



THE CHRISTIANS AS THE ROMANS SAW THEM, by Robert L. Wilken. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984. Pp. xvii, 214. \$17.95.

CHRISTIANIZING THE ROMAN EMPIRE, by Ramsay MacMullan. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984. Pp. viii, 183. \$18.00.

Before considering these fine essays, some preliminary remarks are in order. The discipline of church history is the most modern of the classical theological disciplines. While it traces its roots to Eusebius, and even to Luke, the fact of the matter is that church history emerges as an independent force from two sources: the Reformation and the Enlightenment. From the Reformation came the insight that the history of the church is not a divine *traditio non scripta*, but a story of human traditions. From the Enlightenment came the understanding of just how human these human traditions are.

Of the two sources of the discipline, the Enlightenment is more important. Protestant church historians—almost all of them of Lutheran Pietist background—distrusted the tutelage of both the institutional church and the dogmatic interpretation of history. Drawing upon Luther’s rebellious spirit *per se*, they applied modern canons of scholarship to such areas of investigation as the history of heresy, the influence of pagan philosophy, and the relations of church and state. The battleground of this reassessment was usually patristics; the results usually anti-ecclesiastical. Hence from the beginning, the discipline of church history has been characterized by the tendency to interpret the church’s past critically and, correspondingly, to be attracted to whatever stands outside of a supposed mainstream called “orthodoxy.”

The advantages of this critical approach are obvious. The scholarly yield of the discipline in a scant two hundred years is a proud story in itself. But the “modernity” of church history has not been without a certain cost. Too often church historians have dismissed the orthodox tradition out of hand. Their principle has been relevancy; their agenda has been their own. Semler, Baur, Harnack—or more recently, Elaine Pagels—are accomplished patristic scholars. But there is also no doubt that they have used material from the past for the purposes of the present. It is indeed amazing how contemporary the subject of patristics has been! Like Schweitzer’s biographers of Jesus, patristic scholars have mirrored their times.

These remarks need to be made because it is very important to note that they do *not* apply to these books by Wilken and MacMullan. This fact makes these works all the more valuable to those interested in the accurate history of Christianity.

To be sure in a grand tradition of church history both Wilken and MacMullan are interested in subjects off the beaten track. Their essays are not predictable or comfortable by any means. But they have no axe to grind other than that sharpest of axes: getting the story as straight as is humanly possible.

Wilken’s subject is in the title: *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*.. He portrays pagan criticism of Christianity from the second century to the late fourth century, focusing on

Pliny, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian the Apostate among others. Drawing sensibly upon meager sources, Wilken is concerned to uncover what outside critics observed in the early church, particularly the type of observation which is “‘true’ but cannot be fitted into the Christian self-understanding.”

MacMullan’s subject is conversion, the christianizing of a pagan culture. In 100 A.D. Christians numbered perhaps fifty thousand in a society of sixty million. But they were able to sustain a growth rate “on the order of half a million in each generation from the end of the first century up to the proclaiming of toleration

[in 312 A.D.]” “How did they do it?” is MacMullan’s question. “Not the way we usually think today,” is the answer.

To give the reader a taste of what is in these books, I will use one illustration and work with it from one book to the other. My purpose is to make the reader want to read both books.

Pliny, says Wilken, observed early on that Christianity was a “superstition” (*superstitio*). He did not know much about the Christians but he knew this. But what was a superstition to the Romans? As Wilken explains, a superstition was, in the view of the Romans, an anti-social belief grounded in the primitive fear of the gods and leading to extreme behavior. The Roman understanding of the proper religious attitude (*pietas*) was most sophisticated. Religion was “civil religion.” Its purpose was to uplift the populace by giving an ordered meaning of life and providing a means to call upon divine powers to fulfill hopes and desires. True religion was enlightened, pluralistic, respectful of the past, concerned with moral training. To have many gods is just fine. We are all different but we all want the same things: success for state, family, and self. True religion is truly human.

In this framework of understanding, Christianity did not fit. It was not inclusive, but exclusive, claiming to be the only way to God. Its subject was not humanity first, but God first. It was antisocial in its view of individual and corporate sin. The God it proclaimed was not comfortably distant, but close, incarnate, demanding, hated by humanity, but loving humanity in a strange, unheard of way. What Pliny said was true: Christianity was a *superstitio*.

And this superstition converted people by the score. MacMullan, a classics scholar at Yale, asserts that Christianity accomplished this feat not by being some sort of rational alternative to the philosophies of the day—after all, most people could not read let alone have the time to reflect—but rather, in an age in which the natural world and the spirit world were one, Christians converted the Empire by performing miracles of faith-healing and the driving out of demons. In other words, MacMullan says that the early Christians did exactly what they said: “And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles” (Acts 2:43).

“Is this so hard to conceive?” asks MacMullan. No, it really is not. Consider the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism in the twentieth century.

It just so happened, by the way, that one person converted by miracle was Constantine. This was revolutionary. The intolerant *superstitio* in a tolerant pagan world was enabled to use the power of the state to coerce belief. Were such conversions genuine? In a certain sense, who cares? “What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in that I rejoice” (Phil 1:18). So said Paul; so said Augustine and all the Fathers.

These are wonderful essays that will take you on a far journey on the other side of the Enlightenment. They will bring you into the past and help you to see what happened. And I must say that I cannot help thinking that what Christianity has become, at least in the mainstream of the tradition, is not a *superstitio*, but a Roman civil religion. If we came before Governor Pliny, he would let us go, knowing that we are harmless.

Walter Sundberg
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

MANAGING STRESS IN THE MINISTRY, by William Hulme. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984. Pp. 145. \$13.95.

Hulme's book *Managing Stress in the Ministry* is a guidebook which provides insight for any pastor—male or female, young or old, in transition or not.

Having been a woman pastor in an urban setting for the past ten years, first as assistant pastor and then as senior pastor, I found this book personally addressed me on my own journey. Serving in a congregation where three-fifths of the members were retired, where approximately 150 of the members were 80 years of age and older, and where urban ministry as well as congregational ministry were constantly filled with crisis situations, this book became for me not only a reliving of many aspects of the past ten years, but a most helpful guide in identi-

page 231

fying the stress factors and placing them into a helpful and healthy perspective.

Whether female or male, whether church “professional” or in ministry outside congregational life, stress has become for many a destructive force in our society. As Hulme stated, we are products of our culture, of the success motif, of stereotyped labeling, and of many projected denials which prevent the self from emerging in its authenticity and truthfulness. We become entrapped in performance, in comparisons, in competitions, in productions, and in the expectations of others, including those of congregations as well as of our denominations, many times resulting in the loss of personal integrity.

In the process of *doing* ministry, the pastor and congregations have often lost the meaning of Agape love which calls people into *being* without expectation. We have often sought to become by doing, rather than by realizing that our value and the value of others lies not in who we are, but whose we are. God's unmerited and unconditional love places value on all of us merely because God alone has created value in us. It is this kind of love which allows us as ministers and as lay people to look at the self with all its weaknesses and strengths—in balance and wholeness, in dying and in rebirth, in the Good Fridays of our lives and the joys and hopes Easter announces.

The love of God reminds us we are not *in control*, playing God, but we are *under God*, and loved by God whose very nature is love. That means because he cares for us, we, too, ought to care for ourselves and to be responsible for our lives.

I strongly recommend this book to all pastors, seminary students, lay professionals, and congregational study groups. It is a book which awakens people to the very heart of the gospel

and initiates a process of self-evaluation, of self-discovery, of inter-relatedness, and of relationship with God's "Agape Story" and its meaning for us as recipients. The study of this book can become for many a time of learning how to affirm the totality of self under God. It is a book which can lead a congregation and pastor(s) into a more healthy, wholistic view of the ministry they share together.

The stress factors in our society today are major concerns. Societal norms and expectations are so engrained in us, Christian and non-Christian alike, that to discover or rediscover meaning through the gospel message is paramount to freedom. The study of this book could mean for many individuals and congregations a new awakening in their journeys as it was for me in mine. For example, examining and discussing the meaning of anger, its origins and its expressions, as well as healthy ways to approach it in our personal and professional lives, would provide for many new dimensions of growth. Likewise, examining various ways in which people avoid facing their weaknesses and inadequacies, often projecting onto others the very "enemy" they fail to realize in their own lives, will aid pastors and congregations in gaining a clearer understanding of the meaning of sin and the significance of self examination.

The chapter on "Achieving Balance in the Life of the Ministry," is also vital, not only to pastors, but to lay people who have become consumed by demands and expectations which tend to create imbalance in their lives, often leading to burnout. Similarly, I particularly appreciated the focus on prayer and meditation and the function both play in the view of wholeness and health. This is a book I strongly recommend for it addresses essential needs of people in a constantly changing world.

Kay Jurgenson
Minneapolis, Minnesota

AGAINST THE NATIONS: WAR AND SURVIVAL IN A LIBERAL SOCIETY by Stanley Hauerwas. Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985. Pp. 208. \$16.95.

Stanley Hauerwas wants Christian ethics to become what they now are in name only—Christian. He does not think that they are very Christian anymore. To begin, here is Hauerwas' view of the current condition of Christian ethics.

The day of a strong bond between Christianity and morality is long gone, absent at least since the Enlightenment. There still *appears* to be such a bond, but

page 232

the fact that so many people, representing so many religious and political positions, still assume the bond says only this: Nothing has yet been found to replace Christianity as the sustaining ethos of our civilization.

In this vacuum Christian theologians and ethicists have generally taken a lame duck approach to their work. "Even if they cannot demonstrate the truth of theological claims (to the larger culture), they can at least show the continued necessity of religious attitudes for the maintenance of culture" (24). The trick is to do that in a way palatable to a culture indifferent to religion. Here is the trick.

If religion is to deserve our allegiance, so the thinking goes, it must be based on the universal. Thus, theologians have sought, at least since the Enlightenment, to demonstrate that theological language can be translated into terms that are meaningful and compelling for those who do not share Christianity's more particularistic beliefs about Jesus of Nazareth....The theologian thus tries to locate the "essence," or at least what is essential to religion, in a manner that frees religion from its most embarrassing particularistic aspects. (24)

But alas, theologians and ethicists have not tricked the culture. They have tricked themselves.

Ironically, just to the extent this strategy has been successful, the more theologians have underwritten the assumption that anything said in a theological framework cannot be of much interest. For if what is said theologically is but a confirmation of what we know on other grounds or can be said more clearly in nontheological language, then why bother saying it theologically at all? (25)

But what is wrong with theologians saying it philosophically, sociologically or psychologically? Here is what is wrong. By not keeping theology theological enough we trick ourselves into abandoning the essential particularities of Christian faith. In the name of cultural relevance we make Christianity marginal, if not downright irrelevant. We've been had, and most of all by ourselves. The Word of the Gospel is muted and coopted.

...the strong argument that gives this book coherence is simply that theological convictions have lost their intelligibility. They have lost their power to train us in skills of truthfulness, partly because accounts of the Christian moral life have too long been accommodated to the needs of the nation state, and in particular, to the nation we call the United States of America. As a result the ever present power of God's kingdom to form our imagination has been subordinated to the interest of furthering liberal ideals through the mechanisms of the state. To recover a sense of how Christian convictions may be true (or false) requires a recovery of the independence of the church from its subservience to liberal culture and its corresponding agencies of the state. For without the distinctive community we call the church, there is no place for the imagination of Christians to flourish if we are to sustain our ability to be a people of peace in a war determined world. (6-7)

Let's look now at how Hauerwas applies his view of Christian ethics. Throughout the book Hauerwas manages to poke and prod just about everybody with his view of the condition of Christian ethics. He pokes at mainline liberal Protestants and at mainline conservative Protestants. Of course he questions fundamentalists and their views of the connections between Christianity and morality. He wonders about the Roman Catholic Bishops' ethical methodology in their recent pastoral, *The Challenge of Peace*. Hauerwas even manages to slip in a question to Lutherans (107) who, at least until recently, thought they had such a secure niche somewhere between two kingdoms from which to do ethics.

Hauerwas not only questions us. He also connects with us. For one thing his tone is always inoffensive, even when his questions are pointed. He does not seek to offend or humiliate

anyone. More importantly, his questions are salutary. He asks them to help us all, including himself, more clearly see and be able to live out the faith.

In the first half of the book Hauerwas clearly lays out his understanding of how theological ethics ceased being very theological, ceased being particularly Christian and ceased having much to contribute. In doing this he looks at such

movements and people as the Social Gospel, both Niebuhrs, Paul Ramsey and James Gustafson.

Hauerwas then includes chapters on imagination, remembering, and what it means to take religion seriously. Even if you read no more of Hauerwas' book, read these three chapters. He uses these themes to write convincingly and movingly about keeping Christian ethics Christian. This first half of the book hangs together. There are good connections between the chapters, even though the book is a collection of various lectures and essays.

In the second half of the book Hauerwas uses his ideas to consider the Kingdom of God, the Church, different positions on nuclear weapons and the question of whether or not war should be eliminated. I found it somewhat harder in these chapters to see the thread which so clearly binds the first half of the book together. But nevertheless, the second half remains helpful, thorough, unself-righteous and refreshingly readable.

The weakness in Hauerwas' view of Christian ethics shows up in the second half of the book. It is not so much a weakness in his position per se, as it is the type of weakness that results from pushing too far. In his chapter "An Eschatological Perspective on Nuclear Disarmament" Hauerwas discusses the importance of working not only for peace, but of working as Christians for a peace that is Christian. He suggests that any other peace reached by any other route may not be worth having. One could almost conclude that having a nuclear war wouldn't be so bad after all, if we can't have our kind of principles and our kind of peace. But is any principle more important than all life? And is there such a thing as a pure principle, from which we can live and work without ever straining and compromising ourselves?

Who is this book for? It is for pastors, theologians and seminarians. The book helps these professional Christians think about and define the core and starting point of all their work. All of us professional Christians are of course supposed to be good preachers, teachers, counselors, administrators, students, chaplains, etc., and in all things psychologically, sociologically, philosophically and politically astute. Oops! I forgot to mention Christianity and theology. Hauerwas is right. He kindly, firmly reminds us that we are first of all to be Christians, and that we finally contribute the most when we remember that.

All in all, Hauerwas accomplishes what he understands his task to be:

Our task as theologians remains what it has always been—namely, to exploit the considerable resources embodied in particular Christian convictions which sustain our ability to be a community faithful to our belief that we are creatures of a graceful God. If we do that we may well discover that we are speaking to more than just our fellow Christians, for others as a result may well find we have something interesting to say. (44)

Hauerwas does have something interesting to say. Go read it for yourself!

Will Mowchan
St. Michael's Lutheran Church
Roseville, Minnesota

THE MALE PREDICAMENT, ON BEING A MAN TODAY, by James E. Dittes. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985. Pp. 240. \$14.95.

The male world is changing. There are a lot of men who are finding out that the old rules about what it means to be a man in our society no longer apply. For some men this change is very painful. If they are married this pain is often shared by spouse and family.

How can the man who wants to be sensitive to his own needs and the needs of his wife survive in a world where the rules about what it means to be male have changed? James Dittes plunges in and takes the risk to help solve the problem. He is a sensitive writer who speaks from his own experience. He is a master story teller and capable scholar who sees new life in ancient biblical texts and makes those texts speak to modern men. Dittes takes time to set the stage, using story, to help men understand that on the one hand the "male predicament" has always been in existence but on the other to offer hope to men caught between old roles and new realities.

page 235

The predicament men face is the need to dominate in order to feel good about themselves, but who find that in that domination they themselves are diminished. Women are caregivers, says Dittes, men are advice givers. Men are forced into performance. The following excerpts set the tone:

Men are afflicted still with a small-boy sense of impatient omnipotence: what they want is, or can be made to be. There is always something to be done to make things right. And that something should be done now. (36)

For men chores are the solution, not the problem. Chores are to be pursued, pursued even to the breaking point. (7)

Women can dream of escape from the chores, because they know that life is more than chores. For men, the chores faithfully performed are life. (7)

That is the male story, the male predicament: Promises hijacked, life diverted, trapped in dreams too big or chores too mean. That's what this book is about:

Dreams too big and chores too mean and the excruciating way that dreams become chores. (202)

The only response to such a dilemma, says Dittes, is that "self-fulfillment is found in self-abandonment" (223).

This book could help you, if you are a man, to see yourself in a new way. It could be helpful if you are a male parish pastor struggling with your male identity. It could serve as an excellent resource for a group of men willing to risk present status in order to grow towards a new sense of maleness. And finally this book brings fresh insight to women who seek to understand men.

Robert Stenson
Grace Lutheran Church
Hebron, Nebraska

SHARING JESUS IN THE TWO THIRDS WORLD, by Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden.
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984. Pp. 284, \$12.95 (paper).

The preface clearly states the origin and purpose of this book:

During the third week of March, 1982, twenty-five theologians from Africa, Asia, and Latin America met in Bangkok to discuss the emerging Christologies in the Two Thirds World. This volume is the result of the deliberations of the Conference....It was the first time that theologians of evangelical conviction from the Two Thirds World had met at their own initiative to focus attention on what Jesus from Galilee means in their own contexts and their attempt to fulfill his mission. (vii)

The fourteen papers presented at that conference, together with a record of some of the discussion that followed each, are contained in this book. Twelve of the papers were presented by theologians from the Two Thirds World, two of the papers were from the West.

The conference findings, a three page document entitled "Towards a Missiological Christology in the Two Thirds World," is also included.

The book concludes with a brief summary statement of the editors entitled "Emergency Issues for the Ongoing Debate" and a listing of the conference participants.

These papers and the discussion that followed them represent a significant attempt "to understand what it means to proclaim the name of Christ in a religiously pluralistic world surrounded by situations of poverty, powerlessness, and oppression" (4). As is true with virtually all such collections, the papers are of uneven quality. Some represent a genuine advance in the current Christological/missiological debate, while others do not. Among the more provocative are those of Rene Padilla (Argentina), Kwame Bediako (Ghana), and Michael Nazir Ali (Pakistan) and the remainder of this review will focus on them.

In his paper entitled "Christology and Mission in the Two Thirds World," Rene Padilla argues for "the importance of a new quest of the historical Jesus for the purpose of letting him speak for himself and, if at all possible, letting him determine the shape of Christian discipleship and mission in the modern world" (12).

From that base he critically evaluates Jon Sobrino's *Christology at the Crossroads* (Latin America), Choan-Seng Song's *Third Eye Theology* (East Asia) and Albert Nolan's *Jesus Before Christianity* (Southern Africa). Padilla concludes that Two Thirds World Christology stresses

- 1)...the humanity of Jesus Christ and challenges us to rediscover the social dimensions of the gospel (27),
- 2)...the fact that Jesus' death was the historical outcome of his life and challenges

us to suffer because of righteousness (28), and
3)...the historical nature of the Christian life and challenges us to commitment to
Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world (28).

In his paper entitled “Biblical Christologies in the Context of African Traditional Religions,” Kwame Bediako surveys the western missionary encounter with African religion. He concludes that “the reality of our Christian communities bears evident witness to the communication of the gospel, however inadequate we may now consider that communication to have been” (95). He then goes on to develop a “Christology from an African Perspective: Jesus of the African World,” giving particular attention to the understanding of Jesus in relation to the ancestors and the African concept of kingship.

Michael Nazir Ali, in “Christology in an Islamic Context,” observes that

Christology in an Islamic context is not the same as an Islamic Christology. The latter would be a specifically Muslim view of Christ, whereas the former is a Christian Christology developed within a Muslim socio-cultural situation and addressed to it. (141)

He contends that much of the task of Christology in an Islamic context is to show the Muslim that the incarnation is not a contradiction. He further contends that

no mere metaphysical subtleties are going to win the Muslim to Christ. Until he is confronted by the person of Christ as found in the Gospels and in the life of the church, he will not find it possible to acknowledge Christ as Lord. (152)

Everyone vitally concerned with the ongoing Christological debate, the faith, life, and mission of the church on a global scale, theological methodology, and/or the communication of the Gospel will find this book worth reading.

Duane A. Olson
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

PHILIPPIANS, by Fred B. Craddock. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985. Pp. 96. \$12.95.

Is there anything new that can be said about Paul’s letter to the Philippians? Probably not, yet Philippians is the subject of this small volume in a new commentary series entitled “Interpretation: A Biblical Commentary for Teaching and Preaching.” The author, Fred Craddock, is Professor of Preaching and New Testament at Candler School of Theology, Atlanta and the author of numerous books. He is known for his ability to interpret the Scriptures for contemporary life and faith. He lives up to this reputation in his commentary on Philippians.

This book is an interesting and relevant expository essay on Paul’s letter to the Christians at Philippi. For the sake of preachers, special attention is given to the texts from Philippians that are included in most church lectionaries. Also attention is given to texts in light of their use in the liturgy and the theology of the church. Paul’s talk to God is as integral as his talk about God.

In the Introduction, Craddock deals with what it means for the book of Philippians to be “a letter,” “of Paul,” and “to a church.” That is, Paul, the apostle, who is in prison carries on a ministry by mail with the Christians at Philippi, his partners in the gospel. This introduction prepares the reader for the commentary that emphasizes and shows a relationship between a minister and a church.

The commentary section of Philippians follows the text. It is divided into Salutation, 1:1-2; Thanksgiving, 1:3-11; Autobiographical Disclosure, 1:12-26; Exhortations for the Meantime, 1:27-2:16; Autobiographical Disclosure, 2:17-3:1a; Exhortations for the Meantime, 3:1b-4:9; Thanksgiving, 4:10-20; and Closing, 4:21-23.

Throughout the commentary, Craddock emphasizes the partnership Paul has with the Philippians in furthering the good news of Jesus Christ. This partnership is not dependent upon Paul’s being present or absent.

Craddock points out that the call to faith and the call to ministry are not separated in Paul’s thought. In Paul’s account of his call to apostleship, he includes his

page 237

conversion (Gal 1:13-17). His conversion was also his call to ministry. This is a fundamental conviction of the church today. One’s baptism is a call to ministry.

Unlike other commentaries, *Philippians* deals with passages as a whole rather than a verse by verse or word by word interpretation. Also space is not used to reprint the text as you find in many commentaries. Another obvious difference from most commentaries is that it is not filled with the opinions of scholars about the text. This is not to say that Craddock has not consulted the scholars in his writing. There is evidence throughout that Craddock is well aware of the scholarly research on the difficult passages and questions. Also Craddock does not deal with issues of date, authorship, or purpose as most commentaries do in their introductions. Instead historical context issues are treated in the text when appropriate. But even then, he does not go into them in any depth. For instance, concerning the site of Paul’s imprisonment when he wrote Philippians, Craddock states that commentaries debate the pros and cons of Rome, Caesarea and Ephesus. He does not repeat these arguments because they can be read in other commentaries and he does not state his conclusion. The place of imprisonment is not that important. What is important is that Paul is in prison and the gospel is on trial.

For those who desire a more in-depth study of Philippians, Craddock includes a bibliography that is divided into the

page 238

following areas: Introductory Matters, The Christ Hymn, The Meaning of the Text, Paul’s Thought as Context, and Literature Cited.

If this volume is an indication of the quality of this series, this is indeed a commentary series that will be of help to those who teach and preach. I also found it helpful as a reference for writing a Bible Study on Philippians.

Marilyn Saure Breckemidge
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
Minneapolis, Minnesota

THE TRAVAIL OF NATURE: THE AMBIGUOUS ECOLOGICAL PROMISE OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, by H. Paul Santmire. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. Pp. 274. \$16.95 (paper).

In order to respond to theological questions posed by ecological problems today, H. Paul Santmire believes that we need “a new historical understanding of biblical-classical theological reflection about nature” (8). Santmire does not think that the tradition is ecologically bankrupt, nor does he suppose that there is a wealth of ecological riches waiting to be drawn upon to resolve our current problems. The tradition, rather, is ambiguous in its theology of nature, and we must seek to understand the varied views of nature in the metaphors and concepts employed by the tradition itself.

This study is written with environmentalists in mind as well as those who identify themselves with the Christian faith. Santmire hopes that his book will challenge “the critical ecological wisdom about Western theology: that orthodox Christian thought always construes God and humanity apart from, or over against, the world of nature” (5). The book, accordingly, works as an introduction to Christian thought about nature. Most of the book consists of historical-descriptive chapters on key figures in Christian thought about nature such as Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Francis of Assisi, Luther, Barth, and Teilhard de Chardin. It concludes with a study of ecological motifs in scripture and offers a new reading of the biblical theology of nature.

His analysis begins by identifying two fundamental “theological motifs” (9) which have shaped theological reflection.

The first is predicated on a vision of the human spirit rising above nature in order to ascend to a supramundane communion with God and thenceforth to obey the will of that God in the midst of the ambiguities of mundane history.(9)

This spiritual motif he contrasts with the ecological motif. The latter

...is predicated on a vision of the human spirit’s rootedness in the world of nature and on the desire of self-consciously embodied selves to celebrate God’s presence in, with, and under the whole biophysical order, as the context in which the life of obedience to God is to be pursued. (9)

Santmire shows that the first motif has dominated Christian attitudes toward nature; yet both motifs are present in the tradition, and greater emphasis on the ecological motif promises to reveal a more fruitful basis for the development of a theology of nature.

These motifs, Santmire explains, have their origin in pre-reflective levels of “lived human experience” (14). There is an immediate level of religious awareness, in other words, which is at the root of articulated theological motifs. Certain experiences give rise to root metaphors such as *ascent*—the search for transcendence from the mundane, *fecundity*—the wonder and awe before the vast panorama of the earth’s beauty and richness, and *migration to a good land*—the peace and blessedness awaited in the promised land. Santmire’s analysis of major representatives of the Christian tradition proceeds by locating these metaphors and motifs and showing how they oppose and complement one another. In his study of Augustine, for example, Santmire uses these

metaphors and motifs to show how Augustine's valuation of nature developed. As a Manichee, his thought was dominated by the metaphor of ascent or the spiritual motif. But in *The City of God* we see the metaphors of fecundity and migration to a good land combined to form the ecological motif where "God will be all in all, not just in the spiritual creation, but throughout the whole world of nature as well" (65).

The ecological motif, however, is always present with the spiritual motif

which does not see nature in God's plan for redemption. Because of this tension, Santmire concludes that the ecological promise of Christian theology is ambiguous. The concept of nature has been in travail throughout the classical tradition because it is divided over the motifs used to understand nature.

This study of the ecological promise of Christian theology raises one main question for the reviewer: Will the reader be content with ambiguity? For what does one usually do when one receives an ambiguous answer to a very important question? One looks for ways to move beyond it; and a number of possibilities are available in this case. For example, one might remove the ambiguity by electing one side of the answer over the other. Perhaps one can find in other sources and traditions the guidelines for a clear, unambiguous response to the question. Or, one might wonder whether the question was properly posed in the first place. Perhaps the chosen method of analysis has ambiguity built into it so that the unresolved tension is not in the answer but in the question. Finally, one might listen more intently to the answer and discover that what sounds ambiguous is really, from another way of hearing the tradition, richly profound. Santmire confines his study to historical description of this ambiguity and so he does not engage in constructive reflection to resolve it. As an introduction to Christian thought about nature, this book is readable and informative. It broadens the context for understanding the relation between God and humanity by including nature as a fundamental datum for theological reflection.

Ned Wisnefske
Roanoke College
Salem, Virginia

JESUS AND JUDAISM, By E. P. Sanders. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. Pp. 444. \$19.95.

E. P. Sanders put his mark on Pauline studies with *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, and he is now an Oxford professor and a recognized authority in Judaism and the New Testament. Thus *Jesus and Judaism* was already an important book before it reached the hands of the readers. Once again, Sanders has provided a host of correctives to caricatures of Judaism which have persisted too long in New Testament interpretation. He has also compelled the reader to attend carefully to the historical questions surrounding Jesus which have often been neglected in New Testament theology, and he has brought Jesus' mission and even his death within the expectation of first century "Jewish restoration eschatology: the expectation that Israel would be restored" (323).

The task which Sanders undertakes is that of an historian who is "interested in the debate about the significance of the historical Jesus for theology in the way one is interested in

something he once found fascinating” (2). In spite of such annoying condescension and constant use of first person pronouns and personal references, the book is a valid and valuable effort to achieve clarity in historical method. Sanders seeks to discern the connection between what Jesus taught and did, on the one hand, and the reason for his execution, on the other. He argues “that there is a substantial coherence between what Jesus had in mind, how he saw his relationship to his nation and his people’s religion, the reason for his death, and the beginning of the Christian movement” (22). He may not be so objective as his assertion of theological disinterest claims, but his discussion is a challenging and enlightening exercise in historical and textual research.

After a lengthy introduction, defining the project and reviewing the scholarship (1-58), Part One features a discussion of “The Restoration of Israel” with chapters on “Jesus and the Temple,” “New Temple and Restoration in Jewish Literature,” and “Other Indications of Restoration Eschatology” (61-119). His ease of movement in and out of a wide range of second temple sources already goes a long way to mending the rigid split between Jewish and Christian concerns which many interpreters have imposed upon the texts. The common restoration themes of repentance and the inclusion of the Gentiles provide the context for understanding Jesus, and Jesus’ lack of insistence on repentance and observance of the torah stands out.

page 240

Part Two on “The Kingdom” includes chapters on “The Sayings,” “Miracles and Crowds,” “The Sinners,” “The Gentiles,” and “The Kingdom: Conclusion” (121-241). Here the hard work of detailed textual study is pursued to describe “the relationship between Jesus and the kingdom he proclaimed” (123). Sanders paints a fascinating picture of Jesus declaring and inaugurating a kingdom of “other worldly” origin in which the “truly wicked” were “included in the kingdom even though they did not make restitution, sacrifice, and turn to obedience to the law” (207). Of course, all Israel taught that God forgives repentant sinners, even that repentance is God’s gift, but Jesus’ “special mission was to promise inclusion in the coming kingdom to the outsiders, the wicked, if they heeded his call” (227).

In Part Three, “Conflict and Death,” chapters discuss “The Law,” “Opposition and Opponents,” “The Death of Jesus” and a “Conclusion” (245-340). Chapter ten on “Opposition and Opponents” is poorly argued, and the conclusion is marred by cavalier statements, e.g. “It is not historically impossible that Jesus was weird” (333). Ah yes, the rigors of objective historical research with all of its precise, scientific vocabulary!

This book will make people angry, but it will also make people think. Its extensive notes, bibliography, and indices (341-444) make it a valuable reference tool. And above all, as the faces of second temple Jewish belief and practice emerge more clearly out of the caricatures of the past, the portrait of Jesus also assumes its proper Jewish profile. Then Jesus’ radical declaration of forgiveness and inclusion of sinners, outcasts, and Gentiles stands out in bold relief.

David Tiede
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

FAITH AND PRACTICE IN THE EARLY CHURCH, FOUNDATIONS FOR

CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY, by Carl A. Volz. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983. Pp. 223. \$9.95 (paper).

This book is an admirable balance of historical interpretation and citation of original sources in fresh, idiomatic translations. Thus, one is able to follow Professor Volz's interpretation through the evidence he employs. Especially commendable are the numerous quotations from Greek-speaking Christianity, that branch of the early church known today as Eastern Orthodoxy. Here, the reader can see that Christianity at a number of crucial points—e.g., anthropology, original sin, redemption, and infant baptism—is not identical with what evolved into that western version of Latin-speaking Christianity called Roman Catholicism. The book is a valuable resource for seminary or college students, and other adults who wish to understand the complex and rich development of early Christianity up to about A.D. 500.

On the doctrine of God, Volz gives a fairly well developed picture of the early Trinitarian and Christological controversies which resulted in the first four ecumenical councils. He discusses the dialectical nature of Christology, the lack of balance in the heretical views of Arius, Appollinaris, Nestorius, and Eutyches while showing how philosophy was used to give more precise meaning to the Trinity and the person of Christ. At stake were the different ways in which orthodox and heretical views reflected the actual liturgical and prayer life of Christians as well as the different conceptions of salvation.

However, Volz fails to discuss how a certain philosophical view of God in the ancient world, namely the belief that a transcendent God is by definition impassible, shapes these early controversies. For example, Volz's judgment that the Alexandrian and Antiochene views of Christ differed because of divergent views of salvation—the Alexandrian's view that the divine Son assumed human nature in order to transform it into the divine and the Antiochene's view that Christ's humanity took an active role in restoring human nature through human

page 242

obedience to God—is only part of the picture. For once the Nicene Council confesses that the Son is as divine as God the Father but simultaneously retains a conception of transcendence entailing impassibility, the problem is then how an impassible being suffered as a human. Did the divine Son assume only a body since a body is capable of suffering (the Alexandrian tendency)? Or did a man, Jesus, suffer; and was the divine Son joined to the man, assisting him but not himself undergoing the actual suffering (the Antiochene tendency)? Volz's discussion of the divine and human (natures) in Jesus Christ would have been enriched within the context of the issue of God's impassibility.

On the doctrine of humanity, Volz provides a thoughtful exposition of human nature, contrasting the East and West and showing how infant baptism functions in each. This chapter will be especially insightful for Roman Catholics and Protestants because the eastern view has been lost in the West since early Medieval history.

Volz shows that in the East the fall of Adam and Eve means that their descendants were born with only an inclination to sin and the absence of the likeness of God (holiness and the chance of immortality). But since they retain the image of God (reason and the power to choose the good), humans are free to live morally. Infant baptism is not for the forgiveness of sin since the newborn have not sinned and do not share in the guilt of Adam and Eve's fall.

The picture is different in the West, especially in Augustine whose concept of original sin asserted that all newborn share in the guilt of Adam's sin and have Adam's fallen nature, a nature only free to choose evil. Infant baptism bestows forgiveness of sin and a grace which enables the child to follow the good.

However, I disagree with Volz's judgment that Augustine's doctrine of original sin is not deterministic. For if one is only free to choose evil (apart from baptism), then human behavior is determined, since by freedom what is usually meant is not simply the freedom to have done what one did (e.g., choose evil) but the freedom to have done otherwise (e.g., choose good rather than evil). And if freedom does not entail the capacity to have done otherwise, then how can one be held responsible for having "freely" chosen the evil?

On the doctrine of salvation, Volz surveys the early church's understanding of Christ as teacher, moral example, victor, and victim in the work of reconciliation, forgiveness, and deification. The dominant theme in the West is Christ as a victim whose death made satisfaction for human sin and thereby brought about reconciliation, but Volz also documents this theme in the East while indicating that there the conception is complemented by the image of deification Christ as the divine-human mediator who incorporates the believer into the life of God.

On worship and Sacraments, Volz presents a view of Baptism and Eucharist along with some discussion of the sermon, prayer, and music. According to Volz, early Christians agreed that "in some way Christ was actually present in the consecrated elements of bread and wine" and that Christ's death was "a sacrifice for human sin." These two ideas led to the conclusion that whenever the Eucharist is celebrated "the Christ in the elements is also the crucified sacrifice, by whose merits the communicant hopes for salvation."

Missing in Volz's discussion is the sense of Christ's sacrifice as that of obedient love which in the Eucharist is given to the communicant thereby enabling him or her also to offer up obedient love to God. Significantly, the first extensive witness to the Eucharist as a sacrifice is Cyprian (mid 3rd century) who, living through the first universal persecution and seeing martyrdoms as re-enactments of Christ's suffering, spoke of the church offering the passion of Christ in the Eucharist. Worship within the church reflects the reality of Christian life lived out in the world and offered to God as a sacrifice of obedient love. Attention to this fact would have shown how the Eucharist as sacrifice functioned in Christian life in the world.

In addition, the judgment that Christians agreed that "in some ways Christ was actually present in the consecrated elements of bread and wine" (so the idea of Christ being represented by the

elements is a 16th century innovation) is quite debatable. The earliest post-canonical references to eucharistic liturgy found in the *Didache* and *Apostolic Tradition* (2nd and early 3rd century) do not, by themselves, support Volz's judgment. They could be used (and have been) by those who believe that the elements represent Christ.

Moreover, Volz's judgment that only Tertullian, early 3rd century, opposed infant baptism implies that by then infant baptism was the standard practice of the church. But the witness of Cyprian, bishop in the same city where Tertullian had taught, shows that parents (a generation after Tertullian) still decided whether or not an infant was to be baptized. Evidently,

infant baptism as standard practice was slow in evolving and Tertullian's opposition impeded that evolution. Thus, Tertullian's support of adult baptism may reflect the traditional view. Finally, that the idea of original sin came after "infant baptism had been established" is also questionable. The reverse seems as probable, namely, that infant baptism becomes established as standard practice in the West only after the idea of original sin appears.

On authority in the early church, Volz gives a balanced and informative picture of the evolution of the canonical status of the New Testament, the role of catechetical teaching, and the relation of both to the creeds of the early ecumenical councils. He argues for an organic relationship and then shows how the bishop of Rome came to symbolize the authority and unity of the western church.

Volz's concluding chapter, "The Church and Society," competently surveys the causes of persecution, the role of women, and attitudes of Christians towards marriage, the military, slaves, and wealth. Converts were won because the church was a movement committed to values different from Graeco-Roman society. Although women could not be ordained ministers, they played prominent roles as deaconesses, prophetesses, confessors, martyrs, and founders of convents. Special regard for the poor, elderly, and the sick together with the power of martyrdom—the courage to suffer and die for one's belief—commended the church to inhabitants of the Roman empire.

Frederick Klawiter
Augustana College
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

LIFE CYCLE THEORY AND PASTORAL CARE, by Donald Capps. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984. Pp. 127. \$6.95 (paper).

Life cycle theory has made significant and helpful contributions to pastoral care and counseling during the past decade. One of the most innovative translators of Erik Erikson's developmental theory and its relevance for pastoral ministry has been Donald Capps, a professor of pastoral theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. In an earlier book, *Pastoral Care: A Thematic Approach* (1979), and in this volume being reviewed Capps cogently utilizes Erikson's schematic conceptualization of the stages of the life cycle as a framework for clarifying the purposes and goals of pastoral care. Erikson's perceptive insights into the stages and crises of the human life cycle are used by Capps to illustrate pastoral responses to major threats which often create disorientation in the world.

An introductory chapter succinctly summarizes the eight individual psycho-social stages and the basic concepts of Eriksonian theory. Infancy, adolescence, and mature adulthood are singled out as being the most critical developmental stages because they bring with them more potential for disorder and disorientation. For example, the first stage of life, infancy, presents to the task of "feeling at home" in the world while the fifth stage, adolescence, confronts one with the challenge of assuming responsibility for "fitting into" the world. In the eighth and final stage, that of mature adulthood, persons face the need of relinquishing their place in the world and "completing life."

The three major causes of disorientation, according to Capps, are the loss of moral order, the loss of an understanding of life's meaningfulness, and the experience of suffering. The role of

personal comforter becomes the focus of Capps' application of Eriksonian stage-based theory to the developmental crises that threaten the orientation of persons in the world. Erikson's schedule of virtues are set alongside the traditional eight deadly vices and are employed by Capps to provide understanding concerning the contemporary moral confusion and the pastor's responsibility to address these in preaching and counseling. In a chapter setting forth Erikson's stages of ritualization, the parish pastor's task of being a "ritual coordinator" is described. The pastor's role is that of "one who assumes responsibility for integrating the various ritual processes in the total life of the parish community, assisting it in shaping its ritual elements into a coherent and meaningful life" (56). The role of the pastor as personal comforter to those who suffer provides the context for the introduction of the problem of shame. Because there has been so little attention given to this topic in the pastoral care literature, Capps' examination of the phenomenological experience of shame and the pastor's ministry to someone isolated by it provides valuable insights into this universal disorienting experience of life.

In Erikson's theory the schedule of virtues as well as the stages of ritualization culminate in wisdom. In his attempt to provide a biblical grounding for his pastoral care model, Capps utilizes the wisdom tradition of ancient Israel as well as the teachings of Jesus and suggests their affinities with Erikson's life stage theory. The Book of Proverbs with its emphasis on moral order, Ecclesiastes with its concern for life's meaning, and Job with its poignant discussion of human suffering are applied by Capps to life's psycho-social stages and their conflicts. The resultant pastoral approach of "therapeutic wisdom" incorporates the pastoral roles of moral counselor, ritual coordinator and personal comforter and converges on what Capps considers "the two most fundamental issues in pastoral care—helping people toward positive change and enabling them to become better oriented in the world" (14).

Life Cycle Theory and Pastoral Care is an imaginative and illuminating work which succeeds in introducing fresh images and approaches that address important issues in life cycle crises and challenges. The author acknowledges the strain of always trying to fit his pastoral care model to Erikson's eight stages and their bi-polar conflicts. This over-dependence on Erikson's conceptual model excludes the use of other developmental theories which, if they had been included at relevant points in this book, would have added value and validity to Capps' model. Even more importantly, the largely uncritical use of Erikson gives the appearance of prescribing the categories in which ministry to changing and growing persons must take place. The art of pastoral care is too rich and too dynamic ever to be reduced to a forced application of any particular theory of human development. Nevertheless, Capps' work represents a provocative and useful contribution to an understanding of pastoral care ministry in our contemporary society.

Melvin A. Kimble
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota