again theme created a major split between evangelicalists and mainliners. He correctly points to the resurgence of premillennial eschatology at the end of the 19th century as the channel into which the energies of the instant conversion believers were directed. Using both

the tools of the exegete and the historian, he shows how this eschatology developed into its present-day form. Following the work of Ernest Sandeen and George Marsden, the author traces the subsequent emergence of fundamentalism, tying it to both the new End Times theme and the inerrancy school of Princeton Theology. Quite rightly he sees inerrancy as the great dividing point. Perhaps Gritsch's discussion here could have profited from reading Jack B. Rodgers and Donald McKim's exhaustive study or the more up-to-date work of Robert K. Johnston.

It is here that the flexible structure of the book shows at its best. Gritsch discusses the born again movement, then stops to present a careful analysis of its biblical theology. Then he presents a critique which can best be called "Early Reformation" theology of topics such as eschatology and inerrancy (or authority). His discussion of the difference between biblical theology and a philosophy shaped by the Greek metaphysical tradition is especially helpful.

Then the author offers a brief but insightful discussion of the charismatic (or "neo-Pentecostal") movement of the last two decades. Here, in this reviewer's judgment, he is on less convincing ground. The line between the evangelical born again and the charismatics is more clear than he suggests. Granted that some overlap occurs, the evangelicals place their emphasis on the initial instant conversion experience. They do not go beyond, as do charismatics, searching for

page 193

the "second baptism," the empowering. with the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12). Indeed, some hostility exists among the born again, especially Southern Baptists, towards the neo-Pentecostals. Billy Graham has not to date made a flat-out endorsement of the charismatic movement. Evangelicalists have a more sharply defined social ethic, neo-Pentecostals are more preoccupied with a theology of glory. One wishes the author would have made the ties between the two movements more clear.

The highlight of the book comes in the concluding chapter, on the differences of born againism with mainliners on baptism. Gritsch offers a precise exegesis of the contrasting positions, one which consciously endorses the high sacramental understanding of early Reformation bodies. He concludes with a ringing reaffirmation of the theology of the cross.

At every point, the reader may want a more complete discussion of the topic being examined. Such perhaps was not to be, given the escalating costs of publishing. Then too, the author assumes a rather large amount of historical and scriptural knowledge on the part of the reader.

Readers of this journal may find themselves at most points disagreeing with born againism. Yet that movement continues its energetic course through the American religious theme. Is there something in born againism that the mainline, early Reformation churches could adopt? If the major dividing points are inerrancy and sacraments, is there any way to find common ground? This book is a rewarding first effort to explain born againism to the mainline. It deserves careful attention—the issues it raises will be with us for the foreseeable future.

Erling Jorstad
St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota

WHAT ARE THEY SAYING ABOUT MORAL NORMS? by Richard M. Gula. Ramsey, NJ: Paulist, 1982. Pp. 129. \$3.95 (paper).

The title of this book has a mysterious, almost sinister ring and inevitably prompts the question, “Who are *they*?” Answer; “They” are Catholic moral theologians known as revisionists, who are seeking to move *from* a notion of intrinsically evil acts and exceptionless moral norms *to* an ethic which weighs values and disvalues and finds, at best, “virtually exceptionless” norms. Richard Gula, S. S., has written a very clear and readable introduction—aimed largely at a lay audience in need, so it seems, of reassurance—to some complicated ideas and complex literature in recent Catholic moral theology. Although other theories are briefly discussed, Gula’s purpose is to communicate concerns of the revisionists. The movement he charts can be characterized in many ways, of which three will be noted here.

It is in part an epistemological movement, stressing that all our judgments are historically conditioned and that no description of “objective” reality can be given which does not consider the “subjectivity” of the describer and the actors. One person shoots another. Does that sentence by itself describe reality? Or must we also know whether the shooter is a member of a firing squad, a soldier, an assassin, a terrorist, a father whose child has been killed by a hit-and-run driver, etc.? Revisionists think it rather complicated to describe what we “know,” and they doubt whether purely “physical” descriptions of acts are often sufficient.

It is, second, a movement away from natural law ethics. (Gula would describe this a little differently, saying that it is a movement away from St. Thomas’ “order of nature” to Thomas’ “order of reason.” But one senses some straining to find legitimation from the *Summa*.) Human beings are both (a) bodies with certain limits, and (b) free spirits who regularly transcend old limits. The moral question raised by this anthropological datum is whether there are sometimes limits which we *can* transcend but *ought* not, and whether a proper description of our acts can be derived solely from the physical structure of the act or must include the personal significance which we find in or give to the act. Revisionists want to stress that human nature is more than just biological structure. The sex act is by nature oriented to procreation of new life. Are we limited by that natural

page 194

fact or can we, finding unitive significance in the act wholly apart from its procreative possibilities, use our reason to transcend the limit we find in nature? On this issue, contraception, we are likely to feel some sympathy for the revisionists. But it is also true that the procreation of new life has for centuries seemed to require a physical act of union between woman and man. This limit we *can* now freely transcend in the laboratory. Whether we *ought* to is, though, open to question.

The movement Gula charts is, third, a movement toward consequentialism. A deontological ethic (represented, for example, by the traditional manuals in Catholic moral theology) asserts that the rightness or wrongness of acts does not depend solely on the consequences to which they give rise. Our moral obligations are not adequately described by saying that we ought to do all the good we can; on the contrary, there are (for the deontologist) some independent limits on the means by which we seek to do good. There are acts we can do, and which would realize the greatest net value possible, but which we ought not do. The

revisionists are seeking to move away from such an ethic to what Gula describes as “mixed consequentialism.” I think it fair to say, however, that a reader of chapter 4—by far the most difficult in the book—will have difficulty specifying what makes this different from the “strict consequentialism” which Gula ascribes to Joseph Fletcher. There are differences, but I do not think the important ones are made clear in this chapter.

One of the underlying themes in Gula’s treatment is the tension between ethics and pastoral counseling. He never ceases to remind us that the revisionists want their conclusions to remain “tentative” and “provisional.” Norms of that sort may seem desirable to the counselor dealing with a hard case, and one senses that a good bit of the pressure to move away from the exceptionless norms comes from such practical concerns. Whether an ethic shaped largely by the needs of the counselee (or is it the counselor?) is likely to do the Church much good is another question. There is good reason for doubt; it is at least as probable that an ethic with some firm shape might have headed off a few problems before they were bad enough to call for counseling.

Popular as revisionism may be at the moment, there is little new about it—it is probably a form of “ideal utilitarianism”—and much about it that is troubling. One need only consider an act like rape to see that on occasion the physical structure of the act, quite apart from the motives of the agent or consequences of the act, may be sufficient to arrive at a moral judgment—and a judgment which we should rightly hesitate to regard as “provisional” or limited by our historical location.

Readers wishing to pursue these topics farther should consult the essays in Charles E. Curran & Richard A. McCormick, eds., *Readings in Moral Theology, No. 1: Moral Norms and Catholic Tradition* (Paulist, 1979)—a volume containing many of the articles whose argument Gula summarizes. Also, Richard McCormick and Paul Ramsey, eds., *Doing Evil to Achieve Good* (Loyola Univ. Press, 1978)—in which the criticisms of Ramsey are particularly noteworthy. Gula’s book is to be commended as a careful and readable summary of the developing view in Catholic moral theology (1) that all moral judgments must be provisional (or purely formal); (2) that we can never specify in advance a natural limit which human freedom ought not transcend; and (3) that morality is primarily a science of weighing and maximizing values. All three are important—though, in my judgment, mistaken—claims, not just for Catholic moral theology but for any Christian ethic.

Gilbert Meilaender
Oberlin College
Oberlin, Ohio

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, by F. W. Beare. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981. Pp. 550. \$29.95.

Beare, now an emeritus professor at the University of Toronto, secured his niche in the New Testament hall of fame years ago with the publication of his *Earliest Records of Jesus*, thereby establishing himself as an able form-critical scholar. His Matthew commentary demonstrates that he remains one. Again and again issues

The 485-page commentary is preceded by a 49-page introduction which is in some ways the most valuable part of the book. In the latter, Beare discloses his position on a number of questions about the evangelist, his community, his gospel and his purpose in writing. Beare sees Matthew as a Jewish Christian who had scribal training and was acquainted with the scribal methods of interpreting scriptures. To training he added a wide knowledge of the teachings of Jesus about the Kingdom of God.

As Beare sees it, the gospel was written in a community situated in a predominantly Jewish environment where the relationship with Judaism was of great importance and where, indeed, conflict may have existed between church and synagogue. The church itself was not 100% pure and morally flawless and Beare thus postulates that Matthew's central concern was with the moral requirements of the kingdom as set forth in Jesus' teachings. The concern was met by the evangelist by formulating a series of teaching discourses and setting them within the story of Jesus' ministry (adapted from Mark) to "show how Jesus with sovereign authority has laid down the laws which govern life in the kingdom of heaven" (6f.), thus fulfilling the law of Moses. Matthew's interest lay with his church, and thus the gospel has what Beare calls "a double perspective:" in its story-line Jesus addresses his contemporaries, but they in reality constitute the church, the people who hear its message and its opponents in Matthew's own time and situation.

Beare rightly acknowledges Matthew's indebtedness to Mark in the narrative structuring of his gospel. Into that structure Matthew has placed Matthean-formulated discourses of Jesus in order to direct attention to what Beare calls "the picture of Jesus as Teacher or Lawgiver" (19). But it is not just Jesus who is teacher *in* this gospel; Matthew himself becomes one *by* his writing!

So far so good! The introduction leads one to expect a strong "teacher note" in the commentary proper. But it is not as strong as expected. For example, in his treatment of the discourse in 10:2-42, Beare isolates the discourse proper from the context of 8:1-10:42 where the evangelist set it. The discourse is fixed on the heels of a series of fifteen previous units of material beginning with the story of the leper at 8:1, all of which portray Jesus in acts of cleansing, healing, exorcizing, raising the dead, dealing with nature, teaching, calling a disciple and preaching. By coupling those acts at last to the discourse Matthew had in fact made the acts themselves into *didactic models* for the commissioning of the twelve and for the teaching on discipleship which follow. In other words, it is not only in the discourse as such that Matthew pursued his presentation of Jesus as teacher; he marshalled also the preceding narratives to the same purpose. Beare failed here to see just how intent Matthew was in setting Jesus forth as the church's teacher, and that is a disappointment.

But it is not only in his failure to see Jesus' acts as didactic in Matthew's hands which leads to disappointment. It arises as well over the fact that Beare tends in his commentary to let the "teacher note" fall completely out of focus now and then and to replace it with Christological concerns. Thus, to return to the matter just raised in connection with the discourse in 10:2-42, Beare states that the sequence of miracle stories in 8:1-9:35 were used by Matthew "to show how the powers of the coming Kingdom were manifested in the healing ministry of Jesus" (201), a matter less important to Matthew than Jesus' teaching ministry. So what then was Matthew affirming by the sequence? Beare states himself clearly about it: it was to reveal Jesus as "Messiah in deed" (14). That statement at once clouds the whole issue! Was Matthew concerned with a Messiah-Christology (as Kingsbury in his studies has implied) or with convincing his

church that its risen Lord was in fact also its teacher? Beare does not come clean on this question even though he admits Matthew's intent was the latter. But if that is so, why then Beare's failure to see the didactic character of the 8:1-9:35 miracle stories, and why does he dub them as "Messiah-in-deed" revealing? Was Jesus' Messiahship the issue at stake in Matthew's church, or was it the neces-

sity to see him as the church's only valid teacher which was the issue? Beare has muddied the question!

He muddies the same question in his dealings with the genealogy, with the infancy "legends" and with the related "fulfillment note" in Matthew. For Beare the genealogy serves only to affirm Jesus' Messiahship (61,65) and the cycle of infancy legends in 2:1-23 likewise have a Christological purpose (72). By such a treatment Beare fails on the one hand to see a possible relationship between a purely "Jewish genealogy" (which fixes Jesus in a messianic line, to be sure) and Matthew's portraiture of Jesus as teacher, and on the other to see an equally possible relationship between the "prophecy-fulfilled" infancy stories and Matthew's presentation of Jesus as teacher. In other words, Beare does not manage to keep his eye on the target as, in this reviewer's opinion, the evangelist himself did.

This confusion of the issue in Beare's commentary is not only a major flaw in his work, it also raises a crucial study question with respect to the interpretation of Matthew's gospel. What *was* the evangelist's purpose which resulted in his adding another gospel to Mark's? Was it to defend the church's confessional position about Jesus (a Christological apologetic so to speak) in the face of a Jewish attack upon it? Or was it to focus the church's attention on the writer's conviction that the one whom the church worshipped as Lord and whom it confessed to be the Messiah was also to be seen as its undisputed teacher?

That question leads to a further one, and it too is raised by some degree of muddiness in Beare's commentary. Did the church situation behind the writing of this gospel demand some sort of short course (in the form of this gospel) on moral rectitude because the Matthean community was not pure, or was it a case of the church, stricken by the impact of the fall of Jerusalem, listing into uncertainty between Judaism and its own confession of Christ over the issue of who was to be its rightful teacher, a listing which placed its existence and its mission in jeopardy? Beare's commentary does not come fully to grips with these important questions primarily because its author has apparently not detected a singular objective in Matthew's interpretive endeavor. He let the "teacher note" slip out of focus. For that reason alone this "major new commentary" is a disappointment.

This criticism aside, the volume is nevertheless a storehouse of information on and of many keen insights into the details of the text of Matthew's gospel. The commentary is laden with word studies which will be of value to the student of Matthew and it lifts up much about the evangelist's editorial work in his borrowing from Mark, in his placement of the units which form his gospel and in his interpretive technique. The reader will be well instructed both by the evangelist in this work and by Beare himself. In addition the reader will probably be grateful, as this reviewer was, both for the progressive verse by verse treatment of the text and for the fact that instructive reading of the commentary is not thwarted by a myriad of footnotes. Citations, where they appear and are necessary, are embedded parenthetically in Beare's text.

Useful and informative as this commentary is in these respects, it remains an unsatisfying treatment of Matthew's gospel for it plows no really new ground as a redactional study and in perceiving this gospel as a megaphone for the Lord in a critical period of the Matthean church when both its existence and an awareness of its mission were in danger.

Robert A. Bartels
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

SOLIDARITY WITH VICTIMS, by Michael Lamb. New York: Crossroads, 1982. Pp. xv + 158. \$12.95.

The last eight decades have profoundly changed the understanding of an "anguished world." Increasingly, the anguish in the world has been shifted from the weary shoulders of mother nature to the proud shoulders of a male-dominated history so aptly symbolized by Atlas. (3)

It is this "shift from a primacy of nature to a primacy of history as the locus of

page 198

human suffering" (3) or what Johann B. Metz has called "an anthropocentrism of suffering" that provides the background for Matthew Lamb's attempt "to discern the outlines of a practice of reason and of religion in a self-critical solidarity with the victims of history" (xiii). Responsible theology today, according to Lamb, can only be done in solidarity with the victims of history.

That is not how theology has usually been done which means that the thrust of Lamb's argument has to do with the changes that are required if theology is to be responsive to the challenge which the anthropocentrism of suffering represents. A start in that direction can be seen in the efforts of liberation theologies, efforts which are being furthered by political theologies which seek to mediate to reason the commitments that form the heart of liberation theologies. But the task is far from complete. Accordingly, Lamb analyzes some of the methodological tasks which political theologies must undertake in order to contribute to genuine social transformation.

Lamb is convinced that political theologies have more promise for enabling solidarity with victims than do other theological options. Instrumental in the development of political theologies has been the work in critical theory of the Frankfurt School of Social Research. Especially important has been the commitment to the imperative value of truth and recognition of the bias that infects all human, historical projects. Most recently, Johann B. Metz and Bernard Lonergan have been significant in opening up the potential of political theologies for responding to the challenges facing theology today.

Three elements in the work of Metz are singled out by Lamb as particularly significant in understanding the central thrust of the most promising political theology. Theology "must be grounded, not on concepts and ideas, but on the dynamics of historical and social human subjects striving to live out the call to conversion, metanoia, or exodus as intellectual, moral, social, and religious imperatives" (120). Secondly,

political theology recovers the transcendental thrust [of Karl Rahner's theology] by understanding it, not as disclosive of human being "always ready" before God but as imperatives to transform ourselves and every human being into more attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and loving subjects....(120)

Thirdly, political theology seeks to recover the concrete history of suffering through which theologizing is to occur.

Bernard Lonergan's work advances the project of political theology in still other important ways. The result of the work of such theologians—Metz and Lonergan above all—is an understanding that the real problems facing Christianity today are not rooted in traditional distinctions between the natures and personhood of Christ but are the exploitations of class, race and sex which can be traced to failures "to live up to the orthopraxis expressed in Christological orthodoxy" (141). Political theology seeks to respond to such problems by grounding an agapic praxis of conversion in the empowering transformation of the cross.

If the above comments capture some of the flavor and content of Lamb's book, they also contain the seeds of this reviewer's difficulty with it. Granted that the book is specifically addressed to theological communities and colleagues, it still seems to this reviewer that the language, sentence construction and style of the book are more complex and technical than is needed. A subject as important as the title and subtitle suggest—Toward a Theology of Social Transformation—clearly needs to be made accessible to those people in the churches who are doing theology day in and day out among the people of God. This book does not attend to that task—nor does it intend to do so.

At the same time, such a task remains crucial to the self-understanding of political theology and thus to Lamb lest a criticism leveled at theologians representing another option be said of political theology as well: "it is not enough to produce learned tomes on theology which leave the doing of theology within the present academic, ecclesial, and social contexts" (84). What remains unclear, in other words, are the strategic and programmatic implications of political theology's insistence that praxis is both the foundation and the goal of theory and hence the priority of theology. Perhaps

that is next on Matthew Lamb's agenda, but for the moment it would appear that praxis or the concrete social reality of the victims of history has not achieved the primacy that it is said to deserve. The preposition—toward—in the subtitle is quite accurate.

Nevertheless, the argument of the author remains a significant one even though more needs to be done with it. It is important, therefore, in conclusion to identify what appear to be some of the strengths in what Lamb has done.

First of all, Lamb does convey a sense of what liberation and political theologies are all about, a help for anyone who desires to understand this important theological option. Second, Lamb's emphasis on the cross and its transforming power both gets to the heart of the Gospel and serves to remind theologians of the need to take seriously the concrete experience of suffering in the world because in the cross God has already identified with the world's victims.

Third, Lamb's insistence that theology has to do with imperatives is a clear reminder that theological reflection has finally to do with discipleship. Those imperatives involve the

transformation of each and every human being into more “attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and loving subjects.” But what may be most important of all is the clear statement on the priority of praxis and its attention to concrete social reality. For if praxis is not only theory’s goal but also its foundation and ground, the implications for theology are major. An indication of what is at stake is contained in the claim that is made of the praxis of liberation theology—“Letting God be God as revealed in Jewish and Christian religious traditions simultaneously liberates humans to be humane” (87). If such is indeed the case this effort to advance the project of political theology ought not be taken lightly, even as it needs to attend to its inherent implications.

Randolph A. Nelson
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

MIND IN NATURE, ed. by Richard Q. Elvee. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982. Pp. xvi + 157. \$7.95 (paper).

Reading these essays must surely be the next best thing to having heard them as lectures and discussions at Gustavus Adolphus College. They comprise the papers of the seventeenth Nobel Conference, sponsored by the college and the Nobel Foundation of Stockholm.

Two of the contributors are Nobel Laureates: Ragner Granit and Eugene Wigner. Sir Karl Popper contributed a paper. Physicist John Wheeler gave the opening address. Philosopher Richard Rorty “was invited as a positivist control on the potentially out-of-hand speculations about the mind.” Wolfhart Pannenberg argued that both mind and nature have a common source in “spirit,” a concept he traced from the biblical tradition and developed in terms that he believes are adequate to contemporary physics and to current theories of evolution.

Physicist John Wheeler, in the opening address, reviewed the famous running debate between Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein regarding the implications of quantum theory. In spite of his own role in challenging all notions of a strictly deterministic physical universe, Einstein—as is well-known—could not bring himself to believe that God plays dice. The debate he carried on for some years with Bohr had nothing to do with disagreements over the equations provided by quantum theory, rather it had “to do with the nature of ‘reality’ itself.” To Einstein, at an early stage of the debate, the quantum theory to which his own work had contributed, was logically inconsistent. Eventually he reverted to the deterministic philosophy of Spinoza, his hero, and insisted to the end that quantum theory is incompatible with any reasonable idea of reality. Wheeler, in this paper, agrees with Bohr against Einstein. Whatever is “out there” in the world as the elementary phenomenon of the universe—the ultimate unit of reality—is not a phenomenon until it is recorded. The “most ethereal of all the entities” are to be thought, not so much as inert bits or facts, but as “elementary acts of ‘observer-participancy.’” All events in the universe, then, are interdependent actions whose behaviour would suggest that they were adapting to each other in a social or mental way. Complete prediction is impossible; only statistical probability can forecast events. God does play dice.

Sir Karl Popper’s essay, “The Place of Mind in Nature” is worth the price of the book. Here he sketches his prehistory of the human mind, suggesting that mind plays an active part in

evolution, even in its own evolution. “We are largely active makers of ourselves; and our minds are largely makers of our place in nature.” The most important evolutionary developments are in language, most especially when language took the great step from a “signaling language”—animals signaling to one another and releasing certain reactions such as flight—to “descriptive language,” that is, “a language that can describe facts, after the fact has occurred, or before it has occurred.” This tremendous achievement of language as the product of the human mind has meant that the mind is, in turn, influenced by language: a feedback effect. Language is essential to being human, “the only skill that is vital to us.”

The crucial role of language, for Popper, is that it has given to the human mind the capacity to create products of the human mind which transcend the mind. To understand this phenomenon, the reader would have to accept Popper’s famous distinction of three worlds: The world of all physical bodies, forces, organisms, brains, and processes. Secondly, the world of conscious experience, thoughts, feelings, aims, plans. Thirdly, the world of the “products of the human mind, and especially the world of our languages,” including stories, myths, theories, technologies, art, music, etc., none of which would have arisen without human language.

The interaction between our minds and the products of our minds—between worlds 2 and 3—is a very complex and subtle one. For example, “The sequence of natural numbers, 1, 2, 3...is a human invention, a linguistic invention. But we do not invent the distinction between odd numbers and even numbers: we discover this within the World 3 object...which we have produced or invented.” There are objective facts about this World 3

which we may or may not ever discover and thus “know” in our World 2.

The incredible thing about the human mind, about life, evolution and mental growth is the interaction, the feedback, the give and take, between World 2 and World 3; between our mental growth and the growth of World 3 which is the result of our endeavors, and which helps us transcend ourselves, our talents and our gifts.

It is this self-transcendence which is the most important fact of all life and of all evolution. This is the way in which we learn; and we can say that our mind is the light which illuminates nature. (57)

The philosopher Richard Rorty urges the entirely different view of the “pragmatical nominalist outlook” which discards the “blurry concept of mind” much as “we discard the theologians’ blurry concept of God.” On the other side, the neurophysiologist Ragnar Granit contends that mind emerges in the evolutionary process. “The creative force in evolution is held to be natural selection weeding out destructive mutations so that useful ones can be multiplied by the differential production thus made possible. The survival value of mind in this process is difficult to define with the precision that sometimes can be reached in experiments on insects and bacteria....For us, mind is simply there to be accepted” (105).

Lee E. Snook
Luther Northwestern Seminary
Saint Paul, Minnesota

THE AMERICAN POOR, ed. by John A. Schiller. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982. Pp. 220. \$9.95 (paper).

GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR: WEALTH AND POVERTY IN LUKE-ACTS, by Walter Pilgrim. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981. Pp. 198. \$7.95 (paper).

On the agendas of Christian social ethicists, the question of economic justice (along with that of nuclear war) seems to be emerging as a priority issue today. These two books make a significant and intelligent contribution to the effort to define poverty, understand its causes, consider our Christian calling as it relates to poverty and the human misery resulting from it, and to respond in effective and informed ways to the ethical challenge which this misery and the poverty underlying it pose for the Christian and the Christian community.

The value of these books for the Christian community is greatly enhanced for two reasons. In the first place, while offering much substantive and well researched material about poverty and its causes and some very sound biblical and ethical insights, the books avoid excessive technological jargon and thus are both challenging and intelligible to general audiences. Secondly, these books reflect throughout a vital ethical concern clearly motivated by the Christian faith of the authors.

The American Poor is the unique and exemplary product of an interdisciplinary effort on the part of faculty from six different disciplines at Pacific Lutheran University.

John Schiller's opening chapter presents a statistical profile of poverty in the U.S., focusing particularly on the distribution of wealth and income. Several facts fundamental to the entire volume are included in this chapter: 1) The upper 10% of the people in the U.S. control 56% of the wealth; 2) the highest 30% of the people receive 41.5% of the income, the lowest 20%, 5%; 3) these statistics have not changed substantially since 1810; 4) while the distribution of wealth and income has remained stable for over a century and a half, the anti-poverty programs of the 60's and 70's did reduce the percentage of people below the poverty line from 22.4% (1959) to 11.6% (1977).

One of the delights of this book is the lucid writing style of the majority of the authors. Katharine Briar sets the tone for this in her two excellent chapters. The stories which she shares in Chapter 2 give a human face to the problem of poverty, but her contribution is by no means limited to an emotional appeal. She includes facts which demolish many cruel but popular myths about the poor and concludes that poverty is, for the most part, the result of situational factors and not the result of some moral or character defect

(41). Briar points out that the government's expenditures on welfare programs are less than 1% of the gross national product, a fact of seminal importance in an era which seeks to blame all the nation's problems on excessive government spending in behalf of the poor.

In Chapter 3, Briar points to the strong correlation between family breakups and poverty, calling attention particularly to the features of the welfare system which encourage family breakups and discourage work by their excessively punitive measures. Briar notes that the U.S. is the only major western industrial democracy which does not invest in the family, a fact which belies the rhetorical exaltation of the family and family life in America.

Economist Stanley Brue discusses the issue of poverty from an economic perspective in Chapter 4. His thesis is the widely held belief of economists that economic equality is bought at the price of economic efficiency and vice-versa. Brue offers an excellent definition of “efficiency” as understood by economists, and builds a convincing case for the tradeoff theory in the context of the capitalist economic system. If the trade-off theory is universally valid (which, in my view, is not conclusively proved here), then Brue’s suggestion that we pursue an economic policy which is a sort of balancing act between equality and efficiency seems sensible.

In Chapter 5, political scientist Walter Spencer discusses the question of power as it relates to the poor in the context of U.S. politics. The disadvantages of the poor in the American political process can be overcome to some extent if the poor organize, become informed and involved, and learn the political arts of coalition and compromise. A more extensive discussion by Spencer of the fundamental question of how to organize the poor would have been helpful.

Walter Pilgrim’s theological contribution is outstanding. He provides an excellent summary of Biblical material dealing with poverty as a spiritual and ethical problem. That this chapter is built primarily on New Testament sources is most helpful, since the New Testament is too often overlooked as a resource for social ethics today. As honest as Pilgrim is in his interpretation of the radical New Testament teachings on wealth, I think he still tones them down. Perhaps it is true that Paul did not advocate a life of poverty (154), but the reference to I Corinthians 9:14 does not prove this. Nor is Jesus’ appreciation of created reality and the pleasures connected with it necessarily to be set in tension with his teaching on possessions. There are those (Karl Marx, Francis of Assisi) who have taught that it is precisely the turning of created reality into a *possession* which renders enjoyment of it so difficult. The suggestions for Christian action and commitment with which the chapter concludes are as good as I’ve seen anywhere. They are concrete, highly challenging and yet realistic enough to serve as a basis for congregational action.

Robert Stivers’ excellent ethical reflections consider the fundamental conflict between Biblical values and some of the sacred economic values of U.S. society today, particularly economic efficiency. On the basis of this discussion of Biblical values, Stivers offers some provocative suggestions for political policies designed to attack poverty at its roots.

The final chapter helps to make up for the major defect of the book—its failure to set the discussion of poverty in the U.S. in a global context. The opening description of capitalism, socialism, communism and the welfare state should be required reading for every Christian. It is a good antidote to the inflammatory misinformation regarding these terms spread around by many special interest groups. One chapter, however, is inadequate to make up for the lack of global perspective in the rest of the book. This, however, is the only major weakness in an otherwise excellent volume which, if read, will perform an outstanding service for those willing to be educated about poverty and the poor in the U.S.

Good News to the Poor, a study of the Gospel of Luke, is an excellent companion to *The American Poor*, presenting an in-depth study of Lukan teaching on wealth, possessions and Christian discipleship. Like *The American Poor*, it is well and lucidly written. It is a challenging volume, but because it avoids technical academic language, it is accessible to

the lay readers who want to grow in their understanding of faith. The study is based on excellent

scholarship and research and manifests extensive knowledge of the broad spectrum of New Testament and particularly Lukan studies. This competence is brought to bear on a question of relevance to the “average” Christian.

In the foreword, Pilgrim explains his methodology and approach, which pay particular attention to the social dimensions inherent in particular texts and in Luke as a whole. Thus, Pilgrim avoids the twin dangers of spiritualization and harmonization.

The first chapter contains a survey of what Old Testament and Intertestamental literature has to say on the subject of wealth and poverty. While admitting that there is a tradition within the Old Testament, particularly in the wisdom literature, which sees wealth as a blessing from God and poverty as a curse for laziness, Pilgrim believes that the dominant tradition in this literature views Yahweh as the Protector of the poor and needy. Indeed, according to Pilgrim, “This concept of divine protection of the poor is found nowhere else to the same degree in the religious literature of the ancient world” (20).

Chapter 2 describes the sociological situation in Palestine within which the preaching and ministry of Jesus must be understood. This careful and essentially non-tendentious study is highly credible and revealing.

Against this background, Pilgrim’s third chapter discusses Luke’s presentation of Jesus’ ministry. The juxtaposition of this presentation and the sociological situation described in Chapter 2 opens the reader’s eyes to the explosive, authoritative power of Jesus in this social context and explains the enthusiasm with which the dispossessed and marginalized masses received him. It also explains the nearly unanimous opposition to Jesus on the part of the ruling class whose power and wealth Jesus challenged. On the basis of Jesus’ sermon in Nazareth, Pilgrim declares that at its *heart* Luke’s message is “good news to the poor.” The rich, to whom Luke also has a lot to say, are those whose material resources enable them to live a life of ease and affluence. Pilgrim accepts the thesis, justifiably I think, that much of Luke’s message is addressed to the wealthy Christians in the church of his time and is a challenge to them to use their wealth for the whole community.

Part II of *Good News to the Poor* is an exegetical study of selected Lukan passages. The thesis of Chapter 4 is that for Luke the demand for total renunciation of possessions which the earthly Jesus made for his “full time” disciples, was *required* only during Jesus’ earthly ministry but remains the *ideal* for the New Testament church. This ideal is approximated in the radical economic sharing of the Jerusalem community.

Chapter 5 deals with some of the most difficult and disturbing sayings of Jesus, those concerning the near impossibility for the rich of being saved. Pilgrim rejects those rationalisms by which “established” biblical scholars have softened and weakened these teachings. He points out, for example, that no “needle’s eye gate” in the Wall of Jerusalem is known to have existed (120) and, therefore, according to Luke a true miracle is required for the rich to be saved. This miracle occurs and the rich pass through the eye of the needle when a confrontation with Jesus takes place and frees their heart from its attachment to wealth, enabling them to share their wealth with the poor. In other words, the rich can get into heaven, but not with their wealth intact. “For Luke, only radical surgery can cut the attachment to possessions that opens the way into the kingdom, and only radical sharing can meet the needs of the poor and allow the rich to be saved” (164).

According to Lukan teaching on the right use of possessions, dealt with by Pilgrim in Chapter 6, the rich can avoid exclusion from the Kingdom by repentance which issues in a

radically new style of life. While this lifestyle does not require surrender of all one's possessions, it does call for radical economic sharing similar to that practiced by the Jerusalem community as described in Acts.

Pilgrim is right on the mark in this work, and he makes a very significant contribution to Lukan studies. I recommend this book to every pastor during the year of Luke in the lectionary. I must con-

page 205

fess, however, that I found this book, precisely because of its scholarly soundness and credibility, profoundly disturbing. It unsettled me in a way that few books have. It provided some ideas which can and should be pursued in concrete ways in the preaching and life of the parishes. Now and again, in the midst of the scholarly discussion, the power, beauty, freedom, and joy of that radical abandonment of earthly security lived out by Jesus and his disciples blazed out and warmed my heart. This power to move is rare in a work of such careful scholarship as *Good News to the Poor*.

Jerry Folk
Shalom Center
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY: BONHOEFFER'S LEGACY TO THE CHURCHES, ed. by John Godsey and Geoffrey B. Kelly. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1981. Pp. 348. \$19.95 (paper).

A way has been found to make available to the growing number of people interested in serious Bonhoeffer scholarship, papers and research items that would otherwise remain in the hands of a relatively small group of professional Bonhoeffer scholars. Through an arrangement between the Edwin Mellen Press and the English Language Section of the International Bonhoeffer Society, a series of volumes is appearing which present selected pieces from national and international meetings of the society.

Ethical Responsibility is the first in this series. It is a "proceedings volume" from the Third International Bonhoeffer Conference held at St. Edmund Hall, University of Oxford, in the spring of 1980. About one hundred participants from Great Britain, the United States and Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, Italy, Spain, Denmark, France, Austria, Belgium, South Africa, and Japan gathered to consider the significance of Bonhoeffer for life in the modern world.

Following the foreword to the volume by Clifford Green, editors John Godsey and Geoffrey Kelly sketch the mood and movement of the conference, with specific recollections of contributions to the conversation by people such as Jean Lasserre, the French pacifist friend of Bonhoeffer; Tom Cunningham, a South African who spoke of the courage given by Bonhoeffer's life and writings to those struggling for human rights in his country; Carl-Jürgen Kaltenborn of East Berlin, who spoke of the realities of living in a "church without privileges" and the guidance given by Bonhoeffer who had anticipated in his prison writings just such a church.

The editors also lift up four items that they perceived as emerging consistently throughout

the conference, and which they anticipate as central issues for the coming decade of Bonhoeffer studies. First is the location of God. Bonhoeffer helps us to locate God not as “a human projection into another world of psychologically-needed divine omnipotent being,” but rather as a God who is God “only in the chosen form of a human being who is completely for us in the midst of the world” (6). Secondly, by locating God in the midst of a suffering world, Bonhoeffer at the same time locates the ministry of the church in the midst of the suffering world. Thirdly, that means that the task of the church is necessarily political in nature; that politics becomes for the church a handle for grasping and directing historical change. To speak in this way of the Church of Jesus Christ requires the willing acceptance of the risk of “free and responsible action.” Fourthly, there is no way to manage such action apart from the practice of the *secret discipline*. Prayer and righteous action are correlatives.

The eleven chapters of the book are conference papers selected by the editors. The international flavor of the conference is reflected in the fact that the authors are from the Federal Republic of Germany, the United States, South Africa, and England. The chapters are grouped into three major sections. Each section begins with a helpful introduction by the editors.

Some lines from the opening paragraphs of the first essay will serve to indicate the seriousness with which participants struggled with the implications of Bonhoeffer for the modern world. The

article is by Heinz Eduard Tödt of Heidelberg. The title is “Conscientious Resistance: Ethical Responsibility of the Individual, the Group, and the Church.”

Our generation is experiencing an immense escalation of violence throughout the world...discrepancies in standard of living exist right next to each other in the same country, violent conflicts of the worst kind are either being generated or intensified. We cannot pretend to stand outside these conflicts since they confront us directly as we do, indeed, participate in them by our own decisions which affect the lives of others....We may perhaps desire to keep ourselves neutral, declaring that we are not sufficiently informed to make up our minds....But, whatever we do and wish, we are directly and indirectly involved; that is to say, we cannot have a peaceful world without willing the means to achieve it. (17f.)

Tödt draws from Bonhoeffer’s insistence that the church proclaim the Word concretely. Tracing the thin line which binds individual and group and church, Tödt skillfully describes the nuances which accompany the attempt to make bold decisions in a very imperfect world, where under the conditions of what Bonhoeffer calls the *ultima ratio*, an act of violence may be “required” even though it may not be possible to “justify” it. This is heady material, not for those who think the world’s problems can be solved by a program or a slogan. But for those who dare to face the complexities of our modern world, there is substantial analytical help here from one who works with Bonhoeffer as a primary resource.

Eberhard Bethge writes on Bonhoeffer and the Jews, Robin Lovin on Bonhoeffer’s changing views on the Christian and the authority of the state, and Burton Nelson on the struggle of Bonhoeffer within the ecumenical church, specifically at Sigtuna in 1942. In Part II, Clark

Chapman writes on Bonhoeffer and Liberation Theology, Donald Shriver on the legacy of Bonhoeffer for Americans, John de Gruchy on Bonhoeffer and South Africa, and John Godsey on Bonhoeffer as appropriated in West Africa, Cuba, and Korea. Part III contains a piece on Bonhoeffer and the Arcane Discipline by Roger Poole; a remarkable combination of careful scholarship and family remembrances about “elite” and “silence” in Bonhoeffer’s person and thoughts by Renate Bethge, and a study by Geoffrey Kelly of “Freedom and Discipline: Rhythms of a Christocentric Spirituality.”

The book is a feast of nuanced scholarship for anyone interested in Bonhoeffer not for hagiographical reasons, but for concrete help in facing the immense problems of the modern world. It could also serve to introduce a reader with no previous knowledge of Bonhoeffer to this person who so combined action and reflection that he has become for many a paradigm of free and responsible discipleship.

The offset printing procedure has produced a very readable book, although some may find the variety of typefaces somewhat distracting.

James H. Burtness
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

THE POLITICS OF MORALISM: THE NEW CHRISTIAN RIGHT IN AMERICAN LIFE, by Erling Jorstad. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981. Pp. 128. \$4.95 (paper).

BY WHAT AUTHORITY: THE RISE OF PERSONALITY CULTS IN AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY, by Richard Quebedeaux. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982. Pp. 204. \$11.95.

The authors of these “tracts for the times” are concerned to understand a particular feature of the contemporary religious situation in America. Both of them give brief descriptions of the same phenomenon, viz., the so-called electronic church and suggest ways of interpreting it. As might be expected, they differ rather widely in their interpretations.

In continuity with his previous study, *The Politics of Doomsday* (Abingdon, 1970), Jorstad emphasizes the political intent of the media preachers. By the use of mass media and an extensive direct mailing, people like Jerry Falwell, James Robinson, Jim Bakker, and Pat Robertson are concerned to promote and engender a political view labeled “The New Christian Right,” which in Jorstad’s view is more “moralistic” than it is “moral.” The

distinction, which is not made altogether clear, seems to be that “moralistic” is rules-oriented whereas “moral” refers to a principled understanding of “the rightness and wrongness of human actions.” Based on a fundamentalist understanding of the Scriptures, the media preachers of the Christian right are supremely confident that they discern the will of God on every particular issue. It is relatively a small matter for them, then, to make out “report cards” on political candidates and to support those who pass (the conservative right) and to oppose those who fail (the liberal left)—“good guys” and “bad guys.” The consequence, according to Jorstad, is the polarization of the American people without any discernible concern for the common good.

Quebedeaux bases his interpretation of the same phenomenon on an understanding of “popular religion” in America. He contends that popular religion is something manufactured for consumption by a mass market in which everything is made readily understandable and remediable. It is disseminated by celebrities like Falwell, Oral Roberts, and Robert Schuller, who become centers of personality cults that have become widely influential on the contemporary American scene. At the heart of Quebedeaux’s analysis is his assertion that traditional religion as espoused by the mainline churches has largely lost its intellectual prestige, hence its “authority,” in a religiously pluralistic mass culture because it has been displaced by the method of modern science. The highly visible leaders of a largely invisible religion have stepped into the vacuum and, despite the superficiality of their message, have been accorded anew authority by the masses because they are pragmatic celebrities who have manifested what Max Weber called “charisma.” In an atmosphere of “homelessness,” by which term Quebedeaux designates the lack of commonly accepted beliefs, the purveyors of popular religion offer the assurances—the certainties of a fundamentalist preacher like Falwell or the promise of possibilities by Robert Schuller—that aimless people want to hear and believe.

I do not have problems with Jorstad’s understanding of the matter. My own preferences and biases incline me to conclude that he is direct, forthright, and quite accurate in his assessment of the present situation. For the same reasons, I am somewhat troubled and less persuaded by Quebedeaux’s analysis. I doubt, for example, that what he describes as popular religion has quite the impact he seems to ascribe to it. More substantively, I wonder about his understanding of religion in both its traditional and popular expressions. Precisely because he seems not to construe religion as powerful “symbolic activity,” such as is described and analyzed in Peter W. Williams’ *Popular Religion in America*, he underestimates and perhaps misconstrues the staying power and influence of traditional religion at the same time that he overestimates the impact and power of popular religion. The future will tell.

Paul G. Sonnack
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

SCIENCE AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING, by Donald M. MacKay. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982. Pp. 75. \$3.95 (paper).

This little book contains two lectures given at the University of Waterloo on the general subject of the compatibility of scientific knowledge with Christian faith. The author is Professor of Communications at the University of Keele, Staffordshire, England, and the author of several books in the areas of communication and the human brain and computers. Each lecture is followed by questions and answers from the discussion that took place after the lectures.

While MacKay makes no claim to be breaking fresh ground (after all, such university lectures to general audiences are not the place to expect the breaking of fresh ground), the lectures do give a simple, even concise, view of the extent of compatibility between science and faith.

In the first lecture, titled “Does Science Destroy Meaning?” MacKay argues the thesis that “science and technology are in principle to be positively welcomed as an

immense enrichment of the meaningfulness of human life, even if they do not of themselves answer the ultimate questions of meaning” (4). Among the points he makes along the way are these: (a) When Christian and humanistic thinkers criticize the scientific approach to knowledge, they do so because of misrepresentations about the scientific approach, not because of any inherently subhuman or antihuman orientation of science. (b) The term “chance” as used by scientists does not properly refer to an entity “out there” that causes things to happen, but to our own ignorance of what is going to happen. (c) Desmond Morris (author of *The Naked Ape*) and Richard Dawkins (author of *The Selfish Gene*) are guilty of what MacKay calls “nothing-but-ery”—that is, they commit the fallacy of reductionism when they argue that human beings are essentially nothing but naked apes, or that they are nothing but throwaway survival machines for immortal genes. Worse, when Christian apologists respond by hunting for flaws “in the scientific description in the hope of rescuing the significance of the other level,” they “give the game away completely,” for “completeness of description at one level doesn’t necessarily rule out the need for descriptions at others” (21). Thus both the evolutionary hypothesis and the biblical notion of creation can be true. (d) Scientific theories and hypotheses, such as determinism or evolution, are themselves theologically neutral and inherently no enemy of what MacKay likes to call “biblical theism”; rather, they become problematic only when they are somehow personified as if they were entities “out there” which are somehow credited with the ability to act or to bring about certain kinds of events.

The second lecture, titled “The Meaning of Science,” makes a kind of apology for science as an expression of faithfulness to “a truly biblical religion” (40), and of Christian accountability for the world that God has made. An extended discussion of the notion of “miracle,” focused occasionally in the “miracle” of the resurrection of Jesus, is the principal feature of this lecture. MacKay argues that

the dynamic stability that biblical doctrine attributes to the natural world means that we have every ground for expecting that the normal pattern of events will be a pattern according to a fixed precedent, worthy of the scientist’s study and reliable on the basis of scientific laws as discovered. But, on the other hand, there is no absolute guarantee against an event arriving with a note attached to it: “You didn’t expect this, did you?” (47)

He concludes by suggesting that the “meaning” of science is threefold: It means an increase in our accountability, an increase in “opportunities for compassionate action and the exercise of responsible foresight for the benefit of our fellow men” (56); it means “unlimited growth of our wonder and awe at the mysterious universe in which we find ourselves” (56); and it means “the steady growth of our confidence that precedent can be a reliable guide to expectations,” which simply amounts to “our confidence in the trustworthiness of the Creator who holds in being the natural world” (57). Thus science can indeed lead us to truth, even though it cannot lead us to the Truth, to the one who said, “I am the Truth.” The text is from Pascal: “We cannot be radically free until, tired and exhausted from the vain search after truth, we have stretched our arms to the Liberator” (58).

The lectures breathe a quiet confidence that the Christian can be bold to raise any

question, face any fact, test any hypothesis, and not thereby risk apostasy. They are thus a useful starting point for Christians to begin to explore the relationship of faith and scientific method in a responsible way. They are free of the strident and frantic rhetoric of some Christian critics of the scientific approach to knowledge. For their author knows that, if this is God's world, then we who know that creator God as "Abba" have no need to fear.

It is no criticism of the lectures to point out that, precisely because they are a good beginning, they are not the whole story. In any case, this little booklet is a promising beginning point, and a helpful discussion of some basic issues.

David G. Truemper
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, Indiana

page 209

THE RISE OF WORLD LUTHERANISM, AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE, by E. Clifford Nelson. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. Pp. xxii + 421. \$24.95.

As noted by Nelson, for about four hundred years Lutheran churches throughout the world maintained relatively independent existences. It was not until after 1917 that Lutherans in the various countries began to "discover" one another and become organizationally related for witness and service. Plans for a joint celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, and emergency programs launched to meet urgent needs resulting from World War I, brought Lutherans in America together as they had never been before. In 1916 The Lutheran Society (later called the Lutheran Bureau) was begun in New York to promote the forthcoming Quadricentennial celebration. Following the entrance of the United States into the war in 1917 the National Lutheran Commission for Soldiers and Sailors Welfare was launched and the following year, as the war was nearing an end and the new challenge of an emergency ministry in war-devastated Europe was seen, the National Lutheran Council was hurriedly brought into existence. Lutherans in Europe, especially in Germany, had already formed the Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Konferenz in 1868 and the Lutherischer Bund in 1900. The extensive National Lutheran Council program of relief and rehabilitation assistance to Lutherans in Europe immediately following the end of the war was a reconciling and uniting force which awakened an awareness on the part of many Europeans to "the Lutherans in the diaspora." As early as 1919 it was proposed in NLC circles that a world gathering of Lutherans be convened as soon as possible. At a meeting of the NLC European Commissioners, held in Berlin October 6-7, 1919, a policy statement on the distribution of funds for relief and rehabilitation was prepared. The statement concluded with the suggestion that "fraternal and helpful relations" should be "judiciously utilized by the commissioners to further...federation among the Lutheran Churches of all countries of the world." At the National Lutheran Council meeting held in New York on December 18, 1919, John Morehead, chairman of the NLC European Commission, urged that in order to meet spiritual and physical needs of European brethren brought on by the political and social unrest, the corrosive nationalism, and the human exhaustion by war and revolutions, some international Lutheran organization should be formed. A resolution was adopted looking "toward the formation of a Lutheran world federation." The word "conference" was later substituted for "federation." The proposal was referred to a special sub-committee consisting of F. H. Knubel,

H. G. Stub, M. Reu and C. M. Jacobs. Further action was taken by the National Lutheran Council in December 1920 and April 1921, followed by consultation with European leaders including AELK president, Ludwig Ihmels, and leaders of the Lutherischer Bund and Scandinavian churchmen. In November 1922 a formal invitation to a proposed “Lutheran World Convention” was sent out signed by Ihmels and NLC president Lauritz Larsen. With the August 19-26, 1923 meeting of the Lutheran World Convention held at Eisenach, Germany, the groundwork for a world organization of Lutherans was laid, even though it was not until 1947 that the Lutheran World Federation was formally organized at Lund, Sweden.

This excellent book by E. Clifford Nelson, dean of American Lutheran church historians, deals with developments from 1917 to 1947, during which period there took place “the rise of world Lutheranism.” The first chapter deals with the 1947 Lund Assembly. As one reads Nelson’s account of that historic meeting one can almost hear the chimes of the Lund Cathedral as they played the medieval Christmas hymn “In Dulce Jubilo” and see emerging from the 14th century clock of the Cathedral the carved figures of the Three Kings as they come forward to worship the Christ. Writes Nelson: “It was Christmas in midsummer, a fortuitous reminder that the name which drew men and women together from all corners of the world was Emmanuel.” Noting the thrust of the addresses and reports by key leaders, attention is directed to important issues facing Lutherans of the world as the Lutheran World Federation came into

page 210

existence. One of the issues was “the real desire throughout the Lutheran Church of the world for fellowship and unity.” A second issue related, with a special sense of urgency, to “the rescue of the needy who had suffered from the war.” A third issue facing Lutherans, also with a sense of urgency, was the question of how they would relate to the modern ecumenical movement, since the following year the World Council of Churches was to be officially constituted. Nelson makes the observation that the same, or at least similar, issues were before the first meeting of the Lutheran World Convention when it met in Eisenach in 1923, citing the keynote address by Ludwig Ihmels on “The Ecumenical Character of the Lutheran Church” and F. H. Knubel’s presentation on “That They May All Be One—What Can The Lutheran Church Contribute To This End?” Looking briefly at other developments during the 1917 to 1947 period, Nelson calls attention to the statement “Lutherans and Ecumenical Movements,” drawn up mainly by Abdel R. Wentz and adopted by the LWC Executive Committee in 1936. For Lutherans the issue of ecumenism goes back at least to 1923 and even earlier. In *The Rise of World Lutheranism* Nelson deals especially with the intra-confessional or inter-Lutheran phase of the modern ecumenical movement as Lutherans of the world seek to come together in fellowship, witness, and service leading finally to the formation of the Lutheran World Federation. (This reviewer in his *American Lutherans Help Shape World Council* [see next review] deals especially with Lutheran participation in the inter-confessional or interdenominational phase of the ecumenical movement which eventuated in the formation of the World Council of Churches.) Nelson suggests that from 1910 to 1947 the ecumenical question was never far from the thoughts and deliberations of the church’s leaders and theologians.

Nelson gives a very interesting and helpful overview of basic Lutheran history, reviewing important developments as they relate to major theological emphases, to differences among Lutherans especially in the nineteenth century, and to efforts for the unifying of Protestant forces.

He notes the factors leading to the promulgation of the Prussian Union in 1817 as well as results issuing from that forced union. He traces the emergence and growth of a renewed confessional consciousness which found organizational structure in the formation of the Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Konferenz, the Lutherischer Bund and the National Lutheran Council. Step by step he reviews the developments in the emerging Lutheran World Convention and its successor the Lutheran World Federation. He deals with the “Kirchenkampf” during the Nazi era and notes Lutheran responses and involvement in the struggle forced upon the church. He deals with the reconstruction of world Lutheranism after World War II. All of this Nelson does with clarity and insight in a narrative both accurate and extremely interesting. In his research the author, who himself has been an active participant in ecumenical developments, made extensive use of vast amounts of source materials in archives and libraries both in America and Europe. His personal acquaintance with many of the church leaders and theologians who have played key roles in the emergence and growth of the LWC and LWF made possible knowledge and insights which add immensely to the value and authenticity of this work. Taped interviews and correspondence with key figures are reflected in the narrative and evaluations in this book which is indeed a masterpiece of Lutheran historiography.

Dorris A. Flesner
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

AMERICAN LUTHERANS HELP SHAPE WORLD COUNCIL: THE ROLE OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES OF AMERICA IN THE FORMATION OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, by Dorris A. Flesner. St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1981. Pp. 330. \$7.50 (paper).

This book was interesting reading on three counts. First, it is first-rate primary historiography. Second, it traces the American Lutherans’ struggle to have

page 211

confessional rather than territorial and national representation in the World Council of Churches expanded beyond the Orthodox Churches. Third, it poses so many interesting questions for Lutherans in America. Let me expand on these three counts.

Flesner’s book is interesting reading because it is primary historiography at its best. The amount of primary source material taken into account in this text is amazing. E. Clifford Nelson, in his review of the book, said it well, “[Flesner] armed himself with what must have been a barrelful of research notes and produced a definitive, data-loaded, and durable [work]....” With a minimum of interpretation, the letters and documents speak for themselves. The reader feels a part of the world these texts project. What more can a reader ask from historiography?

There is more, and that includes the significant subject matter that Flesner introduces and develops: The role of Lutheran Churches of America in the formation of the World Council of Churches. The text traces that role from the American Lutheran participation in Faith and Order prior to World War I through the formation of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1948, and the reactions of American Lutherans to the invitation to join the new institution. The

final and twelfth chapter evaluates this role and suggests four contributions Lutherans made. They bear summarizing:

1. Lutherans influenced the policy of the Council to “receive” rather than “adopt” reports of study groups and commissions. Flesner suggests that this “makes possible a free discussion of all issues, both doctrinal and practical, and a full reporting of conclusions arrived at in the course of deliberations, without involving member churches in any compromise of their confessional positions.”

2. “Lutherans of America were in large measure responsible for securing a reaffirmation of the representative principle.” This position was taken in objection to the practice of “co-opting” individual members into the work of Faith and Order and Life and Work.

3. “The 1947 statement on the nature and purpose of the World Council of Churches, in which any intention of having the Council be or become a world church with a central administrative authority was pointedly disavowed, was drawn up at the insistence of an American Lutheran member of the Provisional Committee.”

4. As a result of the American Lutheran petition for confessional representation the World Councils provisional constitution was amended so that the new world organization was set up along different lines than it otherwise would have been.

This contribution, as Flesner documents in interesting detail, lies primarily in the American Lutherans’ success in having the “Horsham Amendment” adopted. The “Horsham Amendment” is so named after the meeting of The Committee on Arrangements for the First Assembly which met at St. Julians, Horsham, England, July 31 and August 1, 1946. In this amendment the American Lutherans, eventually joined by European Lutheranism, petitioned a change in the Provisional Constitution adopted in Utrecht in 1938. Instead of geographical and territorial representation, the Lutherans wanted the possibility of confessional representation as well.

Flesner summarizes the reasons for Lutheran insistence under nine headings; they, too, bear repeating:

1. The minimization of doctrinal considerations.
2. Pressures for unionistic programs and unity schemes which would compromise a sound evangelical witness.
3. Geographical representation suggested the Council was to move in the direction of becoming a united world church in which area-divisions would be the natural ones.
4. American Lutherans would not receive a sympathetic hearing among churches whose theology differed considerably from their own.
5. The possibility of not being granted proper representation in the Council by an area organization under the influence of persons unsympathetic to Lutheran views.
6. Smaller bodies could de facto have no representation on Central Committee, etc.
7. Confessional representation seemed to them to be more in keeping with the churchly nature of the World Council of Churches.
8. Frank facing of doctrinal differences is better for Christian unity.
9. Full assurance that the confessional principle, which insists that convictions of faith are the basic reality underlying all other considerations, would be duly recognized and respected.

Third, the book was interesting to me because of the questions it raised. Some of these are

more matters of clarification than development.

Chapter Ten documents the rejection in 1948 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) of membership in the World Council of Churches. Even though the entire leadership was clearly in favor of accepting membership, the delegates roundly defeated the motion to accept. To what degree was ignorance of WCC apart of the 1948 ELC rejection of membership? To what degree was experience with the Federal Council of Churches responsible for ELC's demurring from WCC? If the question was one of ignorance, what changed between 1948 and 1956?

To what extent was ethnic alienation the primary ground for American Lutheran's reticence to participate in WCC *via* geographical and national lines? Since European Lutherans were not overly concerned about this matter, could it be a certain discomfort with American identity showing itself among Lutherans in America?

Flesner argues that "Lutherans believe that since salvation is through faith alone, it is a matter of primary concern what is believed and taught." How explicit are these ties between the *sola fide* and the Americans' insistence on confessional representation?

I delighted in the description of the play by play, parliamentary move by parliamentary move, battle waged by A. R. Wentz, et al., at Horsham and at subsequent meetings. That description raises several related questions. How much of the reticence of WCC leadership to the American Lutheran proposal was fear of doctrinal squabbles taking over WCC work? Flesner suggests that most of the opposition subsided once the opponents heard the argument in full. Could it be they simply feared that they would lose the Lutherans altogether?

One last observation: I once had an opportunity to study with Bishop Stephen Neil, a principal in some of the negotiations. He, too, discussed some of the meetings that Flesner describes in his book. To Bishop Neil, the Lutherans were by and large a nuisance, both in the WCC discussions and in his other pet project, the Church of South India. All the way through his descriptions, I heard a late 19th Century Victorian speaking. Britain, at least through her ability to order, would provide the basis for Church unity. And these Neanderthal Lutherans were simply messing up the empire. But what could one expect from Lutherans, especially American ones!

We owe Flesner a great debt for this marvelous piece of historiography. He has done the church a great service.

Patrick R. Keifert
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota