Word & World 6/4 (1986)
"REVIEWS"

GOD: THE QUESTION AND THE QUEST, by Paul R. Sponheim. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. Pp. 214. $19.95.

There is a venerable tradition of apologetics by dialogue. In seeking to recover a dialogic approach, Sponheim manifests openness to listening to the other side, attending to its queries and doubts, recommending rather than deducing the Christian perspective. This light tread derives at least in part from our age, in which claims of knowledge are made with great tentativeness.

In the opening chapter, Sponheim reflects on the source for the contemporary rejection of the reasons for and relevance of theistic faith. The origins of this lurk in the Enlightenment, which emphasized the ellipse embracing the self and world. The Christian response is to alter the modern conception of the ellipse so as to make relevant the reality of a third focus, the unconditional, actual infinite which engages and provides meaning for the other.

Sponheim recommends dialogue—and so the book proceeds, though perhaps written more for or to the Christian than the non-Christian. In the first part Christians are encouraged to attend seriously to the objections of the unbeliever, whereas in the second Christians commend their own case.

The modern doubter speaks first. Chapters two through four contain a litany of atheistic and agnostic objections. Chapter two focuses on the epistemic objections to God's existence. For one, since knowledge is understood in terms of our own experience, "Christian faith eludes, defies, and even demands the self's own experience, and so fails to qualify as knowing" (24). The other objections concern the classic 19th century claims that God is some sort of projection and the 20th century claims that religious belief is fundamentally non-cognitive.

In chapter three standard objections concerning the object of faith are raised. If God is transcendent, how can he relate to the world; if he relates to the world, how can one adequately explain the prevalence of evil in it? Finally, can one ascribe to God a coherent set of properties, including agency?

In chapter four the objections introduced concern the dehumanizing and de-worldizing effects of belief in God. Christians, in ascribing all ideals to God and complete sinfulness to humans, alienate humans from their true selves and potentialities. They have traded the strength and glory of humanity for weakness, egalitarianism, poverty and plainness. Christian doctrines of piety and sinfulness have detracted from world-changing efforts on the one hand, whereas subduing the earth leads to its manipulation and rape.

The strength of these three chapters is also their weakness. Though a host of the most significant objections are paraded before the theist, generally there is little conceptual clarification of the issues which they presuppose or precise explication of the arguments themselves. What philosophical commitments do the arguments make? Are these background beliefs true? What do the arguments really establish? For example, positivist restrictions of knowledge to the particular and experiential underlie many of the theses. Yet the serious question

of what constitutes an adequate epistemology of knowing, and more specifically, what constitutes rational belief, are left untouched. Toulmin is quoted in support of the thesis that we cannot have an oversimplified epistemology of the kind promulgated by positivists, yet this is little more than hinted at. Nothing is said about the contemporary discussion of the rationality of religious belief by George Mavrodes (*Belief in God*), Alvin Plantinga (*Rationality and Religious Belief*), Gary Gutting (*Religious Belief and Religious Skep-*

ticism), or Basil Mitchell (*The Justification of Religious Belief*), to name just a few. Of course, at this early stage in the attending one might not expect a detailed response, yet one would anticipate at some point a careful consideration of the nature of knowing and justification, something which never is presented.

Next to speak in the dialogue is the Christian. Sponheim's Christian starting point is the self, considered not substantivally, but relationally. It is the self as becoming, related in its growing to others, limited by relational and temporal finitude. It is a self seeking fulfillment—what he calls intensification. He traces intensification in art, which in discovering the timeless enables the self to transcend itself, and in morals, in which the self transforms itself in the context of ordinary human relations. Yet the Christian claims that there is more, a transcendence which brings unity to the intensification process. This the theist finds in God as the unconditional whom to know promises intensification.

In chapter six Sponheim turns to the second focus, the world. The Christian claims that the world is comprehended in God. The contingent creation is sustained as a cosmic system which supports actions in and understanding of the world through God's constancy. Thus life is not merely contingent, but has a purpose. God, though not the creator of the significance of the moral, provides the unchanging context of its significance (as well as instruction and incentive). God, however, is in the world and is worldly. To speak of God is not to speak of him abstractly, but of him in relation to that world. Thus, the Christian commends attention to God as a willing being, acting through the world as his means.

The final leg of the theist's case is to show that the two foci of self and world can be reconciled in God. God is objectively at work in the world, restoring and bringing meaning through freedom. The future is significant, for it informs our present through the assurance that it is God's future (for us) which will prevail.

Dialogue is critical, and Sponheim has crafted a well-written quest. Yet there lurks a troubling feature about how the dialogue is conducted. The problem is that the dialogists often seem to speak by each other. The unbeliever raises issues primarily of cognitive meaning and epistemic truth. Does Christianity make logical sense? Is it true? Sponheim responds with a scenario which stresses existential sense (it can make a qualitative difference in one's life) and existential truth (it is true to me, true to me in my needs of self-fulfillment and freedom of agency in the world). But is existential recommendation a satisfactory response? Will the theist's case, built on the existential and relational, resolve the *type* of difficulties suggested by the non-Christian?

Sponheim acknowledges the problem. The Christian's dialogue is not so much a response as the commencement of a new dialogue, the making of a case which does not intersect point by point with the unbeliever's critique. He writes, "The fit is not as fine as my brief statements

might suggest, for the first speakers in each dialogue do not approach self, world, and history with exactly the same questions in mind and indeed the terms 'self,' 'world,' and 'history' must not be taken to refer to realities about whose identity both participants in the conversation fully agree in advance." He goes on to note, however, that the dialogues do intersect by "converging choices of topics" (79), only in the Christian's case with the added dimension of a relational God. But it is not converging topics that matter so much as the methods for dealing with them. If the objections are existential, then true dialogue can continue on that level. Yet as generally raised by Sponheim on behalf of the unbeliever, they are not.

Sponheim is correct in seeing that dogmatics cannot replace apologetics. Neither—as he stresses—should apologetics "erode into mere accommodation" (47). Throughout he refuses to sacrifice the essential ontological commitments of Christianity to obtain a pottage of agreement. Throughout there is a solid recognition that the issues involve substantial metaphysical claims and differences. This is nowhere better seen than in his repeated emphasis that in Jesus we actually have God with us in the world; in him we encounter that which provides objective grounds for transformation of

self and reconciliation. Yet apologetics must address directly the serious cognitive difficulties raised by the non-Christian, and in many respects this is not done. [His four-page theodicy (117-121) is a movement in that direction, but illustrative in its sketchiness].

What then is the place of Sponheim's book? Its case for the significance of a hearing for the Christian message in the contemporary world suggests it is less an apologetic than a prolegomena to one: to win a hearing. It delineates the cognitive issues to be addressed, advocates a framework from which to address them—God in the world fulfilling the self and reconciling it to the world, and advances the claim that the Christian message deserves a hearing because of its existential significance. In this direction, his treatment is provocative and helpful; Christians must speak boldly that they have something to offer to mend the human predicament. But once the hearing is commended and the unbeliever ready to listen, the Christian must still turn to the thorny metaphysical and epistemological issues raised by unbelievers. The existential cannot substitute for detailed replies to the hard conceptual issues of the critical arguments themselves. As Sponheim affirms, let the dialogue continue, not only with the needed response that Christian metaphysical claims can make a real difference in one's life, but with a careful treatment of the epistemic and ontological ground undergirding Christianity's claims to rational belief.

Bruce R. Reichenbach
Augsburg College
Minneapolis, Minnesota

CREATIONISM ON TRIAL: EVOLUTION AND GOD AT LITTLE ROCK, by Langdon Gilkey. Minneapolis: Winston, 1985. Pp. 301. $12.95 (paper).

In late 1981 Langdon Gilkey, a well-known theologian at the University of Chicago, was asked to participate as a witness against an Arkansas law demanding equal time for the teaching

of "creation science" alongside "evolution science" in the state's public school classrooms. Gilkey's credentials for the assignment included a solid book on the meaning of creation (*Maker of Heaven and Earth*) and a long-standing interest in the role of science in modern western civilization. This book is both Gilkey's report on his participation in the Little Rock trial and his thoughtful reflections on the larger issues at stake in that conflict. While *Creationism on Trial* is not as compelling as Gilkey's book on his experiences as a prisoner of war in the 1940s (*Shantung Compound*), it still is an insightful volume on several levels.

The first two-thirds of Gilkey's account tells how he was contacted by the attorneys for the American Civil Liberties Union who were orchestrating the complaint against the Arkansas law, how his contributions as a philosophical theologian were put to use by the plaintiff's legal team, how Gilkey's more general thinking on the subject of science and religion was brought to bear on the specific question at issue, and how he actually fared in Little Rock as an "expert" witness on December 7, 1981. While Gilkey is no threat to Erle Stanley Gardner in the creation of courtroom drama, we nonetheless receive an intriguing picture of the way in which first-rate counsel prepares witnesses for their testimony. The last third of the book is a systematic statement of larger questions concerning science and religion in modern western life. Some of this material was part of Gilkey's testimony and some is a distillation from his earlier work. The volume closes with two appendixes, one giving the original Arkansas law, the other the 34-page judgement of Judge William Overton in favor of the plaintiffs striking down the law.

Gilkey's sentiments on the question of creation science are very clear. Since so-called creationism is "half-misinterpreted religion and half-misinterpreted science" (40), and since to teach it in the science classes of public schools would violate the constitutional prohibition against the establishment of religion, it deserves vigorous opposition. Gilkey's own testimony and that of his fellow-witnesses for the plaintiffs provide a full indictment of creationism. Creation science misunderstands the nature of science as a system of exploration limited to natural sequences of cause and effect. It is a product of reli-

gious beliefs unique to literalistic fundamentalism. Moreover, it represents a way of interpreting the Book of Genesis and the Christian doctrine of creation which has been thoroughly discredited by the best scholarship of the last 200 years.

At the same time, the book is much more than an attack on the creationists. In fact, its unusual benefit lies in basic, yet informed comments on "the time of troubles" (196) in western civilization that has led to such a tension involving religion and science. The root evil, Gilkey makes clear, is the notion that scientific learning offers a privileged way of grasping reality. Gilkey feels rather that scientific exploration provides one legitimate approach to the truth, but by no means the only one. When our culture enthroned science as the great arbiter of all truth, several disasters followed. Secularists pretend that since religious questions are not approached by "scientific" methods, religion is worthless. Sincere, but benighted, Christians catch the message that if sources of religious inspiration (like the Book of Genesis) are not interpreted "scientifically," they are likewise worthless. Gilkey, on the other hand, argues that while science and religion are related parts of the human story, they also represent different ways of comprehending the world. As a result, great care must be taken to allow science to flourish, but within appropriate limits. Likewise western civilization as a whole needs to respect the

deliverances of religion, but not to confuse them with the findings of the sciences. By the end of the book it is clear that Gilkey regards unthinking obeisance to a supposedly omniscient science as just as great a threat to modern life as the crass moves for political power by fundamentalists.

Gilkey's own proposals for making sense of what, in a fine phrase, he calls the "intricate interface involving two different and yet variously interrelated modes of speech and of knowing, one scientific and one religious," (184) are not the only possible ones. His preference is for liberal or neo-orthodox ways of joining self-critical science and self-critical religion. Those who are more conservative theologically would appreciate even the barest mention of how some Protestant biblical inerrantists (like B. B. Warfield earlier this century) and official spokesmen for the Roman Catholic church have proposed ways for accommodating evolution within traditional orthodoxy. Furthermore, it is not at all clear how Gilkey's splendid affirmation that Christians understand "the manifestation of God in special events, in particular human persons (e.g., Jesus), in history generally, and in nature" (223) can survive his ruthless sundering of the faith traditions into their "religious meanings" and their "factual' clothing" (227). All the same, this is an interesting book for what it tells us about the Little Rock trial, and quite a bit more than merely an interesting book for its skillful, succinct description of the troubled relation between religious knowledge and scientific pretensions in the modern world.

Mark A. Noll
Wheaton College
Wheaton, Illinois

REFORMATION OF CHURCH AND DOGMA (1300-1700), by Jaroslav Pelikan. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984. Pp. 424. $14.95 (paper).

Professor Pelikan produced in 1950 the initial prospectus for his multi-volume history of the development of Christian doctrine. One suspects that there are few scholars active today in the field of historical theology who could undertake such an ambitious project, requiring as it does such extensive knowledge of the primary sources of Latin Christianity and Eastern Orthodoxy as well as the insight to weave out of their witness a coherent narrative. *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* will comprise five volumes when it is completed (Volumes 1-4 are already in print). Pelikan describes the series as follows:

> In *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (100-600) I have sought to set down the development of what the Christian church believed, taught, and confessed between 100 and 600. The second volume...will cover the history of Christian doctrine in its Greek, Syriac, and early Russian forms from 600-1700 (although, strictly speaking, its account of the "non-Chalcedonian" churches will begin before 600) and will bear the title, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom.* In *The Growth of Medieval The-*

> *ology* I shall carry the story of Christian teaching in the Latin church from 600 to 1300. Volume 4, also confined to the West, will be called *Reformation of Church*

> *and Dogma,* 1300-1700. Then in the final volume, *Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture,* I plan to put the Eastern and Western developments back together, as they once more faced a common situation. (1, ix)

For the purposes of this work doctrine is defined as what the church of Jesus Christ believes, teaches, and confesses on the basis of the word of God. In accordance with this inclusive definition, Pelikan takes as his sources the "modalities of devotion, spirituality, and worship" and the exegetical activity of the church as communicated in proclamation and teaching in addition to the formal confessional statements found in apologetics, creeds and dogma. The work's arrangement according to doctrinal emphases rather than specific theologians reminds the reader constantly that the focus is on the church's tradition. Individual thinkers are considered only as they influenced its development. Personal idiosyncrasies, interesting as they may be, are not catalogued for their own sake. Thus, this is not the work to consult if, for example, one wishes a summary of the theology of Duns Scotus. If, on the other hand, one wants to know what contribution Scotus made to the church's discussion of divine foreknowledge and predestination, Pelikan's organization and indices make this information readily available.

Pelikan's study requires that one reflect on the relation between doctrine and dogma on the one hand and the distinction between doctrine and theology on the other. The witness of the church includes more than the normative statements of belief adopted by ecclesiastical authorities and enforced as official teaching. For example, as Pelikan points out, Protestantism had virtually concluded its confessional development by the 1650s so that a history of Protestant dogma would fall far short of the story of its doctrinal growth. On the other hand, individual Christian thinkers have entertained ideas that did not become part of the deposit of church teaching. Indeed, "[t]he distinction between what individual theologians held and what was believed, taught, and confessed by the church or churches was itself rendered increasingly ambiguous by the schism of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and above all by the Reformation of the sixteenth" (IV, 6). The challenge Pelikan takes up in *Reformation of Church and Dogma* is to evaluate the theology of religious geniuses like Luther and Calvin and of the denominations which developed in their wakes as these tributaries emptied back into the mainstream of Christian doctrine from which they took their origin.

Because he is concerned with intellectual rather than institutional history, Pelikan does not recount in detail the ravages of institutional separation which figure so prominently in the Reformation. Still, their effect on his task is unmistakable, for now the articulation of the church's doctrine must be discerned among the several churches, believing, teaching and confessing differently upon the basis of the same word of God, each claiming to be the true witness. Pelikan makes clear that the continuity of Christian doctrine lies in the shared dilemmas, the facing of certain core questions which arise in ever new terms. They give the tradition some permanently identifiable contours but at the same time permit genuine development, even novelty. For example, concern about the communication of God's grace was not unique to Luther and Lutherans, but the doctrine of justification by faith, "...even the very question of justification itself, was anything but a commonplace in patristic thought, Eastern or Western" (IV, 157). Once the question of the communication of grace was thus posed, all of Western Christendom ended up grappling with it in these terms. It is of such stuff that doctrinal development is made.

Reformation of Church and Dogma does a fine job of putting the Reformation in its context, tracing the doctrinal pluralism of. the late Middle Ages from which it emerged and

setting the stage for Christianity's traumatic encounter with modern culture in the account of the growth of confessional dogmatics in the late 16th and 17th centuries. In particular, Pelikan's chapter dealing with the doctrinal achievements of Luther and Luther-

anism is well organized and lucid. This reader found his analysis of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, indeed of the theological values at stake in any teaching on election, very illuminating. For Protestants who tend to see in Tridentine Catholicism a monolith of dogmatic definition, Pelikan regularly reminds his audience that the Council distinguished clearly between the tasks of consolidating authentic tradition of the church against the Protestant Reformers and "clarifying, within the household of faith, some of the theological inconsistencies that had been inherited from the doctrinal pluralism of previous centuries" (IV, 374). It restricted itself to the accomplishment of the first task, so that much unfinished business remained to divide the defenders of the faith. A decree such as the one on Scripture and tradition, while specific in its rejection of the Protestant *sola scriptura* principle, represented within Roman Catholicism itself "a decision not to decide" (IV, 302). In his account of the Reformation conflicts Pelikan shows repeatedly that the doctrine of authority was rightly identified by the participants as *the* "issue implicit within all the other issues" (IV, 262). Thus, he challenges contemporary readers, their heirs, to think once again about the proper role of that Christian tradition whose development Pelikan has documented with such mastery.

Jane E. Strohl
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

SPIRITUALITY AND PASTORAL CARE, by Nelson S. T. Thayer. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. Pp. 128. $6.95 (paper).
PROFESSIONALISM AND PASTORAL CARE, by Alastair V. Campbell. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. Pp. 119. $6.95 (paper).

In the first of these two books from Fortress Press's "Theology and Pastoral Care" series, Nelson Thayer, Professor of Psychology and Religion at the Theological School of Drew University, sets out to

> provide the theoretical linkage (between spirituality and pastoral care) and to show how the practice of prayer functions in the overall dynamic of spirituality, and how this articulates with pastoral care as it has come to be practiced by a psychologically informed generation of clergy.(13)

The relationship between spirituality and pastoral care is, indeed, an issue that lies at the very heart of the pastor's role as caring servant; an issue that must be addressed.

In his first chapter, Thayer gives a brief overview of the cultural context in which pastoral care is practiced today. He then goes on to offer some observations on the implications of that context for the pastoral caregiver. Thayer traces recent developments in philosophy to fill out the

picture of the modern circumstance of pastoral care. While staying on a highly theoretical plane, Thayer gives only general references as to what actual caregiving might look like in the modern context.

In the chapter, "Spirituality and Spirit," Thayer reviews various contemporary understandings of the human person and comments on the theorists (e.g., Freud, Jung, Erikson, Rogers, Maslow, May, Frankl) who have helped to shape those views. Thayer stresses the importance of depth and transpersonal psychology in a balanced, wholistic understanding of the person.

Thayer next sorts through a number of definitions of the human "spirit." Though he admits that it is impossible to come up with one, all-inclusive description of "spirit," Thayer suggests that at the center is the notion of the human's "capacity for participation in and responsiveness to the essential dynamism of the transcendent" (45). Throughout the discussion Thayer is careful to stress that "the human is utterly dependent on the self-initiating grace of God" (50).

Next Thayer moves on to address the matter of "spirituality." He defines it as:

> the specifically human capacity to experience, be conscious of, and relate to a dimension of power and meaning transcendent to the world of sensory reality expressed in the particularities of a given historical and social context (which) leads toward action congruent with its meaning. (55)

Thayer emphatically points out that spirituality is not to be equated merely

---

with the mystical but rather is a concept and reality whose center is "lived experience."

In the third chapter, Thayer proposes that pastoral care

> functions to nurture absolutely basic, essential human actions: the construction, experience, and maintenance of an ordered, value-laden world, without which human beings risk losing their essential, distinctive humanness. (63)

Further, Thayer puts forth that the aim of pastoral care is

> the formation of a consciousness that can be experienced and articulated in a variety of ways: the sense of the presence of God, the continuity between the human and the divine, the encounter with Christ, life in Christ Jesus, the spiritual Presence, the power of the Holy Spirit, relationship with God, the life of Christ. (70)

Thayer argues that pastors must seek to nurture their own spirituality (through prayer, worship, Bible study, compassionate social action, etc.) as they endeavor to guide others along the road toward the integration of faith and life.

In the last and by far the longest chapter Thayer centers in on "The Function of Prayer in Spiritual Formation." For Thayer, "prayer is a focused endeavor to open our awareness to the

reality of the transcendent" (81). Such prayer, he states, will occur in the face of great obstacles and objections which our society puts forth. He goes on to describe in great detail three main types of prayer which aid in spiritual formation; they are: centering prayer, verbalized prayer, and imagistic prayer. Thayer asserts that "enabling others in a mature prayer life should be seen as close to the core of pastoral care" (121). Thayer's deep passion for prayer comes through clearly in his thorough discussion.

As Thayer has set out to do in *Spirituality and Pastoral Care*, he provides us with a highly theoretical study of how these two Christian realities are related. This volume is a well-written primer on the subject and provides a solid foundation upon which one may further reflect on spiritual pastoral care. Those who are looking for a directly practical manual on relating Christian spirituality to caregiving in the parish will be disappointed by the focus of this work. The book is not a "how to..." guide but rather a "what is..." discussion. Those new to the subject or wishing to refresh themselves would do well to look to Thayer.

Alastair Campbell, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology at Edinburgh university finds "the idea that pastoral care should be regarded as a professional activity both attractive and unacceptable" (9). He goes on to say in his introduction that,

> there is an obvious attraction in the competence, consistency, and dedication of the professional person. These qualities certainly enhance any form of caring. Yet, at the same time, the claim to competence and to acknowledged authority seems to accord very badly with the theological insight that we all fall short of the love that God both offers to us and requires of us. Do we dare to lay claim to an expertise in Christian love? (9)

With this and many equally probing questions, interlaced with illustrative stories, Campbell set out to grapple with the thorny issue of the relationship between "Professionalism and Pastoral Care." It is a matter with which all serious caregivers must wrestle.

At the outset Campbell defines pastoral care as helping "people know love, both as something to be received and as something to give" (11). Love, as the aim of pastoral care, is furthered by the skill, consistency, and discipline of professionalism. But, as Campbell puts it,

> there may be a danger that if we professionalize pastoral care, we will lose the spontaneity and the simplicity that characterize love. Can we translate the command of Jesus to love thy neighbor simply into the instruction to become a trained counselor? This seems a poor translation indeed. (14)

Inherent in pastoral care is a tension that must be maintained between the safe, measurable skills of trained caring and the uncontrollable, risky side of love.

To get at the root of this tension Campbell explains that originally the word "professional" had to do with "the public declaration of faith associated with

a life of religious obedience" (19). Eventually the term came to describe not a religious/secular

distinction but rather a measure of skill, education, or socioeconomic status. After further probing the meaning of professionalism Campbell concludes "that the modern concept of profession encompasses many semantic and moral ambiguities. It is not clear what is being described when we say that an activity is 'professional'" (22). That which is labeled "professional" is often self-seeking and in direct opposition to the idea of "agape" love. Yet, we must be careful lest we throw the baby out with the bath water.

Campbell moves on to a discussion of "Profession and Vocation." He rightly points out that it is the calling of each baptized believer to be a caregiver and that this "ministry takes many forms but it (always) revolves around one central theme—servanthood" (28). The question then arises, can the ordained minister care in a way that stresses not power or superior status (as is often the case in professions) but servanthood and humility?

Campbell challenges us to rethink the very role of the pastor when he asks: "Does it still make sense (in our era) to centralize all the ministerial (servant) functions of the church in one designated individual, however well trained, however carefully prepared?" (36). Later he adds: "Is this really how *diakonia* should be exercised in contemporary life?" (36). He goes on to speak of a vision of pastoral care that starts with the whole people of God, not merely the ordained leader. He suggests that pastoral care can be related to the life of the whole church through *kerygma* (preaching), *koinonia* (fellowship), and *diakonia* (service). One person, Campbell warns us, can never create and sustain this kind of all-encompassing caregiving system. It is possible for one person, though, to lead others in their participation in the unified mission.

Campbell argues that following the secular view of professionalism too closely may very well preclude the very purpose of pastoral care, i.e., love. There are several features of professionalism that must be avoided by the compassionate caregiver. They are: lack of mutuality, maldistribution of influence and power, intellectualism, neglect of the communal dimension, and resistance to radical change.

To help us avoid these traps of professionalism Campbell would remind us that

> love entails a discipline of the physical, bringing care in contact and closeness; that it seeks story rather than theory in order to create a companionship with others; and that it requires a passion for honesty and truth in both personal and societal dimensions. (57)

Campbell speaks of a quality of trained caring that is open to innovation, creativity, and a risking love that reaches out to the other.

How are such caregivers to be prepared for their ministries? Campbell suggests that the necessary "'formation' entails not merely the acquisition of knowledge or the fostering of skills, but also the development of character" (79).Such character comes from reflection upon experience and from participation in the life of the congregation; from "a style of Christian living that promotes creativity and sensitivity" (90). That life is one which, like that of our Lord's, is filled with danger, hardship, and pain.

Campbell's work is a refreshing and stimulating wealth of insight into the very nature of ministry (lay and ordained) in the church today. He challenges many of our long-held assumptions regarding pastoral care and provides us with an exciting vision of a caring congregation which is able to reach out to touch the world with the love made known in Jesus the Christ. Those who are seeking to find a focus in their own perspective of pastoral care and in the

mission of their congregation will find Campbell's volume most helpful. He opens our eyes to see both the dangers of professionalism and the opportunities and possibilities which it offers for true caring in and through the church.

Thomas A. Wright
Gethsemane Evangelical Lutheran Church
Virginia, Minnesota

FACING UNITY: MODELS, FORMS AND PHASES OF CATHOLIC-LUTHERAN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP, by the Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission. The Lutheran World Federation, 1985.

Facing Unity is the most recent statement of the international Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue. It is the latest in a series of documents that began with the celebrated Malta Report on "The Gospel and the Church" in 1972. Succeeding statements discuss the Lord's Supper, the ministry, the Augsburg Confession, Martin Luther, and ecumenical strategy.

Facing Unity is different in kind from its predecessors. It makes a proposal that would put the churches on the way toward what it calls "structured fellowship" while it would keep them in continuing conversation over remaining differences. It is a daring bid for movement. Everyone with a care for Christian ecumenism should read and reckon with *Facing Unity.*

The problematic addressed by *Facing Unity* is adumbrated in an initial assertion: "The unity of the church given in Christ and rooted in the Triune God is realized in our unity in the proclaimed word, the sacraments and the ministry instituted by God and conferred through ordination." Lutherans will recognize here a departure from the formulation of the seventh article of the Augsburg confession which says "For the true unity of the church it is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments." *Facing Unity* is, among other things, an implicit attempt to argue that these two definitions are compatible.

Part I of the report treats the "Church as Fellowship" and sketches several models of church union. A valuable outline of the alternatives debated by contemporary ecumenists, these brief pages alone are worth the modest price of the book. Part II treats Lutheran-Roman Catholic fellowship in faith, in sacraments, and in service.

The report argues that Lutherans and Roman Catholics enjoy substantial consensus in faith despite considerable diversity in expression. The commissioners recommend that, where possible, the churches lift standing condemnations and anathemas as a means of giving expression to existing unity.

With respect to the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, informed Lutherans and Roman Catholics will expect the statement that the churches share a consensus of considerable proportions. Many Lutherans, however, will be surprised to find discussion of ordination under the heading of agreement in the sacraments. The report states that there is "substantial convergence" on ordination "...wherever ordination is celebrated through the laying on of hands and

---

prayer (*epiklesis*) as act of blessing and wherever it is taught that 'through the act of ordination

the Holy Spirit gives grace strengthening the ordained person for the lifetime ministry of word and sacrament.'" To anticipate points at which *Facing Unity* may be criticized by Lutherans, one might ask two questions here: Is this the prevailing view of ordination among Lutherans? Is it consistent with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions? It is unlikely that most Lutherans will answer either question in the affirmative.

The framers of *Facing Unity* introduce their new proposal under the heading of "Fellowship in Service." They argue that a common faith and understanding of sacraments means that the churches are "entitled and obliged to enter into a structured fellowship." The key to this structure is a fellowship of ordained ministers and a common exercise of episcopal leadership. The commissioners claim that "Only in a church so structured is it possible to take joint decisions to preserve and further the apostolicity, catholicity, and unity of the church...."

There is a pause at the point where earlier discussions have so often faltered: historic episcopacy. The framers of *Facing Unity* are blunt about it. They reiterate the Roman Catholic perception that Lutherans lack "the sacrament of orders" and repeat the traditional prescription for remedying this defect. "What is needed...is acceptance of the fellowship in ecclesial ministry, and this, ultimately, means acceptance of fellowship in episcopal ministry which stands in apostolic succession."

Prescription follows diagnosis. The first phase of a movement toward fellowship in ministry under an episcopate in a succession recognized by the Roman Catholic Church would consist of mutual efforts in service familiar to American Christians who have worked in local and regional councils of churches. This is to be followed by an "initial act of recognition" which would involve a declaration on the part of the partner communions that they are, in fact, churches of Christ with forms of the ministry established by Christ. Roman Catholics, the report asserts, would regard this as an admission on the part of Lutherans of "a lack of fullness of the ordained ministry" that is "a *defectus* which, for the sake of church fellowship has jointly to be overcome." A third stage of fellowship would allow regional oversight to be administered jointly by the two churches. In a final stage, a single ministry with a single bishop for a given area would emerge. At the beginning of this phase neighboring Lutheran and Roman Catholic bishops would jointly ordain new ministers. In time there would thus be a single ministry with one body of bishops. Regions might conceivably undertake cooperative initiatives at different times in different ways.

Predictions are risky, but it is difficult to think of this initiative meeting a favorable reception in Rome. Knowing what we do about the policies of the present pope, it is not hard to imagine what would befall a diocesan bishop or metropolitan who took independent action on the basis of these proposals. Yet it does bear the signature of two respected bishops, Martensen of Denmark and Scheele of Bavaria. And who during the later years of Pius XII could have predicted the events of John XXIII's reign?

How Lutherans—with their messier processes of reception and their indeterminate exercise of the magisterial authority entrusted to the church—will respond is more difficult to guess. American Lutherans will surely differ. George Lindbeck, a member of the Lutheran Church in America and one of the chief authors of the document, is a widely respected ecumenist, and favorable comment on *Facing Unity* has appeared in some quarters. How this sentiment might be translated into action by the American Lutheran churches is not, however, clear. On the other hand, many will suggest that these proposals amount to a scheme for the coopting of the Lutheran churches and their ministries by the Roman Catholic episcopate. It seems to some American Lutheran observers that the report simply bypasses difficult questions

about doctrines of the ministry in favor of action that will in time render the questions moot.

Debate promises to be lively. Read *Facing Unity* and take part.

Todd Nichol
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

THE THEATER OF GOD: STORY IN CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, by Robert Paul Roth. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. Pp. 191. $10.95 (paper).

The Theater of God is a definitive and daring work. Definitive, because it is the most carefully worked out treatment of narrative theology yet to appear. Daring, for Robert Roth goes beyond the small sorties in storytelling—autobiography, biography, biblical tales—to explore the grand sweep of the Christian epic. And he does so along the path of *doctrine,* a way considered closed to a hermeneutic sensitive to affect and art form. Indeed, the book is extraordinary in its joining of a mastery of intricate doctrinal and philosophical issues with literary grace and artistic sensibility.

As befits a narrative approach Roth tells us that his effort is an "experiment." The question that takes us on this journey is: Can *story* function as a universal "category" for interpreting Christian doctrine and thus constitute an alternative to philosophical motifs—ideal forms, substance, process—that have offered themselves as frameworks for faith? Building on the foundations of his earlier study, *Story and Reality,* he strives to show that a reading of human experience as "story-shaped" makes more sense of the specifics of Christian teaching than interpretations that force-fit them into any kind of discursive mold, scientific and historical as well as philosophical. Human life in all its richness is plot with characters moving over time and place through conflict to resolution. We experience it as such, and great literature discloses it to be so. When the Bible is read as our macro-story, and doctrine construed as chapters within it, the vitalities that escape the constructs of the left brain are discerned for what they are.

In conducting this experiment Roth traverses the doctrinal loci. In the doctrine of creation, for example, he directs us to the "Word that sang the worlds into being with the moaning of the Spirit" (49). How different this than the philosophical category of causality "which allows for no freedom, no absurdity, no mystery, no conflict, no laughter, no tears, no regret, no hope, no joy" (49). Also to be distinguished from this narrative vision of creation is the fundamentalist hermeneutic that turns the tale into modern(ist) historiography. So too, all along the storyline from creation through fall, the covenant with Israel, Incarnation and Atonement, justification, the church, its Scripture and sacraments, mission and ministry to the "final curtain" in this theater of the triune God, Roth shows how the narrative category illumines Christian conviction. A reader cannot go this route with the author without being regularly edified and instructed, including therein intriguing reinterpretations and defenses of the virginal conception, and the reality of the Evil One.

Whether Roth' s experiment can finally succeed will depend on how well he can answer critical questions posed from within the Christian community to this kind of storytelling theology. In the spirit of narrative, I put the questions in the tension of point-counterpoint.

1. What does it mean to juxtapose "recognition" to "cognition" and "acknowledgment" to

"knowledge" so sharply? And why reject the "message" in biblical stories in favor of their expressive and evocative power? Is there no room in narrative theology for the "truth of the symbol" as well as "symbolic truth" (Wilbur Urban), one in which the trustworthiness of meta-historical as well as historical referentiality is affirmed? Roth criticizes Hans Frei for his "agentic ahistoricism" with respect to the latter, and rejects a subjectivist view of religious symbol, but the "reality" in which story "participates" is consistently human experience, and that to which it points is an often elusive "transcendence." Is there a correspondence (analogical, of course) between the personal language for God that Roth vigorously defends as necessary for narrative and the ontology of transcendence? When he says "that the devil comes as a person and speaks in our hearts and minds in the very same way God does—except he speaks lies" (81)—it does not make the answer to this question clearer. Narrative theology can and must find a place for both heuristic and correspondence truth claims.

2. In substituting a literary for a philosophical interpretation of Christian doctrine does one avoid the danger of turning the Gospel into a "wax nose"?

Narrative theology does, indeed, keep us closer to the Book, its language and storyline. However, it runs the risk of any venture in translation whether it be the quest for a universal key ("category") or the more historically-oriented venture in "contextualization." We listen hard to the renderings of translators to hear if the text is in charge of the context/category, or the other way around. Thus, how large a role does our experience and conceptualization of "story-shaped reality" play in stating what an article of faith means? How much weight do we accord experiential tests—the often mentioned, "to satisfy," "to delight," "to edify"—in adjudicating doctrinal assertions? When the question of authority is answered with a "troika" of Scripture, church and the "faith of believers" (146), with each correcting the others, is the fallibility of our experience taken sufficiently into account? Is its corrigibility by the deeds and disclosures of God, mediated to us in the primacy of Scripture, given its due?

3. Does narrative theology enrich the catholicity of the church, honoring the gifts brought to it in the variety of its traditions? It would seem that it should, making a place for dramatic interaction and openness to the future. Roth often does speak ecumenically. But sometimes another word is heard, one that shows the limits of story, shaped as it is by heroes and villains, the armies of light and night, and thus vulnerable to Manichaean and Zoroastrian dualisms. There are enemy forces here, from which no good thing can come. "Born again" Christians turn up regularly in this camp. So too does "the fatuous grasping after the gaseous in the charismatics..." (68). On the other end of the spectrum, the defense and employment of patriarchal language for Deity has no time for the critique of the same by Christian feminists. A price is paid for these exclusions. Roth's weak treatment of the subjects of biblical authority and evangelization would have been improved by a knowledge of the debates among evangelical Christians on these matters, and his commitment to catholicity enriched by the feminist witness to inclusivity.

These questions do not come easily to this reviewer so convinced of the rightness of narrative theology and Roth's superb exposition of it. Nevertheless, they are part of the testing which experiments are all about.

Gabriel Fackre
Andover Newton Theological School

Newton Centre, Massachusetts

MATURE CHRISTIANITY: THE RECOGNITION AND REPUDIATION OF THE ANTI-JEWISH POLEMIC OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Norman A. Beck. Cranbury, N.J.: Susquehanna University Press, 1985. Pp. 326. $19.95.

The *adversus Judaeos* ideology has been very much a part of Christian tradition from the start. This anti-Jewish polemic has found expression in a variety of ways in the history of the church and in the broader society in which the church has had an influence. At times the polemic was over teaching and doctrine, sometimes taking the form of Christian apologetics. At other times the polemic was shaped by soteriological concerns and the mission of the church in salvation history. At still other times the polemic took the form of social and economic rejection of the Jews falsely grounded in scriptural warrants and church practices. In our time, especially, the *adversus Judaeos* ideology found racial expression in the exclusive definitions of the 1935 Nuremberg laws on citizenship in Germany's Third Reich and in the Holocaust that followed in Nazi Europe.

The fundamental question Christians have had to ask individually and communally in all times is whether this ideology is constitutive of the biblical record of salvation history and therefore justified or whether there are historical realities that have so influenced the interpretation of the biblical record that God's plan of salvation has come to be understood finally to exclude the Jews and to vindicate all forms of anti-Judaism in the Christian community and beyond.

Norman A. Beck argues that the latter is the case. God's gracious plan of salvation does not nullify the covenant with the Jews expressed variously in the Hebrew Scriptures. Nor is Christianity to be understood as superseding Judaism theologically and historically. What has come to be an anti-Jewish polemic in the

broad historical sweep of the Christian experience is in fact a distortion of the biblical record that had its genesis in those historical experiences in which Jews and Christians struggled together and in opposition to each other to know God's will for both. Those moments of struggle were later understood and interpreted out of context, creating the historical and theological separation between Jews and Christians that resulted in the *adversus Judaeos* ideology.

In order to correct this distortion, Beck argues, one needs to go to the source of the struggle, to the biblical record itself, especially in the New Testament Scriptures, to understand the historical realities for what they are and thereby turn the scale on misinterpretations that have found their way into later human experience.

Using historical-critical methods of study, Beck examines the New Testament Scriptures by sections: the epistles of Paul, the later Pauline traditions, the individual Gospels and their source in "Q", Acts, and the later remaining writings. He is clearly conversant with the literature and employs the critical methods carefully and thoroughly. His goal is not to disclaim the anti-Jewish polemic or to whitewash it but to interpret it historically and repudiate it contextually.

Beck's program as an interpreter of the New Testament, however, is not limited to what

we would normally think of as the hermeneutical or exegetical task. Interpretation for Beck involves a prior critical appraisal of the doctrine of Scripture and the canon. Repudiating the anti-Jewish polemic in the New Testament means going beyond such things as commentary explanations, footnotes *to* the text, interpretative essays, sermons, religious education, and the like. Repudiation means making those necessary corrections in the text itself that will eliminate the polemic or reduce it appropriately to its own *Sitz im Leben* where it can be understood in terms of its own dynamics. This correcting of the text can be achieved, Beck proposes, by (1) using sensitive interpretive translations (162, 199) that "eliminate material that seems offensive to us" (44); (2) bracketing the text and explaining it in a footnote (45); (3) pruning the text by reducing it to footnote status (45, 162); (4) eliminating the verses in question entirely from the translation (45). Beck's own choice generally is the third option.

Handling the text this way is not arbitrary, Beck contends, because "we are dealing with the interaction between permanent and changing factors within the Word of God" (46). Our responsibility as interpreters is to allow the text to speak today in all fairness to its own context.

Form-critical, redaction-critical and theological considerations provide helpful criteria for making corrections in the text. But the principal criterion is Christology. Repudiation of anti-Jewish polemic, Beck maintains, must always be done without damage to the theology that confesses Jesus the Messiah as Lord.

This principal criterion, however, in the opinion of this reviewer is the one that needs considerably more attention in further discussion. Beck has done close and careful exegetical work on the text, but his theological agenda to repudiate the anti-Jewish polemic and leave New Testament Christology undisturbed is not so carefully explicated. One wishes his brief statement in the concluding chapter (283-86) where he speaks of the development of Christology in the early church along the lines of Jewish understanding of God (Elohim) through Yahweh their Lord had been given more space in the development of the author's argument. Beck has made undemonstrated claims for an undisturbed Christology by not giving fuller attention to Scripture as Scripture in his exegetical work.

The call for maturity in Christianity, too, deserves more discussion. One wonders, for example, if the use of critical methods on the New Testament at some temporal distance from the text produces the climate of maturity, as Beck suggests, or whether maturity is presupposed in the use of the methods themselves. Moreover, Beck's definition and criteria for maturity are not clear. He seems to presuppose something of the von Harnack Hellenism thesis, especially in chapter 2 on "The Anti-Jewish Polemic in the Epistles of Paul." There he argues that this polemic crept into the Pauline letters in their later editing. The impression left is that there was a proleptic

"mature Christianity" in Paul that was blemished by later Christians and will hopefully be recaptured through present-day use of critical analysis and theological reflection. And yet, on the other side of that early maturity is the development of Christology which also figures in the process of repudiation and reconstruction.

Finally, the program for correcting the text of the New Testament Scriptures seems to call for establishing a "canon within the canon" by properly distinguishing authentic and redactional materials. Against this, one could propose that instead of corning to a view of Scripture out of

critical analysis, mature Christianity would be better served by interpreting the New Testament contextually out of a sense of the whole of the canon. Such a process would keep text and interpretation more closely together and give Scripture a historical perspective through which one could examine the effect of each upon the other. That perspective might be more helpful in the hermeneutical work the Christian community must do today in Jewish-Christian conversation to prevent contemporary misinterpretation and distortion of Scripture in that conversation.

Eugene C. Kreider
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

PAUL'S GOSPEL AND MISSION, by Arland J. Hultgren. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. Pp. 176. $9.95 (paper).

In this readable and clearly organized book, Hultgren seeks to explore four basic questions: 1) "How has God disclosed himself to the world in light of the Christ event?"; 2) "What has God done through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?"; 3) "What are the effects or benefits for humankind that have accrued through the divine action?"; and 4) "How did Paul conceive of his mission?" (6f.). After an introductory chapter, Hultgren uses the remaining ones (chapters 2-5) to construct his answers to those questions. He does so by pointing to "God's righteousness" (eschatological justifying action) as central to Paul's understanding of the gospel and the character of his mission.

In Chapter 2, Hultgren argues that at the center of Paul's explanation of God's disclosing event is the phrase "God's righteousness" (*dikaiosyne theou*) which is to be understood primarily in theocentric-eschatological (following Käsemann) rather than anthropocentric terms. He strengthens this conclusion by pointing to texts in the Old Testament and other Jewish writings which associate God's righteousness with the coming of the messianic age. Though the forensic sense of the justification of the individual—what the Reformation made primary—is not lacking in Paul, the accent is on God's saving power for all the cosmos.

In chapter 3, Hultgren responds to the question about Jesus' death and resurrection by concentrating on Romans 3:21-26. He argues that the much debated word *hilasterion* in verse 25 is best interpreted as an allusion to the cultic notion of *kapporeth,* rather than carrying the meaning of "propitiation" or "expiation." His case for Paul's use of the Old Testament idea of "mercy-seat" is convincing, yet his assumption that "Romans 3:21-25 sets forth the Pauline gospel in miniature" (71) is debatable.

In chapter 4, the author returns to his investigation of the use of "righteousness of God" and argues that Paul speaks of "justification" in two contexts: 1) justification of humanity by God's act of righteousness through Christ (theocentric and cosmic emphasis), and 2) "realized justification of believers through faith"—anthropocentric and ecclesial emphasis (96). Moreover, he attempts to relate Paul's statements about judgment to this theme of justification. Hultgren's final conclusion regarding this relationship is best seen in the following summary statement:

> They [believers] are the saved, living in the midst of a world whose form is perishing and doomed to pass away. They differ from unbelievers not in the sense that they alone are saved and that unbelievers are condemned. They differ rather

in the sense that that which is in store for the whole created order, including humanity that does not know the gospel or even rejects it now, has been granted to them pro-

leptically. They do not therefore boast in their status but rejoice in it and await final redemption. (144)

Thus, Hultgren interprets Paul as having little or no room for divine judgment in any ultimate sense.

In the final chapter, attention is directed to Paul's view of his apostolic mission. According to Hultgren, Paul's description of himself as "apostle to the *ethne*" (Rom 11:13; cf. Gal 2:8-9; Rom 15:16, 18) is to be understood primarily in terms of mission to "the nations." Paul viewed his missionary work as bringing about an offering to God of the "nations" as part of the eschatological messianic kingdom. His missionary strategy was designed to establish congregations which stood as an anticipation of the unity of humankind fully to be realized in the soon-expected new age.

Hultgren's book is worth careful study. He is obviously in touch with much contemporary scholarship on Paul (both in English and German). But there is a methodological problem in his approach. Though Hultgren acknowledges that Paul's central understanding of the gospel is always "contextualized" and never to be abstracted as "doctrine," he tends to proceed in his consideration of the "righteousness" theme with no consistent attention given to the particular historical-sociological context for Pauline texts, especially those in Romans. At the outset (7-9), he makes explicit his approach to Romans. Following Bornkamm and others, he assumes that Romans offers a summary of "major themes of Pauline proclamation and theology" (9). He does seem to agree with many other scholars that "justification is only one of the Pauline metaphors concerning the effects of God's action toward the world through Christ" (82). Yet when I finished reading his book, I had the impression that Hultgren, by concentrating on the theme of "justification" in Romans, assumes that he is explaining the "center" of the Pauline gospel. The centrality of the "justification" theme and Romans as a summary of Paul's theology are issues now widely debated among Pauline scholars.

James L. Bailey
Wartburg Theological Seminary
Dubuque, Iowa

THE CHILDREN'S GOD by David Heller. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986. Pp. 175. $15.95.

This book should be required reading for all who teach children about God, whether in home or church.

In this first book-length study of childhood theology, Heller draws on developmental psychology, religious education theories, and interviews with forty children—Catholics, Baptists, Jews, and Hindus—regarding their images of God. His stated purpose: "I wish to depict the many

dimensions of deity imagery in children ages four to twelve; at the same time, I want to create a portrait of the several influences that shape these deity representations." Although Heller himself is a psychologist, he exhibits no little sensitivity to the nuances of theological matters.

The interview conducted with individual children was carefully structured; it included drawings, storytelling, doll-play, the writing of letters to God, and conversation. The survey instrument is included in an appendix. Adapted to your own situation, it could serve well as a means to elicit the theology of the children with whom you work. You may well be surprised by what you discover, as most readers of this book certainly will be. Their small voices are not yet so filtered by social and religious expectations that honest moments of intimacy, anxiety, and doubt are edited out. They sometimes offer educational and religious lessons more profound and true-to-life than the prepared, and often guarded, curricula of the adult world.

After a chapter on method, four chapters compare the children's images of God in terms of their religious affiliation, age, gender, and personality type. Another chapter explores the influence of family history and relationships on their theological development. An extensive chapter seeks to indicate seven commonalities in their images of God: God's qualified power (!), intimacy, omnipresence, transforming energy, and connectedness with people and world; their own anxiety in relation to God; and a vision of light. These commonalities seem to cut across the socialization process. A concluding chapter draws some implications for parents and teachers regarding

the impact of socialization by institution and family (e.g., the tendency of teachers and parents to block noninstitutional or unconventional views, thus discouraging discovery; the children "communicate a great striving for deity-related exploration and a great yearning for more expansive personal experience and belief"). An epilogue makes it clear that children's images of God are not for children only.

> In six-year-old Keith's play scenarios, God cries as a young boy dies.
>
> "Once upon a time in Heaven...God woke up from his nap. It was his birthday. But nobody knew it was his birthday but one angel...And this angel rounds up all these other angels, and when he gets out of the shower, they have a surprise party for him" (nine-year-old).
>
> The relationship between the child and the deity is heavily shaped by the child's current relation to family.
>
> In general, the God representations of the girls are not nearly so grounded in concrete facts and events as are those of the boys. The girls collectively present a deity that is closer to sound and color, closer to nature and natural phenomena, and farther from technical and scientific constructions.
>
> "Maybe there is a God, but it must be someone else's God" (ten-year-old).

The girls present a God of at least relative emotional intimacy, in contrast to the more distant God the boys describe.

"Usually, God is a man. But some people think he could be a woman, with long hair and all. I don't see why he always has to be a man" (seven-year-old).

"I believe that God may have a little of both sexes but I'm afraid to say this out loud...I guess 'cause people might think I'm stupid or something" (twelve-year-old).

A significant group of children carry a deity consumed by rage and villainy.

"God takes away people's suffering, like from cancer. He has the power to do that and he uses death in that way. But he must not have full control—otherwise he would cure the cancer" (eleven-year-old).

"God is always here. God is always walking in my mind" (four-year-old).

More than once, Jesus had something important to say to adults about the faith of children, both for their own sake and for the sake of the children. This book continues in that important tradition.

Terence E. Fretheim
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

HABITS OF THE HEART: INDIVIDUALISM AND COMMITMENT IN AMERICAN LIFE, by Robert N. Bellah, et al. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. Pp. 355. $16.95.

The significance of *Habits of the Heart,* a book quoted in every graduation speech I heard last year, is rivaled only by the popularity of Garrison Keillor who is now being sought as everyone's graduation speaker. Each, the scholarly collaboration and the humorist, seeks to remind us of who we are.

A team of five writers, headed by Robert Bellah, researched the epistemology, ethics, and identity of Americans (a term they use to mean the people of the United States) believing that, in the republican sense, the mores (Tocqueville's "habits of the heart") of a people (i.e., their character) is related to producing a morally coherent community. The authors are concerned that the strong historical thread of individualism could actually threaten freedom. "Commitment," the twin word in the subtitle, is not used in the manner in which others have spoken of a "crisis in commitment." Here commitment means that to which we give priority or devotion. In that sense this is a book about faith, that to which we are ultimately committed. In the authors' view our faith foundations seem quite fragile.

The two hundred field interviews which were part of the production of this book are not treated as *statistically* valid conclusions; rather they are used to produce a current *portrait* of at

least some of us. The authors were particularly concerned that the respondents became "strangely inarticulate" in describing dreams for communal life beyond individual liberty. The responses were vague: e.g., people should "make society better," or not hurt each other, or "have the right to make a reasonable amount of money and live a reasonably good life" (19).

Freedom, with its biblical and republican bases, is traced to such traditionally reported roots as Winthrop, Jefferson, and Franklin, to produce at the end of the eighteenth century the argument that "in a society where each vigorously pursued his own interest, the social good would automatically emerge" (33). What are not traced are the networks of those not free to pursue their own interest: women, slaves, the oppressed immigrant groups to come.

In our loss of coherence, the identified "crucial change" is that of size; from visible social relationships to a vastly complex technological society where individuals cannot understand themselves as interrelated in morally meaningful ways (50). Perhaps the problem is deeper than size. Just as Bellah, in *The Broken Covenant,* recognized that the problem with the American Dream was that, from the beginning, not everyone's dreams were included, so here, it is not that the findings are inaccurate, but that the questions merely circle back to the individual freedom as envisioned by those free to be free.

The book examines our search for meaning through our breaking away from dependency to find and rely upon ourselves, defining performance in comparison with others (57, 68). Relationship is researched only in terms of love and marriage, whereby woman could moderate the rugged individual (85). The tone of the book, as well as the questions sequenced in the chapters, presumes the norm is the upwardly and outwardly mobile and successful individual male.

There is a truth here, of course—for example in the telling description of the cowboy. One could substitute "pastor."

> The cowboy has a special talent—he can shoot straighter and faster than other men—and a special sense of justice. But these characteristics make him so unique that he can never fully belong to society. His destiny is to defend society without every really joining it. He rides off alone into the sunset...like the Lone Ranger moves on accompanied only by his Indian companion [the pastor's wife?]....his significance lies in his unique, individual virtue and special skill and it is because of those qualities that society needs and welcomes him....he always leaves with the affection and the gratitude of the people he has helped. (145)

The second part of the book, on the public life, begins with "getting" involved, not with "being" a communal people. Citizenship might well be "the pursuit of different interests according to agreed-upon neutral rules" rather than a "consensual community" (200). Just as the *Faith and Ferment* study revealed, religion often boils down to individuals' "finding a congregation they like" and yet remaining lonely in their faith life in the world (227, 241). Congregations themselves appreciate autonomy. The national society's unresolved problem is the "tension between self-reliant, competitive enterprise and a sense of public solidarity" (256). A meaningful, cohesive, communal, and public life is elusive.

I found a haunting sadness in the summary. Although the authors state individuals' need for nurture in groups, and for a conception of the common good, and for an understanding of work which expresses our intricate connectedness and interdependence, the only answer the book offers is a "return" to colonialist ideas of social obligation and group formation. We have less a "Transformation of American Culture" than a lament that the battles have become "half-hearted" (276). With our broken heart, like the broken covenant, we are bewildered by the possibility of artificial heart transplants, rather than a transformation through the healing of our communal heart-beat.

The book ends with our poverty. Perhaps the authors, too, know that we cannot be simply "informed by Republican and Biblical sentiments" (259). We need to recognize also the poverty of our ideals and listen to the voices which have been there all along, simple communal voices, like those from Lake Wobegon, or the voice of Ruth Levy, buried—but there—on page 138: "So encircled by love and suffering shared, we are no longer in the 'giving-getting' mode. We know ourselves as social selves, parents of children, members of a people, inheritors of a history and a culture that we must nurture through memory and hope."

Norma J. Everist
Wartburg Theological Seminary
Dubuque, Iowa

PRAISING AND KNOWING GOD, by Daniel W. Hardy and David F. Ford. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985. Pp. 228. $12.95 (paper).

Praising and Knowing God is written by Daniel W. Hardy and David F. Ford who are lecturers in theology in Birmingham University, England. Their book examines the Christian experience of worship in terms of our knowledge of God. The authors do not concern themselves with liturgy, its shape and the various forms it can take. Reference is made to four modes of praise—word and sacrament, spontaneity and silence—but again the authors are not concerned to discuss these modes. Furthermore they do not examine Christian praise as a psychological or sociological phenomenon, although they do limit themselves to a description of praise as a Christian experience. This Christian experience is analyzed into Catholic, Protestant, and Pentecostal types, but no detailed, distinguishing description is given, except that Pentecostalism is hailed as the great contribution of the twentieth century with its "jazz factor" of combining pattern with spontaneity. In my judgment the two brief references to Pentecostalism and speaking in tongues as the symbol of the movement lack critical sharpness and historical understanding.

The methodology used by the authors in examination of praise seems to be a combination of Aristotelian definition by concentric circles and Socratic dialectic. Praise is one of five kinds of prayer. After distinguishing thanksgiving, confession, intercession and petition we are left with praise as the focus of discussion. The seminal definition of praise is "recognition and respect." In the broadest sense praise both comes from God and goes to God. God made us in the beginning and delighted in what he made. He praised his creation by saying, "Behold, it is good!" Then with typical Socratic reasoning, the authors contrast praise with its opposite, blame. And since the creature has fallen into sin and become blameworthy, God's praise for his creature is caught in a dilemma: God cannot praise guilty sinners but if he marks our iniquity who shall stand?

Throughout the book the authors refer to a "logic of overflowing" in contrast to a "logic of projection." Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud levelled the criticism of Feuerbach against Christianity: our God is the projection of human wishes and fears. Hardy and Ford say that such a logic of projection necessarily denies God, but Christian praise derives from above, not from within, from the God whose love overflows and breaks through all the rigid paradoxes and dilemmas in which sin has captured us. The doxology of praise to Jesus as Lord breaks us out of the tension between freedom and responsibility, order and non-order, grace and works. We experience this overflowing love of God in Jesus Christ whose obedient praise of God "perfected perfection." The key to understanding praise is the kenosis hymn quoted by Paul in his letter to the Philippians. This is profoundly Trinitarian in that it puts Christ and the Father into relationship, not in terms of equality as in the Chalcedonian formula, but in terms of a dynamic of praise, one for the other.

God was confronted with a rebellious creature full of blame and lacking praise. He became that creature in Jesus who returned praise to God for the blame. This Jesus did for us, and so his praise perfects perfection. The movement of praise refers all to God. Jesus did this, referring not only the goodness and beauty of the creature to God but also the sin and suffering and death. Praise, in contrast to blame, is thus defined as an expanding economy which is given by the praiser to the praised. As Jesus gave praise to God and thus enhanced his glory, so God gave praise to Jesus and lifted him in resurrection to a glory above the heavens. The test therefore is this: do we return praise for blame, or do we return only blame?

Hardy and Ford present an interesting application of their "logic of overflowing" to the ontological argument for the existence of God. It still does not avoid the four-term fallacy, but they want to avoid the static equilibrium of Chalcedonian Trinitarianism and affirm instead a dynamic, growing, personal relationship among the persons of the Trinity. When the ontological argument is stated in Trinitarian terms this becomes surpris-

ingly evident. The ontological argument says God is existent because he is that being "than which we can conceive nothing greater" and a being without existence is less than one with existence. Now, if we think of God not only in terms of his greatness as Creator but also in terms of his greatness in history and in personal relationship, we will open our praise beyond mere intellectual statement. Greatness of God now becomes understood also in terms of the story of Jesus and his suffering and power. The cross and resurrection are the events "than which nothing greater can be conceived." Furthermore the movement of the Spirit giving us power to confess Jesus as Lord and God as Father, and the calling of the Spirit gathering us into the eschatological community of the church, is a power "than which nothing greater can be conceived."

This is the kind of book that teases the reader into deeper reflection, but it raises more questions than it answers.

Robert Paul Roth
Luther Northwestern Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota