



A CRY OF ABSENCE: REFLECTIONS FOR THE WINTER OF THE HEART, by Martin Marty. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983. Pp. 172. \$11.95.

As I write this review the scene from my office window is of 30 inches of newly-fallen snow. The chill of winter is here, and, with the cold, there is a bleak absence of life and comfort. Such a picture reminds us of the seasons of life and “winter” of the spirit we may encounter when the warm, loving God seems hidden from our troubled life.

Stimulated by a thought from Karl Rahner, “I am inclined to think that in the future there will be two types of spirituality and piety—naturally they are related to each other and, once again, are not chemically pure” (10), Martin Marty develops an extended metaphor. In the Christian community one will experience those of a summery and those of a wintery heart. His thoughts focus on the wintery heart and he describes how that heart reacts to crises, struggle, and adversity in life.

Those of us raised in a religious tradition where it’s “cool” to be cool, and the formal and reserved approach to faith is common, may find significant insight and help from Marty’s descriptive analysis. To be sure, as Marty insists, the types are never “chemically pure” (quoting Rahner again), for everyone has a hot spot or two, but many of us would remain firmly within that wintery tradition and piety. Those of us who have struggled with our winteryness can take heart. Not only do wintery Christians have their strengths but they are a necessary perspective in the kingdom and they enjoy a long history of significant contribution to the faith.

Marty turns to the Psalms to illustrate the wintery experience. “To my surprise I noticed that more than half of the Psalms had as their major burden or context life on the wintery landscape of the heart” (39). In the Psalms he finds evidence of insight, steadfastness, and a fearless struggle with pain and adversity. Believers have moved through this winter of the soul and even a “winter fallow” to discover hope and steadfast love in God and signs of His presence.

I would recommend the book for two reasons: First, the book should validate the views of those who appreciate and live out the faith and piety of this wintery heart. The wintery types are the realists, the seekers on the edge of the horizon, the thinkers who are not satisfied with easy answers, religious cliches, or superficial assurances. Such persons insist upon the struggle with death, pain, disease, unbelief, and all the other opponents of faith. Only after such struggle can the person with a wintery piety develop strength, understanding, and significant hope. Such folk embrace a theology of the cross and must experience the reality of Good Friday before the dawn of Easter.

Secondly, the book should assist the reader who wishes to minister to those of the wintery faith and piety. Wintery folk will not seek the same comfort as summery folk, and will not be impressed by summery preaching or comfort in crisis.

Moreover, persons who do not understand or cannot identify the wintery piety may begin to judge that there is no faith there or that there is lack in Spirit and love. A wintery piety, like a

summery piety, has its strengths and weaknesses and its identifying marks. To know the piety is a prerequisite for effective ministry. For example, Marty advises, “My address, then, to the needs of the wintry sort of spiritual hearts is based, at rock bottom and boldly, on *texts*” (26). This has obvious implications for our ministry approach when dealing with those of the wintry piety.

Martin Marty, normally a writer of depth and impressive insight, has again offered a significant spiritual resource.

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THE DARKNESS OF GOD: THEOLOGY AFTER HIROSHIMA, by Jim Garrison. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983. Pp. 238. \$8.95 (paper).

I fear this book will be popular. It is a serious work on an important subject. It is written with moral passion, has a powerful chapter on nuclear weapons and the hazards of nuclear power, and gives a relatively clear account of some sophisticated conceptual systems. But it is not a particularly thoughtful book. It raises questions of which the author seems utterly unaware. And its main line of thought could be extended in a direction directly opposed to the one he takes.

The argument goes something like this: nuclear power is dangerous; Christians have not come to terms with this because their conception of God is out of date; Whitehead’s philosophy can help us to a more subtle notion of God, compatible with the scriptural witness to God’s wrath, the “shadow side” of God; that achieved, we can see Hiroshima through the category of apocalyptic, though nuclear extinction is a future that God and humanity are creating together; Jung’s psychology unveils the arena in which this creation takes place, the human psyche; we can thus appreciate nuclear weaponry as a revelation from God on the same scale as that of Christ, and, having discarded “the norms of previous ages,” integrate its evil into our lives and bring good out of the mess we are in, as God “invariably” does.

I share Garrison’s horror of nuclear weapons and his frustration over the careless spread of nuclear power. But I find the argument of this book incredible.

First of all, not all and not only Christians, as Garrison knows, are paralyzed before nuclear power. Thus, whatever paralysis there is in the Church cannot simply be directly charged to a particular vision of God. But pinning down what is causing what—that is not Garrison’s strong point. It remains unclear to me whether (1) our concept of God is causing our paralysis, in which case we can free ourselves by changing it, or (2) God is causing the threat of nuclear war to force us to grow up, in which case we can grow up or God can try something else, or (3) God is bringing about our extinction through nuclear warfare, and we can—to, follow Garrison’s conclusion—turn this to good or—to follow the cold logic of this bizarre theology—help God to destroy us.

For all his criticism of traditional thought, Garrison himself stops short at what looks like standard Christian rationalism: good will come out of evil, even this, one day we will see. But there is nothing in the theology he constructs which will allow him to stop there: if the darkness of God is so great that God is capable literally of anything, if the incarnation brought not

salvation but the introduction into humanity of God's antinomial nature, if Hiroshima was not obscene revolt against God and humanity but part of the shadow side of God and the modern equivalent of the incarnation, then the only thing stopping Garrison from concluding that we *ought* to begin a nuclear war is his own decency. At the theoretical level, he keeps talking about how creative the use of evil can be. But the simple fact is that Garrison really does not believe any further use of nuclear weapons would lead to good. Yet the theology he has constructed points the other way.

The biblical material he marshalls to display the shadow side of God is impressive, but he fails to ask how the whole of that witness should be seen. For him, it is all of equal weight: the stone-hurling God of Joshua and the crucified Christ. These become static characteristics of God. Thus, though he commits himself to the God of process, his notion of that God's nature is utterly static: curses and blessings are always around. God throws some stones, tries the crucifixion, then goes back to throwing things—only now they are nuclear bombs. In essence, his theology remains at Isaiah 45, that dark frontier of the Old Testament, darker still when torn from its context, and goes no further. (An exegetical aside: *Revelation* can hardly be read as a continuation of the biblical history. For a Christian exegesis, one should look at Ellul's *Apocalypse* or Barth's *Dogmatics*, II, 2.)

There are other problems that could be raised, problems about the identification of crucial points in history, the prophetic reading of events, providence and necessity, and the relation of communities to the interpretation of events. But all these

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are complicated by Garrison's choice of Whitehead and Jung as the two pillars of his structure, two thinkers whose systems share a fatal problem: the difficulty of relating their elements to the world of human events, to history. This will obviously pose a problem for a theology of history, especially one centering on one particular chain of events.

All of this is serious enough. But what I find most disturbing is the modern assumption Garrison shares—which, of course, pre-dates Hiroshima—that our problems and/or possibilities are so unique that we must simply sweep the past away. This century has already given us the spectacle of one madman living out his own apocalypse and trying to take his whole nation with him. And the people who talk about acceptable levels of destruction in nuclear war would agree with Garrison that “we can no longer live by the norms of previous ages.” This seems to me only to increase the lack of stability that allows us to drift indifferently toward a nuclear nightmare.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Helmut Koester. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982. Vol 1, *History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*. Pp. xxxiv + 429. \$24.95. Vol. 2, *History and Literature of Early Christianity*. Pp. xxxiv + 365. \$22.95.

Translated by the author himself from the German edition (1980), this is the most extensive “introduction” to the New Testament available in the English language. It is

encyclopedic in scope. It is the kind of work which one would ordinarily expect possible only through the collaboration of a team of specialists.

Koester's work ranges far beyond the usual limits found in other widely used introductions in several respects. First, he does not limit himself to introductory matters concerning the 27 books of the New Testament. He provides introduction to the "literature of early Christianity" (as the subtitle of vol. 2 indicates) from the first 150 years of Christianity, including the New Testament, the Apostolic Fathers, early apocryphal literature, the Nag Hammadi writings, and other documents. Second, he presents the "history, culture, and religion of the Hellenistic age" (in vol. 1) to illuminate the historical contexts in which Christianity had its rise. The result is that the sub-disciplines of "New Testament History" and "New Testament Introduction" are fused into a common enterprise. Third, Koester has included sections which survey the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus and the life and ministry of Paul. While these topics are not totally left aside in other introductions (e.g., Fuller sums up the teaching of Jesus, and both he and Kümmel establish a chronology of Paul), the tendency has been to concentrate chiefly on the external circumstances surrounding the 27 documents (authorship, date, provenance, and destination) and their internal literary character (genre, structure, and sources), and perhaps their theological emphases. But introduction should go beyond these limits to deal with the major figures and communities of the era precisely in order to understand the documents themselves (including traditions they contain). Koester has done that, and it makes his work all the more significant and informative.

The first volume is the larger of the two. It is devoted first to an historical survey from the eve of Alexander into the New Testament era. Then Koester goes on to discuss the culture of the various communities within that time span. Virtually every topic conceivable is touched upon or treated in depth, depending on the subject. A partial listing includes the concept of Hellenism, a description of society (including wealth, poverty, and slavery), agriculture, trade, education, the development of Koine, Greek philosophy (including Stoicism), Greek religion (including the mysteries), Judaism (including the various sects and the rise of apocalypticism), religions in the Roman imperial period, and Judaism after the destruction of the Temple on to the composition of early rabbinic writings. Particularly noteworthy and valuable are his discussions of Stoicism, the mystery religions, Jewish literature, and the rise of

apocalypticism and Gnosticism. He also provides helpful bibliographical listings so that the reader is directed to the primary texts available and to the most significant and recent studies.

The second volume begins with introductions to the development of the canon, textual criticism, and literary, form, and tradition criticisms. Sections follow on John the Baptist, Jesus, and the earliest communities. Then there is a survey of Paul's career and introduction to his letters. After this, there are sections on "Palestine and Syria," "Egypt," and "Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome"; within each of these the other literature is introduced within historical contexts.

Critical decisions are made throughout. Most are in keeping with the consensus of leading scholars, although some positions taken continue to be debated. Koester accepts the so-called "two-source hypothesis" (priority of Mark and existence of Q—although in more than one version). He concludes that only seven letters can be attributed to Paul with certainty; Romans is Paul's last; Philippians and Philemon were written during an Ephesian imprisonment; and 2

Corinthians and Philippians are composite. The Fourth Gospel, which he thinks had its rise in Syria (composed at the end of the first century), is based on various sources (e.g., dialogues of Jesus, Johannine church traditions, a passion narrative, and a signs source).

A work of such broad scope requires its author to make critical decisions, some of which will be contested by other specialists. Those who have sought to reinstate the priority of Matthew (over Mark) may be disappointed that their arguments have not been given more extensive reporting and assessment. Others may claim that too little historical veracity is attributed to Acts in dealing with aspects of the career of Paul. Others will disagree on various critical conclusions, e.g., that Jesus did not speak of the coming of an apocalyptic Son of man; that Mark and John made use of a primitive passion narrative, expanded by each (which has been widely held previously, but challenged in some recent studies); and that the Pastoral Epistles should be dated so late (A.D. 120-160), when the turn of the century may be more fitting. One can go on. Generally one does not find in this work the full presentation of various points of view, critique, and subsequent decision as in the case, for example, of Kümmel. Yet, of course, the informed reader does not need all that, and the less informed reader is directed to specialized studies in which competing positions are taken. Koester obviously knows the issues, has faced them, and has made decisions in light of current scholarship. He provides the essentials (without full survey) of competing viewpoints and then moves on to present his own conclusions, which are clearly stated, frequently with insights of his own which had not been considered previously.

Besides the wealth of material provided, what is distinctive and could be called the essential “stamp” of the author on the ordering of the material is his tracing of “trajectories” in early Christianity—a project which he has pursued for some time in earlier works as well. He seeks to trace the history of motifs and traditions across time, cultures, and communities, including their modifications, in order to portray coherence and to show how the pieces for the whole picture of early Christianity might fit together or at least relate. So, for example, he has written that the author of the Fourth Gospel attempted to “fuse the early gnostic views of the Johannine tradition with the kerygma of the cross and resurrection,” and this Gospel can be spoken of as an amalgamation of “the special tradition of the Johannine communities with the traditions of Syrian Christianity” (2.185). The construction of such hypothetical trajectories throughout the work are programmatic and, as the author recognizes, subject to debate. By positing them, Koester sets forth positions and raises issues which other scholars will have to face, and that means that New Testament scholarship will be enriched, for it is through the raising of questions (even if in the form of propositions) that scholarship thrives and insight is gained.

Koester’s work is a valuable tool for instruction and constant reference. It should become widely available and used.

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Eller. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982. Pp. xiv + 56. \$2.95 (paper).

The little book *The Language of Canaan* has been out for a couple of years and has provoked comment throughout the religious community. Virginia Mollenkott's review in *Christian Century* was one of outrage that anyone, especially Bruce Metzger, could warmly endorse the book. A recent *Dialog* review credited it with being thoughtful and to the point.

It is a polemical book, one that raises the hackles of feminists and makes those who prefer sexist language feel vindicated. After all, Eller seems scholarly. He uses Wittgenstein, and Strunk and White's little classic, *The Elements of Style*. But the polemic is rather like the polemic of the late Luther: more to his supporters than to his opponents. Anyone who has feminist leanings can only be wrathful after reading it—as he intends, I am sure. It certainly does not contribute to the dialogue about sexist language.

He has two main points. The first is derived from Wittgenstein, he claims, though it looks more like Wittgenstein through the lens of S. I. Hayakawa. It is important to use “man” because it both stands for the whole class as well as, in itself, names one. That makes it very easy to use images of God relating to “man” which are intimate and even sexual, as in Yahweh's marrying the people of Israel. He argues that such a fundamental metaphor for the relation between human beings and God is destroyed if feminists are permitted to add “...and woman” in order to be fair. As he says, you have to think each time you see the inclusive noun or nouns.

It might be possible to solve this problem by making the word “woman” refer to all human beings, and it would certainly make Yahweh's sexual preferences a bit more acceptable.

Or, another way to solve that problem would be to refer to Yahweh as “she.” Then “man” could stand for both male and female and women could take pride in the fact that they were created in the image of God. How man would feel about this would be interesting, to say the least.

The other argument Eller makes is that usage, as directed by Strunk and White, insists that “he” is the correct referent for the nouns in which the sexuality of the referent is unclear. As in, “Would everyone please take his book.” This may make *logical* or *grammatical* sense, but often it makes little rhetorical sense. To say to a group of women in a sewing circle, “Would everyone put down his needle” would be rhetorically incorrect, even though the grammar would be absolutely correct. Correctness that takes no cognizance of the rhetorical situation is *not* correct. Sensitive people always adjust their language to the situation. Not to do so is just plain rude. English teachers have nearly spent themselves teaching this grammar to reluctant students who, on looking out over a group of boys and girls, know that it is simply incorrect to refer to everyone in the group as “he” or “him.” As they say, vive la difference!

When asked to explain why this rule exists, teachers will simply refer students to handbooks of English usage, most of which used to agree with that rule on the grounds of logic: if you are speaking of one, you must only refer to one, and the grammar books, since the 18th century, have decided that the masculine is more comprehensive than the feminine. The English, in an attempt to regularize the language as the French Academy had done, simply made up the rule at that time. As an uninflected language English does not have to think about gender in the same way as inflected languages do. And, rather generally speaking, English is a fairly sloppy language. English speakers have not taken very nicely to the grammarians' rules. It may be that English is sloppier than most languages because it is a unique combination of two major families in Indo-European: the Germanic and the Romance languages. 1066 and all that!

of Early Modern English as we have it in the Oxford English Dictionary, English writers have used “they” often “in reference to a singular noun made universal by *every, any, no*, etc., or applicable to one of either sex (= ‘he or she’).”

The venerable editors then catalogue a list of entries in major English works which, indeed, show that to be the case. I quote:

1526 *Pilgr. Perf.* (W. de W. 1531) 163 b, *Yf..a psalme scape only persone, or a lesson, or else y^t they omyt one verse or twayne.* 1535 Fisher *Ways Perf. Relig.* ix. Wks. (1876) 383 He neuer forsaketh any creature vnlesse they before haue forsaken them selues. 1749 Fielding *Tom Jones* VIII. xi, Every Body fell a laughing, as how could they help it. 1759 Chesterf. *Lett.* IV. cclv. 170 If a person is born of a gloomy temper..they cannot help it. 1835 Whewell in *Life* (1881) 173 Nobody can deprive us of the Church, if they would. 1858 Bagehot *Lit. Stud.* (1879) II. 206 Nobody fancies for a moment that they are reading about anything beyond the pale of ordinary propriety. 1866 Ruskin *Crown Wild Olives* 38 (1873) 44 Now, nobody does anything well that they cannot help doing.

If we look to other forms of the same pronoun the same evidence presents itself. Under “their” an equally august body of English writers use the plural form to refer to “him or her,” when the gender is inclusive or uncertain. Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* says, “A person can’t help their birth.” And George Bernard Shaw, who thought English spelling was a mess and made attempts to regularize it, had a fairly decent sort of character in *Candida* shout, “It’s enough to put anyone out of their senses.”

With so great a cloud of witnesses, why does this rule, learned at such cost, apparently, drive the grammarian out of his or her skull? It came to be such a hot issue in Britain that the Parliament, in 1850, passed a law saying that the masculine was more comprehensive than the feminine. But, as usual, speakers of English the whole world over view such rules with suspicion, if they view them at all. After all, we are not French, nor is our wondrously messy language.

It’s a question of norms. Which century are we going to take as normative to the language? The 8th? Then we’d have to inflect and not be able to be very subtle in our discussions. The 14th? Then we’d have to be Anglo-French and that was a mess, rather like the Norwegian spoken by second generation Norwegian Americans. Shakespeare’s language? Then we’d be filled with Latinisms, and a garden variety of every grammatical mistake the Frenchified regulators of the 18th century disliked.

It’s rather like worship. Pick your century and then prescribe from there.

It should be obvious from this, that English usage is just that: usage—and each generation shapes the language just a bit differently from the previous one. And there is usually a logic to the changes which occur. But this change that so horrifies Eller and his friends is no change: it is nothing more than the persistence of what anyone knows when they look out over a group of men and women: “he” does not accurately describe them all, nor should it.

Let's revive the old rule, for goodness sake. After all, it was God who got us into this by creating us male and female. It would have been so much easier for Eller and his ilk if we had only been one kind: then we would be able to get straight to the heart of religion and not worry about such picky things as being inclusive.

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LUKE-ACTS: THE PROMISE OF HISTORY, by Donald Juel. Atlanta: John Knox, 1983. Pp. 144. \$7.95 (paper).

Juel's strategy is first to retell the story of Luke-Acts. Chapter I focuses on the Preface (Luke 1:1-4) and the Birth and Infancy Narratives (Luke 1:5-2:52), emphasizing the temple as place of action, the atmosphere and thematics of worship, and the announcement that Jesus' coming, although it has Gentiles in view, will set Jew against Jew.

The subject of chapter II is the ministry of Jesus beginning with his anointing by John (3:21-22) and inaugural sermon (4:16-30). Jesus gives instructions about

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discipleship, speaks of the dangers of wealth, attacks exclusivism, enters into controversy, and uses parables as his weapons. His deeds show that he lives what he preaches. For example, he eats with tax collectors and sinners, refusing to respect traditional boundaries established by guardians of ritual purity.

Jesus speaks and acts like a prophet, like Elijah and Elisha (9:19), like the prophet resembling Moses (Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22-26). A shift in imagery occurs as Jesus enters Jerusalem and he is increasingly described as kingly (19:38).

Chapter III tells the story of Acts under the general heading of the spread of the good news to the ends of the earth. In excellent material on Peter's Pentecost sermon Juel emphasizes the fact that Jews are addressed and that God's people (Israel) are being restored. Following are some of the essentials of his sketches of the chief witnesses in Acts: Peter is a totally reliable Jew whose prestige serves to legitimize the inclusion of the Gentiles without circumcision; Stephen is the thinker whose sermon shows that the temple is not an essential element in Jewish identity; Paul is a completely orthodox Jew whose restless traveling makes him the primary agent of the mission to the end of the earth.

Three chapters of retelling the story are followed by three chapters which focus on themes. Chapter IV (The Life of Faith) analyzes Luke's conception of discipleship under four headings: hospitality (enlarging the family by including Gentiles), possessions (the problem of wealth and the possibilities for good uses), the Spirit (identified not so much with speaking in tongues as with turning points in the mission), openness to the future (Luke pictures the world as a hopeful place in spite of all opposition to Jesus and the church).

In chapters V and VI Juel describes his scholarly genealogy as including Nils Dahl, Jacob Jervell and David Tiede, and that means not being of the house and lineage of Ernst Haenchen, Hans Conzelmann and all those who think that Luke-Acts teaches (1) that freedom from the law is the final result of the Christian movement and (2) that the Christian church represents a new

religion replacing Judaism.

Luke-Acts was designed, says Juel, to address Jewish Christians who were suffering from an identity crisis, unsure about their legitimacy as God's people, shunned by fellow Jews who rejected the messianic claims made for Jesus, confused about the value of their heritage at a time when Gentiles were flooding into the church. Luke wrote his story, says Juel, to assure his community that they were the people of God in continuity with the family all the way back to Abraham (not a different people, not some new God). They are the true worshipers and servants of God, founded by people loyal to the Torah as they themselves are loyal.

Before saying how much I like this book, it may be appropriate to raise a few questions: I do not share Juel's notion that Luke wrote to encourage Torah-observing Jewish Christians and that Luke views Gentile converts as faithful to the law (with the exception of circumcision).

I also confess that I do not understand what I perceive to be Juel's enthusiasm for these positions. I do sympathize with what I take to be his annoyance with the once dominant Bultmannian position regarding the relationship of the gospel to history and the law, his shrinking back from the dangers of Marcionism, his delight in Luke's "optimism" about the world (nicely sketched in this volume), and his appreciation for Luke's bold construction of a narrative or historical framework, under which he shelters his community and imposes order upon the unruly welter of experience.

But I cannot quite fathom the importance to Juel of the view he proposes regarding the Jewish Christian movement as true Israel. He says it is wrong to interpret Luke as asserting that Christianity replaces Judaism, or that the church is distinct from the synagogue and belongs to a new era with a new law-free piety (102-103). Luke, he says, emphasizes continuity with Israel's heritage. But then he says that only those who accept Jesus remain true Jews while those who reject him exclude themselves from Israel, do not deserve the name Israelite, are purged from Israel, have been destroyed from the people (Deut 18:15-18), and will perish. Juel uses the language "church" and "Israel" and says that the church

claimed Israel's heritage as its own (112). To me this sounds very much like the division, distinction, discontinuity and even displacement which he wants to avoid.

And what is Luke's attitude to the law? In spite of Juel's efforts to persuade me that Luke teaches the observance of Torah, I find myself still thinking of Luke as a Gentile to whom Jewish laws were a nearly impenetrable thicket. He is far from exhibiting Paul's understanding of the law and appreciation for its demands. Luke naively reduces it to a set of universal ethical demands and to a few additional precepts necessary to enable Gentiles to fellowship with Jews.

What I think Luke is attempting to do from beginning to end with his discussions of Christian behavior is to describe Jesus and all the major representatives of the Way as pious and upright, neither sacrilegious nor immoral, whether judged by a popular, common sense view (from a Gentile perspective) of the Jewish law or of Roman law.

I find it a bit distressing that Juel has so little to say about Luke's many references to the innocence of Jesus and of Christians in relationship to Roman law, Roman custom, and Roman institutions. The trials of Jesus and Paul focus far more on their innocence vis-à-vis accusations of disloyalty to Rome and Caesar than on their observance of Jewish Torah. It seems to me that one thing Luke is trying to do is to remind Christians (and to tell a larger Gentile audience) that

being Christian and calling on the name of the Lord Jesus are by no means incompatible with piety, respectability, uprightness and citizenship.

This book is a valuable introduction to Luke-Acts, its story, and issues surrounding its interpretation. It is well and clearly written, and it deserves the serious attention of all who are interested in comprehending the plot of Luke-Acts and in coming to terms with the unique voice of Luke among the chorus of NT writers.

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EZEKIEL, by Peter C. Craigie. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983. Pp. 321. \$7.95 (paper).

The author is one of eleven contributors who have been asked to do for the Old Testament what William Barclay did for the New: to make it come alive for the Christian believer in the twentieth century. This entry to *The Daily Study Bible (Old Testament)* under the general editorship of John C. L. Gibson does the job. Divided into 109 sections, no doubt for reasons of manageability—compare Zimmerli's 71 kerygmatic units—each section of Ezekiel text is followed by an average of 2-3 pages of commentary. Since the (RSV) text is printed in smaller type it does not obtrude upon the exposition.

The first part (approximately half) of every discussion deals succinctly and judiciously with the historical and literary problems. Craigie is clearly in touch with contemporary Ezekiel scholarship, though he was unable to utilize the insights of Greenberg's fine commentary in the Anchor Bible series on chapters 1-20, both books having appeared within the same year. Textual criticism is left unattended.

In the second half of each expository section Craigie makes consistently trenchant and edifying applications. Some examples follow.

When discussing Ezekiel's first symbolic action (4:1-3) of portraying on a clay tile a map of a city under siege, which expresses God's resolve to destroy Jerusalem, Craigie comments:

Every message of doom contains the seed of hope. Every announcement of judgment has implicit within it a call to repentance. If they would only hear the words pregnant within the prophetic action, a new map would unfold with a path for the future marked firmly upon it. (29)

It is well known that sin for Ezekiel is primarily offense against the sacral orders. Listen to Craigie connect sin in the sacred with social injustice:

Worship and morality are intimately interrelated. This interrelationship is hard to grasp and hard to explain. What we do is deeply rooted in what we are, and what we are is shaped by our understanding of ourselves and of God. The one who Worships, knows God, and begins to know

the relationship between God and human beings. And so worship, in addition to being a fundamental expression of the relationship between a person and God, also shapes the character of the person as such. Thus, when we cease to worship, we lose our understanding, which in turn may be followed by the loss of morality. (65, in comment on the prophet's transport vision when he saw the abominations in the Temple, 8:14-18)

Even in the apparently barren recesses of the New Temple Vision (chaps. 40-48), Craigie finds appropriate springboards:

To only a few persons is granted the privilege of seeing the extraordinary vision of God and perceiving the change that his presence could make to an evil and sad world. But all may participate in the vision and work towards its fulfillment. And the vision with which the Church is entrusted is similar to that of the prophet: it is of a world in which the presence of God may be made known through the proclamation of the gospel of God's presence in the world in the person of Jesus Christ. (290)

If someone would say to me, "I know nothing about Ezekiel, where should I begin?" beside directing him to the Book of Ezekiel, I would recommend this fine little book.

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METAPHORICAL THEOLOGY: MODELS OF GOD IN RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE, by Sallie McFague. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. Pp. 236. \$11.95 (paper).

As a sequel to her *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology*, Sallie McFague's most recent work further serves to make us aware that "talk is *not* cheap." McFague contends that language not only identifies us as "hermeneutical creatures" (55) who name the world, but it also speaks of an inverse relationship in which the world names us (8-10). In the Vanderbilt professor's search for a religious/theological language which neither capitulates itself to the extremes of literalism (e.g., fundamentalism, doctrine of transubstantiation) nor to the extremes of spiritualism (e.g., Feuerbach, Protestant liberalism), McFague proposes what she calls a "metaphorical theology."

The aim of metaphorical theology...is to envision ways of talking about the relationship between the divine and the human which are nonidolatrous but relevant; ways which can be said to be true without being literal; ways which are meaningful to all peoples, the traditionally excluded as well as the included....The final task of a metaphorical theology will be a reforming, transforming one. As metaphorical, such theology can never be simply a baptizing of the tradition, for

that would mean giving up the *tension* which is at the heart of metaphor. (28-29. See also 103)

In making her case for a metaphorical theology, McFague argues that not only is the Protestant tradition metaphorical (e.g., Luther's understanding of the eucharist, Tillich's "Protestant Principle" 12-13), but metaphor is also the basis for all human thinking (14-15). Drawing upon Jean Piaget in setting forth her epistemology (i.e., "critical realism" 132), McFague demonstrates how it is that we all "come to know," that is, "to learn," by proceeding from the known to the unknown (31, 36). "Most simply, a metaphor is seeing one thing as something else, pretending 'this' is 'that' because we do not know how to think or talk about 'this,' so we use 'that' as a way of saying something about it" (15). Here one discovers the "is and is not" character (Ricoeur) which is intrinsic to any metaphor (38, 134). Giving this premise some theological extension, it then follows for McFague that "Jesus 'is and is not' God" (51) and that the "Bible 'is and is not' the word of God" (54).

McFague further argues that we can only know that to which we are related—having, therefore, no knowledge of that from which we are isolated. When examining the Apostle's Creed, for example, one ought to focus one's attention on the involved relationships and events rather than the matters of identity and description (111-117, 165-167). In fact, for McFague, the "root-metaphor" of Christianity is one of *relationship*, namely, "the 'Kingdom of God' which is supported and fed by many extended metaphors, the various parables" (27). And the task

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"at hand" is to traverse the route which connects (via models) the parables of Jesus and Jesus as the parable of the Kingdom of God (i.e., metaphors) with the doing of systematic theology (i.e., concepts).

After four chapters of methodological discussion ("Toward a Metaphorical Theology"; "Metaphor, Parable, and Scripture"; "Models in Science"; "Models in Theology"), McFague moves on to her test case—"God the Father: Model or Idol?"—in the final chapter.

The issues of idolatry and irrelevance come together in the image of God as father, for more than any other dominant model in Christianity, this one has been both absolutized by some and, in recent times, found meaningless by others. The feminist critique of God as father centers on the *dominance* of this one model to the exclusion of others, and on the *failure* of this model to deal with the anomaly presented by those whose experience is not included in this model. It is, therefore, an excellent test case for a metaphorical theology, since its task is to envision ways of talking about the divine-human relationship which, in continuity with the parables and Jesus as parable, are nonidolatrous but relevant. (145)

Basically for McFague, the model of God as father is a good and legitimate one. Yet, it has unfortunately become an idol which has dictated a patriarchal framework not only for theology, but for the whole Western way of life. "When a model becomes an idol, the distance between image and reality collapses" (9). At this point, McFague takes a heuristic cue from Ian Ramsey's rebuttal to Antony Flew's now thirty-year-old critique of theology: "An endless

number of metaphors and models...is no 'death by a thousand qualifications.' Rather it is life by a thousand enrichments" (106). More succinctly one might say, "Many metaphors and models are necessary; but no one is sufficient" (146, 183).

As the main constructive task of her essay, McFague proposes that the metaphor, "God as friend," has great potential for being a nonidolatrous yet relevant model. Though needing to recognize that it is not a self-sufficient metaphor, "God as friend" is yet a non-gender-related image which has great efficacy in crossing the boundaries which separate people of different classes, sexes, races, ages and religions.

The friendship model is in part eschatological; it projects a possibility of a time when all peoples shall be one with God and with each other. It models not only what we are now in part but what we hope to be. As an eschatological model, it offers us a standard or perspective from which to see our present alienation more clearly and to criticize, in prophetic fashion, that alienation more perceptively. It suggests that the adequate and appropriate worship of God is not a solitary affair between the soul and God but, as Dante envisioned in the *Paradiso*, a dance in which all will join together accompanied by the music of the spheres. Friendship is an intimation of the unification of all that is, the natural as well as the human, joined together in harmony with God. (189)

If I understand McFague correctly, I cannot agree with her statement that "religious language in the Judeo-Christian tradition excludes us all, for it is largely biblical language" whose concerns are not ours (8), or her "come of age" attitude which on occasion seems to disparage any notion of God's sovereignty (186-187). Over all, however, I consider McFague's essay to be a substantive, well-balanced, and lucid argument which offers much of importance to the ever-crucial conversation between theology and hermeneutics. To put a paraphrastic twist on Augustine's classic dictum, I hope along with McFague that "our metaphors are restless till they find their rest in thee."

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT: IMAGES FOR THE FUTURE, by Gabriel Moran. Minneapolis: Winston, 1983. Pp. 238. \$8.95 (paper).

Gabriel Moran's most recent book is an excellent one for those concerned for or about the place of developmental theory in religious education. Critically inclusive is the phrase I would use to describe the book's tone. The title masterfully includes

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three themes: the development of developmental theory, the development of religious education, and Moran's own conceptualizations of the development of the religious.

Moran's initial question concerns the helpfulness of the word "development" in understanding either education or the religious. Though it has been captured by economists and

psychologists, he claims that it must be recovered if religious education is to understand what it is about. His claim is presented most clearly as he describes his own theory in Part II.

Part I is an examination of those theorists who have been the source of continuing reflection on the subject: Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg and James Fowler. Moran isn't the first to catalog the research of these persons. Nor are his summaries and critiques altogether even. He outlines the stages of development in Piaget's and Kohlberg's work rather well. He must have assumed that readers knew, or didn't need, the more detailed description of stages in the schemes of Fowler and Erikson.

What Moran brings to this book that is new is his own critique of each theory. In his comments and questions he draws on his wide-ranging familiarity with the literature in the field of developmentalism. Those wishing to pursue the subject will find his bibliography helpful and challenging. The theme of inclusiveness is struck as each critique ends. It's almost a litany as Moran seems to ask, "Is this theory adequate?" and the response, "No, not quite." He is especially troubled by the failure of the theorists to include women and children in their research and conclusions.

Moran's thoughts about the religious are of greatest interest in this book. "A beginning way to define the word religious," he writes, "would be to say that it refers to whatever keeps open the process of development" (129). Further, he argues, "The religiously adult person is one who holds in fruitful tension the rational and nonrational, dependence and independence, action and receptiveness" (131). With that definition, it's no wonder his book reflects the tone of inclusiveness.

The three stages of religious development Moran posits are: the simply religious, acquiring a religion, and the religiously Christian (or Jewish, Muslim, etc.). Though he doesn't see many at this third stage now, it is the necessary goal for religious education in the future, as Moran sees it. He insists that the third stage is not a denial of the second, but a period of disbelief with respect to the second may be necessary for the third to come into being. He writes, "A Christian group might sometimes have to stand against the church for the sake of the church, or, to use the distinction of *religion* and *religious*, a Christian religious movement is likely to have some conflict with the Christian religion" (145).

The third stage is an obviously inclusive one. There "one no longer has a religion; one is religious in a particular way. To be religiously Christian today, one has to live in relationship, especially with an appreciation of Judaism and Islam" (153). To be inclusive in one's outlook is the characteristic of the religious person. It's a view that presumes development—and a broadly conceived education that assists in the process.

Not all will agree with what Moran has written. Theologians won't be pleased to find their efforts concentrated in the second stage, working with present and post-adolescents. Nor will decision-oriented folks find his comments about one-time conversion palatable. That's part of the value of the book. I think Moran hopes that something will happen in reading it—maybe some development.

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MATTHEW: THE TEACHER'S GOSPEL, by Paul S. Minear. New York: Pilgrim, 1982. Pp. 194. \$7.95 (paper).

This brief redactional study and commentary on Matthew is a guide for any who may wish to study the unique interpretive work of the Evangelist we commonly call Matthew. Following Minear's introduction to the gospel (which discusses the author, the audience, the gospel's arrangement, the date of writing and the sources used), seven chapters are

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devoted to interpreting Matthew's text. At their conclusion come two appendices: the first containing chapter by chapter "notes for teachers" who may guide groups in the study; the second containing supplementary material on six subjects related to the gospel (e.g. The Expectation of Christ's Return, 173-180) which Minear lifts up for special attention and on which he furnishes special comments for further reflection.

Those who use this rather excellent study guide will find it refreshing for its uniqueness in a number of ways. First, Minear, as he himself says, focuses attention "on the work of the *Evangelist* as a teacher" (ix) who addresses himself to his readers who were themselves "leaders in the local churches" (9) and who "were charged with basic educational work among adult believers in Jesus Christ" (ix). The gospel, Minear thus asserts (rightly in this reviewer's opinion), was not written "to prove to his readers that Jesus was Messiah, for his audience already made this elementary confession" (9), but was prepared as "a source book of the traditions of how Jesus—the master rabbi (23:8)—had communicated to his interns the mysteries and keys of the kingdom of heaven" (10).

Thus, according to Minear, the Evangelist organized Jesus' teachings into five major "sermons" which Minear calls "manuals" (12ff.).

Second, users of this guide will find Minear's commentary filled with the author's scholarship. His presentation does not dig into Matthew's text with the detail of most scholarly exegesis. Instead he lifts out of the units of the gospel the interpretive and teaching intention of the Evangelist, which is the distillation of Minear's own textual, source, form and redactional analyses of the gospel. Again and again in the process Minear reflects upon the manner in which the Evangelist, using pre-Matthean traditions of Jesus' teachings, refocuses the Lord's words so that they directly address people, thought, and situations in Matthew's own churches.

Minear is to be commended for his insistence that Matthew presents Jesus as the master teacher both of his disciples and, via this gospel, of his church. One might wish that Minear had seen more clearly the connection the genealogy, the birth narratives and the "fulfillment note" have to the portrayal of Jesus as master teacher. Likewise, one might wish that Minear had also considered the significance of the presentation of Jesus as master teacher as much against the background of the situation in Judaism and its rabbinic traditions after A.D. 70 as he did against the background of possible situations within the Matthean communities. That said, this is nonetheless a commentary exciting for its insights and for the author's perception that teaching lies at the heart of this gospel.

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THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS: A COMMENTARY, by Eduard Schweizer. Translated by Andrew Chester. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982. Pp. 319. \$12.50 (paper).
WORD BIBLICAL COMMENTARY, VOLUME 44, COLOSSIANS, PHILEMON, by Peter T. O'Brien. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1982. Pp. 328. \$18.95.

The Evangelisch -Katholischer-Kommentar (EKK) series of N. T. commentaries claims to be *ecumenical*, for it is the work of a joint Protestant and Roman Catholic team; *theological*, for no section has been written without first having been preached, and *historical*, because the historical background has been thoroughly researched. This English translation of the Colossians volume was recently lauded by the editor of *Word & World* as "by far the most outstanding commentary on the Letter to the Colossians in the English language and a model of what a commentary on most books of the Bible ought to be" (*Augsburg Book News Letter*, Sept.-Oct., 1982). What would prompt such an accolade?

The commentary embraces four sections. A relatively short "Introduction" describes the Colossian community, and discusses the authorship, date, and place of writing the letter. This is followed by

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the "Commentary" proper, dealing with the letter in four divisions: 1:1-8; 1:9-2:23; 3:1-4:6; and 4:7-18, each section of text being considered separately under "Analysis," verse by verse "Interpretation," and "Conclusion." The third section deals with "The Impact of Colossians" throughout the centuries upon Christian writers and theologians from the Fathers to current scholars. Finally, in the fourth section, which Schweizer calls "Outlook," he looks more generally at the place of the letter in history, in its setting, and in the church today. A rich and thorough "Bibliography," including classical as well as modern writers primarily from the continent, completes the commentary.

The English text printed in the commentary unfortunately is the RSV; I say "unfortunately" because Schweizer's exegesis is based on the Greek text, so a fresh translation would have made his comments more pointed. Of course, the reader really needs the Nestle Greek Testament before him or her, as I did, when this commentary is studied. While the Greek text is printed only in the footnotes at the bottom of the page, the Commentary frequently assumes a knowledge of the Greek text.

One of the great contributions of Schweizer in this volume, it seems to me, is his setting forth of the social, cultural, historical, and philosophical backgrounds of this community, documented and illustrated in the copious footnotes at the bottom of each page.

Schweizer regards the author of the letter as a "fellow-worker of Paul," possibly Timothy (whom he regards also as the possible author of II Corinthians, Philippians, and Philemon), at a time when Paul could neither have written nor dictated it, probably when he was imprisoned at Ephesus. This theory he prefers to the one considering it an authentic letter of Paul himself which has been heavily edited.

Colossians 1:15-20 is always a test case of Colossians interpretation. Schweizer regards it as a Christian hymn, with glosses added by the letter writer, to be sharply distinguished from the rest of the Epistle, for the reason that the hymn is addressed to God, while the rest of the letter

gives comment to the community. The hymn, he says, uses the language of worship, while the community is addressed in terms of doctrine, and it is dangerous to read doctrine into a hymn of praise. (Schweizer does not consider the hymn pre-Pauline, pre-Christian, or gnostic in origin, as others have suggested.)

Another important Colossians theme, “Cosmic Redemption,” is regarded as “probably the most important consequence of Colossians” (260). It has engaged theologians such as Justin, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Origen of the Fathers, and modern theologians such as Emil Brunner, Karl Barth, Oscar Cullmann, Rudolf Bultmann, and Joseph Sittler, as well as the WCC ecumenical conference at New Delhi. But Schweizer concludes the extensive discussion by saying that “a doctrine of the redemption of the universe cannot be based on Colossians” but rather “the community in its song of praise cannot abstain from reminding God, over and over again, of his boundless grace, and thus include everyone and everything in their praise and petition” (276).

People today, as in the time of this letter, fear the dissolution of this world. Consequently the letter, as the author shows, can be a great encouragement to us, for we too must express our worship in the hymn as the early Christians did, in words that are really inadequate, for our words are at best our attempt to express the inexpressible. But like the early Christians, we must also beware lest we allow our worship to become hardened into an antiquated doctrine or outward form. Since the writer affirms the present world as God’s creation and the object of His love and since “all things” have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ (Col 1:20), Christians are called upon to include and serve all humankind in love (Col 3:14-17).

Like E. Lohse’s similar commentary (in the *Hermeneia* series), this commentary reveals a high quality of exegetical skill and ongoing research of current questions, while the format in the present volume appears somewhat more attractive than the *Hermeneia* style. This is a significant commentary. While it is

“tough going” in places and heavy with theological discussion, it is indeed spiritually rewarding, and one can only hope that it will awaken new interest in this great epistle.

Just a few words about the O’Brien Colossians-Philemon commentary in the *Word* series. The author is head of the N. T. Department at Moore Theological College in Australia. The *Word* commentaries have a stance that is “evangelical,” understood in the “positive, historic sense of a commitment to scripture as a divine revelation, and to the truth and the power of the Christian Gospel.” This author, however, is far from a “fundamentalist” in this commentary, and uses modern research methods much as the author of the previous volume, although the authors do come out differently (e.g., O’Brien considers Paul as the author of both epistles, while imprisoned in Rome, c. 60-61 A.D., rather than agreeing with Schweizer’s preference for the author being “a fellow worker of Paul” writing during the hypothetical Ephesian imprisonment).

The format of the O’Brien volume is very helpful. After a very full introduction, each section of the text is considered under six heads; a special “Bibliography” relating to the section, a fresh “Translation,” textual and grammatical “Notes,” an account of “Form/Structure/Setting,” a verse by verse and a phrase by phrase “Comment,” and an “Explanation” intended to provide a clear exposition of the passage’s meaning and its relevance to the life of the church. The commentary is based on the Greek texts (followed by an English translation) and thus should be

of value both to scholars versed in Greek and the general reader. This is a very competent, detailed, and helpful commentary.

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EDUCATION FOR CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: A NEW MODEL FOR CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, by Mary Elizabeth Moore. Nashville; Abingdon, 1983. Pp. 222. \$10.95 (paper).

This book is heralded as a truly innovative model of Christian religious education and, in this reviewer's opinion, that is exactly what Mary Elizabeth Moore has provided. This work is both precise in its structural progression and clear in its scholarly expression.

The book begins by explicating the controversy between the traditional transmissive model of education with the reflective experiential model. Dr. Moore images these two emphases by the utilization of two key words: "Continuity" is most expressive of the transmissive model with its emphasis on imparting tradition with its faith story."Change" is the key focus for the experiential approach which accentuates contemporary existence and experience. She finds neither of these positions adequate in and of itself, and postulates a "traditioning" model as a more inclusive and useful alternative. The traditioning model shares with the transmissive and experiential models a concern for the incorporation of past and present. It adds, however, the dimension of the future as an equally important perspective. This is most appropriate given the fact that a key biblical thrust, namely, that of the Kingdom of God, is an eschatological concept.

An historical review is next offered, which traces the continuity/change controversy in education, noting key theological and philosophical perspectives which have influenced the debate, and previous attempts at synthesizing the two perspectives. From this historical analysis, distinct conclusions are drawn for building a foundation for the traditioning model.

Section two constitutes the theoretical heart of this work. It begins with a description of the traditioning community or the church as the matrix out of which the new model is to emerge. An added bonus in this section is a history of ecclesiology as it specifically influences the continuity and change debate. The community of faith is portrayed as a theologizing community with *hermeneutics* as its primary task for understanding and *transformation* as its principle focus for both the faith community and the world.

Moore then moves to the individual perspective and discusses anthropology

from a developmental and philosophical point of view. Primary informants are George Herbert Mead who provides a dynamic social interactionist theory and Alfred North Whitehead who furnishes the metaphysical structure of self understanding. By linking these two thinkers, she finds a fruitful socio-philosophical structure of anthropology, and introduces the metaphor of the 'intersection' to convey her particular understanding: A driver who approaches an intersection must rely on past knowledge and experience, concentrate on the present existential situation with its multiple decisions, and keep an eye on the future to anticipate the possibilities and potential.

Likewise, a Christian educator must take into account the past, present, and future in a kind of trinitarian manner with equal emphasis on all three dimensions. This tripartite emphasis eliminates the persistent dualism which has characterized Christian religious education in the past with its transmissive versus experience-based approaches.

The final section of this book is an effort to demonstrate how this model is implemented in the praxis of education. Moore returns to the functional dimension of Christian education as being an exercise in hermeneutics and transformation. Hermeneutics asks the question “why?” which involves both an objective and subjective aspect of reflection. Transformation addresses the question “how?” and involves human action in the process of establishing the Kingdom of God. Succinctly stated,

The primary goals of Christian religious education inherent in this model are knowledge with understanding and the transformation of persons’ actions, beliefs and values. (132)

Teaching is a dynamic activity in which instructor and students journey together and are mutually engaged in a growing awareness of the intersectional nature of reality. The past provides context and content, the present engages the participants in existential awareness of the issues, and the future lures the persons forward with an of its potential and novelty. In other words, “Education...takes place wherever persons are opened to their experience of God and the world and are transformed” (166).

The book concludes with a critique of current educational curricula and a suggested design for a curriculum which incorporates the concerns of the new model. In Moore’s words, a traditioning model of curriculum will “relate to the persons at the intersection, facilitate interactions, and promote knowledge with understanding and transformation” (187).

In assessing this important work and the unique contribution it makes, one might lift up the central concept of “traditioning.” It is intended to incorporate the past, present and future appropriation of the church’s message and mission. It has the processive dimensions of remembrance, experience, and anticipation, and the realization that tradition, like history, is in the making. The author clearly indicates what she means by “traditioning” on the horizontal level. It would have been helpful for her to delineate more specifically for the reader what is included in her understanding of “traditioning” vertically. She defines it as “what God gives, or hands over” (23), but the reader is not sure of its precise substance or whether there can be any general agreement about its shape and form.

There is an air of excitement about this model of education with its emphasis on novelty and creativity, but one wonders whether these concepts are being asked to carry too much freight in the educational endeavor.

Another positive aspect of this model of education is its inclusivity. There is a definite wholistic concern which addresses critically important issues ranging from global concerns, to a sensitivity to cross-cultural issues, to contemporary understandings of theology, anthropology and sociology and their impact on religious education. This passion for inclusivity is prompted by the philosophical assumptions of process thought. One might debate the issue of whether it is possible to always include everything and discard nothing. Is there anything about the Christian faith which would by definition require one to be philosophically and theologically exclusive at certain points while still being inclusive with regard to people?

an exciting work. Its scholarship is sound, its style and structure succinct. To attempt to extricate Christian religious education from its dualistic entanglement is a commendable and important task.

People who have a concern and passion for the task of Christian religious education must read this book, digest its contents, and assess its viability for their own given context. It presents a challenge to be creative and to take seriously both God and the world which God has created.

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I AND II CHRONICLES, by H. G. H. Williamson. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982. Pp. 428. \$8.95 (paper).

It is only in the last fifteen years that the *differences* between the books of Chronicles and the books of Ezra and Nehemiah have been taken seriously. The publication of Williamson's doctoral thesis as *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge, 1977) was a major step forward in that direction, arguing convincingly for the separate authorship of 1 and 2 Chronicles. However, since that time there has been no available commentary which treats the books of Chronicles from a theological perspective distinct from Ezra and Nehemiah. Such is no longer the case. Williamson has presented us with a standard, full-length commentary on 1 and 2 Chronicles, based upon the RSV, which forcefully demonstrates the positive results specialized studies have uncovered in these books since the artificial linkage with the theologically different Ezra and Nehemiah has been severed.

In his Introduction (2-36) Williamson provides a concise presentation of contemporary discussion regarding Chronicles, occasionally referring the reader to scholarly works, but often advancing the discussion with new insights. His "primary aim is to elucidate the message which the Chronicler himself sought to convey" (2). Consistently, Williamson offers slight information concerning questions of history, geography or even exegesis where parallels exist with Samuel, Kings or the Psalter, unless the Chronicler has been active in the selection or alteration of these texts. He summarizes his position on the question of authorship, cogently critiquing the basic arguments adduced in support of common authorship with Ezra and Nehemiah and sketching five major "differences of outlook" (9) between the two works. Less convincing to this reviewer is Williamson's acceptance of most of the text of Chronicles as coming from the same author with a priestly redaction of some of the material in "I Chr 15-16 and 23-27, but also in one or two less extensive passages" (14), as well as his adoption of "a date for Chronicles within the fourth century BC" (16). However, both these areas are fraught with debate in scholarly circles and constitute a relatively minor disagreement when compared to the question of authorship. A brief section on the Chronicler's use of sources is followed by an examination of four of the major themes developed in these books: (1) The People, which portrays the Chronicler arguing for a mediating position between the 'exclusivists' and 'assimilationists' of his day. (2) Kingship,

which concentrates upon the central role played by the Davidic Dynasty. Interestingly, Williamson claims that this centrality of the Davidides over against the Exodus/Sinai traditions is the Chronicler's attempt to resolve the tension between the Mosaic and Davidic covenants. (3) The Temple and Worship, which argues "against the portrayal of the Chronicler as a strict and unyielding ritualist" (30). (4) Retribution and Repentance, which effectively removes the Chronicler's understanding of retribution from a purely mechanical sphere. The Introduction is capped with a detailed outline of 1 and 2 Chronicles which nicely emphasizes Williamson's structural observations (also argued by Braun and Throntveit) that Chronicles is best divided into 3 segments: I. The United Monarchy (Saul, David and Solomon); II. The Divided Monarchy; III. Hezekiah to the Babylonian Exile.

The remainder of the commentary contains a pericope-by-pericope articulation of the Chronicler's thought on the basis of the RSV (though Williamson often corrects the RSV on the basis of the Massoretic Text). His skill in illuminating the

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message of these formidable books is most clearly seen in his discovery of the Chronicler's purpose in the first nine chapters of I Chronicles, the long genealogical lists. His portrayals of Hezekiah (350-388), Manasseh (388-395) and Josiah (396-411) are especially rewarding.

Williamson has the special knack of conveying somewhat technical information in a clear and lucid manner. This ability coupled with his fresh approach, painstaking thoroughness, balanced opinions and eminent good sense make this fine commentary a true gem. I recommend it unreservedly to one and all.

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