



THE CRITIQUE OF PURE MODERNITY: HEGEL, HEIDEGGER, AND AFTER, by David Kolb. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987. Pp. 332. \$25.00.

What “world” is there for the Word? Readers of this journal presumably possess some interest in the relationship of “Word and world.” They have reason then to attend to the conversation which David Kolb joins with this book. A common theme in that conversation is the passing of the “modern” world, though it is less clear what is to follow. Typically, not many tears are shed at modernity’s funeral. After all, a chorus of critics (Bellah, MacIntyre, Bloom may be the most cited) has lately been heard in the land. Kolb studies the transitional criticism of Hegel and Heidegger and offers his own distinctive proposal without either the gravity of the traditionalist or the levity of the postmodernist.

What “modern world” is meant? Following Max Weber and Peter Berger, the emphasis is on the “notion of the distanced self formally defined in terms of its power to choose” (xii). We imagine that we live at a distance from what was taken for granted by earlier ages and with this distance comes control. “We identify everything around us, including ourselves, as possible objects for planning and control” (2). In the modern elevation of self-development even values and desires are subject to manipulation. Over against such modernity, Kolb asks, “Can we avoid the dilemma of rootless freedom versus oppressive tradition?” (17).

Hegel and Heidegger both “deny the distinctions that structure modernity’s image of itself” (17). This book will hold interest for students of Hegel and Heidegger. There is here sufficient close reading of texts, discussion of translation options, and dialogue with other readings of the German giants to sustain such interest. But Kolb does not forget his orienting question regarding the modern disjunction. Thus he suggests that Hegel finds customs (*Sitten*) to offer the “third alternative” by which it can be decided which goals to pursue and which desires to prefer over others (36). Hegel calls on us to recognize that determination is not limitation (79), and to recognize the finite possibilities that come to us in the movement of spirit (80). Hegel’s is a hopeful vision. In the process of the logic of spirit we find a grounding, even if there is no grounding outside the process or of the process itself.

Heidegger also recognizes the temporality of our being as challenging the modern distinction/disjunction of the self/world: “There is no inner self to project out of; we exist as the opening of possibility and understanding with things” (134). We will understand this if we recognize the character of “technology.” By technology Heidegger does not refer to an external application of science, but rather to “the way man and things are brought into presence together” (144). The emphasis is on complete and instant availability, a notion Kolb seeks to convey by translating *Gestell*, “universal imposition.” And yet something more primal speaks through universal imposition (158)—a “more original happening (*Ereignen*)” (159). This event “withdraws” or “hides” itself, but as we attend to it we possess the possibility of “understanding” universal imposition and so of overcoming the narrowing self-definitions of subjects and objects

which occur within the universal imposition.

Hegel and Heidegger, then, both represent critiques of modernity. Wherein do they differ? Here is how Kolb sees the matter: "...for Hegel there is a self-

giving in the transparency of the motion of spirit. That motion has something to give: itself....For Heidegger there is no such self-giving: the propriative event has nothing of its own, no structure or principle or form to give" (210). Accordingly, Hegel can offer advice gleaned from studying the movement of spirit; Heidegger cannot offer advice, but can represent "the deconstructive life" of irony, compassion, and humility.

And what of Kolb who writes of Hegel, Heidegger, and after? He appreciates the critiques of both Hegel and, Heidegger, but does not propose a reconciliation of their differences. His voice is a third voice, a later one, as presumably ours must be. His proposal is to question the emphasis on unity—whether the unity of worldwide teleology (Hegel) or that of opposed epochs in history (Heidegger). Kolb asks, hopefully: "Can we make sense of the idea that our world is not a unified totality on any level, preconceptual or conceptual? Imagine multiplicity all the way down, with many partial and totalizing fields of possibilities contingently together providing that within which we find ourselves always already in motion" (240).

What follows? The self will not be hopelessly split in this view, because "there are no enclosed wholes to parcel the self out among" (249). Accordingly, "multiple methods will be needed for human understanding, and no linear ordering is available to elevate a particular method above the rest. In any case "there is no substitute for looking at the details" (264). Given this critique of unity, the "modern world" loses its own tight outlines, and it becomes possible to try to reclaim some contributions of modernity and, at the same time, to dialogue with fundamentalism which can no longer be dismissed as a reaction against some supposed modern world. There is here no basis for a liberating hope for a new age (261), but there is hope that one can work within the many options available in the present age (259). What follows, then? Kolb argues that what follows is not a "genial relativism" (264): "We have choices and have standards, but we have no final standards" (270). We are to live without skepticism or security, and with humility, irony; and compassion.

It does seem that the sovereignty of the self/world distinction is ending, though Kolb's skepticism about a total transition is a welcome thing. And Kolb seems to speak for many others in his emphasis on a pluralistic and empirical understanding. How shall one who would speak of God regard these developments? That question is urgent, for at the very least the audience for our proclamation is no longer what we may have supposed it to be. But the answer to the question is not clear. Shall the recognition of Babelesque multiplicity be welcomed as a preparation for the clear word of the God who is One? But our possession (is that the right word?) and speaking of the Word is surely itself a human thing, and hence pluralism can be expected within the sacred tent as well. Moreover, if Kolb's multiplicity is understood not only as an epistemological matter but as an ontological one, do we not face a challenge of finding in that "world" the Word of the one God? It may be hoped that voices of faith will join this conversation that is needed for the sake of world and Word.

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SIGMUND FREUD AND HIS CRITIQUE OF RELIGION, by Joachim Scharfenberg.
Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988. Pp. 161. \$17.95.

This book is an informative and pleasantly readable introduction to the relationship between Sigmund Freud and the religious community. The author begins by tracing the sometimes volatile way in which the religious community reacted to the early findings and theories of psychoanalysis, and the sometimes naive way in which the two were harmonized by others. The views of Oskar Pfister receive special attention

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because of his sometimes brilliant application of psychoanalytic method to religious phenomena, and his “naive Jesus piety” by which he tried to make psychoanalysis acceptable to its “gang of theological opponents.” The treatment of Pfister does much to explain both the attraction and resistance of the religious community to Freud’s work and the emerging field of psychoanalysis.

The more dominant history of the opposition and resistance to Freud by religious individuals is a recurring theme throughout the book. This early resistance to psychoanalysis is explained in terms of its perceived relativizing of social norms and moral values, as well as its potential threat to pastoral care and a person’s religious faith. Theologians are portrayed as being afraid of an emerging ideology or world view which threatened to replace God and the soul with wholly natural processes.

The early failure of theologians to perceive psychoanalysis as a therapeutic process concerned with treating in religion those manifestations which are pathological or neurotic, is slowly countered by a grudging acceptance of its focus on healing, brought about in part by the work of Scandinavian theologians such as Arvid Runestam.

Scharfenberg uses the work of modern theologians including Paul Tillich and Paul Ricoeur to argue that our present position is little improved over the earlier period. He argues that a thoroughgoing reevaluation of Freud’s work and psychoanalysis could greatly benefit our understandings of faith development, religious symbols, sin, morality, and human nature.

Read either as a history or as a critique of modern religion, the introduction provided to this early conflict, though brief, is well done. No less well done is the author’s discussion of Freud’s own antipathy toward religion and his insistence upon psychology’s independence from both religious and medical rule.

In approaching Freud biographically, Scharfenberg describes Freud’s intellectual background, his early reading and religious upbringing, his fascination with and interpretation of Michelangelo’s Moses, and his movement into and away from medicine. His description of Freud is of a fascinatingly complex individual. Freud’s intuitive insight, his endless variety of interests and ideas, and his provocative nature make for a diverse and interesting sketch which neither beatifies nor condemns.

From here, the author moves on to discussions of psychoanalytic theory and treatment. In his discussion of the theory, Scharfenberg deals with personalities such as Breuer, Fleiss, Adler, and Jung. He discusses their disagreements with Freud over sexuality, body-soul relationships,

instinct theory, and the unconscious. The summary provided of these figures and their ideas seems fair and well handled. The author's descriptions of the manner in which Freud related to these people personally helps to keep the reading light.

Scharfenberg's treatment of therapy as a process of "healing through language" is concise but woolly reading. The author works extensively from Wittgenstein, Herder, Heidegger, Philalaos (?), and Bultmann, saying such things as, "Suddenly we recall Wilhelm von Humboldt....," when clearly we don't. Nonetheless, he does manage to highlight the importance and role of language and interpretation in the processes of communication and therapy. Scharfenberg lays out Freud's contributions here clearly if not simply. For those interested in the role of language in separating myth or fantasy from reality, the chapter is clearly worth reading.

The author then deals with Freud's understanding of religion in relation to neurosis, delusion, illusion, and historical truth. While Freud at times delights in treating religion with complete disdain, there is much to suggest that he was also captivated by its role in society and the subconscious. Scharfenberg deals extensively with Freud's under-

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standing of religion in terms of sociology and history. A significant focus of his work is Freud's understanding of the ethical demands of religion in terms of primal history.

Finally, Scharfenberg recaps Freud's views on religion in terms of its origins, ethical function, and social manifestations. Freud's understanding of psychoanalysis as "healing through love" and his opposition to religious expressions which represent "infantile wishful thinking" are held forth in positive terms. It is the author's suggestion that a more serious and less defensive encounter with Freud might lead religion away from pious delusion and toward mature faith.

This is not a book to take fishing with you, but one to be enjoyed over several cups of coffee. The introduction it provides to Freud and the still-deepening relationship between psychoanalysis and religion make it well worth reading.

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THE CHRIST AND THE FAITHS, by Kenneth Cragg. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988. Pp. 372. \$14.95 (paper).

This book represents the seasoned reflections of one who has been at the heart of the Muslim and Christian conversation for a lifetime. It is not limited to that one conversation but ranges much more broadly. So this reader asks, Can what one has learned in the Muslim-Christian context have an application in a Buddhist-Christian or a Hindu-Christian setting as well? We will have to read the book to see.

Cragg's guiding idea is that of "cross-reference." What does this mean and how does he propose to use it?

It is an effort to identify and build conversation upon a common ground amidst the religions. But how can one find such common ground amidst the diverse "prepossessions" of the religions, the Christian included? Surprisingly, it may seem, the figure of Jesus helps to form that

common ground. Of course, there is a background to this foreground interest. After all, it is because of our common human experience that all cultures can resonate with the very human event that is named Jesus.

It is now clear that Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists (the religious persuasions he treats), not just the Christian, have views about Jesus. Cross-reference, then, is a deliberate referral of the Christian to the convictions by which others live and to the way these convictions shape the interpretation of Jesus with potential for a double result: it can aid in a more effective translation of the Christian conviction via the idioms of others as perhaps unsuspected resonances appear while also opening up the Christian to a sharp interrogation by others.

How then does Cragg go about doing this? He begins with a chapter entitled “Bona Fide Christiana.” Good faith is both a clear affirmation of the faith held, while also a respectful allowance for others to speak and interrogate. One can thus avoid the simplicity of “vehement assertion” or the exclusion of our various “self-enclosures.” Cragg is eager for a public meeting rather than a private speculation based on our own Christian self-enclosure. Cross-reference happens when we “listen to the questions” other religions raise of us; work with these “in the common denominator of human experience”; and from this let answers emerge (11). Cross-reference is, of course, not new. It is the process whereby the biblical material was given shape. “Cross-reference theology is the only one there is” (13).

The body of the book treats four religions, “God and Islam,” “Messiah and Jewry,” “Christologies and India,” “The Buddha and the Self.” The final chapter, “Bona Fiducia Christiana,” completes the enveloping begun by the first chapter.

In the body of the book we find how it is that Islam challenges Christianity to reconsider its seeming compromise of

divine transcendence; how Judaism challenges Christianity to reconsider its christology in the light of an unrealized Messiahship; how Hinduism challenges Christianity to reconsider its claim to singularity for Christ and its conversionist stance in the light of many overlapping ways; and how Buddhism challenges Christianity to reconsider its inherent egoism in the light of the transience-in-inter-dependence of all things.

Does he do his task well? Cragg is never easy to read not because the thoughts are overly lofty but because his style is lyrical, his thoughts dense, and his language often a wistful recasting of our often more prosaic way of saying things. The lilt of his language has, however, evocative power and invites musings and ponderings. The reading requires an effort worthy of the task.

But having said this, does the crossreferencing work?

By and large I would say yes. The perspective that emerges is deeply grounded christologically, tethered to the tug of history, open to the pluralism that threatens our certainties, probing in the self-questioning that rightly arises, yet always sure of the soul of Christian conviction. Quick answers are not found here. But quick answers of the over-certain, whether of those who exclude any other name or those who include every other name, are always dubious anyway.

It is not possible in a review of this sort to go into the detail of his treatment. Cragg is always at his best when he probes the Muslim-Christian cross-referencing in the issue of divine majesty and vulnerability. He always seeks away in to the faith of the other. Without giving up

the quest, he recognizes limits. In his treatment of Judaism questions of messiahship, peoplehood, holocaust, two-covenants beckon us. Finding two covenants wanting, he yet recognizes a boundary of faith that cannot and should not be crossed. In his discussion of Hinduism and the conversionist question, without yielding on the Christian obligation to witness, he recognizes the limit once more in his language of “associate” Christians or, conversely, “associate” Muslims or Hindus. Because we cross-reference we cannot easily let each other go, even in the difference. His pondering on singularity and history in this section is decisive for his interpretation of religious pluralism throughout the whole of the book.

He seems to find Buddhism—he treats it in its Theravada form—the most problematic. He repeatedly refers to the “bleakness of its philosophy.” Theravada renunciation of life seems so far from the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish annunciation of life. Yet, in his obvious struggle with the Buddhist claims concerning non-self, his wrestlings are well worth our while and a Christian understanding of a death to self clearly presented.

The final chapter possesses some broad issues for Christian self-reflection. Most important is his extended discussion of questions of canon—was it, for instance, too quickly finalized, and ought other cultures to be excluded and only the Hebrew and Greco-Roman cultures brought into the norming?—and his briefer but helpful discussion on the question of pluralism. If it is indeed the case that pluralism leaves “truth an ever open question,” how will Christian faithfulness prove itself therein? The answer comes full-circle back to his thesis concerning cross-referencing: the church will “be the custodial house and home of the gospel”; it will “seek...the utmost possible relation to the themes and tensions of other faiths in positive hope”; and will then set these two, both the distinctives and the resonances, in our common experience of “human wistfulness and present history.”

None who ponder his ponderings will fail to be richly rewarded.

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THE YOUNG CALVIN, by Alexandre Ganoczy. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987. Pp. 408. \$24.95.

The English translation of this book is appearing over twenty years after the French original. The book remains an important work because of its insightful analysis of the development of Calvin’s self-understanding as a reformer. In addition, the volume is of particular interest because it is the work of a Roman Catholic scholar. At the time of its first appearance, the author acknowledged: An examination of the works published up to now on the youth of Calvin reveals that there is not one Catholic study specifically devoted to this subject. The irrevocable judgment pronounced on the heterodoxy of several of Calvin’s ideas has probably led Roman Catholic historians to lose interest almost completely in the study of the young Calvin. Without doubt it was more important to present him as a heretic than to try to explain how and why he developed his views. The exceptions are very few. (35)

The Young Calvin is significant not only because of what it demonstrates about Calvin but because of who is doing the demonstrating and why. Ganoczy approaches his subject not as a

key figure in another Christian communion, as one of the founders of the Protestant Church, but as a reformer within the one church catholic. The ecumenical import of his undertaking is clear. The author may belabor what to some readers seems obvious, that is, Calvin's intent to work for the one church of Christ rather than to found a "true" church divorced from the community that baptized him. Nonetheless, Ganoczy offers a salutary reminder to both Protestants and Roman Catholics who, for differing reasons, cherish the image of Calvin as a separatist. Indeed, Ganoczy's study is particularly directed to the Roman Catholic community in the hope that Calvin's accomplishments might be acknowledged and taken up in the ongoing evolution of its ecclesiastical life. He concludes that "Calvin's calling as a reformer, a factor in division for the past four centuries, may in some way now become a factor in reunion" (312) and pursues his project to aid the contemporary efforts of separated Christians working together to bridge that division.

The Young Calvin is divided into four sections. Part I provides a biographical account of the years 1523-1539, setting out the events, persons, and movements that contributed to the young man's religious development. Part II analyzes the sources which influenced Calvin in the writing of the first edition of the *Institutes* and is followed by a third section summarizing the major doctrinal themes of this work and its proposals for reform. In the final section Ganoczy discusses conversion, schism, and vocation as they apply to Calvin and offers his evaluation of Calvin as a reformer and a Catholic Christian.

One is struck by the contrast between Luther scholarship and Calvin studies. The young Luther has been worked over painstakingly; his development from an Augustinian friar to an evangelical reformer, with particular concentration on the date, nature, significance, and even location of his so-called tower experience, has occupied the interest of many. In studies of the French reformer, as Ganoczy portrays the field, the mature Calvin and his late writings have dominated. Attempts to date and characterize Calvin's spiritual transformation have depended largely on testimonies written long after the events, in particular the Preface to the *Commentary on the Psalms* (1557), where the reformer uses the term *subita conversio* to characterize his experience. Ganoczy reviews the various scholarly interpretations of this matter and then analyzes primary sources contemporary with the events as well as pertinent later writing to reach his own conclusion as to what Calvin meant by the term conversion.

Ganoczy offers a persuasive portrayal of Calvin's development from the ranks of the moderate reformists to advocacy of more radical reform measures and finally to the exercise of public ministry

in service of such reform. He emphasizes the significance of Calvin's own experience of persecution in 1533 and of his direct engagement in pastoral work for his growing sense of urgency. Particularly moving is the excerpt Ganoczy gives from a letter Calvin wrote shortly after taking up his duties in Geneva to his friend, François Daniel:

"You can hardly be persuaded," writes Calvin, "how great is the scarcity of ministers, considering the multitude of churches *who need pastors.*" Ah, if all the so-called partisans of the reform who, like Daniel's colleagues, have a lot to say in the shadow and do so little in the open, would finally decide to dedicate

themselves to the effective service of the Gospel! And the letter ends with this pressing invitation: “Oh, if those among you who are at least one with us in heart, when you see the *visible need of the Church* would put forth some effort to help.” These are clearly the words of a Christian who recognized the importance of the missionary and pastoral aspects of the reform and of a reformer who appeals for help as he becomes aware of his responsibility. (111)

Ganoczy contends that Calvin’s own sense of receiving an “extraordinary vocation to prophetic mission” (119) led him to accept the call of the Council in Geneva to be a pastor of the church within a year of his arrival, a ministry which he initially declined. He underscores the use Calvin made of the prophets as warrants for the reforming activity he pursued. The fact that he was never ordained caused Calvin no concern. According to this biography, Calvin experienced his first and last vocational crisis at the time of his expulsion from Geneva. As I read the evidence provided, it suggests to me that the issue then was not so much the validity of his call as the sufficiency of his ability, although Ganoczy equally emphasizes the former. The pastoral work Calvin then took up in Strasbourg at the instigation of Martin Bucer and the reformers there and thus, in Calvin’s eyes, at the behest of the church, quickly repaired whatever damage had been inflicted upon his sense of vocation and competence. According to Ganoczy, historians who understand Calvin’s conversion in contemporary terms, either as “a sudden passage...from a state of religious indifference to a living faith” (131) or “a break with a particular church” (242), are mistaken, for the reformer never languished in unbelief, nor did he reject one Christian community for another.

All of this change in life and spirit, this revitalization of what was buried, occurs basically in the subjective realm. It never reaches the objective realm of the sacrament, which is unchangeable because it is guaranteed by God. In this view, the continuity between a deformed state and a re-formed state of the Christian community is implicitly affirmed. Moreover, any idea of founding a new church by means of a new baptism is categorically rejected. (254)

Ganoczy rightly insists that the truly significant transformation for Calvin and consequently for the history of the church is his taking up the public ministry of reform. His conversion was subordinate to this vocation. It entailed repentance, turning from past errors (i.e., the abandonment of Romanism) to restore the Church in accord with the gospel.

Although Ganoczy clears Calvin of the charge of schism, he does hold him liable for a faulty understanding of the nature of the church and its mediation of grace. He generously acknowledges that this was in large part due to the poor teaching and abusive behavior of the ecclesiastical establishment in Calvin’s day. Yet the reformer was wrong in his denial of the church’s sacramental nature and in his rejection as “the most intolerable scandal of the Church” (212) the fact “that for centuries responsible doctors have insisted upon humanizing the divine and making grace material” (Ibid.). This failure to accept the full consequences of the incarnation represented a deviation from Catholic tradition and remained part of Calvin’s legacy through succeeding generations. Thus, even while insisting that Calvin’s calling as a reformer has posi-

tive import for the universal church, Ganoczy concludes that its primary significance is negative.

Although Calvin neither wanted a break nor felt responsible for it, his positions in fact separated him from the rest of the Church. And this separation continued to widen. Rejected and separated from the influences and the men who might have kept him within the Roman Catholic communion which would eventually be reformed, Calvin (thanks to himself in part) enclosed himself in a local church. Although he was initially “open,” he became the “Calvin of Geneva,” always “prophetic” and pastoral, but also more and more intolerant. Thus, Calvinism was born. This militant Protestantism, with its rigorous organization, austere morality, and conquering dynamism in spiritual and temporal affairs, was to cause much concern for the Counter-Reformation and the Roman Catholic reform. Thus, two intolerant positions rivaled each other and inevitably led to the wars of religion. (311)

It is questionable whether Calvin should be held responsible for the whole of Calvinism, or indeed, whether Calvinism is a phenomenon to be deplored. Moreover, in his preface to this English edition, Ganoczy in a few brief paragraphs makes some significant retractions with regard to his views on the Catholic understanding of the sacrament and the young Calvin’s alleged deficiency in this regard. Considering what a significant part this issue plays in his study of the reformer, one wishes that the author would say more about the significance of these alterations for his original conclusions.

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MODELS OF GOD: THEOLOGY FOR AN ECOLOGICAL, NUCLEAR AGE, by Sallie McFague. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987. Pp. 239. \$10.95 (paper).

Models of God is both a troubling and an exciting book: troubling because it calls into question many firmly held Christian beliefs, and exciting because McFague’s book suggests fresh metaphors for talking about God today.

Methodologically, McFague develops further her “metaphorical theology.” She rejects the notion that theology can describe God directly. Talk about God is inescapably metaphorical. She admits, therefore, that her theology is heuristic, a thought experiment designed to test how fruitful certain models of God are for relating the Christian message to our contemporary world.

I think McFague’s understanding of the metaphorical character of theology deserves commendation. Even some of the most sophisticated theologians seem on occasion to forget how essentially metaphorical religious language is. If McFague is correct in insisting on its metaphorical character, however, it becomes difficult to know whether any model of God expresses something genuinely true about God. Her criteria for evaluating models consist in

recognizing that models construct their own reality and in judging whether that vision of reality is better for our time than its competitors. McFague does believe that models can be evaluated on the basis of continuities which exist between them and the Scriptures. Nevertheless I sense a fatal relativism in McFague's position, for even though she says that metaphors both *are* and are not true, she provides no satisfactory set of criteria for judging how adequate to experience a particular metaphor or model is, except for appealing to its truth *for our time*. Important as this concern is, *used alone* it may lead to a theology that fluctuates with every cultural shift.

McFague's goal is to suggest models of God appropriate for our age, an age she describes as nuclear, ecological, ho-

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listic, and inclusive. In other words, she seeks to offer an image of God that is relevant to people who live under the threat of nuclear war and environmental crisis and who increasingly see life as an interdependent web of relationships rather than as an individualistic struggle. She joins a variety of theologians in rejecting traditional monarchical thinking of God as King, for with its other critics she sees that this model has led to a view of God as distant from the world, concerned only for humans, and supportive of oppression. The negative consequences of the monarchical model as well as the particular characteristics of our own age call for new models of God.

These models of God require as a foundation a new understanding of God's relationship to the world, McFague believes. As such she proposes to view the world as God's body. Seeing the world as God's body seems pantheistic. Not so, argues McFague, for God is no more identical with the world than we are with our own bodies. Of course, God is intimately related to the world as God's body, but this is a view that is consistent with Christian incarnational theology. A more difficult problem is how to resolve the apparent implication that if the world with all its evil is the body of God, then God is somehow responsible for evil. Here McFague could do better, I believe, for basically she acknowledges the problem but answers it primarily by pointing to the symbol of the cross to show that God suffers the consequences of evil along with us and that God and we together overcome evil by our passionate love for the world.

Finally, McFague spells out some of the implications of the three models of God she is proposing. The first model she suggests is God as Mother. This model might be labeled more accurately "God as Parent," for McFague does not object to talk of God as Father that avoids the monarchical interpretations that have been attached to this otherwise parental model. McFague associ-

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ates the model of God as Mother with *agape* love, which is not a disinterested love, as it has often been described by theologians, but rather an impartial love that values life itself, including the life of each of its offspring. God's activity as Mother is creative, giving birth to all the world. This model of God supports a concern for justice, for God as Mother cares that all her offspring share equal and fair access to whatever is necessary to preserve and maintain their lives.

Secondly, McFague proposes the model of God as Lover. McFague does not hesitate to attribute *eros* as well as *agape* to God. God as Lover desires and values the world and in some

sense can be said to need it. Salvation on this model means restoring alienated portions of the world to a relationship of interdependence with their Lover, God, as well as with the rest of the world. According to McFague this model views salvation as an ongoing process of healing in which many people work with God to establish solidarity and overcome alienation, rather than as an action addressed to individuals and carried out once and for all by Jesus. Notice that salvation for McFague is a cooperative effort of God and humans and that there are many paradigmatic examples of God's saving love in addition to Jesus. Traditional Christians may sense here a "weak" christology and a tinge of Pelagianism (although she denies it)—or at least a confusion of salvation and sanctification.

The third model is God as Friend, applying *philia* to God's relationship with us. Friendship as McFague describes it is a freely chosen relationship where two individuals are bound together in some common project. We are bound together in friendship with God in our common commitment to healing and fulfillment for the world. Whereas human friendship is often exclusive, limiting the friends' attention to themselves, the divine friendship McFague describes is dedicated to including others in the relationship with God. God as Friend acts to sustain us by involving us in a joyful, loving community. This model places value on companionship, on the effort to include all the world in the community of the friends of God.

It is no accident that McFague proposes three models of God, for they are intended to be analogous to traditional Christian trinitarian thinking. The models, however, were not crafted slavishly to follow a trinitarian pattern but emerged on their own. McFague experiments in this book to see whether these three models may serve our times better than traditional trinitarian thinking. Certainly these models of God challenge traditional Christian teaching. Surely McFague's discussion of the models leaves unresolved problems. Nevertheless, her book offers us some exciting, helpful, and provocative ways for imaging the reality of God in our contemporary world.

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JOHN, by George R. Beasley-Murray. Word Biblical Commentary 36. Waco, TX: Word, 1987. Pp. 441. \$24.95.

At first glance the appearance of Beasley-Murray's commentary on John's gospel in the Word Biblical Commentary series is something of an anomaly. The publisher is well known for a conservative evangelical stance and a desire that this commentary series reflect "commitment to scripture as divine revelation" (ix). On the other hand, the author of this volume is a respected scholar who was responsible for the English translation of Rudolf Bultmann's commentary on John, a work that is more often perceived as a threat than a promise by conservative evangelicals. Nevertheless, Beasley-Murray points out that Bultmann had "a passionate desire to demonstrate that the gospel was not only to be believed but to be lived" (xi), a desire shared by biblical interpreters who may differ in many other respects. His own commentary on the Fourth Gospel is a happy melding of evangelical commitment and a high level of

scholarship that is in constant conversation with the leading Johannine scholars of recent generations, including Bultmann, Hoskyns, Dodd, Brown, Schnackenburg, and others.

The commentary is written with pastors in mind, but will also be of considerable value to scholars, teachers, and students. The sixty-page introduction is a splendidly balanced discussion of major issues in the study of the Fourth Gospel. In it Beasley-Murray summarizes the major scholarly positions together with his own views, which generally reflect current scholarly consensus. For example, on the matter of the relationship of John to the Synoptics, he agrees with D. Moody Smith that John is “relatively independent” of the Synoptics (xxxvii), and given the lack of agreement concerning the nature of possible literary sources behind the gospel, he wisely attempts to interpret the gospel in its present form.

Beasley-Murray maintains that the gospel “sets the historical ministry of Jesus in Palestine in indissoluble relation to the ministry of the risen Lord in the world” (xlvii). He affirms that the traditions behind the gospel seem to have emerged in Palestine and were developed in ways that addressed the needs of Christians later in the first century. This approach generally accords with the views of J. Louis Martyn, Raymond E. Brown, and others, who understand the gospel as a two-level drama—a drama that on one level recounts the story of Jesus and on a second level reflects the story of the Johannine community. Beasley-Murray also underscores Martyn’s observation that the Johannine community understood such a development of the tradition to be the work of the Paraclete, or Holy Spirit. But in contrast to Martyn, Wayne Meeks, and others, who perceive the Johannine community as a rather isolated group in early Christianity, Beasley-Murray argues that the Fourth Gospel reflects the tradition of the church at large and addresses those outside the community of faith as well as those within it (xliv; lxxxix).

Analysis of the Fourth Gospel’s affinities to various religious traditions supports this outward-looking understanding of the evangelist and his community. Scholars have discerned links between the Fourth Evangelist and a bewildering array of ancient religious traditions: the Hellenistic Judaism of Philo, Gnosticism, the Hermetic literature, and Mandaeism as well as the Old Testament, rabbinic Judaism, the Qumran literature, and Samaritan religion. Beasley-Murray comments that it is impossible to identify the Fourth Gospel with anyone of these traditions to the exclusion of others. By using the term “logos” to begin his gospel, the Fourth Evangelist hit upon “a masterstroke of communication” with which to present Jesus to the world of his day (lxvi).

The discussion of the identity of the Fourth Evangelist and the Beloved Disciple in the introduction is one of the clearest and most balanced available. Beasley-Murray concludes that the gospel was not written by the Beloved Disciple and that the identity of these figures remains unknown, a view which is now held by many leading Johannine scholars, including Raymond E. Brown, Rudolf Schnackenburg, and others. The format of the commentary is like that of the other volumes in this series. For each pericope there is bibliography, a translation of the passage, notes on details in the text, a discussion of the form/structure/setting, comments on each verse, and an “explanation” oriented toward contemporary explication of the text. Although this format may be confusing to some, readers soon learn to turn to the sections designed to meet their needs.

In any commentary there are of course points at which one might wish for a different treatment of a passage. For example, the discussion of the first Cana miracle (John 2:1-12) is rather brief and does not draw on pertinent Old Testament texts like Amos 9:13 and Joel 3:18, or

Baruch. Additional discussion of the Johannine attitude toward the sacraments also would be helpful. For example, Beasley-Murray comments that John 6:52-59 need not be interpreted in terms of the Lord's Supper, but insists that the evangelist certainly would have associated the passage with the sacrament (lxxxv; 95). Yet he does not deal with the diverse scholarly opinions on the evangelist's attitude toward the sacrament which arise from the silence about the Lord's Supper elsewhere in the gospel.

These issues are minor and do little to detract from the excellent quality of the work as a whole. Recent generations have seen a wealth of superb scholarship on John's gospel. Beasley-Murray is engaged with the work of his predecessors throughout this volume, and his own work is a valuable contribution to the discussion.

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BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON AGING: GOD AND THE ELDERLY, by J. Gordon Harris. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987. Pp. 160. \$9.95 (paper).

There is a glut of books already in the area of gerontology. Why then one more? Because what the Bible has to contribute to the subject is largely unrepresented. This reviewer knows of only one whole book (Rachel Dulin, *A Crown of Glory: A Biblical View of Aging* [Paulist, 1988]), besides this one, which seeks to supply what the Bible may have to offer us in our present aging crisis. So Harris is filling an otherwise almost empty niche.

Harris says he has written on the Bible and the aging for a number of good reasons:

It challenges members of Christianity and Judaism to rediscover the roots of their society, ethics, and theology. [He hopes] that because of this book many more people may age with dignity and a sense of worth in an environment more sensitive to their needs.... (xiii)

[He asserts that] the public is still generally indifferent toward aging issues. Society needs additional pressure to facilitate change. Religion appears to be a proper vehicle for enlightening public opinion, confronting society's attitudes, and encouraging the elderly themselves. The Bible could and should assume a pivotal role in influencing future trends....[He writes out of a] concern for that growing percentage of the population—the aging—who daily encounter increasing hostility in the western world. (1)

For the sake of this growing minority the resources of faith need to be marshaled.
(2)

Religion offers a legitimate context for dialogue between the theological tenets of biblical materials and current sociological structures....Theologians must challenge the presuppositions of ageism on biblical grounds. (3)

[The] discussion...seeks to sensitize interpreters about aging realities in order to help them avoid a simplistic approach that unnecessarily increases anxiety about the aging process. (42)

Biblical theology [should] marshal its resources to help an aging society deal with its social turmoil. (104)

Biblical theology [should] provide a basis for eliminating so-called ageism. (111)

It is unclear how much Harris thinks this one book can do to achieve these laudable goals. He does expect biblical theology of which his work is an “overture” (to quote the name of the series of which it is a part) to work major changes in the whole community and in the elderly. Just how his success is to be measured is also not spelled out. But surely such changes as he awaits take place slowly, over decades perhaps. And his book was published only last year! We wish him well. Others in the various theological disciplines will be needed also if such impressive goals are to be achieved.

The method which Harris employs in his study is a cross-disciplinary one. Recognizing that in no sustained way is the Bible ever occupied with the elderly as a primary subject, Harris needs anthropological and sociological data from

extra-biblical sources to interpret what little material there is. He utilizes Ancient Near Eastern writings in chapter 2 and Jewish ones in chapter 6 to this end. He uses the broader contexts of human life as much as possible from within the Bible also. In addition, he seeks to pay heed to the differences between the various periods of biblical history and the different kinds of literature in which the viewpoints and practices are preserved. After comparing Jewish and early Christian attitudes (chap. 6), Harris concludes by comparing the biblical with our modern responses to aging (chap. 7). In so few pages (115) even major biblical passages are surveyed rather than covered in detail.

The results, while not striking, are refreshing. Unlike today, the whole Ancient Near East had a great admiration for the aged. Although their physical and other powers diminished, the elderly's wisdom and knowledge of the traditions guaranteed them a major role as teachers, sages, and models of behavior in society. Harris believes he can speak of a “common theology” (18) in the ancient world with regard to aging (chaps. 2, 3). God(s) upheld the institutions of society and rewarded those who honored the elderly while punishing those who did not. Still, certain forces such as urbanization and monarchy as well as a desire for power among the young were a threat to the role of the elderly (chap. 4). God's involvement is at times ambiguous too. The very institutions which are received as divine blessings can become instruments of oppression of the elderly. In Israel, the “common theology” shared with neighbors finds the same impediments as elsewhere to carrying its precepts into life. But there are insights which make a

profound difference here: the role which God plays in upholding justice, in favoring the powerless, and in undermining as well as blessing institutions is an extension of the divine character. Thus, while Harris does not say so, the “common theology” may not be so common after all. God’s character and commitment gives biblical theology its vitality and capacity for shaping human life. Thus, it has value still for meeting the contemporary aging crisis (chap. 7).

Harris’ compassion for the elderly and his commitment to the authority of Scripture give his work a compelling quality which will probably move anyone who is inclined to listen to biblical testimony. Mid-chapter summaries and chapter-end conclusions make it virtually impossible to miss the author’s main points. They do tend to give the book a flavor of repetitiousness, however. Happily, Harris speaks of “Early Judaism” for the period which previously was widely known as “late Judaism.” He uses B.C.E. and C.E. and avoids sexist language. While Egyptian and Mesopotamian contributions to the so-called “common theology” of aging are graciously acknowledged, Harris unfortunately cannot avoid some bashing of the Canaanites (25-28). Were they really that different from Israel’s other neighbors?

This reviewer heartily commends the author for not only writing *about* the elderly, but also speaking *to* them. This attitude respects them as joint participants in solving their and our present aging crisis. The conclusions to which Harris comes seem appropriate to one who shares his conviction that the Bible still speaks in a unique way to the Jewish and Christian communities of faith. Here we have a book which lay people, pastors, and rabbis should find helpful. After all, is it not true that most congregations have a larger percentage of aged members than do the larger communities of which they are a part?

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CRY OF THE OPPRESSED, by Robert F. Drinan. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987. Pp. 224. \$17.95.

This book makes one acutely aware of how far we’ve come, and the difficult road ahead in the evolution of human rights. Born out of a need to domestically protect persons and groups from gross violations of human dignity, has come a twin of international scope making accountability more comprehensive. Drinan unfolds the life of these twins in their struggle to become universally accepted. He is both an admirer and a critic of their story. I am simply an admirer of the breadth of knowledge Drinan evidences in *Cry of the Oppressed*. It should be read by all who desire to be articulate in the human rights revolution.

Drinan, appealing to our sense of duty as Americans who constitutionally embrace the concept of human rights, calls us to fulfill what we intrinsically acknowledge to be true, and to breathe life into what we helped to create in the United Nations Charter. In the preamble of the United Nations Charter there is a reaffirmation of faith “in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.” And then again in articles 55 and 56, nations “pledge themselves to joint and separate action” to “promote...universal freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.” Drinan points out where we all too often failed to follow through. As a

nation that lifts up this ideal, and then consistently fails to affirm its relevance by not making itself accountable in the international arena, we have simply lost credibility and come awfully close to validating the charge of hypocrisy raised by those who both admire and fear our position and status. We have consistently failed to “ratify treaties agreed to by every nation in the world” despite President Carter’s determination “to get the Senate finally to adopt four of the most important United Nations treaties on human rights” (28).

Seemingly above binding international agreements of this nature, we have created the suspicion that we lack any real desire to be responsible advocates. Drinan powerfully and persuasively shows how our domestic reluctance to make changes (on such issues as racism and civil rights, representation and protection of the disenfranchised, etc.) has once again given way to international impotence. As a world power which at the same time is innately isolationist, we have a difficult time making ourselves directly accountable to another lawful body. As an example, Drinan reiterates a decision on the part of the “Reagan White House to accept the decision of the World Court at The Hague asserting that the U.S. must pay damages to Nicaragua for the injuries done by the covert activity in the harbors of Nicaragua by the CIA or its agents” (67). We have recently heard of such payments to settle for Iranian losses in the Persian Gulf due to the accidental shooting down of an Iranian commercial airplane. The latter was our decision quite apart from a lawful body that might hold us accountable. There was no defiance of international law as was the case when Nicaragua sued through the International Court of Justice, but neither was there any working through international channels and structures.

The premise of this book is that we idly stand by while European countries, Latin America, and Africa struggle to create their own regional centers for human rights. We applaud their achievements when it affirms our selfinterested American foreign policy or investments directly related to our domestic welfare. Drinan expects more, and he gives some very concrete ways we can help. (We have recently seen this played out as America denounces the evil system of apartheid in South Africa.) Drinan states that “the gross abuse of internationally recognized human rights is so abominable that laws penalizing such abuse should be retained. If they present sometimes insuperable difficulties in enforcement, they nonethe-

less teach that certain deeds are evil and should have consequences adverse to the nation that sanctions or allows them” (79). “If 160 nations found it possible to yield a part of their sovereignty to join that world body, they might well be prepared to agree to a tribunal that would do what domestic criminal laws everywhere do—punish lawless conduct with swift and effective sanctions” (173).

Drinan applauds our noble gestures in the United Nations Charter, articles 55 and 56. He gives a standing ovation to our signing of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Aug. 1, 1975), commonly known as the Helsinki Accords, where we pledged to promote universal and effective respect for human rights. This covenant has given new hope for international security problems, sparking “major inspirations for the Solidarity movement in Poland, for democratic initiatives in Hungary, and for anew restlessness in several of the countries dominated by the USSR” (126). But behind his enthusiasm lies the fear that, because there is really no enforcement mechanism, and because of the failure to be consistent and accountable to the mechanisms we now have in place, human rights as subject to international

law will never see the light of day. His fears soon give way to his dream of a permanent international court with a high commissioner who would be responsible for a “thorough global survey of the state of each human right in each nation of the world” (176), making publication of his findings incentive enough to keep one another honest.

I like his proposal, his dream, and his honesty. As a powerful and influential nation we stand at Lazarus’ gate. We have heard the cry of the oppressed. Drinan becomes the voice of the prophet bringing us to repentance, the need for change, and a vision for the future. Don’t pass it up!

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CHARLES GRANDISON FINNEY 1792-1875 REVIVALIST AND REFORMER, by Keith J. Hardman. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987. Pp. 448. \$45.00.

Those who read this volume, the first critical biography of Charles Grandison Finney since 1891, will first of all be treated to a good plot: a dramatic conversion experience spurs Finney to leave the practice of law and prepare for ministry in the Presbyterian church. As an itinerant preacher in western New York, Finney’s reputation grows; many people are converted through his tough and logical sermons. Finney polishes his style and leaves the backwoods circuit for larger towns. His career is watched with growing alarm by established east coast divines such as Lyman Beecher and Asahel Nettleton, who favor a more restrained approach to evangelism. They try to silence the western interloper through a private smear campaign and a public confrontation, but in vain. Then in Rochester, New York, a dramatic revival in 1830 results in mass conversions; barrels of whiskey are smashed and poured out in the streets. The Erie

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Canal flows with demon rum. Finney’s fame as a pulpit orator grows; he becomes pastor of Second Free Presbyterian Church in New York City, a platform from which he can spread his brand of revivalism, and a place in which to confront grim poverty. Finney publishes *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* in 1835 (which Perry Miller has called “the key exposition” of the revival movement and a “major work in the history of the mind of America”).

In 1835, financed by wealthy abolitionist merchants, Finney and others establish what became Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, a coeducational and biracial training ground for revivalist preachers and abolitionist agitators. Then, seeking to consolidate the gains of early nineteenth-century revivals, Finney ignites a perfectionist movement at Oberlin, a heady quest for entire sanctification and sweeping social reform. Oberlin becomes the junction of several Underground Railroad routes. Abraham Lincoln, says Finney in 1861, is too conservative on the slavery issue. Someone more radical is needed, Such is the plot of Finney’s life.

Biographer Keith Hardman, however, goes well beneath the plot line to evaluate Finney’s significance for American religion. Finney has often been called the originator of modern mass evangelism; “he supposedly developed innovative methods to bring about more conversions,”

which became the model for large-scale evangelism followed by Dwight Moody, Billy Sunday, and Billy Graham. But Hardman insists that this interpretation of Finney must be revised. George Whitfield, who spread the 1740s Awakening throughout the colonies, preached to greater audiences. Baptists and Methodists played a significant role in developing revivals, as did Presbyterians and Congregationalists. According to Hardman, Finney's genuine contributions were his "new style of freer, largely extemporaneous preaching; the concept of citywide, cooperative evangelism; and the wedding of evangelism and reform." Finney was, says Hardman, "the key figure in American religion for the second quarter of the nineteenth century."

Well and good, but why should anyone outside of the revival traditions read this book? There are several reasons. First, in this supposedly ecumenical age, there is too little understanding of this facet of United States religious heritage. Revivalism is often caricatured by its present decadent state; little is generally known about the movement when it was young, when religious zeal sparked social reform as well as individual conversion. Second, this book raises the question of the relationship of evangelism and ecumenism, for while Finney's work created divisions, it also brought people together across denominational lines in common efforts for church and society. Third, Hardman's book provides copious resources not only for the history of revivalism, but for Black history, social reform, the demise of predestinarian Calvinism in our culture and, to some extent, the role of women in religion before the Civil War. The detailed notes for each chapter are a boon to researchers in any of these areas. But perhaps most important, *Charles Grandison Finney 1792-1875* is especially recommended for those who wish to know more about the lineage of those "other churches" in town, and for those who seek some historical perspective on the present state of revivalism.

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