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CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS, VOLS. 1 AND 2, edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984. Pp. 591; 621. $24.95 each.

These two volumes constitute a remarkable achievement of exacting scholarship as well as of pertinent address to today's situation in the church and the world. These authors have done their homework. It may well represent a landmark in American Lutheran theological scholarship. It may serve as an example of what dogmatic theology might be expected to do in service to the church catholic and in faithfulness to the Gospel. As the editors say, however, it is, like all theology, a fallible human achievement, and, in its multiple authorship, not without its inconsistencies and even contradictions (see 1.xvii ff).

The six authors are: Carl Braaten, Gerhard Forde, Philip Hefner, Robert Jenson, Paul Sponheim, and Hans Schwartz. While all authors are Lutheran and of the same generation, they cannot all be placed in the same "school of theology." They say that they all have been influenced in various ways by the currents that have swept the world and the church throughout its history, especially during this century. They each have different areas of expertise and scholarly interest. Their commitment to "the Gospel rightly proclaimed" (Article VII, Augsburg Confession), necessarily gives them an ecumenical rather than "sectarian" orientation. Therefore a "Christian dogmatics" rather than a Lutheran one (which is what most dogmatics written by Lutherans have attempted to be. Cf., e.g., Gustav Aulen's "The [ecumenical or catholic, according to the Swedish title] Christian Faith").

This is not to say, however, that their common adherence to the 16th century Lutheran confessions does not make a difference, especially their common insistence that the doctrine of "justification by faith alone, apart from the works of the law" is "the article by which the church will stand or fall." They consider it a "critical principle," the

> demand continuously to submit all preaching, liturgy, pastoral care, church administration, etc., to this question, Does this particular act of ministry lead people to find their life's justification, their reason to be, in the fact that the crucified Jesus lives, or are people left on their own, to depend on themselves for the ultimate meaning of life? If a churchly word or practice in any way suggests the latter, it must, according to the doctrine of justification by faith, be reformed. (1. xviii, ff.)

This view is contrasted with the attempt by Lutheran confessionalism to deduce the whole of the church's life from the special principle of Lutheran theology, the article of justification by faith alone. (See my further comments below.)

Although the writers, then, do not represent any particular "school of theology" it is quite evident that they do share some common emphases, called forth by the state of biblical-

historical-hermeneutical scholarship as well as the state of the world and the church today (which, by the way, are not quite as "new" as they sometimes claim). Some of these common emphases are:

1. The Bible does not set forth "timeless truths" (Cf. Lessing: "Necessary truths of the reason cannot be based on contingent, historical events"), but contains "testimony literature," the written precipitate of the witness "to the acts of God" in history. This writes off all biblic*ism* and historic*ism* (these terms more carefully defined, of course) and means the acceptance of the "assured" findings of "science" (also more carefully defined), especially the findings of the critical study of the biblical texts.

It also means a decisive break with the "Greek way of thinking," especially in Platonic, Aristotelian categories, and a return to the "Hebrew way" as reflected in the Hebrew language, in which there are no abstract nouns and the verbs are decisive. (Cf. Humpty Dumpty in his

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conversation with Alice in Lewis Carroll's "Through the Looking Glass," when he insisted that words meant no more and no less than he wanted them to mean [Wittgenstein—"The meaning of a word is its use in a sentence"]. While Dumpty could handle the adjectives well enough—as we all can—it was the proud verbs with a temper that gave him all the trouble).

2. There is a common interest in patristics, the fathers of the early church, thus making up for a long standing lacuna in Protestant theology, especially in traditional Lutheranism.

3. The "apologetic" thrust: Kierkegaard was correct, when, from the stance of one claimed by the Gospel, in either faith or offense, he said that "every apology is a shameful and insidious betrayal," either in the sense of a lick-spittle surrender to the claims of the autonomous reason or in the sense of an argument intended to persuade the unregenerate the truth of the Christian claim. This would be to remove the "skandalon," the God-provided stumbling block of the cross. In the presence of a king one does no honor to the king with an argument to prove his existence but only by the proper obeisance and obedience. Besides, there is the little difficulty in proving the existence of anything whatsoever. The best anyone can hope to do is to prove that something, the existence of which is given, is this or that, a stone perhaps or a dunce. (See *The Philosophical Fragments*).

There should then be the recognition that every formulation of doctrine is itself "an apology" in that it refutes a false alternative. Hence—as stated above—the Christian claim cannot be stated in "timeless truths" that beam their certainty to the mind as self-evident, in as much as what they assert exhausts the possibilities.

There is a sense then in which all Christian theologians are "apologists," all the N. T. writers, Paul in conflict with the Judaizers and others, Luther in conflict with that "damned heathen," Aristotle, Kierkegaard himself in conflict with Hegel who had introduced motion into logic and reduced the whole world-historical process into what might best be described as a giant, cosmic masturbation, since it destroyed the over-againstness of the address by the word.

Nevertheless it was a mistake for a whole generation (my generation) for the most part to write off *apologetics* as a separate discipline, the task of which is to assess specific rival claims, to see how rival they really are and also for what might be learned from them and so to state the Gospel's claims that it will really be good news and not set up false stumbling blocks. The Gospel's claim and promise must themselves be recognized as the true stumbling blocks, even if

this recognition requires the opening of deaf ears to hear and blind eyes to see.

This legitimate apologetic task is evident in all the authors—some more, some less. But it seems to me that in the attempt to come to terms ("Auseinandersetzung") with every theologian the individual happens to have read, the results are at once too little and too much and perhaps also too accommodating in trying to salvage at least a few pieces of flotsam from the wreckage. It's one thing, to recognize many things that will enhance the human enterprise in, e.g., Buddhism's teachings. It's quite another thing to set forth clearly the irreconcilable difference between the atheistic Gautama as a teacher and the Triune God of the Christian faith, as so unequivocally set forth by Robert Jenson as the only possible *Christian* confession.

The attempt to cover the water-front has led in many instances (so it seems to me) to a far too facile summary of the opponents' point of view, so that—whether wrongly or rightly—the various theologians meet the fate that Kierkegaard dreaded the most, viz., to be summed up by a "paragraph vulture" and then dismissed as also having made a quantitative contribution to the ever increasing volume of theological knowledge. It may well be wise to remember Kirkegaard's advice that the task is not to begin as a simple Christian and to become an ever increasingly more learned one, but rather the reverse, to become ever more simply a Christian. Without detracting from the authors' acknowledged accomplishments, it might have been better (also from the point of view of its serviceability

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as a text-book in dogmatics) if they had restricted themselves to setting forth the Gospel's claims in address to the situation today with its false Gospels, and had left the specific apologetic task to a separate enterprise that would be able to do more justice to the counter-claims, without just blowing down straw men. Moreover the list of those with whom the Christian theologian may be in conversation, both to learn from them and to oppose them is in fact endless and inexhaustible (philosophers, scientists, poets, novelists, etc., from Shakespeare to Hume to Voltaire to Dostoievski to Melville to Unamuno to Baron Von Hugel, to Erica Jong, André Brink; and the Mad Comics, etc.) as any copy of the *N. Y. Times Book Review* will attest.

This leads me to the related observation that the writers' claim that plural authorship, in view of the fact of theological pluralism today, will avoid the danger of being "received only as advocacy for the position of that person's own school of theology and thus fail to command the wide churchly use inherent in the notion of dogmatics" (xvii), may need qualification. There is something to be said—precisely in view of the fact of theological pluralism—for a single authorship that sets forth a consistently held orientation in all the loci. This has been the case with all the great theologians, who have gotten a hearing, precisely because of their consistency, regardless of whether they put it all together into one system (Aquinas, Schleiermacher, Barth) or whether they attacked every issue from the same consistently held position (Paul, Luther) without ever producing a "system." Then at least the reader can make up her own mind without befuddlement as to who is doing what and how and to whom.

4. A fourth element which all the authors share is the priority put on the triune name. As Robert Jenson puts it,

> Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the proper name of the church's God. *That* God have a proper name is a demand both of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New

> Testament Gospel. That God has *this* proper name is an immediate reflex of primary Christian experience. (1. 87)

Therefore the locus on the Trinity cannot be a kind of summary or afterthought at the end, but is put at the beginning of all the other affirmations (with the proper exception only of the locus on the Scriptures because without this there would be no proper "norm" for this "proper name of the Church's God"). Put at the beginning it is already decisive for all the other loci. (My students will recall that I named my course in dogmatics "Trinitarian Theology" and, after the prolegomena, began with the Trinity.)

5. The authors have in common the renewed emphasis upon history, the kingdom of God, and eschatology, which all focus on the resurrection of Jesus as actual historical event. This makes the Christian's hope *a,* it is not *the,* central affirmation. The writers intend to draw out the full implications of the event of the resurrection of Jesus for the life of the individual and the whole course of history, and they certainly are to be commended for this. The resurrection is by no means a mere addendum to buoy up the flagging hopes of the world faced by all kinds of dire calamities (nuclear holocaust, plundering and pollution of the planet, overpopulation, famine, etc.). Rather, it is a central event celebrated from the very beginning on each first day of the week as a festival of the resurrection.

While my generation certainly based all its hope on the resurrection as the final and conclusive victory over "sin, death and the devil," recognized that the new age had already begun, and tried to draw out the full implications of "the new heaven and the new earth" toward which all history moves, we did not so radically (in a non-pejorative sense) see the whole course of history from the point of view of the future moving into the present. Perhaps we did not push sufficiently the possibilities for this age that result from the fact of what has been achieved for the whole world in the resurrection of Jesus.

On the other hand, my generation stated more clearly than some of the theologians of hope that the final fulfillment lies beyond time and space as we know them in our sinful finitude, while history moves forward both its "finis" and its "telos." We consistently applied the *simul justus et peccator* not only to the lifespan of the individual but also to that of the whole world. Anything else would be a denial of justification by faith alone.

Eschatology cannot be a mere addendum to the other loci concerning what happens in the "last days," although questions concerning them must also be raised. The "eschatological" orientation must rather permeate everything that is said. Above all the course of history does not mean eternal recurrence nor a return to a state of pristine integrity after a period of involvement in an evil, material world. No, the whole shebang moves forward to the fulfillment of God's purpose in its creation. This requires a "new creation" for the "totus homo" as well as for the "total" cosmos in as much as God's intentions in creation were vitiated by humanity's fall, for which the creature and the creature alone bears full responsibility.

Having lived through all but two of the 84 years of this century and experienced the ebb and flow between high hope and utter despair, not just as a spectator but as a participant, perhaps I may be excused for saying that the hopes for this world may become dangerously utopian and only lead into deeper despair. The symbol of the millennium, which should set no arbitrary limits

to the possibilities of good already in this life, should be held dialectically with the symbols of the Anti-Christ and the final battle of Armageddon, which say that no matter what the horrors of evil we have experienced in the past there is always the possibility of horrors of evil far exceeding anything the world has ever experienced. Anything less than this is unrealistic and utopian. It should be obvious by now that all the advances of science have the same possibilities for good and evil as the human hand (homo faber) and brain (the rational animal) of which they are the extension.

The authors are to be commended for focusing on death, both as the decisive factor in human finitude and as "the wages of sin" and for pointing up the human being's "denial of death," especially today. Only if death means the end of all human possibilities can the "died for our sins and raised for our justification" come into its own.

Sharing my detailed criticisms, mostly pro but also con, is beyond the scope of this review, which is intended to encourage the reader to study the volume directly. Only this—I mentioned above the editors' statement regarding "justification by faith alone without the works of the law" as a "critical principle" rather than as the special principle of Lutheran Theology "from which to deduce the whole Christian life." I think it is better not to regard it as a "principle" at all—neither as one from which you can, like a spider, spin out (deduce) everything else or which you arrive at, like the bee gathering honey, by flying from flower-fact to flower-fact, nor as a rational touchstone which enables you to decide what constitutes conformity with the Gospel. But, as Gerhard Forde makes clear in his loci, "justification by faith alone" is to be considered an empowering action, as doing what it says, and it is this action of God that determines what is said in every locus and even this theologizing will be justified by faith alone. Perhaps this is only an alternative way of saying what the editors have said which further discussion may clarify.

And, finally this: I have been too much influenced by Kierkegaard to resist any attempt to understand the mystery of God's love, (the *deus absconditus et revelatus*) in any other way than that I understand that I do not understand it. I will continue to go along with Kierkegaard's belief that all the Christian affirmations of faith are paradoxical and that this is the very thing that prevents a mere intellectual acceptance but makes becoming a Christian into a transformation of existence. "If anyone is in Christ, that one is a new creation. Behold old things are passed away and all things are become new" (2 Cor 5:17).

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EASTER GOSPELS: THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE FOUR EVANGELISTS, by Robert H. Smith. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983. Pp. 254. $15.00 (paper).

The passion and resurrection stories are foundational for the Gospels and represent the perspective from which each

evangelist has drawn together the unique Jesus story found in that Gospel. Without the

resurrection of Jesus the four Gospels would not have been written. The Easter story is not merely the last chapter in the gospel. The Christian faith lives in light of the resurrection—thus the importance of a focused consideration of these texts.

Smith's *Easter Gospels* is a unique volume which does many things well. My fear that the resurrection narratives might be treated by themselves was quickly allayed. A chapter is devoted to each of the Gospels and includes three sections: (1) the situation of the evangelist and community in which the Gospel is composed and to which it is directed; (2) a verse by verse commentary on the resurrection narrative; and (3) a concluding section, drawing together the central theological themes of the Gospel with specific reference to the Easter faith.

The determination of the setting from which a Gospel comes forth and to which it speaks is never without its difficulties. In these sections the author fairly evaluates various proposals and expresses what he deems to be the most appropriate and helpful toward interpreting that Gospel. Throughout this discussion, texts from the Gospel under consideration are drawn upon as well as the vast amount of secondary literature.

In the exegetical section, textual discussion and translation insights are discussed to clarify the text, e.g., the meaning of "Nazarene" in Mark 16:6 and the response of the first witnesses in Mark 16:7-8. Insights drawn from work done with the Greek text are presented in such a way that one who is not familiar with the language can also gain an appreciation of the text. Likewise, the discussion of the original ending of Mark's Gospel at 16:8 is helpful and clear, taking into account the traditional as well as the contemporary responses to solving this textual and interpretive issue. At the center of such discussions is the exegetical interpretation of the text.

Following the exegetical sections on the resurrection texts, the author draws his work together in concluding summary sections, placing the exegetical work within the theological framework of the Gospel under consideration and its setting in the life of the early church. There is much helpful material in these summary sections for proclaiming the Easter story.

In each chapter on Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the author allows for the unique story and witness of that Gospel. This volume is not an attempt to harmonize the accounts or take the reader down other blind alleys. Where there are textual relationships, the unique expression of each evangelist is still noted. The history of the text's interpretation along with its relationship to the Old Testament and other literature is appropriately brought into the discussion. Here the author's familiarity with the secondary literature in the field adds immeasurably to the exegetical and interpretive insights of this volume. At the same time it is evident that the author has also spent considerable time with the resurrection texts themselves and heard their word for the life of the church today.

The volume is worthy of consideration for anyone studying the resurrection narratives for preaching and teaching. This is very readable work which at the same time continues the scholarly conversation in the end notes. This thoughtful examination of the resurrection stories in the four Gospels is a fresh rehearing of the Easter gospels.

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PAUL, THE LAW, AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE, by E. P. Sanders. Philadelphia; Fortress,

1983. Pp. 227. $19.95.

In less than a decade, E. P. Sanders has emerged as a major scholar. His *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Fortress, 1977) is fast becoming a classic. He has served as general editor of an important Fortress series entitled, *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (3 vols). His latest book carries further his major project; a reassessment of Paul's thought in light of a revised portrait of first-century Judaism. The book is a careful, well-documented, and enormously stimulating journey into one of the most important and difficult areas of Pauline thought.

How did Paul understand the law? The question touches every aspect of Paul's

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career: his mission to Gentiles, his relationship to Israel and his Jewish past, his doctrine of "justification by faith," and his ethics. The question is also difficult to answer. The vast body of scholarship amassed over the last century has not resulted in anything approaching a consensus. One reason is that Paul is not clear. He offers no systematic exposition of his views. His reflection comes to us in the form of pastoral letters arising from specific situations in his ministry. Furthermore, what he has to say about the law is not consistent; significant differences exist between statements in Galatians and statements in Romans. "Paul's view," therefore, will always remain hypothetical, the product of imaginative probing behind his letters.

Such reconstruction has always been and will always be a necessary feature in studies of Paul. J. C. Beker, in his own important study of Paul entitled *Paul the Apostle* (Fortress, 1980), warns against systematizing Paul's thought so as to destroy its "contexuality," meaning its capacity for flexibility of expression in different settings. He believes, however, that there is also a "coherence" that underlies the variety. Sanders speaks of Paul's "basic convictions." To abandon the search for "Paul's view of the law" would represent a refusal to take him seriously as a thinker—reverting to a 19th century notion, perhaps, that what is important about Paul is his religious experience and not his theology.

Sanders is a fine exegete. His special expertise lies in the area of Jewish studies. He is one of several important scholars helping to redraw our picture of Judaism in the first century. His personal target has been the mistaken notion that Judaism is a religion based on works-righteousness. His former volume is a painstaking demonstration that the myth of Jewish "legalism" completely distorts the truth and represents an inability to understand a religion with a legal structure ("Covenantal Nomism" is his term for Judaism). Abandoning the myth has important implications for the study of Paul.

Jews did not believe that living under the Torah meant earning salvation. And that is not the criticism Paul advances against Torah-piety. He does not contrast "grace" with "works," as if to suggest Judaism had no notion of God's mercy. Paul contrasts "faith" with "works of law": "For we hold that one is justified by faith, apart from works of law" (Rom 3:28). The tension Paul explores is between living by faith in Christ and living under the Torah. The problem with most interpreters of Paul, Sanders argues, is that they misunderstand the problem. Clarity about Judaism helps to focus on what ought to be clear in any case.

Interpreters of Paul must make far-reaching decisions about what to look for and where to look. The opening chapter in Beker's book is a helpful analysis of the problem. Creating a coherent system from bits and pieces of Paul's letters may produce an intellectually satisfying

result but only at the expense of what Paul says in one or another letter. Sanders aims at no such goal. He studies the letters with the hope of penetrating to Paul's basic beliefs about faith and law that can explain his various statements. The situation of each letter must be taken seriously. Analysis of the letters will not yield a tight logical system, but it may permit a glimpse of Paul's fundamental convictions.

Two of the convictions that underlie Paul's statements about the law are (a) There must be equality between Jew and Gentile, and (b) Faith in Christ is the sole basis of righteousness before God. The convictions are practical as well as theoretical. "Justification" is for Paul a missionary principle that deals with admission to the Body of Christ, the People of God. "By faith" for Paul means "not by works of law." As a mark of the identity of God's people and a sign of the covenant, the Law of Moses is at an end. Faith in Christ is now the sole mark of identity. Jew and Gentile are on an equal footing. All have sinned, all must become members of the redeemed by faith. There is no distinction. Seeking to recognize distinctions, even at meals, constitutes a denial of the gospel (Gal. 2, 5).

Categorizing scholars can be an excuse for not taking their arguments seriously. It can also be misleading. We may, nonetheless, at least recognize familiar strains in Sanders' approach that help locate him in the history of Pauline interpretation. What is the relationship between Paul's

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basic convictions about faith and his statements about the law? In answering the question, Sanders sides with the Reformed tradition: gospel precedes law. Paul's convictions about justification by faith come first. His reflection about the law seeks to unpack that certainty about faith. Paul did not become an apostle to the Gentiles through a careful examination of human bondage to sin, not even his own. His conversion was not the result of a moral collapse. Phil 3:2-11 provides, according to Sanders, the best insight into Paul's Jewish past: "as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless." Paul regarded himself as an exemplary Jew. What shattered his world and turned him around was a revelation of God's Son (Gal 1:16; I Cor 15:8).

Paul's view of the law does not arise from an objective assessment of Judaism as a religion. Paul had no standards by which to judge righteousness under the law apart from the revelation he received, which showed him a new righteousness. As a Jew Paul seems to have found righteousness under the law both attainable and satisfying. He would certainly not have used the expression itself, as if to suggest that there was any other righteousness, unless he had been confronted with something new. And his criticism of "righteousness under the law" is not that it is legalistic, but wrongheaded. The fault of the law is that it does not have Christ. Christ's death and resurrection have altered the rules. Insofar as the law blocks access to God's grace *in Christ* and provides a barrier between Jew and non-Jew, it is contrary to the gospel. In this sense, Christ is the end of the law (Rom 10:4).

What do the terms "righteousness" and "justification" mean, and why the problem with the law? In answering the question, Sanders sounds another theme familiar from the history of interpretation: the center of Paul's thought is not "juridical" but "participatory." Adolf Deissman's "in Christ" and Albert Schweitzer's "Christ mysticism" come immediately to mind. Sanders acknowledges his debt to Schweitzer, though he does not argue that Paul is a mystic. He

argues that what lies at the heart of Paul's religion is a sense of participation in something new, formulated variously: the Body of Christ, the People of God, the elect, the realm of the Spirit, etc. He pays particular attention to the image of dying and rising in Romans 6, which is used with images of dominions within which we live. The gospel speaks of a transfer from one dominion into another. Paul's use of the terms "righteousness" and "justify" (Sanders chooses to translate the verb "to righteous," or "to be righteoused," to emphasize the connection with the noun and adjective) must be understood within the larger framework of "participatory" images. Paul characteristically uses the verb *dikaio* as a passive to denote transfer from one realm to another. The issue is admission to the People of God. "Righteousness" no longer refers to covenantal life under the law. Both Jew and non-Jew become members of the new realm or community through righteousness that comes by faith in Christ.

One result of this interpretation is that ethics is simplified. If "justification by faith apart from works of law" has to do only with admission to the people of God, it says little about the place of the law in the life of those who have come to faith. Sanders believes Paul had rather traditional views about ethics: Christians knew the commandments and were obliged to do them. Admission to the Body of Christ was God's free gift, based on faith. Believers were now expected to maintain their status by living in "purity." Paul, in other words, fully expected Christians to keep the law.

At this point it is necessary to raise some questions about Sanders' interpretation. What is meant here by "the law?" Are "the law" and "the commandments" the same? Sanders has shown clearly what it means to live with a religious constitution. The Torah was Israel's constitution from which could be deduced rules for shaping a faithful life. Torah was also part of a covenant that distinguished Israel from the nations. Paul was not concerned about law as an abstract principle (obligation, compulsion) but as the constitution that governed Israel's life as God's elect. On the basis of the revelation God granted him, Paul insisted that the law can no longer serve as the sign of distinction. Unswerv-

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ing fidelity to the Torah had driven him to persecute Christians (Phil 3). Paul the apostle to the Gentiles based his mission on the belief that God had eliminated the distinction between Jew and non-Jew. Christian Jews who obeyed the Torah by separating themselves from Gentile believers were branded as opponents of the gospel—even Peter (Gal 2). It is difficult to understand how Sanders can speak of obedience to the Torah as Paul's basic approach to ethics. It is the same whether we examine how Paul actually deals with ethical matters or if we look to his "basic convictions." Paul became an "opponent" of the law—able to find ways of explaining its function in God's economy of salvation, but always with its end in view. Paul's teaching about justification, even in Sanders' restricted sense, is an attack on the whole conception of Torah and covenant, even if Paul never worked out all the implications.

Sanders' masterful study forces us to raise old questions. He demonstrates that though Paul and his religious vocabulary stem from Jewish roots, there was no precedent for his teaching about justification and the law. Where, then, does it come from? "There is a real sense in which we cannot explain in detail why Paul came to that position" (208). We cannot fault Sanders for not answering every question, but in this case the comment is significant: he is unable to explain the radical opposition Paul sees between faith and the law from the basic convictions he posits. A

natural suggestion would be to examine Paul's Christology. Sanders sees the confession of Jesus as universal Lord as basic for Paul. Such a view cannot explain the radical tensions in Paul, however. An author with as all-embracing a Christology and soteriology as Luke could still find a framework for accommodating Gentiles within the church that required no abrogation of the Torah. Pious Jews could eat with Gentiles as long as they observed certain dietary restrictions (Acts 15). Why is Paul so uncompromising on this issue, insisting that no burdens of any sort are to be placed on Gentiles?

One reason may be that Paul believed Jesus to be the Messiah. Sanders deliberately dismisses the idea. The main reason is his disagreement with W. D. Davies, who sought to argue that Paul's idea about the end of the law came from Jewish beliefs that the Torah would no longer be necessary when the Messiah came. Sanders rightly dismisses such a view. He has not taken seriously, however, the proposal of Nils Dahl, spelled out in several essays in *The Crucified Messiah* (Augsburg, 1974). Dahl seeks to show that at the basis of all NT Christology is the confession of Jesus as Israel's Messiah-King. Paul the Jew would have had difficulty believing that the God who had elected Israel and given the Torah could have placed his stamp of approval on Jesus the would-be Christ, who was rejected by the leaders of his own people, executed by Roman occupation forces, and because of the manner of his death cursed by God's law (Gal 3:13, quoting Deut 21:23). Obedience to the law drove Paul to persecute Christians. The appearance of the risen Christ convinced Paul that God had in fact vindicated his Son by raising him from the dead. The tension he finds between the Torah and Christ are present in the actions of God who both raised Jesus from the dead and gave the law. It is precisely as Israel's crucified and risen Messiah that Jesus brings the old to its goal and explodes the structure of life under the Torah. The question to ask Sanders is not if Paul argues this in detail, but if such basic convictions can better account for the shape of his thought [See Dahl's essay in *Word & World* 3 (1983), 251-262].

Sanders' book is an important one. He shows us a Paul who was concerned not so much with God's grace as with the form in which God has chosen to be gracious. God makes his grace available through faith in Christ. Paul criticized Judaism not because it produced narrow, self-righteous people. As a Jew Paul would have known God as gracious and forgiving. But for Paul the convert that was beside the point. He knew there was something irreconcilable about life under the law and the life of faith in Christ. He did not change his mind when he became an apostle; he only changed sides.

Paul was unable to be consistent. He could not bid farewell to "Israel according to the flesh" that could not accept Christ. He agonizes over their fate in Romans 9-11 without coming to a conclusion. Yet

in whatever ways he tried to picture the future, Christ remained at the center. Sanders makes it clear that Paul's religion cannot be reduced to abstractions. His gospel was good news because it told about Jesus. That is still its scandal and its glory.

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PASTORAL THEOLOGY, by Thomas C. Oden. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983. Pp. 372. $14.95 (paper).

Recent literature discussing the nature and function of ministry has introduced an area of inquiry called pastoral hermeneutics. Ranging from Charles E. Winquist's articulation of "practical hermeneutics" to Gustavo Gutierrez's appeal for a "theologico-pastoral epistemology," foundational understanding of ordained ministry and ministry as expressive of a universal call to priesthood are topics for theological discourse. Thomas Oden's volume, *Pastoral Theology,* engages these topics by claiming to formulate a comprehensive and systematic statement of what he calls the "essentials of ministry."

Oden's book particularly focuses on the office of the pastor by addressing the twofold question of what clergy do and why. Paying special attention to biblical texts and to patristic and medieval sources and documents from the continental and English reformations, Oden seeks to counter a confused and lost pastoral identity and "to assist in salvaging and mending the ailing pastoral office in an era in which it has been badly shaken and bruised." The reader will find the final chapter, "The Trajectory of Pastoral Theology," a careful summary of the argument of the book and a clear statement of what Oden believes to be the integrity of ministry. The movement to the final chapter is brought about by a careful marshalling of a wealth of resources organized in a manner that seldom keeps the "why" and the "what" of ministry apart. This approach will best address an audience Oden believes consists of those people, clergy and lay, committed to the work of ministry but perplexed as to how its source of understanding in Scripture and tradition finds direction through human experience and reason.

Oden's work faces a necessary tension between tradition and innovation as he organizes root understandings of ministry. The tension both shapes and challenges the topics of the contemporary discussion. The first two sections of the volume, "Becoming a Minister" and "The Pastoral Office," address a first topic: the theological formation of ministry. Since a primary goal of the volume is to recover a sense of pastoral identity, these two sections offer cogent interpretations of the office of ordained minister as concrete embodiment of a profound living out of one's baptism in Christ, as representation and continuation of Christ's ministry, and as institutional effort to order an office vital to communal life. As well, in following an ecumenical consensus of a threefold ordained order of deacon, presbyter, and bishop, Oden's position clearly stands within the theological framework informing the World Council of Churches' document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.* As well he seems to echo Robert S. Paul's view, two decades earlier, that in the ordained office the Church objectifies its own ministry within the world.

The volume's methodological principle that "ecclesiology follows Christology" is rooted in two concerns. First, ministry finds its conclusive reference in the ministry of Jesus as servant and as shepherd. Secondly, with that conviction, two errors may be avoided. Reductionism, which Oden sees as the most likely problem addressing the contemporary scene, makes ministry captive to sociological function and to activities of philosophical insight. On the other hand, triumphalism elevates the work of ministry to a divine status apart from ordinary life.

A dilemma is introduced in the way he poses the methodological and hermeneutical questions. On the one hand, the goal of his work is to present a pastoral theology representative of a widely held consensual tradition. On the other hand, the way to interpret the consensus is through a quartet of sources: Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. The

outcome is shaped more by a desire to be congruent with a central tradition rather than by suggesting that new modes of Scripture interpretation, historiography, logic, and experiential reflection might substantively reshape the consensus.

This is illustrated in Oden's strong argument for the ordination of women. Oden highlights his concern for an inclusive ministry through the care he gives to inclusive language and illustrations throughout the text. Yet other issues raised on Christological grounds by feminist theologians are not addressed, such as those of the hierarchical and patriarchal ecclesiastical controls which limit the ability of the church to order its i life and its ministry justly. Thus, when Oden argues that the privilege of being called to ordained ministry is not a civil right, but rests in theological clarity and conviction, there is little recognition that within claims for ecclesial justice there may be an authentic statement of "rights" which the institution has no final authority to subordinate. Edward Schillebeeckx addresses this head-on by claiming that Christian communities have a right to call their leaders which is based both on apostolic witness and sociological necessity. The traditional consensus also is enriched and challenged by renewed perspectives on Christology by such writers as Judith Plaskow and Patricia Wilson Kastner, who argue, with Oden, that reason and experience suggest that the dominant traditional Christologies have indeed contributed to ecclesiastical models detrimental to women, no matter how open the institution is to ordain them, and that new Christological categories will reshape the tradition and its forms. The issue may be pressed even further in Bernard Cooke's claim that competing religious and secular soteriologies must also be considered in forming Christological understanding and ecclesial practice.

Further interpretive problems emerge in subordinating ecclesiology to Christology. The last three sections of Oden's book, "What Clergy Do and Why," "Pastoral Counsel," and "Crisis Ministry," assume a particular form of the church informed by a particular cultural ethos. In many ways these sections interrelate vital areas of ministerial practice with their rootage in biblical mandate and historical precedent. There is seldom a chapter, whether it be on preaching, liturgical action, pastoral visitation, care of the sick, and other presumed duties of the pastor, that does not contain some guidelines on how to go about doing it. Yet these sections offer little clarity as to how Western, affluent religious life shapes a style of ministry. One could well claim that a study of the church reveals a type of ecclesiality—of dwelling in the world through religious commitment—that itself illumines and shapes Christological questions. But a more profound issue is the way ecclesial life by its very nature contains an inner principle of critique, such as the Protestant Principle which holds no human cultural form absolute. More pointedly, liberation theologies address with great power the problem of the church focusing upon itself and not being aware of its wider pastoral task.

This latter point may be seen in the ways Oden's book deals with social structure. To be sure he recognizes (for example, in the chapter on "The Work of the Holy Spirit in Comfort, Admonition, and Discipline") that persons may be admonished for the social evil they do. But the emphasis is on personal morality. The chapter on "The Care of the Poor" identifies systemic social evil. But the forms of ministries illustrated are basically acts of beneficence. This suggests an ecclesial ethos of the rich helping the poor. Again, debate about ecclesial life informed by the theologies of the poor would enrich continued discussion.

In outlining the relationship of clergy and laity, Oden is clear that all ministry expresses

one's baptism. Yet he distinguishes a clear line between ordained and lay ministry which is "thin as a hair, but as hard as a diamond." Thus, a chapter on "Equipping the Laity for Ministry" affirms an "administry" which is the organizing ecclesial principle informing the mission of the Church. Although one wonders why the topic of administration is more appropriate for equipping laity than, for example, preaching or teaching, the point is well taken that enablement may well be the key focus defining clear

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and purposeful roles of ministry. As well, discussion of defined roles could have extended to a fuller treatment of ministry as a profession. By attending to the consensual tradition, Oden cut short his perceptive inquiry into a question generating some confusion: the expansion of the professional roles and accountabilities of clergy. Oden presses his ongoing critique of the pastoral counseling movement, particularly of the private practitioner who accepts fees. (However, there is criticism of this within the movement itself, which gives increased attention to group practices, often related to congregations.) One could point to other manifestations of innovative ministry in industrial and governmental contexts, social ethical consultation through institutional review boards, and other ministries both related to and separate from ecclesial bodies. How to make these accountable to the community of faith remains a task for further reflection.

A comment on the book's extensive bibliography is in order. It is a valuable source for further study. However, it reflects research done prior to 1981. While it contains references to works of Juan Luis Segundo and Rosemary Ruether, it is limited in its mention of other Latin American and feminist theologians who take the tradition seriously but in its reinterpretation offer new insight on ecclesial reflection and practice. As well, autobiographical works such as Carter Heyward's *A Priest Forever* and Alla Bozarth-Campbell's *Womanpriest* speak well of a new ecclesial identity within ministry. Finally, one wonders why there is no reference to the volume, *Ministry in America,* produced through the efforts of the Association of Theological Schools.

In conclusion, Oden's volume provides an historically rooted perspective on the essentials of ministry. Substantive and thoughtful, the volume is best appreciated in the wider discussion of pastoral hermeneutics. It will remain a reference work in the tradition of Richard Baxter and Washington Gladden.

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THE MESSAGE OF EXODUS, by Lester Meyer. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983. Pp. 183. $8.95 (paper).

This is an excellent, though not perfect, study which nicely accomplishes the purpose for which it was written. It reflects the work of someone who has struggled to teach (and I suspect successfully) recalcitrant college students that there is more to the Bible than either a Jerry Falwellized or Rod McKuanized portrait of Jesus. One cannot know the God of Jesus or even

Jesus himself without first knowing the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The book of Exodus is one of the primary Old Testament books where we meet that God.

This study of the message of Exodus is subtitled “a theological commentary,” in contrast, I suppose, to an exegetical commentary. The author is concerned with interpreting the story as a story and with identifying the theological concerns of that story. This book is not intended for historical-critical scholars, though they can learn from it. It is written for the general reader. Yet unlike other commentaries intended for general audiences, the author refuses to do a homogenized “flashdance” around the critical issues. Instead he utilizes historical-critical, exegetical information where it illuminates the story, but he does not dwell upon it or attempt to reconstruct the objective history behind the story.

Meyer’s concern is with the proclamation of the story. Therefore he identifies its genre not as history but as “gospel.” Although he acknowledges that Exodus is part of a larger narrative work, i.e., the Pentateuch, he helpfully treats it as “a self-contained piece of literature with a beginning and an end representing a deliberately defined segment of experience.” He approaches each individual unit of the story asking how it fits into its present literary context and how it contributes to the larger, ongoing story. This method, of course, reflects the influence of Brevard Childs and Ulrich Cassuto which he acknowledges in his introduction.

The author identifies two key theological themes in Exodus: 1) God is the deliverer, and 2) God is the covenant-maker. He proceeds to discuss these and

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other sub-themes by analyzing and commenting on the story as it unfolds in the book of Exodus. His discussion contains interesting reflections upon such topics as the role of women in the initial frustration of Pharaoh’s power, the educational, as opposed to punitive, purpose of the plagues, the divine concern for justice and human responsibility, the significance of commemorative events, the nature of salvation and grace, and the role of the covenant in Israel’s life.

Through this clearly and concisely written study, the reader gains a better appreciation for the Exodus story itself as well as an understanding of the theological beliefs and values expressed through it. I highly recommend it to pastor and professor alike and especially to inquiring lay people and students.

I began by stating that the book was an excellent, though not perfect, study. It is not perfect in the sense that it contains tantalizingly brief discussions of some topics, for example, warfare, the decalogue, and the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart. Perhaps the author also at times too quickly and therefore confusingly dismisses earlier formulations of some passages in his attempt to discern their present function. Yet if these perceived limitations stimulate the reader to further reflection or even further reading (a brief bibliography is included), my qualifying statement about these minor imperfections would be eliminated. Overall, Professor Meyer is certainly to be commended for writing a book which utilizes scholarly material and insights to serve the theological interests of the church instead of the often arcane concerns of the academic community.

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ANCIENT MYTHS AND BIBLICAL FAITH: SCRIPTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS, by Foster R. McCurley. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983. Pp. 205. $11.95 (paper).

In this volume, Professor McCurley examines the relationship between myth and history in the Bible, drawing on ancient texts from Canaan, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. He assumes that Israel's faith grew up and matured within the cultural milieu of the ancient Near East and that biblical writers "quite intentionally used religious motifs and images" (183) from non-Hebrew sources. Furthermore, the use of these ancient cultural themes provides a "means of unifying the component parts of the Bible, even the two testaments." Biblical faith transformed other ancient forms of faith into a unique expression of God's covenant relationship.

The author has chosen three motifs or themes for study: (1) the conflict between the god of order and the chaos of the sea; (2) the rhythm of fertility and sterility in terms of divine and human sexuality; and (3) the quality of space known as the sacred mountain. McCurley examines each of these themes in their ancient Near Eastern contexts, then reviews the Old and New Testament use and transformation of these mythological elements.

On the theme of "Order versus Chaos," McCurley turns first to a discussion of "cyclical conflicts" including *Enuma eliš* from Babylon, the Ba'al/'Anat cycle from Canaan, and various texts from Egypt. Each has similar cyclical myths detailing the conflict between a god who creates and chaos (usually in the form of water).

Israel's prophets used this conflict imagery to portray Yahweh's opposition to countries and people hostile to the Hebrew God's will and purpose. For example, in Ezekiel 29:3, the Pharaoh is conquered by the dragon Rahab, "a dragon who couches in the midst of his rivers" (The Nile). Psalm 74 says, "You (God) split *Yamm* ("sea") with your power; You smashed the heads of the serpent over the waters" (29). The myths give evidence of God's unfathomable powers in contrast to humanity's frailty (34). Only Yahweh can "rebuke" (*ga'ar*) chaos; it is his right, rooted in the cosmogonic event when the watery, chaotic deep (*tehom*) was rebuked (Ps 104:5-9).

Just as Yahweh *alone* had authority to rebuke in the Old Testament, only Jesus can do it in the New Testament, for it is his authority to "control chaos" (58). Jesus is the "son of God," so he rebukes the wind and commands the sea to be still

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(Mark 4:35-41). Only he rebukes unclean spirits or Satan. The enemy is still mythical (sea, demons, Satan), but now the cosmic battled is being waged in the historical man Jesus. Finally, in the end (Rev 21-22), chaos will be subdued once and for all.

In part Two, "Divine and Human Sexuality," the author describes the sexual relations of the gods in Canaan and Mesopotamia. In these cultures natural and human fertility depended upon divine procreation. For example, when Inanna and Dumuzi were fertile in Mesopotamia, the land blossomed and was fertile as well.

While Yahweh is asexual, the Hebrew God is still understood to be important to natural fertility (see Gen 8:22; 2 Sam 21; Ps 104; Deut 26) and human fertility (1 Sam 1;5-6; Gen 29:31-35; Jer 1:5; Isa 49:1). Yahweh is described as a husband (Amos, Hosea), a parent (Ex 4:22-23), the father Israel, the father of the Davidic king (2 Sam 7), and a mother (Jer 31:20; Isa 49:15; Isa 42:14; Job 38:28-29). Yahweh blessed human sexuality and procreation at creation as good. Male

and female, McCurley asserts, were understood in mutuality; sex was pleasurable and beautiful in commitment. This *shalom* was lost in the Garden of Eden when humans tried to be gods.

Jesus is the "son of God," according to Mark, by adoption, and according to Luke and Matthew, by the conception of the Holy Spirit. In the Christ, the fertility cycle is lost, for even death is "swallowed up in victory" by the resurrection (122-123).

McCurley's third theme is the "quality of the cosmic mountain." Space, he argues, is not an issue of quantity in the ancient Near East, but quality. What the community *experiences* in a place determines its value; the area of a piece of land is inconsequential. For Israel, Mount Sinai was the "navel of the earth," where there was theophany, the commissioning of leaders, and the gift of the Torah. With that gift God gave up the palatial residence in order to wander with the people (a unique theological reality in the ancient world) (149). Mount Zion became the new holy space where the "house of God" would be built. And yet, for Israel, no house or mountain could contain God (1 Kings 8:27), even though Zion and its temple were places where Israel could experience Yahweh's presence and benefits (163). "The restoration of Zion as a space which would provide *shalom*...would wait for that day of Yahweh when he would reign...over the whole world."

The mountain was also the space of revelation in the Gospel accounts of Mark and Luke. Preachers and healers were commissioned there, and Jesus opened up the Torah to the crowds and healed on the mount. In Revelation, the mountain is the new heavenly Jerusalem where the whole earth receives the gift of life.

McCurley has written a most helpful volume summarizing themes only with great effort accessible elsewhere. The book will be helpful as a college or seminary text in Biblical theology on one hand, and as a guide and resource for the preacher and pastor on the other. The pastor or layperson who reads this book carefully will be impressed with McCurley's scholarship, and his willingness to deal Biblically with difficult contemporary issues such as human sexuality. The volume provides a wealth of inspiration for a revitalized proclamation of Christ's cosmic victory over all forces of chaos. McCurley insists that the task of the church is twofold: (1) to announce God's victory to the world; and (2) to demonstrate by its own deeds and style that God's reign has already begun. "Such a representative of order, even in the midst of chaos, can serve as a foretaste of the age to come" (185).

Foster McCurley's book is essential reading in the church's efforts to understand its mission and its book in the late twentieth century. He sets the language of myth in a context the church can use to do ministry—for there still is chaos, death, the sea, and the need for holy mountains.

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FROM NICEA TO CHALCEDON: A **GUIDE TO THE LITERATURE AND ITS BACKGROUND,** by Frances Young. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983. 406 pp. $22.95 (cloth).

The one hundred and twenty-five years between the councils of Nicea and Chalcedon are extremely significant in the formation of Christian doctrine, especially Christology, Trinity,

soteriology and anthropology. The standard textbooks for this period—Altaner, Quasten, and Kelley—are all over two decades old, and all of them tend to treat doctrine in a vacuum, apart from the life of the church. Frances Young seeks to bridge this gap by approaching the subject using interdisciplinary resources of biography and literary criticism and by viewing each theologian in the context of the times. Although the author restates the position and significance of early theologians in general by applying literary criticism in their productions, she is primarily in debt to treatments of her topics which have been published since 1960. She draws on a massive body of research so as to broaden the reader's understanding of the culture, history, and crucial issues of early Christianity. A 67-page bibliography covers scholarship of the fourth and fifth centuries published since 1960.

In Chapter One the author addresses the birth of church history and its sequel, Eusebius and his successors and the tales of the monks. Eusebius was not open to the theological thinking required by the difficulties of the Arian controversy, and relied upon the popular Origenism of his time. He was a propagandist, yet his search for facts and his desire to present evidence was in itself ahead of his time. Eusebius' successors, Socrates, Philostorgius, Sozomen, and Theodoret are given critical but sympathetic treatment, the latter as "the last and most beautiful apology for Christianity." The Lausiac History, the *Historia monachorum,* the Life of St. Anthony, and the *Apophthegmata patrum* conclude this chapter.

Chapter Two focuses on Athanasius and his fellow Alexandrians in the fourth century, Arius and Didymus the Blind. Young suggests that behind the Arian conflict was a different understanding of salvation. Indeed, underlying most of the Christological controversies lay a soteriological base even though it was not always articulated. Arius receives sympathetic treatment, as given his time and context he was amply justified in believing himself to have orthodox precedents. Didymus was truly a remarkable man whose contributions were primarily in exegesis, informed by a conservative, pastoral, scholarly, and devout mentality.

Chapter Three is devoted to the Cappadocians, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nazianzus. The author rehearses the complexities of the Christological debates which engaged these thinkers, indicating the variations and shades of meaning given to the terms of the debate, but the treatment of Christianity and the contemporary culture was the most fascinating. Young clearly portrays the struggle between the church and pagan culture in the fourth century and the various shades of grey between orthodoxy and paganism. She also brings life to the struggles by pointing to the tensions caused by personalities and ambition among the protagonists.

Chapter Four is on the temper of the times and some contrasting characters of the late fourth century. These include Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius of Salamis, Chrysostom, Nemesius of Emesa, and Synesius of Cyrene. Of these, Synesius seems the most interesting, since many historians question his Christianity, despite the fact that he became a bishop. His writings display a continued love of philosophy, and there is little uniquely Christian about his own view of life. He was married by Theophilus of Alexandria who also consecrated him bishop. One of his essays, "In Praise of Baldness," suggests that hair on the head is merely evidence of the discharge of evil thoughts from the mind, so that baldness reveals a purer and more godlike state. This chapter reveals the degree to which the church borrowed freely from the Greek philosophical thought patterns in articulating Christian ideas about God, Christ, and the soul of humans.

Chapter Five is by far the longest section of the book (100 pages), dealing with the literature of the Christological controversy. The principal theologians are

Eustathius, Apollinarius and Diodore, Theodore of Mopsuestia, the polemical war and pamphleteers, Nestorius, Cyril of Alexandria, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus. Here again, as throughout the book, the author places doctrinal conflicts in the context of rival schools, personalities, egos, and ambitions. This is especially sharp in the exchanges between Nestorius and Cyril, all culminating in the Council of Chalcedon in 451, which did not end the discussion but formed a plateau from which further discussions were launched, extending to our own day.

This is truly an impressive work. It exhibits meticulous scholarship and a wide ranging mastery of the literature, all presented in very readable, even elegant, prose, as one has learned to expect from British scholars. Frances Young is a lecturer in theology at Birmingham University. Not all readers will agree with her consciously objective approach to the "heretics" of the early church, since placing such persons into their context elicits sympathy and understanding for those whom we have learned to label as unorthodox. Likewise, such worthies as Athanasius are also seen to harbor such unorthodox thoughts as Apollinarianism or even docetism, and a patriarch such as Cyril of Alexandria is revealed as power hungry and, in M. Luther's words, "a thoroughly tricky prelate." This work will undoubtedly become a standard in the library of Christian thought. Young's approach takes the early controversies out of the heat of partisan strife and places them into the more reasonable realm of dispassionate conversation, an attitude which seems in short supply in every generation of believers.

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HEALTH AND MEDICINE IN THE LUTHERAN TRADITION: BEING WELL, by Martin Marty. New York: Crossroad, 1984. Pp. 190. $14.95 and

HEALTH AND MEDICINE IN THE REFORMED TRADITION: PROMISE, PROVIDENCE, AND CARE, by Kenneth Vaux. New York: Crossroad, 1984. Pp. 162. $14.95.

Wholistic Medicine holds to the philosophy that physical well-being is interdependent with the social, psychological and spiritual dimensions of an individual. This philosophy may be self-evident to some, but with the advent of a highly scientific and technological society, what may be self-evident to some is foreign to many. The medical field is becoming increasingly aware of the need to treat patients with a wholistic approach. Physical symptoms are no longer the sole interest of many physicians. Rather, a preliminary examination may include not only a physical history and work up but also a personal interview concerning the social, emotional and spiritual aspects of the patient.

Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Illinois is an institution of the American Lutheran Church which bases its care on wholistic medicine. It places emphasis upon "the understanding and care of human beings as whole persons in light of their relationship to God, themselves, their families and the society in which they live" (LGH "Philosophy of Human Ecology"). In their increasing attempt to explore wholistic medicine, Lutheran General Hospital

is sponsoring a Human Values Forum. Scholars from diverse disciplines have been commissioned to engage in dialogue in order to further integrate and understand the resources of faith and science. This forum is sponsoring a series of ten books dealing with ten religious traditions and their understanding of health and illness. The Forum intends the books to facilitate dialogue between faith traditions and the caring professions and the society which they serve.

The books by Marty, Professor at the University of Chicago, and Vaux, Professor at the University of Illinois Medical Center, both address the designated themes of well-being, sexuality, passages, morality, dignity, madness, healing, caring, suffering and dying. The uniqueness of each book is determined by the particular faith tradition being represented.

Marty's book is the first by a Lutheran on this topic. In part one, he discusses some reasons why little attention has been given to this topic in the Lutheran tradition. These insights are both a critique and a challenge. Marty accepts his own challenge and reaches back to Luther and the Confessional documents in order to point out the strong heritage that Lutheranism has in its understanding of well-being and health care. He uncovers rich material which highlights Luther's insightful perspective on the wholistic nature of humanity. Part one is an overview of the primary theological teachings which inform the Lutheran understanding of illness and wellness, namely, sin and grace and the theology of the cross.

The second part of Marty's book deals with the strength and weaknesses of the Lutheran tradition in the areas of caring and curing. Marty points out that, "the Lutheran tradition is more ready to work with the victims of a bad society than to change the society" (68). The significance of the universal priesthood and the communal form of faith as understood in the Lutheran tradition are the impetus for the Lutheran's sense of caring and charity. Marty explains how these two characteristics developed throughout the history of the Lutheran tradition. This development has led to an individualized notion of priesthood and community. This private sense of faith has inhibited the outward expression of faith in the world. Marty says that Lutheran theologians and pastors have had little success in helping Christian communities integrate their faith into social consciousness and responsibility.

In the last part of the book, entitled "Passages," Marty discusses the various developmental stages of life. This section is more topical, dealing with such issues as sexuality, abortion, aging and dying. Marty discusses the significance of rites at the various stages of life which offer security and establish a strong network of support in the communal faith life of the Lutheran. Perhaps this is one of the strengths of the Lutheran tradition.

Vaux's book deals with Calvinistic theology and how it shapes ethical behavior. The book is divided into two parts: "What do we believe? The Nature of God," and "How Shall We Act? Human Life." Each topic moves from the past to the present in a very systematic approach. Vaux's study is a thorough examination of the Reformed tradition from its roots in scripture and the early Christian church, to the work of the twentieth century scholar Karl Barth.

In part one, Vaux concentrates on the theological uniqueness of the Reformed tradition. The two primary doctrines presented are God's sovereign rule over nature and history and predestination and election. Vaux shows how these two doctrines of Calvinism have shaped and influenced the Reformed tradition's understanding of human life and health care. This is a brief section. However, the basic principles presented here are further developed in the more specific

discussion which follows in part two.

The second part of Vaux's book deals with the meaning and quality of human life as defined by the reflection of God within us. Ten themes are discussed and each one is followed by a brief case study. Vaux's underlying emphasis is that human dignity and well-being are God given. Thus it is the obligation of every individual to act as a worthy being. Since we belong to God and are partners in the redemptive process, it is the responsibility of the believer to have reverence and deep respect for human life. Vaux notes that this obligation has become a compulsion for many in the Reformed tradition who believe that a righteous and moral life is the ultimate goal and expression of redemption. This effects how a person from the Reformed tradition views health and conversely illness. However, Vaux does not pursue the seriousness of this compulsive behavior on personal health and well-being. He does note that "accenting health as achievement has surely fostered the unfortunate attitude that loss of health in some sense signals moral failure" (114). This is an issue for future study and ought not be ignored.

Both books offer significant insight for the medical profession and for the pastoral ministry. As the first in the series of ten books, they leave the reader anticipating the future volumes as invaluable to the study of wholistic medicine. The impact of an individual's faith life in the treatment of their physical bodies is as significant as the social and emotional composition of a person.

These two books present a challenge to the theological world. They call theologians to enter into serious reflection and dialogue with the medical community. So far there has been dialogue concerning the ethical questions of health and medicine. However, there needs to be more research and dialogue in the area of moral and, perhaps more importantly, the spiritual questions related to health care.

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DEUTERONOMIC HISTORY, by Terence E. Fretheim. Nashville: Abingdon, 1983. Pp. 160. $7.95 (paper).

The editors of the series of which this volume is a part, "Interpreting Biblical Texts," indicate its purpose is to assist those who wish to enhance their skills as interpreters of the biblical text. The authors (six are listed on the reverse of the flyleaf) are asked to keep in view the twin tasks of determining the original meaning of the various biblical writings and the manner in which those texts are meaningful today, and to provide assistance in relating the one to the other. Each author is asked to provide: (1) a description of the major features of the type of literature or the assigned portion of the canon; (2) the identification and explanation of the basic assumptions guiding this interpretation of those materials; and (3) the discussion of possible contemporary meanings of representative texts (Editors' Foreword).

Fretheim, Academic Dean and Professor of Old Testament at Luther Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul, accordingly provides a well-written introduction (11-48) followed by a study of nine texts from various portions of the Deuteronomic history (49-158). A brief but well-chosen and helpful bibliography concludes the work (159-160).

The present reviewer found the Introduction of more interest than the textual studies. While no detailed listing of the author's presuppositions or steps in approaching a text is given (if that be considered necessary, possible, or even desirable), there is a host of material which will be helpful to those wrestling with or attempting to identify, structure, and verbalize their own presuppositions. Fretheim accepts the principles of literary and historical criticism (11), while emphasizing the necessity for accepting the "faith claims" of the text to approach its deepest meaning (12-13). While it is impossible to approach the text without presuppositions, guidelines are presented to serve as controls over an unwarranted subjectivism (13-14). From an understanding of the work of other students of the text as well as of the presuppositions of both ourselves and others, a dialogue will emerge "wherein the text, criticism, and contemporary experience are constantly intersecting, and out of the mix important insights into the meaning of the text can commonly emerge" (14). Fretheim notes that some texts are more immediately applicable to life than others. The posture of the interpreter, however, is to listen to the text at each stage of its study, so that it comes to have a greater immediacy to the hearer.

Fretheim's survey of the Deuteronomic history is up to date and valuable. Especially valuable is his emphasis upon the observance of the first commandment (and not a plethora of lesser laws) as the chief interest of the historian. More problematic is the assumption that although the completed history is the result of one or more redactions, the entire history (and apparently each of its parts) should be seen to be related directly to its exilic context (17).

The section on historiography and story (27-41) is well done. However, the concluding section of the Introduction, seeking to frame exilic questions the book addresses, is, as Fretheim himself senses, less satisfactory.

The second part of the book looks in some detail at nine passages from the Deuteronomic history (Joshua 1:1-9; 6:1-27; 24:1-28; Judges 2:6-3:6; 1 Samuel 3:1-10; 2 Samuel 7:1-17; 12:1-15; 1 Kings 19:1-18; and 2 Kings 5:1-27), seeks to study these in the light of the author's presuppositions, notes their specific orientation to the exiles, and seeks to relate the passage to today's readers as well. Most of this material is solid, and Fretheim's treatment shows considerable freshness. The first study may be taken as an example. Fretheim finds the major themes in Joshua 1:1-9 to be those of the land as God's merciful gift to Israel in fulfillment of his promises to the patriarchs and a theology of leadership. He discusses at some length the relationship between God's promises and Israel's faithfulness. The text is then applied to the exiles, and its relevance to anyone who stands at the "boundary" of a new situation. Fretheim regularly rejects popular and moralistic applications (for example, the boy Samuel as a model for all children). On the other hand, one sometimes feels that other applications have been dictated by present concerns of society and the writer rather than the text. Compare, for example, Fretheim's treatment of the Holy War in Joshua 6 (God works through existing structures of society), the promise of a "place" in 2 Samuel 7, and the issue of oppressive use of power in 2 Samuel 12. Such points stimulate some uneasiness about the task of choosing which words of God may reasonably be applied directly to the reader today.

All in all, however, one marvels at the degree to which the detailed study of portions of the Old Testament keeps returning us to such basic themes as God's grace, his faithfulness to his promises, and the prevenience of Gospel to Law. We are in Fretheim's debt for showing us that

this is as true in the Deuteronomic history, where the emphasis has too often been placed upon the Law, as it is in the remainder of the Bible.

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