



APPROACHES TO AUSCHWITZ: THE HOLOCAUST AND ITS LEGACY, by Richard L. Rubenstein and John K. Roth. Atlanta: John Knox, 1987. Pp. 420. \$19.95/13.95 (paper).

The Holocaust is now one generation behind us and has been at the center of attention for Jewish-Christian dialogue for at least three decades. No one can doubt the importance of this event for contemporary relations between Christians and Jews. No one can deny the impact that this event has had upon the way Jews and Christians alike continue to reflect on their individual religious traditions. Indeed, a book by both a Jew and a Christian working together to reflect on this recent history of Post-Holocaust conversation, research, and theology is a landmark event in this already remarkable body of written material. Still, even after having read this book, I am compelled to ask why these two notable scholars have produced this book at this time.

Surely, Rubenstein's own work, which receives review in this book, already spells out clearly his theological position vis-à-vis the Holocaust. In addition, scholarship reflecting historical analysis of the Holocaust from every imaginable perspective is available, perhaps all too available, to every type of reader and audience. Despite the clear and often insightful way of reconstructing both the history of the Nazi plan for genocide and the efforts or lack of efforts by the many victims to resist and/or react to this murderous planned final solution, this reader wonders if another historical text added to Levin, Dawidowicz, Hilberg, Bauer, Schleunes, and many others is really needed. Is this the state of Jewish-Christian dialogue that demands the attention of these important thinkers?

In addition, I wonder whether a survey of theological positions (somewhat limited in its scope) does much to add to the already numerous similar surveys easily accessible to us all. Each has a particular slant provided by focusing on one or two figures who give the most acceptable perspective. This text spends a great deal of energy discussing the thought of Paul van Buren and Arthur A. Cohen (though Emil Fackenheim also receives considerable emphasis). Whatever the reasons for these choices, the effort to mark simply the status quo of conversation disappoints the reader despite the skill of descriptive analysis displayed by these two authors.

The implicit and subtle reason for undertaking this task at this time may well be the fact that we are at the critical dividing point of Holocaust studies. We are facing the loss of the first generation of witnesses, the eyewitnesses to the event. The meaning of this turning point in our history is complex, stretching from the sense of loss of champions of the cause to the realization that the second generation, both Jewish and Christian, now have the enormous burden of assuring that the event and the millions of victims of Nazi atrocities will not be forgotten. Rubenstein and Roth are preeminent examples of this second generation offering a message to the survivors still with us that the event and the people will not be forgotten despite whatever new gains are made that make it easy to forget the strained relations of the past and the unbelievable, still incredible, indifference of so many of the generation of bystanders during the Holocaust.

Of course, another frightening factor has been recently added to this effort to remember,

the so-called historical revisionists. Again, attempts to ignore these strident voices passing as legitimate scholars only serve to give

space and encouragement for more. On the other hand, attempts to respond in kind serve only to give these revisionists a forum. Rubenstein and Roth have chosen the path of clear explicit *restatement* of the case with extensive footnoting and bibliography providing an example of the kind of thorough scholarship necessary to assure that the voice of those who remember and honor the memory of the victims of the Holocaust will be heard above the voices of those who would deny or even ridicule.

And now we have the answer to our questions. Roth and Rubenstein provide us with more than a landmark in the ever burgeoning literature of Jewish-Christian dialogue. They have written an exemplary text for the second generation of scholars that is accessible for both scholar and student and is an effective tool for the classroom of new students seeking to hear the truth about the Holocaust. This is the reason for the survey of history one more time. This is the reason for yet another survey of theological reflection of the past three decades. Roth and Rubenstein have accomplished this purpose admirably.

Even so, it would be unfair of me to suggest that no new insight is offered in this book. I only suggest that breaking new ground may not be the principal purpose of the book. Still, we do get a fresh look at the perspectives of these two important thinkers at least through the selection of material and in their concluding reflections. Emil Fackenheim has argued on several occasions that the principal task of the Holocaust scholar is to focus attention on the perpetrators by examining the questions, *how* was it possible for these men and women to do this and *why* they did it. The second question, for Fackenheim, is the big question. It is the question that leads us to the most basic questions of human behavior and being, of philosophy and theology.

Roth and Rubenstein choose not to focus exclusively on the perpetrators. Instead they aim for a balanced description looking at the full range of human responses—hatred, fear, courage, lack of courage, cool rational evil, spontaneous compassionate good. Does this mean that Roth and Rubenstein have chosen to avoid the deepest and most disturbing philosophical questions? Indeed, their review of Fackenheim does not take up this point, so persistent in Fackenheim's most recent thought. I doubt that they aim to avoid these questions, but they openly disagree with Fackenheim's tactic. Roth and Rubenstein have structured their presentation so as to pose the ultimate question in a way different from Fackenheim's view—a structure most evident in their concluding remarks.

Their closing juxtaposition of Franz Stangl, Treblinka commandant, and Oskar Schindler is not only a masterful way of contrasting people of the Holocaust together with their contrasting motivation and moral standards but a way of posing what is finally the ultimate question of the Holocaust. Through interviews with both him and his wife, Stangl is depicted with particular focus on the question of obeying or disobeying orders. The point is complex, including both the question of possible choice (did these underlings with power have real choice?) and the value of long held personal moral standards. That human beings of apparently high moral standards can be driven to deny choice and accept the coercion of the system in the face of enormous and obvious genocide is the most distressing fact leaping out at us from this event even after these forty-five years. Stangl is a most appropriate example of our greatest nightmare that remains an

indelible imprint from the Holocaust—that human morality of the highest order is ultimately weaker than necessity of survival. The officers of murder that Stangl represents did have a choice and chose evil in spite of their possible revulsion and in spite of the evident contradiction of their deeply held moral standards.

Schindler is a contrast at all levels.

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His moral standards could not have been considered high and noble. His subsequent actions were not derived from long held principles, at least not those evident to any observer. He is the preeminent example of the opposite case. Schindler inexplicably risked his own future for the sake of hundreds of *Schindlerjuden*, children, if you will, of his generosity. His is an example of spontaneous compassion. The ultimate result of his story is filled with touching gratitude. To the many that survived principally because of Schindler's actions, he is the image that survives the Holocaust.

So, what is the ultimate picture of humanity for us? Even more important, don't we skew the story in a particular direction by focusing on the perpetrators? What of Oskar Schindler and the many others like him? Surely, the question of why he did what he did is as important as Fackenheim's search for why the perpetrators did what they did. Fackenheim's claim that his *why* question drives us to the basic roots of philosophy and theology may be unduly narrow. The actions of the "Righteous Gentiles" also provide us with a unique human behavior that tests ultimately what we take to be truly human. This may be the question we are now left to pursue and one more reason why this book should be on every Holocaust reading list.

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PREACHING ABOUT CONFLICT IN THE LOCAL CHURCH, by William H. Willimon. 1987. Pp. 117.

PREACHING ABOUT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS, by Elizabeth Achtemeier. 1987. Pp. 118.

PREACHING ABOUT LIFE IN A THREATENING WORLD, by Ronald J. Sider and Michael A. King. 1987. Pp. 131.

PREACHING ABOUT THE NEEDS OF REAL PEOPLE, by David H. C. Read. 1988. Pp. 132.

PREACHING ABOUT CRISES IN THE COMMUNITY, by Samuel D. Proctor. 1988. Pp. 132.

All published by Westminster Press, Philadelphia. \$8.95 each (paper).

Adding substance to the apparent revival of the pulpit in local churches, Westminster Press has published a series of homiletical books called "Preaching About...." This practically focused series complements other books in the format of homiletical texts. Two excellent examples are David Buttrick's *Homiletic* and Fred Craddock's *Preaching*. As their titles indicate, these were intended to be broadly stroked reflections concerning the essence of the preaching

task. Westminster Press, by contrast, presents to preachers in this new series a five-volume set of inexpensive books which focus homiletically upon the practical concerns of congregations. Therefore, the scope of Westminster's series is more narrowly defined than that of books like Buttrick's or Craddock's.

Prior to addressing questions of content, method, or evaluation of the "Preaching About..." series, however, we must ask a question. Why should any pastor/preacher sacrifice precious time to read about preaching? After all, many church management experts hold that the old rule of thumb "one hour of study for every minute in the pulpit" is prodigal. Efficiency experts say pastors maximize time best by contacts and networking, thereby cutting study time to a minimum. Church consultants of this ilk would have the modern minister believe the scholar-pastor model of ministry is badly anachronistic. Thus, modern pastors have constantly before them this utilitarian concern: Does this expenditure of time justify itself? The question must be asked even of the preaching task. Why do we need more books on preaching? And why should

we spend so much time on this one aspect of ministry?

Without going into undue detail, there are at least three reasons for the revival in preaching and the new literature which has accompanied it. First, scripturally in our Jewish-Christian tradition, preaching has occupied a central place. From the time Israel assembled to hear the Word of God through Moses' speeches into the times of the prophets on to the preaching of Jesus and Paul in the New Testament, preaching has been a major vehicle of God's revelation. The oral tradition has been made up in large part of the preached word. Preaching is scriptural.

Second, when the revival of preaching has occurred in the tradition of the church, new manifestations of the Spirit appear among the people of God. In both the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation preaching asserted, or better, re-asserted itself as a primary means of renewal. Preaching is rooted in our tradition.

Third, the constant clamor among congregations is for faithful preaching and good preachers. Other functions of pastoral ministry are important, but a primary expectation of congregations is that they might hear the Word preached regularly with authority and competence. Word and table need to be held together in a creative way. This honors both and allows each to function fully in the proclamation of the faith. Televangelism and the growth of churches centering on the primacy of the pulpit should validate sociologically this desire for preaching among our people. One of the ironies of the church today is that it is often the preachers who have lost confidence in preaching—not the laity.

The series "Preaching About..." deals with basic needs of local churches and how their preachers might address these needs faithfully. Inferred from the books' titles, the series focuses on particular problems of faith. These topics are not always the "giant" theological issues, but tend to be the day-to-day concerns pastors encounter in the local church. How Christians can apply the Christian faith to their daily struggle might be a way to describe these authors' methodological starting point. They also show how biblical solutions can be explored from the pulpit. Of the five books, Willimon's *Conflict in the Local Church* and Achtemeier's *Family Relationships* are the two which are the most focused according to their particular titles. Sider and King's *Life in a Threatening World*, Read's *Needs of Real People*, and Proctor's *Crises in the Community* tend to be more general in scope, yet even here many concrete issues are dealt

with in substantive ways.

In this series' method we see more clearly the overall content. Each book begins with a statement of purpose. For instance, Will Willimon says, "This book is an exploration of the possibilities for preaching to local church problems. It is based on the assumption that sermons are legitimate settings for a pastoral, biblical encounter with intrachurch conflict" (*Conflict in the Local Church*, 9). King and Sider state their purpose to be "to wrestle with some possible causes, and suggest some potential antidotes, for the malaise by which preaching often seems afflicted" (*Life in a Threatening World*, 9). All five books have a common purpose: to relate the biblical word to a modern body of Christian believers.

Another integral portion of each book's methodology is in its understanding of scripture. The authors concur: the Bible has a relevant word which must be proclaimed from the pulpit. Needless to say, each of the authors was chosen because of a strong commitment to and a mastery of preaching. This mastery is rooted in a well-developed theology of scripture. Proctor speaks as representative when he says, "What the preacher brings out of the Bible as preparation to meet the challenge of community needs is not a checklist of prohibitions, not a how-to-fix-it handbook, not a set of recipes for ready consumption, but a wise appreciation for where the human spirit began and how

far, by the grace of God, we have come" (*Crises in the Community*, 43). In each book we profit from a well-thought-out and well-articulated method for biblical preaching. Each author is adamant about the preacher being both faithful to the biblical text and faithful to the needs of today's Christians.

There seems to be no set agenda for the outline in each of these books, but a pattern seems to emerge. Following an initial introductory statement of purpose and a theology of scripture, each book demonstrates how the Bible addresses the needs of people. It was suggested by more than one of the authors that this was the original intention of the scriptures. Willimon, for example, comments, "Conflict is inevitable, and for the preacher to attempt to remove his or her preaching from that conflict is to imply that preaching is too timid and detached to be of great help when the chips are down and we desperately need a guiding word" (*Conflict in the Local Church*, 9). Thus, each author attempts to answer the age-old question of relevancy by saying scripture was and is relevant to the needs of believers in every age.

The last portion of each book is occupied with the exploration of different methods for proclaiming these truths. This is where the books of the series deviate most markedly. David Read and Elizabeth Achtemeier provide model sermons to illustrate their main thrusts. Proctor is content to summarize by tossing out several possible outlines and suggesting potential contexts. The other two books end with one speaking of the reaction of the hearers and the other about God's graciousness poured out upon the faithful preacher.

The "Preaching About..." series is of remarkably consistent high quality. My favorite of the group was Samuel Proctor's *Crises in the Community*, while my least favorite was David Read's *The Needs of Real People*. Let me quickly add, however, that all are well worth the time and money spent. Each is rich in insight and each speaks with an authority that those who are "insiders" to the weekly preaching task will quickly recognize. If one is looking for some quick step-saving tips on how to effectively preach without paying the homiletical price, these

expectations will soon be frustrated. These books and authors take the preaching task to be one of sacred calling and hard work.

This may not be a set of books everyone needs to read. For the local church pastor, however, this is reading which will encourage, engage, and invigorate. Even though the orientation is practical, this is a series of books which has under it a solid foundation of scholarship and experience. If a preacher is not inspired by these writers and the commitment they bring to the preaching task, then heaven help them! For me, reading this series was like hearing “really good” preaching.

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EVERYTHING IS POLITICS BUT POLITICS IS NOT EVERYTHING, by H. M. Kuitert. Trans. by John Bowden. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986. Pp. 187. \$8.95 (paper).

The central question with which H. M. Kuitert wrestles in this book is: “What is the church for if the church only does what others already do, continue to do, better and with more knowledge of things?” (165). Kuitert asks this question specifically within the context of the church and politics in Holland. Indeed, the event which seems to have occasioned this book is the statements which various synods of the Reformed Church in Holland made during the debate concerning the deployment by NATO of nuclear missiles in Europe. According to Kuitert, when the church enters so directly into politics, it risks losing its very identity as a church by acting as a political party, with the added disadvantage that it does so with dangerous ignorance of the political issues at hand, and with no ac-

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countability for the political risks such interventions entail. The church which enters into the political struggle so directly also risks destroying itself from within, by introducing polarizing and divisive political struggles into the community of love, as apparently happened in Holland upon the publication of synodical statements on nuclear weapons: “a colossal polarization developed within the churches between supporters and opponents of the statements” (141). Such polarization is natural in the political realm, but it is self-destructive when it enters the church.

Kuitert responds to the politicization of the church not by examining the nature of synodical polity in the Reformed Church, but by tracing the phenomenon of the politicization of the church back to the theology of Karl Barth. According to Kuitert, it was Barth’s rejection of natural theology and his insistence on Jesus Christ as the one Word of God which led the church so dangerously into politics, for if there is no general revelation of God, and no natural law, then the one Word of God must be the sole source of knowledge not only of proclamation but also of politics. As a consequence, the distinction maintained in the doctrine of the two kingdoms between the church and the state collapses, and the only thing left is the church, which cannot help but act more as a political entity in the political struggle and less as a church. Barth thus blazed the trail, followed by Moltmann, Sölle, and others, which led to the disastrous view that politics is everything.

Kuitert's remedy for this crisis is to return to "the" Christian doctrine of the two kingdoms, based upon a doctrine of a twofold revelation of God. Over against the one Word of God in Barth, Kuitert asserts another general and universal revelation of God in creation, common to both Christians and non-Christians, which forms the full and sufficient source and norm for all moral and political principles. Kuitert calls these the "universal human principles of humanity" (61 and *passim*). Neither the Bible nor Jesus teach anything other than these universal human principles of humanity; thus the church can bring *no* material contribution to the political discussion either on the basis of christology, eschatology, or Scripture. Therefore, when it enters directly into the political struggle, it not only sheds no new light on the subject, but it also risks destroying itself as the church. The reason for this is that the church stands for "the other world of God, the opposite kind of world where things are not done through power or violence but through the Spirit of God" (22). Since power and violence are constitutive elements of political life, life in the Spirit as the new creation in Christ mutually excludes life in politics. This restriction, however, is applied by Kuitert only to church leaders (such as synods tempted to make statements in the name of the whole church) and not at all to church members. Life in the Spirit for ordinary Christians does not prohibit them from participating in political struggle, but instead frees them for such struggle, guided by the "universal human principles of humanity" which they accept as revelations and commandments of God (73).

Such a contrasting vision of what life in the Spirit means for church leaders versus church members reveals the fundamental internal contradiction within Kuitert's position. On the one hand, he insists *ad infinitum* that neither Jesus nor the Bible teach any other morality than that found in the "universal human principles of humanity" which guide all societies and political structures; while on the other hand he insists that the rules of political struggle and the rules of Christian love of neighbor and love of truth mutually exclude one another (149). The very same Jesus who taught no new morality also taught a Sermon on the Mount which, according to Kuitert, is not only impossible in the political realm, but may be impossible in the church as well (Chapter 12). Life in the Spirit excludes participation in

politics by the hierarchy, but drives ordinary believers into politics, where self-love and not love of neighbor is the rule. In short, Kuitert seeks to have it both ways: he subjects church leadership to the ecclesiology of Menno Simons, and ordinary Christians to the political life of Machiavelli. "Life in the Spirit" apparently only means anything materially for ordained people, synodical representatives, and theologians. Everyone else may meet violence with violence, and may regard the entire Sermon on the Mount (and hence the cross of Christ) as something "very optional" which they may completely disobey with a clear conscience. In sum, Kuitert's distorted and simplistic reading of Barth leads him well past the position of Luther and Calvin on the two kingdoms to a repositioning of the medieval distinction between "counsels" and "commandments." Ordinary Christians are bound only by the natural law, or the "universal human principles of humanity," while Christians with authority in the church are bound by Christian love of neighbor and of the truth. The same Holy Spirit which frees Christians *for* political struggle keeps Christian leaders *from* the political struggle. Kuitert may be right that politics is not everything, but his solution to that problem creates more problems than it solves. He would do well to go back and read Luther, Calvin, Barth, and the Barmen Declaration once again.

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DID THE GREEKS BELIEVE IN THEIR MYTHS? AN ESSAY ON THE CONSTITUTIVE IMAGINATION, by Paul Veyne. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988. Pp. 173. \$25.00/\$10.95 (paper).

In *Orators and Philosophers* (1986) Bruce A. Kimball shows how the story of liberal education in the West has centered in the polarity of the Philosopher and the Orator, that is, in the contrast between critical thinking on the one hand and community and commitment on the other. For Kimball Cicero is the image of the Orator; I prefer Homer with his wonderful, community-defining stories. But we agree on Socrates (of the piercing questions) as the archetypal Philosopher.

The quickest way to miss the point of myth (or music or poetry or a painting or Scripture, for that matter) is to view it with the eyes of a Philosopher. Though he does not use Kimball's vocabulary, Veyne has first of all written this essay to demonstrate that point.

He has more to tell, of course. He briefly traces what myth meant in early Greece and its fate at the hands of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics. He sketches the impact of the Hellenistic period with its learned readers and its interest in historiography and critical research.

But Veyne is thinking about more than the Greco-Roman world. He is the ultimate pluralist. "The truth is," he says, "that truth varies. Truth is the name we give to the choices to which we cling." This variability is not capricious. Veyne uses different images to say what that means. He talks about the "palaces of the imagination" within which we all live. "Nothing exists...but what the imagination, which has brought forth the palace, has constituted." The "palace" is also a "fishbowl." "Once one is in one of these fishbowls, it takes genius to get out of it and innovate. On the other hand, once the work of genius has changed the fishbowl, children...can be socialized into the new program. They will be as satisfied with it as their ancestors had been with theirs, and they will scarcely see a way of getting out of it, since they see nothing beyond it." Or like the Heideggerian forest-clearing, a preserve in which we live, believing it to be limitless, to be all there is. But Heidegger held that there were other clearings. And some other palace can and will

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replace the current one. "These successive dream palaces, all of which have passed for the truth, have the most varied styles of truth....[For] truth is the most variable of all measures. It is not a transhistorical invariant but a work of the constitutive imagination."

It would be too simple to say that for the Greeks in their palace/clearing/fishbowl, their myths were the truth. Plutarch was correct to say that truth is to myth as sun is to rainbow. On the other hand, myth was self-authenticating, like poetry; true and not true at the same time, like a great work of fiction. Myth helped to furnish that "palace of the imagination" where they lived, and to create the community within which they defined themselves. When a Greek child asked a parent, "What will I be when I grow up?", myth supplied much of the answer.

Veyne uses Pausanias as his example of a Greek thinking about his own myth, seeing him (despite his late date) as “classical” both in his reverence for deity and in his uneasiness with traditional myth. From Pausanias 8.8.3:

When I began to write my history, I was inclined to count these legends as foolishness; but on getting as far as Arcadia I grew to hold a more thoughtful view of them, which is this: in the days of old, those Greeks who were considered wise spoke their sayings not straight out but in riddles...

After this “Damascus Road” realization in Arcadia, “Pausanias finally admitted that myths sometimes told the truth by allegory and riddle and that sometimes they told the truth literally, for they were so old that one could not suspect them of being distorted by lies.”

Pausanias is correct, of course; in the “palace” of the Greeks the myths were true. More than that: they helped to furnish the palace, to define life within it.

They make clear its aspirations too. This is the reason Pindar can “honor” a victorious competitor by presenting him with an account from myth which apparently has no relation to the athlete or his victory. He does this because, “as a poet, Pindar is the familiar of the world of gods and heroes. He raises the victor...up to his world by treating him as an equal and by speaking to him of this mythical world, which henceforth will be his....” Something similar happens to Christians reciting the Apostles’ Creed, which does not tell about them at all, but which raises them to participation in that timeless time whose central events the Creed narrates in such simple terms. That is the language of community and commitment, and so is myth.

But where there are Orators there are also Philosophers, including—I suspect—many readers of *Word & World*, captives of detached, analytical thinking. That used to be where seminary education came down, and perhaps it still is. That is why, for most Americans, Christianity is no larger than “Jesus Christ as my personal savior.” The Sacraments, the Spirit, the Communion of Saints, the Church, the Body of Christ do not yield to critical thought. They are Orators’ images, assuming life in that palace of the imagination where participation in the continuing community undergirds all else.

“The theme of this book is very simple,” Veyne says in closing. “Merely by reading the title, anyone with the slightest historical background would immediately have answered, ‘But of course they believed in their myths!’ We have simply wanted also to make it clear that what is true of ‘them’ is also true of ourselves[,] and to b[r]ing out the implications of this primary truth.” Readers of *Word & World* who grasp what Veyne is presenting will begin to see the Church as the Orators might: corporate, manifold, of great age and diversity, evolving toward the future in the Spirit’s guidance and power.

The book, though short, could have made its point in even fewer pages. It is a long, oracular essay not quite translated from the French. Slow going, but worth the trip.

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University Press of America, 1987. Pp. 162.

Oftentimes Jacques Ellul is misunderstood because his readers do not recognize that he deliberately writes in two separate tracks which must be held in dialectical tension. His extremely negative (falsely labeled “pessimistic”) sociological analyses should be read together with his vibrantly hopeful (falsely labeled “idealistic”) theological and ethical works. Daniel B. Clendenin provides a very helpful tool for cohesive reading as he develops the thesis that “Ellul’s theological method revolves around one key theme or kernel idea, the dialectical interplay between freedom and necessity,...a golden thread...which serves as a sort of hermeneutical key to his thinking” (xi). This revised doctoral dissertation contributes immensely to the possibility that more scholars and lay readers can properly understand Jacques Ellul and let his thinking stimulate, rather than alienate, their own.

Clendenin’s own method is illustrated best by three concentric circles, the largest of which describes four methodological interpretations of Ellul as theological positivist, existentialist, prophet, and dialectician. Clendenin illustrates both the errors associated with these labels (such as the misconceptions that Ellul is a Calvinist and that he uniformly follows Barth) and their proper application to Ellul (which clarifies, for example, the influence of Kierkegaard). He concludes that Ellul’s eclectic method proves to be both a strength and a weakness since it enables him to present “the big picture,” but at the same time raises the ire of specialists.

This study’s second chapter analyzes the more narrow circle of Ellul’s dialectical method, highlighted by Clendenin’s excellent sketch of the history of dialectic, particularly in theology (31-36). With the Bible as the source of Ellul’s commitment to dialectic and within the framework of his intentional counterpoint of sociology and theology, “Ellul’s dialectical method operates as a description of reality [the phenomenological], an epistemological orientation to understand this reality, and as a Biblical-theological framework by which to read the Bible and craft a peculiarly Christian style of life [existential]” (xvi).

Chapters three and four explicate Ellul’s central dialectic between necessity and freedom, the innermost circle, and, as Clendenin demonstrates, “the controlling idea in all of Ellul’s work” (59). Necessity, a direct result of the Fall, must be understood in the collective sense, whereas freedom is the discovery and exercise of the individual. Necessity for Ellul is “cultural sclerosis or inertia, crystallization of the social body, wholesale conformity, adaptation, paralysis, entropy, obligation, static uniformity, or assimilation”—a lack of sufficient chaos (70). In Ellul’s works it appears in the antithesis of religion and revelation and of morality and ethics in the forces of technique, propaganda, and politics.

Freedom, on the other hand, is understood by Ellul in terms of its source in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Word of God. It includes not only objective/external freedom from the powers and subjective/internal freedom from one’s self, but also freedom for God’s glory and the love of the neighbor (105-120). Clendenin outlines well Ellul’s disagreements with liberation theology and various illusions and misconceptions about freedom (93-105).

In his final chapter Clendenin analyzes four weaknesses and three strengths of Ellul’s method. His “internal” criticisms are the best part of the book, for he aptly demonstrates that Ellul’s works contain definite nondialectical tendencies which are inconsistent with his avowed method (129).

First of all, Ellul’s unclear or caustic use of language often invites antagonism rather than dialogue. Secondly, his theme that freedom is not just a virtue of the Christian life, but rather its

sine qua non, is undeniably reductionistic. Ellul is right to emphasize this aspect because of the social circumstances of contemporary Christianity, but his overstatement denies the dialectical interplay of other factors in discipleship. Most helpful of Clendenin's critiques is his analysis of the inconsistency of Ellul's universalism in its selective reading of biblical texts, its negation of human free will, and its negation of the individual (135-141).

I disagree, however, with Clendenin's third alleged weakness in Ellul's method—viz., his conception of "Power as the enemy of God." My own dissertation work on Ellul's utilization of the biblical notion of *exousiai* convinces me that Ellul does maintain a dialectical tension in his understanding of power, though his latest work, *The Subversion of Christianity*, contradicts some of his earlier statements about the nature of "the Powers." Furthermore, Clendenin himself must be criticized for his own overstatement that "Ellul *never comes close* to incorporating the use of power into his dialectic" (134; emphasis mine), and he himself is inconsistent when he asks Ellul to give "clear guidelines" for "non-power use," since a few pages later he cites as a first strength in Ellul's method his deliberate refusal to provide a blueprint of solutions or answers in order to obligate his readers to go beyond him in thinking and to formulate their own courses of action (133 and 142). His claim that Ellul "gives us no help here with his rather unrealistic picture" (133) overlooks the prophetic nature of Ellul's language, designed to raise awareness of the subtlety of the demonic aspects of power.

Clendenin cites as a strength Ellul's effective combining of theology from above (revelation) with theology from below (practical concern for the world). Finally, Ellul's dialectical theology enables him truly to offer hope and freedom to the person on the street. These, of course, are main reasons why Clendenin's book is so valuable since an informed understanding of Ellul's works equips his readers with both motivation and insights for offering Christian hope and freedom to a technological society.

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SIX THEORIES OF JUSTICE; PERSPECTIVES FROM PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ETHICS, by Karen Lebacqz. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986. Pp. 159. \$9.95 (paper).

JUSTICE IN AN UNJUST WORLD; FOUNDATIONS FOR A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO JUSTICE, by Karen Lebacqz. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987. Pp. 192. \$12.95 (paper).

Lebacqz has attempted the difficult task of surveying for the college-educated layperson a universe of complex theories about the nature of justice in *Six Theories*, which makes way for her own notes on the subject in *Justice in an Unjust World*. In the first book, she chooses six views significantly different in their assumptions about the good life, their views about the place of the poor in any system of justice, and their choice of methodological and substantive first principles. Three of these views are symbolized by philosophers: the utilitarian view (represented by John Stuart Mill), the contractarian view (as in John Rawls), and the entitlement view of justice (Robert Nozick's work is suggested). Three are views symbolized by pastors or theologians: the

Catholic view (as evidenced by the Bishops' letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy), the Protestant view (Reinhold Niebuhr is the focus), and liberation theology (as represented by José Porfiro Miranda and Gustavo Gutiérrez). Lebacqz then raises the major criticisms which have been directed at particular arguments raised by each school, and offers a brief assessment from her own perspective.

Justice in an Unjust World takes off

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from the liberation theology view, modifying it by creating a skeleton of concepts and images reminiscent of some popular feminist literature. It begins with a description of types of injustice in our world, including racial, sexual, economic, political, cultural, and verbal injustices. It then goes on to create, through the use of representative words, a series of stages through which both oppressors and oppressed must pass on the way from injustice to justice. First, God's response to injustice is characterized: God rescues, by hearing and liberating; God is reticent, by suffering with the oppressed; God rebukes, requires things to be done, and creates a rainbow—a covenant which demands mutual responsibility of God and the individual to each other. The oppressed pass through stages of resistance, including rage and rejection of the oppressor, resolve, rebellion, and reconstituting their community by remembering their history. The oppressors' "passages" are marked by respecting the oppressed, becoming responsible for them, recognizing their own place in the system of injustices, repenting and renouncing past wrongs, being remorseful, and paying reparations. Finally, when both oppressed and oppressor have made their way through these stages, they may be able to celebrate the jubilee, in which old ways can be overturned and the community can rejoice and renew itself.

These books would be most useful in a long-term adult class in which students—not familiar with basic philosophical or theological arguments about methodologies and principles of justice and unwilling to devote themselves to the major texts—are willing to read seriously a small amount of material. Because Lebacqz's discussion is accessible without being trivial, *Six Theories* would help a lay reader understand some common disagreements about philosophical and theological starting points for discussing what is owed the poor. One might use it as a background for discussing church body or caucus positions on economic justice (such as the Bishops' Letter), requiring students to explain how a utilitarian or contractarian might respond to calls for workfare legislation, or raising welfare benefits. Such a channeled discussion may help adult students understand the assumptions which they use to make judgments on these political issues. *Justice in an Unjust World* could be used to begin discussion around biblical texts about the nature of oppression, what action God requires from both the oppressor and the oppressed, and what we seek when we talk about a just society.

A few caveats: In part because Lebacqz so condenses and focuses her discussion around certain themes, her books should not be read for the purpose of understanding the philosophy or theology of a particular author whom she uses as the centerpiece of a discussion. Similarly; neither of her books is a comprehensive or coherent theory of justice. The first is simply a reader, cataloguing a number of theories with standard objections, contrasting and drawing these theories together only slightly, so that the reader must make the major comparisons herself.

The second book, *Justice in an Unjust World*, is not so much an argument about justice as a series of images and starting points. Lebacqz includes in this book a number of stories about, or

allusions to, oppressed people, but in her zeal to include many voices in order to suggest the similarities in their stories, she tends to trivialize the horror of their travails. For instance, it is irritating to see her squeeze the oppression of Jews in Nazi Germany, South African black people, raped women, and gays into two pages. These allusions may, however, serve as useful “footnotes” for those seeking new stories of oppressed peoples. Similarly, she spends only a couple of pages on each stage through which oppressor and oppressed must pass: the stage of recognition, for instance, is four pages, centered almost exclusively on the story of David and Uriah. As a brief image and discussion,

it is interesting and suggestive; it is not, however, a complete discursus on what must precede recognition, or how people should recognize their place in the system of injustice. (To her credit, she freely admits most of the limits of both books.) One hopes that these passages might be more thoroughly explicated, argued, and even limited in further work. Such work might also include discussion of many assumptions of the book, such as that the poor are always the oppressed and can never be oppressors, or that the poor will always recognize and relate their own oppression most clearly. Still, the work offers some interesting, if brief, insights about a theological approach to justice.

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I CORINTHIANS, by Roy A. Harrisville. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987. Pp. 301. \$14.95 (paper).

This past year has provided Lutherans a banner opportunity for the study of ecclesiology. With the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the fabric of the American Lutheran patchwork quilt has changed dramatically and has prompted pastors and theologians, church leaders, and a laity of all shapes and sizes to reexamine what it means to be the church and to discover or hold onto the common thread that makes for distinctive Lutheranism. A commission has been formed to study the extremely complex and sensitive issue of ministry in the ELCA. There has been a renewed effort for the ELCA to be inclusive in structure and in posture, particularly in lay representation at the synod and national levels. This representation has seen much more parity in the leadership role that women have assumed in the new church, in addition to providing a new vehicle for ministry with and for persons of color, although much of that agenda is still in its infancy. All of this, coupled with the much larger number of people coming into Lutheran congregations who do not embrace a common Lutheran tradition—or any religious background, for that matter—or who do not share a common German or Scandinavian ethnic heritage, has made the patchwork quilt much richer and certainly more intricate and complicated, but with borders yet to be defined. And now with an even more concerted emphasis on an ecumenical spirit that has stimulated serious dialogue and cooperation with a greater number of religious denominations and world religions, and with ethical and moral issues bombarding the church and its membership from all sides, there are pertinent questions being

broached as to how those borders can be defined without indelibly staining or cutting off a piece of that quilt. It's bigger. Many say it's better, but will it stay together? Will the common thread that has made for distinctive Lutheranism be strong enough to support the weight of heavy biblical and theological scrutiny over these concerns and many more as we continue to be the body of Christ?

But why such a lengthy prelude to a book review? My reading of *I Corinthians* by Harrisville in the context of Lutheran parish ministry often led me to reflect on such issues and concerns and to further my own understanding of the church and its mission. Of course, such unity questions are not new to the church. Even a cursory review of church history, especially Reformation history, would remind us that the church has always, since its very inception, been embroiled not only in faith questions but in church conflicts that have threatened to fracture the unity of the body. The church at Corinth was no exception, and Paul's correspondence with this faith community has provided us a virtual gold mine of biblical and theological reflection on many of the issues still confronting the church. However, because the history and culture of the Corinthian church lie so clouded in myth and speculation, it is imperative for anyone studying the church at

Corinth to utilize the best tools available for that reflection. Certainly one such asset in this examination is Harrisville's commentary, a scholarly piece of work that is not only timely and relevant, but one that is sure to provoke much thinking and debate over how the situation at Corinth and Paul's counsel with that church can give Christians—and in particular American Lutherans—help in shaping their own theology and polity.

Harrisville begins his commentary with a general overview of the principal events in the history of Corinth, in addition to giving a brief description of Paul's contact with the city and church there and a very cogent review of the interpretative questions that have haunted biblical scholars and theologians for many years. A portion of this introduction concerns itself with a very compelling argument of how Paul was influenced by Stoic and Gnostic thought, for which Harrisville cites numerous examples throughout the text of the commentary, and how this was an influence which led Paul to a unique understanding of the theology of the cross. The final part of his opening remarks is devoted to addressing the issue of unity in the epistle both structurally and thematically. Because the structure of the letter leaves itself open to any "one of 100 theories respecting pages or leaves lost and combined willy-nilly" (22), Harrisville contends that no conclusive argument can be offered regarding the epistle's structural unity. Thematically, however, Harrisville—like Karl Barth before him—does hold to a common theme running throughout the letter and tips his hand by offering the proposal that chapter 15 is the "authentic commentary" for chapters 1-14. This whole section concludes with a humble word of gratitude for the comments and studies of Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Hans Conzelmann, Ernst Käsemann, Johannes Weiss, and Martin Luther, which have provided Harrisville with much of the foundation for his exegesis and reflection in expanding his own "little sandpit" (22).

What appears initially as a fairly mundane and predictable commentary introduction is in actuality one of the most important contributions that Harrisville's study gives to lay and clergy studying 1 Corinthians. This section allows the reader to become a part of the fabric of this early Christian church and community, which is of paramount importance in grasping many of the

theological debates and concerns that the letter raises. Without this sort of introduction, the text of a commentary can seem unrelated to issues that drive deep into the heart of contemporary churches today. This introduction, coupled with his indebtedness to some of the great theological and biblical scholars of all time, makes Harrisville's commentary on just this score a valuable addition to anyone's library.

As for the actual commentary itself, Harrisville's translation and exegesis are superb, and—certainly for any preacher or student of the Scriptures—a technical and exhaustive guide to preaching and teaching 1 Corinthians. Not only does Harrisville show mastery of the subject matter, but his translation and exegesis of the Greek text is complete down to the last jot and tittle. Because much of his exegesis is dependent upon a thorough-going understanding of Greek and English syntax, it might have been helpful to include a glossary of the terminology used (for example, anacolouthon [150], symplectic [123], oxymoron [101], dactylic tetrameter [123]). The syntax is so crucial to the understanding of the translation that passing over any of these constructions would be a significant loss to the commentary.

Having recently completed a month of preaching on 1 Corinthians and an ecumenical session of Bible studies on the same epistle, I have found Harrisville's commentary to be of immeasurable importance to my own exegesis and theological constructions. For example, Harrisville's discussion of Paul's eschatology as shown in practical concerns of the church regarding mar-

riage and celibacy (105-129) allows the reader to move through 1 Corinthians with a much broader comprehension of Paul's theology and how that theology affects the life situations of the Corinthian congregation.

Harrisville also spends almost forty pages on a very well-developed and carefully analyzed treatment of chapter 15 (again, which Harrisville contends is the "authentic commentary" for chapters 1-14). It would be difficult to argue that chapter 15 does not hold a prominent position in Paul's letter and certainly in Paul's own theological underpinnings, but to say that this chapter constitutes a summary of the preceding chapters may well relegate many of the issues discussed earlier in the letter to secondary importance. Paul may simply have been a parish pastor who in his own newsletter to this congregation may have been responding to a variety of parish concerns that had continued to threaten the life and unity of the congregation—from questions concerning the resurrection of the dead to women keeping their heads covered in church, but each constituting a serious threat to the functioning of the body as one. Paul's agenda may be much more pastoral than theological, not unlike so many of the day-to-day issues that face each of us in parish ministry. This notwithstanding, Harrisville's exegesis is masterfully done and provides depth and richness deserving of Paul's resurrection theology.

An overall criticism of the commentary is that, although the material is crammed with deep insights and perspectives from the level of Harrisville as an academician and biblical scholar, I found the commentary lacking in personal reflections from Harrisville as to how these texts have affected his own life or the life of the church today. Whether this agenda goes beyond the parameters of the commentary series, I do not know, but it certainly would have been useful and instructive to have been privy to some of these reflections as well.

Still, Harrisville's commentary is a great contribution to the ongoing study of 1

Corinthians and provides stimulating material for that work. As with his earlier commentary on Romans, Harrisville shows once again his tremendous capacity to provide biblical theology and exegesis for Christian ministry. Harrisville's study has given me a comprehensive summary of what the Apostle had to deal with at Corinth and has enhanced my own reflection on how this living word might continue to shape and reform the thinking and practice of a new church. Certainly his work has provided me with some valuable tools to play with in my own "little sandbox."

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AMOS, HOSEA, MICAH: AN ARCHEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY, by Philip King.
Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988. Pp. 176. \$20.95/\$15.95 (paper).

A number of commentaries on the eighth-century prophets have been produced in the last decade or so. Some of these, particularly the ones by Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos* and *Hosea*, along with *The Prophet Amos* by J. Alberto Soggin, are destined to remain standards for a long time.

However, as important as these commentaries are in their philological, literary, and theological considerations, they have used archeological evidence only tangentially. Philip King, in his commentary on the eighth-century prophets, brings together these areas in an important synthesis. He makes use of biblical archeology in a new and exciting way and illumines the biblical text through archeological evidence.

There are six areas on which King focuses: (1) Archeology and the Eighth-Century Prophets; (2) Historical and Geographical Setting; (3) Architecture, Fortifications, and Warfare; (4) Cult in Israel and Judah; (5) Agriculture, Plants

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and Animals; and (6) Banquets and High Living. King's overview of the setting of the prophets, placing both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms within the historical and geographical contexts of which they were a part, provides valuable background information.

By way of doing this, King gives a brief description of each of the main characters involved in the vast and complex political tapestry of the time. The provision of this archeologically-based biographical data of the kings and leaders of Israel and Judah, together with those of contiguous nations, allows the reader to place in perspective the strengths, the weaknesses, and the orientation of these leaders as they dealt with both the internal struggles and the external alliances.

In like manner, King sheds light on several central sites, using archeological discoveries. To be sure, sites such as Samaria and Jerusalem might be household names for many of us, even though we might not be entirely knowledgeable about the geographical locations. Rather than mentioning other sites in a cursory way, King provides us with a much more complete description of the central areas involved in the political and religious network of the time. In this regard, the author discusses locations such as Megiddo, Bethel, Lachish, and Beersheba, in

addition to others such as Jerusalem and Samaria.

Many commentaries have overlooked what they consider obscure details, but King takes many of these elements and uncovers their significance for a more complete understanding of these prophets. King's incorporation of this evidence is not simply for the sake of passing interest, but the author brings it to bear on the prophetic message.

For example, in Amos' oracles against the nations, King not only discusses the oracle against Philistia, but provides us with both a linguistic and historical background of the Philistines. He points to the adversarial relationship between Philistia and other nations long before the time of Amos and brings this ongoing conflict to bear on the judgment pronounced by Amos. King, by doing this, allows the reader to understand more fully that Amos' oracles against the nations were neither to bolster Israel nor were they arbitrary. Rather, these judgments reflect the expectations of Yahweh, creator of all nations.

Moreover, some of the ambiguity which has long surrounded the issue of winter and summer houses (Amos 3:15) is made clear by insights of King. He argues, using both biblical and extrabiblical evidence, that the geographical locations of these houses are quite distinctive. These locations were chosen to maximize warmth in the winter and summer breeze in the warm months. The invectives by the prophets take on an even sharper tone when the opulence of the wealthy is seen alongside the misery of the poor.

In many other areas, such as the city gate, cult, and warfare, King uses important archeological evidence to shed light on significant elements constitutive of these aspects of Israel's life. A final attractive feature of this work is the glossary at the end. Here, the author defines several of the technical terms which he has used throughout the text.

The need for a resource such as this commentary has long been felt and it will remain a valuable source of information for anyone interested in a fuller understanding of some of the more obscure elements in the message of the prophets.

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