



**SUFFERING AND HOPE: THE BIBLICAL VISION AND THE HUMAN
PREDICAMENT**, by J. Christiaan Beker. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987. Pp. 94. \$4.95 (paper).

In this insightful book, Professor Beker has made a significant contribution to our understanding of suffering and hope as presented in the Bible, particularly in the writings of Paul. Though the language and argumentation are a bit too complicated for widespread use, it should be particularly helpful to pastors, pastoral counselors, and other serious students of the Bible who wish to connect their biblical traditions with some of the most perplexing questions that confront people in today's world.

Though Beker is an accomplished New Testament scholar, he makes it clear in his Preface that this work is no mere academic exercise. He gives us a few hints about his personal struggles (especially because of events in World War II and after) that have moved him to undertake this study. In his Introductory chapter he talks about the problem of balancing suffering and hope in our day. This theme occurs again and again in the book as he discusses the problem of suffering without hope (leading to despair, cynicism, unhealthy submission, passivity) or hope without acknowledging the reality of suffering (leading to illusory false hopes). He thinks that our exposure to suffering and difficulty in maintaining hope is unique in our time, at least partly because of the experience of the Holocaust and because the media is constantly bringing the world's suffering to our attention.

In chapter 1, Beker briefly lays out his understanding of Scripture's authority as a *catalytic* function, which resists literalism, anachronism, and modernist prejudices, and is able to distinguish between a text's abiding character and its time-conditioned interpretations (25). Chapter 2 deals with the Old Testament response to evil by looking briefly at the deuteronomistic literature, Job, Ecclesiastes, and Daniel. Chapter 3 moves into the New Testament literature by juxtaposing the way suffering and hope are presented in 1 Peter and Revelation. Both books have their value but each is too one-sided. 1 Peter does maintain hope for this world *and* the next but has an individualistic inclination and introduces a kind of masochistic valuing of suffering. Revelation is too negative about any possible redemption for this world, though it clearly offers hope for the end times.

For Beker, it is Paul who most successfully understands the complexity of suffering as sometimes redemptive and sometimes tragic. Chapter 4 deals with the former and chapter 5 with the latter. Pauline texts from Romans 8 are considered in much greater depth than the texts from the Old Testament or from Peter and Revelation. He has many interesting and helpful distinctions to make as he puts Paul forward as the best biblical balance between suffering and hope. Some suffering is meaningful (redemptive) and some is not. Suffering at the hands of sinners can be made redemptive and elicits a prophetic response while suffering at the hands of the power of death requires an apocalyptic response. One can do something about the one but is helpless against the other. There is a "dark residue" of evil and death in the created world which cannot be

attributed only to human sin. Our only hope in the face of that kind of suffering is for an eschatological victory over death. And that hope is based on God's victory over death in the cross and resurrection of Christ (77 and *passim*). Such insights are very helpful as one tries to deal with the difficult questions that surround suffering and hope, whether as a biblical interpreter, a

preacher, a teacher, or a pastoral counselor.

In chapter 6, he comments on recent books on suffering by Dorothee Soelle and Harold Kushner. He is both supportive and critical of their work. His final chapter is a good summary of his position, including possible "objections" to his biblical vision of hope and affirmations in response to those objections.

This is a very carefully constructed and balanced presentation. To discuss issues of suffering and hope is to walk through a minefield, where pastoral abuses and theological overstatements are very common. Beker has been very careful to make distinctions, to seek balance, not to be misunderstood by those who may jump too quickly to assume that he is saying what he does not want to say. As I read the book, several times I thought perhaps he was overstating one side of the truth, only to note that a little later he would come back and qualify his earlier point to bring a better balance.

I have two words of critique, both of them influenced by my own personal perspective on suffering and my interest in the Old Testament. First, I found his excessive language about the uniqueness of the suffering of our time a bit annoying and perhaps a little pretentious. Certainly it is an arguable point whether our exposure to suffering in our day is "unparalleled in scope and intensity" (16). Second, though I recognize that he is not an Old Testament scholar and he is most interested in what Paul has to say on this subject, it still seems that some Old Testament material received rather short shrift. I was particularly dissatisfied with his treatment of Job, and, to a lesser extent, with his handling of Ecclesiastes and the deuteronomic material. It seems that Job may have a lot more hope to offer by way of a renewed relationship with God, even though it is certainly limited in its eschatological and apocalyptic vision. The same could be said of the lament psalm which moves from lament to praise of God, demonstrating a renewal of hope in God that may not be dependent on objective events.

In short, this is a very helpful book for those who want to dig into their biblical traditions to make sense of suffering and inspire hope.

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BEHIND THE MASKS: PERSONALITY DISORDERS IN RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR, by Wayne E. Oates. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987. Pp. 144. \$8.95 (paper).

Wayne Oates has pioneered the respectability of pastoral counseling. Over the years he has told us that it is all right for pastors to use the resources of psychology to deal with parishioners. He has interpreted psychological material to non-psychologists, establishing principles of counselling that are accessible to the average clergyperson. He has worked hard to

convince us that we do have a role in the everyday crises in people's lives. And he has tried to make us comfortable in referring those people whose problems were beyond our ken. In *Behind the Masks*, Dr. Oates asks us to reconsider the pastoral care of disturbed people. Subtitled, "Personality Disorders in Religious Behavior," the book might better be tagged, "What To Do When You've Referred Someone for Serious Counselling and She or He Is Still in Your Life."

Behind the Masks is a non-psychiatrist's guide to personality disorders, which Oates chooses to call "masks" in the manner of Harvey Kleckley (*The Mask of Sanity*). Using the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM III), he depends on the interpretation of Theodore Millon, in his *Disorders of Personality: DSM III, Axis III*. By referring to personality disorders as "masks," Oates expresses his Christian optimism that wholeness is possible through faith and care. Dr. Oates' contribution to the discussion of personality disorders is threefold: he describes them as they might present themselves in a congregation or to a pastor; he suggests particular "religious"

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manifestations of the personality disorder; and he suggests resources of faith to reclaim the person under the mask.

This is an important book, because it acknowledges parish realities. Not every disturbed person who comes for counselling will go away. Some refuse referral. Some will go elsewhere for counselling, but still remain part of the parish. Learning to refer the severely disturbed is essential for every would-be pastoral leader. But in real life, learning to live with them is crucial. This book is an attempt to help us live with people in various states of disorder. The book has two foci. The first is the people with the various personality disorders that Dr. Gates exposes. That is the stated focus of the book. The second focus of the book is us—pastors, parish leaders, and congregations—those of us who deal regularly with the people who are the subject of the book. As Dr. Gates goes through the various personality disorders and addresses how we are to minister with them, he also suggests how we are to deal with ourselves as we deal with our sisters and brothers.

Each of the first eight chapters describes a mask, and makes suggestions on how to cope with and help the person under that mask. Because the book is about people in relationship instead of in isolation, it addresses the needs of the whole community, not simply those of the masked person. Chapter I describes the "Mask of Dependence," suggesting that dependent persons are particularly vulnerable to personality-cult type religions, to addictive dependence on a pastoral figure, and to a search for "magic" solutions to their very human problems. Gates counsels affirming the gifts of dependent persons, so that they may grow into them. In the "Mask of the Packaged Personality," Gates describes the histrionic personality as overdramatizing the superficial to cover an inner emptiness. He suggests attention to steadfastness and an inner core of integrity as ways to cope with the "packaged personality."

Gates describes the person with the "Mask of Self-Assurance" as one whose "spiritual deficit is a lack of awareness of grace and an incapacity for gratitude" (45). Accompanying the lack of awareness is a sense of infallibility and of an exclusive relationship with God. Acknowledging the temptation to dismiss the narcissist as unchangeable, Oates nevertheless suggests seizing the teachable moments when the mask is off, as well as "ambushing them with surprise" (53), and not going overboard to indulge or deny their demands. Seeing the "Mask of

Hostility and Aggression” as almost the American way of life, Oates suggests four solutions to this societal and personality disorder: (1) the stewardship of anger; (2) the acceptance of acceptance; (3) the transformation of the power focus from the self to God; and (4) the discipline of considerateness (65).

Identifying the Baby Boom generation as collective victims of the “Mask of Passive Aggression,” Oates describes the disorder as a hidden fear of making a mistake. But as passive aggression is closet perfectionism, the “Mask of Too Many Scruples” is out and out workaholism. Oates is particularly eloquent here, seeming to rely more on his own experience and less on the diagnostic writings of others. He suggests that we help over-scrupulous persons by seeing God as a God of deliverance, not of slavery.

In the “Mask of Detachment from Life,” Oates describes the person who comes to expect rejection in life. Trust is a major spiritual need, and small support groups in churches may help. In “Persons Living on the Edge of Chaos,” Oates describes borderline personalities, paranoid personalities, and schizotypal personalities. Noting that these people are often a nuisance to those around them, Oates suggests that churches become accepting places for the severely disturbed, by providing non-threatening classes and social situations. He calls the churches to help all people seek their unique gifts of God.

Oates’ final chapter, “After the Masks Are Gone,” is his strongest. Freed from the task of interpreting DSM III to church

people, he reflects broadly on health and wholeness and the church community’s role in it. He concludes:

We are faced with the challenge: “By the crowd have they been broken, by the crowd they shall be healed.” In the resurrected community of those who have been crucified with Christ, we live, yet not we, but Christ lives in us, and we are called indeed to live a life ordered by him. In the life of that community we are persuaded that persons with disordered ways of existing no longer need the masks of sanity these disorders represent. Masks are so fatiguing. We can have done with them and be ministers of encouragement to enable others to do likewise. (136)

Despite its importance, this is not a book without flaws. Oates’ writing style is decidedly casual, and tends toward cliches. At places it is unclear whether he is being descriptive or prescriptive as he draws his verbal pictures. But the most significant flaw to this reader is the author’s apparent total ignorance of women’s scholarly contributions to the very subjects which he holds dear. A glance at the bibliography of forty some authors does not reveal Valerie Saiving, whose 1960 essay, “The Human Situation: A Feminine View,” first suggested that women’s sin is not pride, but self-abnegation. Nor does he include Jean Baker Miller, whose 1976 *Toward a New Psychology of Women* revolutionized psychological thinking about universality. Nor does he include Carol Gilligan, whose 1982 study *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* challenged the conclusions of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg because of those researchers’ exclusive use of male subjects to draw their conclusions. My point is not to criticize Oates for not reading everything ever published. But his failure to note the work

of these three scholars, whose work would so illuminate what he is trying to do in this book, is noticeable. Indeed, the absence of any female scholars in his bibliography indicates a significant blind spot in this otherwise well-read man.

Yet, despite its flaws and blind spot, the book is a good contribution to pastoral care. Without minimizing the severity of the personality disorders he presents, Wayne Oates shows hope. By dealing with masked persons as redeemable children of God, Oates provides a provocative, compassionate study on some of the least of the brothers and sisters.

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GOSPEL, CHURCH, & KINGDOM: COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN WORLD MISSION THEOLOGY, by James A. Scherer. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987. Pp. 271. \$14.95 (paper).

Are we poised at the verge of a new era for mission? The author of this important volume thinks so. Furthermore, he would like to push us—with some sense of urgency—to greater engagement with the questions such a new era raises and the doing of mission such a new era demands. James A. Scherer, professor of world mission and church history at the Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, states that one of his aims in writing this book is to clarify issues of mission theology “for my own church by way of challenging it both to deeper reflection on the issues and to more active involvement in forwarding the unfinished task” (5).

Whether or not this aim is realized, Scherer succeeds in fulfilling his two other aims: to provide resource material for study of recent developments in the theology of mission and to offer a synoptic view on recent mission theology from an ecumenical perspective.

Moving from a brief but comprehensive survey of “the great century of Christian missions”—the 19th century—through developments up to the present, Scherer makes his case for what he calls “a new missionary era,” one that will be qualitatively different from the past. (More about that later.) He then gives an entire chapter to specifically Lutheran mission, beginning with Luther’s own thought, which exhibited “a uniquely

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missionary structure,” through the periods of Lutheran Orthodoxy and Pietism to more recent and present day trends in Lutheran involvement in mission the world over. Other chapters treat mission theology and practice in the ecumenical (conciliar) movement, among evangelicals, and in the Roman Catholic church. In a final chapter, Scherer identifies fifteen crucial and unresolved issues common to the three traditions—conciliar, evangelical, and Roman Catholic—that loom large in the future of world mission.

Scherer’s study is unique among current books on world mission. It brings together in a relatively short and readable volume a summation and analysis of the significant developments in thought and practice of Christian mission endeavor of this century. Scherer thereby provides a valuable service to those interested in the topic, for the resources are scattered, not always easily accessible, and voluminous. He excels at concise, clear summaries of reports, documents, missiological studies, and the decisions of the many conferences, consultations, and assemblies which have addressed world mission over the past eighty years. Although ecumenical in scope,

the book's attention to the Lutheran contribution to mission theology and practice makes it especially valuable for many readers of this journal. And, although the focus is world mission, every Lutheran pastor and concerned lay person will find in the chapter "Lutheran Mission in Historical Perspective" insights for mission in the local parish.

I believe with Scherer that we are witnessing the beginning of a new and markedly different phase in the movement and direction of Christian world mission. He asserts that this will be a "new missionary era." But there is a certain ambivalence in this assertion. On the one hand, there is the unprecedented shift in vigor and growth of the church to the two-thirds world, those areas outside of North America and Europe. By the 21st century missionaries from these areas, he predicts, "will have taken over the initiative for global mission" (46). On the other hand, he speaks of the crisis in the Christian missionary movement in the North, in Europe and North America. Here one detects more than a hint of nostalgia for the past, when missionaries from Europe and North America were the ones committed to completing "the unfinished task." Scherer writes, "Gone for the most part are the simple faith, confidence, and activism of the student volunteers," those who believed "that they could literally accomplish the task of evangelizing the entire world within the generation of those then living" (21).

Scherer is the first to admit that the world in which mission is done today is radically changed, vastly different, from those times. In fact, that underlies his projection of a new era for mission. One wishes that while he exhorts the churches of the North to greater involvement in mission, deploring as it were the crisis we face, he would also provide us with a more penetrating analysis of the role and place for Christian mission initiatives from the North in this new era.

This brings me to a comment on his final chapter. He identifies fifteen "crucial issues," raising a series of questions and stating a thesis for each. These are presented in sequence, with little indication of their relative urgency or importance during a time of crisis or the complexity of the relationship of these issues one to another. Repeatedly, the concluding thesis is phrased as a call for continuing research, further study, more reflection—a mode of doing mission that is hardly characteristic of the "simple faith, confidence, and activism" of the past. Fair enough. For it is precisely in a time of crisis that this research, study, and reflection are most needed. The future of our commitment to and involvement in God's mission in the world depends, to a large part, upon heeding this, the most crucial task for us today in world mission.

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THE QUEST FOR UNITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Paul J. Achtemeier.
Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987. Pp. 132. \$7.95 (paper).

CHRISTOLOGY IN PAUL AND JOHN, by Robin Scroggs. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988. Pp. 129. \$7.95 (paper).

Paul J. Achtemeier and Fortress are to be thanked for providing "situational theologians" a book that can be of much use when it comes to preaching on texts from Acts and the Letters of

St. Paul. And, in this age of ecumenical concerns, the book lends itself to a more sympathetic understanding of the controversies among the churches and also within individual congregations seeking to do the “will of God.”

Another contribution of the book calls attention to an important aspect of biblical interpretation. The author makes the point when he writes, “The value of Acts lies in the theological reflections embodied in it, not in historical information about the early church, interesting and at times as accurate as that may be” (75).

As one begins reading Acts, in particular the Pentecost story of Acts 2, in preparation for preaching and teaching in the church, one realizes that the “rosy” picture of the early church portrayed in the account is not the “way it is.” As one continues to read in Acts, as the author points out, it proves not to be the “way it was”—neither in the early church nor in any subsequent age. The same holds true even within local congregations. The Pentecost story is an “ideal”—a “vision” of unity for the churches.

Thus that elusive unity, for which Peter yearned and which Paul sought to achieve, which James attempted to preserve and which Luke labored to portray in his account of the early church—that unity in fact was not achieved. It was as much an ideal in relation to the earliest Christian communities as it remains an ideal in relation to Christian churches today. That early unity existed, and continues to exist, only in the optimistic historical imagination of scholars who cannot bring themselves to believe that Paul really lost the dispute in Antioch, a loss with lasting results for the Christian church; or who cannot bring themselves to believe that Peter, after his right hand offered to Paul in agreement with his apostolic mission to the Gentiles, could have betrayed Paul by siding with the emissaries from James, thus committing his prestige to a denial of the validity of Paul’s theological position. Perhaps the present and future of the church, and its goal for unity, would be better served by recognizing the situation for what it was, rather than hiding it beneath the patina of an overly optimistic historical imagination. (66)

Such thought serves the preacher of the Pentecost story in good stead. It is all right for congregations to hear that the Holy Spirit leads and directs the church through controversy...that this is how the Holy Spirit works. And it is good for a congregation to hear that the unity we seek in Christ is a goal toward which the Holy Spirit directs the churches.

The book also serves a useful purpose for interpretation of the texts of Acts and the Letters of Paul. The historical accuracy of a text does not have to be “proved” in order for the intention of the text—the Word of God—to do what God intends the Word to do, namely to create faith. Both preachers and congregations need to be assured of this at all times, or, in their desire to “prove” the Scriptures, they will not have heard the Word of God, the gospel, contained within the account. What was true for Luke’s friend Theophilus is true for the church of every age.

Chronological accuracy is hardly the kind of assurance that these events fulfill God’s word given to his chosen people, and that thus Jesus is assuredly God’s message of salvation to Theophilus and others like him who repent of their sins,

are baptized (Acts 3:38), and acknowledge that there is no other name “under heaven...by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). It was to meet the need of Theophilus for such assurance that Luke was writing, and it was in that sense that Luke set out to create an “orderly,” that is, “appropriate” account. (74)

After all, that is the purpose of the Scriptures and that is why Paul J. Achtemeier’s book can be of great worth for the parish pastor.

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Scroggs’ work is equally valuable. “Christology should be reflections on the experience of the believer. Unless the believer has experienced something in the depth of her being, she has nothing to think about” (1). How true! And how good it is to have another Proclamation Commentary from Fortress Press giving clear insights into the Christology of two early believers, Paul and John. As with Achtemeier’s volume, parish based preachers, compelled to preach on texts from the Gospel of John and the Letters of Paul, are helped by Scroggs in their study for and preparation of sermons.

Scroggs’ commentary provides the opportunity first of all to grasp and understand the Christ as Paul proclaimed him in his writings. The second part of the book details the Christology of John. While the two respective Christologies are different and not dependent upon each other, put together they do give us rich insight into the question of who Jesus is and what he means for faith. In the comparisons it becomes clear that Paul used legal metaphors to describe the new world made possible through the cross. On the other hand, John saw Jesus as the revelation of divine reality coming from the realm of God the Father into this world of darkness.

Following the discussion of the differences between Paul and John—like “wrestling with two angels” (105)—the author seeks to clarify some essential and underlying similarities in the Christologies of Paul and John. Even though there is a lack of historical connection between Paul and John there is in substance a “profound relationship” (107). This relationship is discussed under three headings: Creation, The Vision of the Fallen World, and Jesus Christ as Revealer. Both Paul and John agree that the God who saves is also the God who created. Such an affirmation from the present day pulpit can indeed be “good news.” That truth affirms that the world created by God is the area of his grace. Salvation then means the restoration, “a return of world to its rightful order in relation to God” (107). While Paul and John say it differently, what is wrong with the world is “willful ignorance” of the true God, manifest in moral and spiritual blindness. Under the topic “Jesus Christ as Revealer,” the suggestion is made that the solution is in Jesus Christ who breaks into the world, “revealing who the true God is and thus making possible a new world.”

The last three pages of the book comprise an important word to the theological discussions present in the church. They point up the importance of theology being Christocentric! “The Christian, just as Paul and John, has experienced God through Jesus Christ, and thus cannot speak about God without speaking about Jesus Christ” (111). But the question is asked whether or not “Jesus talk” is mere intellectualization or whether it is experiential. There is no question that after reading both Paul and John one comes to the conclusion that for them Christology was indeed experiential. They believed in Jesus Christ and thus they wrote and preached. The *Christology in Paul and John*, like the other commentaries in the Proclamation series, should

join Achtemeier's *The Quest for Unity in the New Testament* in every working pastor's library.
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IN SEARCH OF FAITHFULNESS: LESSONS FROM THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY,
by William E. Diehl. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987. Pp. 144. \$5.95 (paper).

This book was inspired by the bestseller *In Search of Excellence* (1982) by Peters and Waterman. The author, William Diehl, wants to do for faithfulness in the church and the world what Peters and Waterman did for excellence in business. He writes, "I decided to look for faithfulness in those very places where it appeared not to be—in the world of business, for instance" (xi). Diehl's professional background includes forty years working primarily in management of a major corporation. He

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has also been active in various structures of his church (formerly Lutheran Church in America, presently Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), and has been involved in the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and the peace movement. The text is the result of seventy personal interviews Diehl had with people from all walks of life, the analysis of a survey he sent to 300 Lutheran business leaders (174 actually responded), the author's own experiences and reflections, and a sprinkling of quotes from several Christian scholars. The book is short, readable, and largely anecdotal.

Diehl wants the church to be a community where people really love each other, where people are just and active in that love, where people have a clear Sunday to Monday connection, and where people know the call of God in their daily work. Diehl has spent years stressing that lay persons are called by God to their particular labors in the world. He wants the church to acknowledge and affirm the work of lay persons as real ministry. And he wants this affirmation to be made publicly and privately.

The main problem facing the Christian church, according to Diehl, is dualism, the dividing of life between things sacred and secular, between the spiritual and the material. Yet, he concludes that it is the church itself which embraces dualism and fosters it, and, in effect, teaches it in order to survive in the world. It is hard not to be sympathetic with this author who has such a legitimate concern. Diehl sees the present day church in a malaise, and is saddened by the puny influence the church exerts in the nation's political, social, and economic institutions. He asks what has happened to the Christian faith. Where are God's faithful people? He wonders why none of the success and excellence books ever mentions God, the Bible, or the church as having any impact on the workaday world. He himself can remember only two occasions when he and an associate talked about religious issues.

Because Diehl's desire is a needed one—that there be a genuine connection between faith and life in a person's daily activity—I had hoped to like this book. However, after reading a few pages a sense of disappointment set in. It was clear that this book would yield only a few bitter fruits. Sadly, Diehl seemed to be constantly carping. Consider the following quotes. I realize they

are taken out of context, but they reflect the flavor and content of the book.

The church itself is the principal barrier to faith development among its people. (xii)

...the church [is] primarily to blame for the fact that all the “excellence” books make no mention of religious values or beliefs among business leaders. (xii)

When only 30% of active churchgoing business persons say that they feel that they have been called by God in their occupations, something is wrong, and our ordained ministers, the “tellers of the story,” must largely be held accountable for the scandal. (36)

Our religious leaders have come to see the church as the center of the universe. It is only natural that they should feel thus. Their theological training was in a church owned institution. As a result, members of our congregations have tended to see prayer as more of a “churchy” activity than a worldly activity. (59)

...for most Christians, the local congregation is their *only* experience of Christian community. It is bad news for several reasons. First, many Christian congregations in this country are essentially dead. (65-66)

We can be ashamed of the narrow self-serving manner in which Christian giving and Christian stewardship are presented in our churches today. (84)

By reinforcing a concept that we live in two worlds, the church is thwarting the mission and ministry of God’s people. (85)

Surely the church cannot be against its people growing more Christlike in their daily lives. (111)

My experience of being let down by my congregations is not unique. (116)

This book is supposed to be about Diehl’s search for Christian faithfulness in the business world. In fact, it is about his own assessment of the church’s faith

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lessness. He finds failure everywhere in the church: in worship, in adult education, in stewardship programs and practice, in nurturing genuine piety, in fostering true fellowship, in helping people in their spiritual pilgrimage, and in addressing ethical matters.

Diehl says that he is not anticlerical. I believe him. Yet it is rare to read in this book any reference to a parish pastor or church leader whose work reflects competency, compassion, and understanding. Most of the time clergy come across as bumbling, simplistic, ill-informed, pretentious, timid, and gifted in the art of laying guilt trips on the people of God.

We have about 120 pages of Diehl’s angry analysis. His rationale: “I believe that the church of Jesus Christ is capable of doing far better than our records show” (116). He does raise important issues, but in my opinion, he manages them poorly. His bitterness gets in the way of a reasoned, balanced, and responsible discussion.

At the end we find five pages where Diehl suggests some remedies for the church’s ills. He suggests that every congregation have a standing committee on ministry; he hopes congregations will use more computers and data banks in keeping track of members’ talents; he believes better adult education programs will be helpful; he hopes that seminary training will

offer more meaningful experiences in the real world and less dogma by itself. Finally, Diehl raises up this ensign of encouragement, a sign that he says is found in many corporate training offices: “All development is self-development.”

That’s about it. There is a certain hollowness in this book, a lingering notion that the author has been on a long journey but not quite in the right direction. It is a cheerless journey. If you are a melancholy owl, read this book at night. It will make you feel better.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA, by H. W. Arndt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Pp. 217. \$20.95.

The title and organization of this book are deceptive. Purportedly “the history of an idea,” the book at first glance appears to be an evenhanded description of different views of economic development. By book’s end, however, after proponents of economic growth western style have been given generally favorable reviews and proponents of “social development” patronizingly dismissed, the apparently evenhanded treatment wears thin and reveals its true nature: ideology disguised as objective analysis. The method is simple: be neutral with your friends, dismiss all your opponents, and leave the reader with a single option—your friends.

The last chapter should be read first. In fact Arndt would have done well to put it first and so announce his thesis up front instead of hiding it. Arndt can speak for himself, first on his friends:

...[M]odernisation based on the absorption of Western science and technology, attitudes and behavior, was seen as a necessary condition of economic growth. In Western countries, economic development of the Third World became a major policy objective because humanitarian as well as political-strategic considerations made it seem important to reduce the gap between the rich and poor countries by raising living standards in the latter. (165f.)

Next, Arndt dismisses his opponents:

At its most unsophisticated, the demand by churchmen [sic], vulgar socialists, and idealistic men and women in the street for policies of redistribution—taking from the rich and giving to the poor—rather than development reflected thoughtlessness and lack of imagination....It simply does not occur to them that poverty can be alleviated more effectively by development than by redistribution. (169)

Church leaders and church pronouncements are patronized and rejected:

Churchmen [sic] have little time for mechanisms by which a country’s progress is maintained (170)

And finally his grand conclusion:

Economic growth, in other words, was the only effective way of making the people of the Third World materially better off. (173)

That's the ending. The book starts in Chapter One with a standard, non-controversial introduction. Chapter Two traces the prehistory of economic growth as a social objective. What the reader learns is that economic expansion preceded the idea of growth as a policy goal. The latter gradually took hold in the West and after World War II was related to Third World economies.

In Chapter Three, his best chapter by far, Arndt effectively summarizes three mainstream economic views which held sway from 1945-1965. These views had in common the equation of economic development with growth of the Gross National Product (GNP). The first stressed capital formation as the most important factor in growth; the second, human capital; and the third, international trade. Arndt takes these views gently to task for attending too exclusively to means and too simply equating development and GNP growth.

Toward the end of the 1960s Arndt notes a change in the climate of opinion, born he thinks of the turmoil and alienation of the period which he clearly did not like. The discussion of economic development shifts away from means to ends. Chapters Four, Five, and Six are devoted to academic economists, government leaders, and church heads who seek social ends through the development process rather than GNP growth western style. These chapters are less helpful because of Arndt's quick dismissal of opposing views, his use of 'ad hominem' arguments, his failure to address the issues raised, and his lack of familiarity with those whose views he describes. His facile treatment of church perspectives is especially disturbing.

Chapter Four looks at the new development strategies which advocated employment creation, equality, eradication of poverty, and meeting basic needs. His categories are well chosen, and his references are useful. He introduces a number of sources deserving of recognition. But then following a few cryptic counter-arguments, come these surprising and simplistic assessments: "[an] accelerating rate of slogan obsolescence" (106), and 1960s youth alienation (108).

Chapter Five looks at Latin American dependency theorists in the same manner. He labels them neo-Marxists. Liberation theology is quickly dismissed. Maoism gets a not very enlightening six-page nod. The New International Economic Order (NIEO) is analyzed and called "ideological" over and over again, a word Arndt never uses in describing his favored positions. Actually, Arndt has some very important criticisms of the NIEO, the most important of which is its failure to deal with poverty and maldistribution within Third World countries. He should have developed that criticism further.

Chapter Six is bizarre. Chapter Five is titled "Radical Counterpoint—The Left" and deals with left-leaning views. So when Chapter Six is titled "Radical Counterpoint—The Right," the reader expects ultra-capitalist views, say the economic thought of Elliott Abrams. Not so. Instead Arndt gives us Gandhi and Khomeini along with lesser known economists, all of whom have in common outright rejection of western style economic growth. Arndt offers no explanation of what he means by "the right." He betrays no understanding of or sensitivity to religion or the need for visionaries. In the end one wonders why he did not offer an analysis of ultra-capitalist views.

My quarrel with Arndt is not over the issues he raises. There are legitimate differences of opinion about ends and means in Third World development. Arndt may also be correct about economic growth western style as the only viable alternative. I am skeptical, but as one trained in Christian ethics, hardly in a position to have “answers.” Would that he had stuck to these topics, for it might have made for a more valuable reading experience.

Instead Arndt takes us through an ex-

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ercise in hidden polemics. That is the basis of my objections to this book, to wit: (1) that he hides his polemical thesis behind copious notes, innumerable sources, and apparently evenhanded analysis; (2) that he dismisses those who differ with ‘ad hominem’ attacks; (3) that he fails adequately to probe opposing viewpoints and writes them off too fast; (4) that he does not come to grips with the miserable poverty in many Third World countries; (5) that he makes no effort to view the world from the “bottom up”; and (6) that he offers no vision of human fulfillment.

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AMERICAN MAINLINE RELIGION, by Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1987. Pp. 279. \$10.95 (paper).

Recently, the United Church of Canada magazine, the *Observer* (July, 1988), speculated on the future of that denomination in light of recent research findings which disclosed that half its membership is over sixty years of age and only 4.6 percent between the ages of 18 and 30. “In 20 years, half of us will be over 80 or dead. For every four who are gone, only one new member will have come in.” Practically every denomination which considers itself in the “mainline” of American Christianity has access to or has commissioned research which gives comparable pictures of an aging constituency, of financial giving which barely keeps pace with inflation, of baptisms which number less than deaths, of members who disagree over the practices of their denominations, and so on. Church executives and pastors, and some lay people, are scrambling both to understand the import of such data and to develop a strategy to reverse trends. All this while those groups of more sectarian or conservative evangelical or pentecostal orientation appear to grow, often by drawing off the young people from the established churches. Of the several interpreters of this situation, none are more helpful than William McKinney and Wade Clark Roof. Sociologists by training

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and theological in outlook, the two teamed up to write *American Mainline Religion* which artfully blends sociological research data, social philosophy, and theological analysis in such a way as to demystify much of the data about “mainline” religious traditions in America and to prepare the groundwork for thoughtful theological discussion about the future of the denominations bearing those traditions.

The conviction of the hypothesis underlying the volume is that the religious landscape of America is undergoing massive shifts—much of which has been and is occurring in response to the counterculture movements of the 1960s and the evangelical revival of the 1970s. Thus, there is a realignment of religious power and authority, shifts of mood and religious outlook among broad spectrums of the American population, and the appearance of new public voices expressing a claim for space within the religious terrain and for recognition within the wider society. The authors seek to map the new terrain through the use of data from the General Social Survey, studies done by other sociologists of religion (e.g., Andrew Greeley), outcomes from denominational research (e.g., the Glenmary Research Center), observations from commentators on the ecclesial landscape (e.g., Dean Kelley, Richard John Neuhaus, and Martin Marty), and reflections of social philosophers and historians (e.g., Robert Bellah and Sydney Ahlstrom).

The richness of the book is made possible by the way in which “mainline” is treated. It is not a static but a flexible, fluid and, even, flawed concept. It is defined more in the experience of religious groups appearing and interrelating in a culture. The authors are clear that several mainline groups appeared in American history and were disestablished. But, for a group to be mainstream, roughly that group must be of significant numbers in membership, have some power in access to public social and political leaders, possess a vitality to mobilize and motivate its members, and claim confidence in and celebrate the American way. A final factor appears as the mainline groups face the threat of disestablishment, as they all do. That factor is tension: tension with religious groups on the mainline’s periphery and tension within its membership over the integrity of mainstream values, beliefs, and practices (72-76).

For the sake of definition, mainline religion refers to “the dominant, culturally established faiths held by the majority of Americans” (6). The authors focus on the shifting mainline of the past forty years, a shift from a consensus public religion which Will Herberg named in the title of his book *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* to a mainline more in the making due to the demise of a public cultural, religious center. That center, often supported by the larger mainline denominations, is less clear in the contemporary milieu of social and religious pluralism and a voluntaristic approach to religion Robert Bellah and others have called expressive individualism (see Chapter Two). The old mainline is in eclipse. A new mainline may or may not be formed.

The authors make the important observation that while the old mainstream will lose its flow of members to the new tributaries of religious expressions and groups, the denominational patterns still are identifiable, though the identities are influenced as much by demographics as theological or ideological conviction. For example, a comparison of religious preferences between 1952 and 1985 surveys shows that people giving a “Protestant” preference has declined from 67 to 57 percent. “Catholic” preference has increased 3 percent. “Jewish” preference declined 2 percent. The surprise is the rise of “other” and “none” as preference from 3 to 13 percent, a striking increase (16). Indeed Roof and McKinney suggest that a hypothesis of a new voluntarism explains in part the shift. First, for example, people are choosing to participate in alternative experiential religious activities. More people are involved in transcendental meditation groups than there are Presbyterians (18)! And, both through new immigrants and through persons ex-

non-religious preference will increase. For example, one finds more Muslims in the United States than Episcopalians (235)! Indeed, the authors speculate that Thomas Jefferson's claim that "I am my own sect" has become a self-fulfilling prophecy (244-45).

For the purpose of differentiating among the varieties of religious groups (an uneasy task since at least 1200 are identified in the American milieu), the authors identify seven broad families of affiliation. These families demonstrate not only a fragmentation of groups but a growing shift in numbers and influence by denominations other than what Roof and McKinney call the Big Three, the Liberal Protestants: the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, and what has come to be the United Church of Christ (which included the Congregationalists in its merger). A second family reflects more nineteenth-century America: those churches of the evangelical revival (Methodists, Disciples of Christ, and Northern Baptists) and Protestant immigrants (Lutheran and Reformed). A third family, Black Protestants, includes Methodists and Northern and Southern Baptists. The fourth is an eight-group set of denominations ranging from Southern Baptists to Assemblies of God to Adventists. Catholics and Jews constitute the fifth and sixth family groups. The final two groups are "others" (Mormons, Unitarian-Universalists, et al.) and "no religious preference" which, noted above, is a growing family. What shapes these families and enables them to grow is the subject of some extended discussion in the volume. For example, more conventional sociological analysis may be helpful to see the impact of social class, ethnicity, region, and race. But, as people increase their choice of religious preference, as social boundaries between groups become less clear, as White Anglo-Saxon Protestant leadership is pushed out of the center of society; as the larger liberal churches experience more ideological division, and as middle class status and church membership declines, then the matter of choice among plural religious options may well be the renewed focus of religious sociology and theological, social, and ecclesial analysis (Chapter 4).

In fact, the influence of voluntarism may be as valuable an analytical tool as demographics in assessing the future growth and development patterns of the old mainline. A review of the demographics of the liberal Protestants shows that they are not losing members to other religious groups. They show a net gain of "switchers." Rather, losses occur due to a lower birth rate and to disaffected members becoming unaffiliated. It is the moderate Protestants who have the greatest losses: to all the other groups (Chapter Five).

The authors conclude with possible options with which the mainline churches could deal as they face not only their futures but the future of religious life in America. First, several things will be fairly certain: Catholic populations will increase; Jewish groups will continue to deal with survival issues; Black Protestants will grow numerically; the Protestant establishment will continue to decrease in size and relative social power; the boundaries of other and new religious groups will expand; and the non-affiliated sector of the population will increase. With these givens, the authors do believe that the durability of denominationalism will continue in our society. But the new context for this will have the liberal churches more on the boundaries while the conservative groups will move to the center. They speculate that the moderate churches may be the potential resource for redefining the center and upholding a public faith which both recognizes pluralism and faces an increasing individualism but which has the integrity of communal faith and practice.

In conclusion, *American Mainline Religion* is a carefully orchestrated volume which judiciously presents data, avoids "scare tactics" that our churches as we know them will shortly die, urges

theological reflection on the impact of pluralism and expressive individualism in our public life, and avoids flashy strategies to increase the number statistics on our denominational roles. Indeed, Roof and McKinney do show that numbers are important. If our denominations do not take the numbers business seriously, they will diminish. But any strategy must be based on the theological integrity for which the authors argue.

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THE JEWS IN LUKE-ACTS, by Jack T. Sanders. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987. Pp. 410.

A passionate concern about the potential roots of anti-semitism in the New Testament, and especially Luke-Acts, motivates this provocative study. It is a concern that ought to be shared by scholars and church leaders alike. Sometimes we may even need the kind of sharp polemic which concludes this book:

In Luke's opinion, the world will be much better off when "the Jews" get what they deserve and the world is rid of them....the modern reader of Luke-Acts is now forced to ask whether Luke's polemic against "Jews" has not become the leaven within Christianity—and within Western society—against which we must all and eternally be on guard. (317)

If this is Luke's opinion, the warning is salutary, though painful. But even if this overstates the evidence, as I finally think it does, there is still good reason to be on guard. Ever since Rosemary Ruether's *Faith and Fratricide*, the honest facing of anti-semitism in the New Testament has become a necessary, though unfinished task. While one may be tempted to engage Sanders in side-polemics, in part due to his own argumentative rhetoric, far better to evaluate his arguments as best one can.

This redactional study has two major sections, with a brief summary. Part one offers a thematic investigation of the main topics on Luke's attitude toward the Jews; the second part provides a detailed exegetical analysis of all the relevant texts in Luke-Acts. One would normally expect the reverse order, but apart from some repetition, the outline works by first engaging the reader with a synthetic portrait of the Lukan attitude toward the Jews, which can then be checked in part two.

The topics discussed in part I are the Jewish leaders, Jerusalem, the Jewish people, the Pharisees, and the Periphery (outcasts, Samaritans, proselytes, God-fearers). Sanders argues that not only does Luke hold the Jewish leaders responsible for Jesus' death and the earliest persecution of the church, he even tells the story as though the leaders actually crucified Jesus, even though Luke knows better. Jerusalem has forfeited its place in salvation-history by rejecting its "time of visitation," and so deserves its divinely-ordained punishment, the destruction of the city and Temple.

As for the Jewish people, Sanders recognizes a more ambiguous portrait in Luke-Acts,

but finds a solution in drawing a distinction between the Lukan speeches and narrative. In the key speeches of Jesus and in Acts the “Jews” are condemned as inherently stubborn and unbelieving. In the narrative, however, Luke must show how they got that way; and so tells a mixed story of faith and unbelief until their pre-ordained judgment. Surprising, however, is the favorable treatment given the Pharisees, with the Lukan Paul even insisting that Pharisees and Christians are faith-companions in their hope of resurrection. New (and unconvincing) in Sanders’ argument is that Jewish-Christians in Acts are literary counterparts to Jesus’ Pharisaic opponents in the Gospel, and that thereby Luke wants to exclude Jewish-Christians who still keep the Law. Thus, despite Luke’s openness to Pharisees, they too are finally left outside. Finally, Sanders interprets Luke’s well-known interest in outcasts and sinners in the Gospel and the proselytes and God-

fearers in Acts as the transition in the movement of the gospel from Jew to Gentile.

In part two, one can examine the exegesis that informs the author’s thematic analysis and conclusions. Each passage is preceded by a select list of important literature. Obviously there will be numerous disagreements on details. But what can be said about the author’s overall presentation of Luke and the “Jews”?

I would raise two issues as test cases for its accuracy. First, whom does Luke hold responsible for the death of Jesus? We may agree that Luke has gone beyond his sources in focusing on the Jewish religious leaders as arch-villains, although ambiguity remains over who actually crucified Jesus. But Luke has not thereby made all “Jews” guilty. The early speeches in Acts accuse only the leaders, and diaspora Jews are likewise told it was their leaders in Jerusalem (Acts 10:39, 13:27-28). So Luke does not lose all historical perspective, and in fact it seems quite untrue (one is tempted to say slanderous) to charge Luke’s presentation as the root of the epithet against all Jews as “Christ-killers” (256).

Second, what is the Lukan attitude toward those Jews who reject Jesus as Messiah? Jervell has argued persuasively that Luke envisions a restored Israel of believing Jews and Gentiles, which then moves out into the Gentile church with no further Jewish mission. Sanders agrees that for Luke the Jewish mission is over, but he rejects any earlier reconstituted Israel. Rather, he sees Luke progressing salvation-historically from Jew to Samaritan to Gentile, with the unbelieving Jews finally cut off forever (Acts 28 becomes a *crux interpretum*). Again, one can agree that Luke does find a negative pattern of *heilsgeschichte* in the Jewish scriptures and up to his own time. But this never reaches the point that all Jews are excluded. Believing Jews belong to the story from beginning to end. And what of the mission now? We agree Luke lives historically and theologically in the time of the Gentiles. But Acts 28 leaves open the fate of the unbelieving Jews. For now, God’s mission must go to the Gentiles. Some Jews do believe, while Paul the Jewish apostle leads the way. And the future? That is in God’s providential plan, rooted in the unbreakable covenant fulfilled in Christ. Here the excellent discussion of Acts 28 by Gerhard Krodel in his recent Augsburg commentary does better justice to the evidence, I think, than Sanders. In fact, the whole question of a Roman apologetic, so uncritically accepted, needs to be challenged as well.

Still, this book deserves thoughtful reading. I commend it so that we will hear what we so often don’t want to hear.

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READING AND PREACHING THE BOOK OF ISAIAH, ed. by Christopher R. Seitz.
Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988. Pp. 126. \$6.95 (paper).

The book consists of a collection of lectures given in 1986 at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, on the book of Isaiah; The intent of the lecture series was to acquaint the audience (seminarians, clergy, and the general reader) with problems involved in interpreting, preaching, or reading the Bible, to discuss the theological issues raised by the book of Isaiah which challenge the contemporary scene, and to familiarize the audience with recent trends in Isaiah scholarship which move beyond the usual historical model of interpreting the book.

The introduction by Seitz, "The One Isaiah/The Three Isaiahs," sets the scene for the remaining selections, each of which discusses one of the main sections of the book of Isaiah (chs. 1-39, 40-55, or 56-66). Seitz stresses that both literary and historical contexts must be considered by the sensitive reader and preacher of Isaiah, and warns that the tension between the two may never be fully resolved. The interpreter must keep in mind both the historical divisions (the

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Three Isaiahs) and the literary unity (the One Isaiah).

In her article, "Isaiah of Jerusalem: Themes and Preaching Possibilities," E. Achtemeier gives a brief overview of the historical and literary background of 8th century Isaiah, and then touches upon some of the major themes of the book. Throughout, Achtemeier interjects observations from the contemporary scene—the absence of self-criticism in many wealthier churches, the problems of poverty in American society, fragmentation of the family, dishonest government officials. Achtemeier also connects the 8th century Isaiah with the New Testament and the Christian message.

J. L. Mays' article, "Isaiah's Royal Theology and the Messiah," also stresses the connection between 8th century Isaiah and modern Christian theology. Most lectionaries emphasize Emmanuel and messianic passages from Isaiah. Mays supplies information about royal theology from the psalms and from the wider background of ancient Near Eastern literature, in order that Isaiah's messianic theology can be understood within its historical and cultural context. His treatments of the term "son of God" and of ancient Near Eastern rituals related to the inauguration of a monarch can help the reader to more fully appreciate the significance of royal theology in both Testaments.

The community is the focus of articles by R. Wilson and P. Hanson. Both emphasize that in order to understand the words of the prophet(s) "we must understand something of the community that collected and passed on these words to us." This, however, is a difficult task, since there is so little evidence about the Jewish community in Babylon. Wilson uses extrabiblical data, as well as material from other biblical books, to illustrate what the community of Second Isaiah could have been like. His discussion of the political and religious situation is brief and concise but furnishes the reader with an excellent picture of the background of the

anonymous Second Isaiah.

Both authors describe the communities of Second and Third Isaiah as deeply divided. The rhetorical tone of Second Isaiah suggests that there is a minority group which is trying to convince the rest of the exiles of the legitimacy of its theological and political position. References to persecution indicate friction within the community; Wilson suggests this is due to the fact that a segment of the community considered itself to be an elite group that was the only bearer of true faith.

Hanson sees in Third Isaiah a description of the conditions of those exiles who had returned to the land and were trying to understand and live out the challenge of Second Isaiah. Hanson, more than any of the other contributors to this volume, shows connections between the three Isaiahs by showing the development and transformation of the themes of light and darkness from the beginning to the end of the book of Isaiah. His article ends with observations about modern communities of faith which “slip into a narrow sectarian mentality” and condemn all rivals within and without the household of faith.

W. Brueggemann’s “Second Isaiah: An Evangelical Rereading of Communal Experience,” will be recognized by readers of his book *Hopeful Imagination*, as simply a reprint of a chapter from that volume. Some readers will rightly object to getting one article for the price of two. Publishers should be discouraged from such a practice.

Seitz’ concluding article looks at the overall unity of the book of Isaiah.

In general, this book fulfills its purposes of exposing the reader to both the unifying aspects and elements which divide chapters 1-66. Half of the articles supply bibliographies which will be useful. The book will be helpful to both the preacher and the general reader and gives both background from biblical times as well as possible applications for the contemporary scene.

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