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REVIEW**

**Fall 1974**



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# Contents

The Minister as Scholar .....	135
<i>by Thomas A. Langford</i>	
Continuing Educational Services .....	142
Albert Outler, D.H.L. (Duke) .....	143
An Effectual Calling .....	145
<i>by Albert C. Outler</i>	
Conversing with the Text .....	153
<i>by John Bradley White</i>	
Focus on Faculty .....	181
<i>by Roland E. Murphy and John H. Westerhoff</i>	
Book Reviews .....	189

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# The Minister as Scholar

by THOMAS A. LANGFORD

Scholarship is a vagrant term. It means different things in different settings; it represents diverse activities; it serves multiple ends; it possesses chameleon traits. I realize that I have now made relative one of the few things you thought had a permanent character. Anyone, you thought, knows what scholarship is. Let me describe the embodiment which has probably come immediately to your mind.

Scholarship is the vocation of a few people who like old books and quiet places. The scholar is an impractical person. Given to solitude, he or she moves naturally to a library carrel or a smelly lab, has contracted posterior deadness, and possesses patience for sustained, minute research. The interests of the scholar are usually narrow in focus, often esoteric, and always shared with a small in-group. Bemused by the real world, and lacking in gregarious instincts, the scholar is to be protected by administrators, listened to by students, and helped across the street by old ladies. But he or she is always to be respected. There is a tradition of respect (a respect which often has a slight wisp of amusement in its incense smoke); there is an expectant sense that something important may come from studious research—although the scholar probably will not recognize its full value and certainly cannot apply its significance. Every campus needs a few of these people—they make for good conversation at the reunion parties—but no campus could survive with too many. You might be willing for your sister to marry one, you would worry about your brother if he did, and you are glad your spouse didn't.

That's the caricature—and like all caricatures it takes a few real features and enlarges them into misshapen oddities. Furthermore, it is an inadequate caricature because it has chosen features of only one type of scholar—and one almost as extinct as the quiet, ivy-covered men's campus with aged fraternity houses and daily chapel—but insofar as it exists it is valid and honorable.

The Opening Convocation sermon preached in York Chapel, September 4, 1974.

The truth of the matter is: there are a number of roles for scholarship, a multitude of types of scholars, and diverse methods of study and communication. To initiate our thinking we need to recognize that scholarship is responsible study which serves clearly envisioned goals, and which is as varied as the persons—with their varied contexts and competencies—who undertake its tasks. And we need to add that all scholarship is legitimate which utilizes the resources of the person and the data so as to enrich understanding.

Now, when we speak of the “minister as scholar,” we must first recognize and accentuate the personal and situational distinctiveness of the minister’s place; we must understand the goals this scholarly task is attempting to serve; and we must understand what responsible study means and the ways in which it may be developed by those in ministry. Throughout we must continue to recognize the necessary diversity of scholarship, and this especially in the ministry and among ministers. There is no portrait which adequately represents even this limited vocational group.

First let us look at the context of the ministry and its distinctive claims for scholarship.

### *The Borderland*

The minister lives on a borderland, a boundary where different territories abut, a place on the edge of other places. This is the habitation of the minister of the gospel; the place of the one who bridges the distance between the theologians and the laity; the place where one is given responsibility for bringing the sharp edge and the tender embrace of grace upon misformed, and unformed, and reformed human life. There is a borderland which will be your place if you are a minister, a terrain upon which you will live, a necessary place, an uncertain place.

Now, obviously, there are many borderlands. As with a segment of an immense chessboard or geodesic design, we all stand in relation to adjunctive socio-cultural realities on every side; so, for instance, the academic theologian (when I use this term I refer to all of the disciplines of theological education) has his or her particular boundaries upon which life takes place—a fact of which Paul Tillich eloquently reminded us in an autobiographical statement. Scholarship in an academic community has its special place, but for the moment



we are concentrating on the borderland which the minister—such as a parish minister—occupies. And we shall want to ask: how may he or she be a scholar?

The borderland where ministerial life is lived is both treacherous and ill-defined. It is uncertain terrain, a place where most people prefer not to step and where only a few are willing to remain. It is difficult territory, always demanding and constantly challenging. But it is the land of the minister. By necessity, by vocation, by the need to serve, the minister is always there.

Jose Ortega y Gasset once claimed, "Tell me your landscape and I will tell you who you are." Everyone must have a *locus standi*, a place to stand, a place from which he or she will view and serve the world. So the minister must find a standing place in the borderland from which he or she can operate. To occupy such a place is no easy matter, for it is the land of the interpreters—the go-betweens—and they who would be interpreters possess the freedom and bear the responsibility in it. Reaching from preparation to proclamation, holding the theologian by one hand and the congregation by the other, attempting to grasp the tenuousness of scholarship and the tenuousness of human existence, moving from skill and technique to the hurt and hope of personal life—these are the activities of the borderland.

Such a borderland is vague and obscure in its demarcations. One can enter sometimes without realizing that he or she is there, but, more possibly, one can leave without knowing that he or she is no longer there. In fact, there are always temptations to move away from the boundary. It is difficult to take the abstractions and exactitudes of the academic scholar and translate them into concrete, vivid language—language which can be heard or read or lived with understanding, and engagement and responsive commitment. It is difficult to take the impact of life and set it in relation to the gospel; or the thrust of the gospel and set it in relation to life. The temptation which confronts one who occupies this unstable terrain is to move fully to one side or the other and, thereby, escape the conflict and frustration of interpretative activity. Standing between academe and the earthly city, one is tempted by the exclusive attractions of each.

The temptation can lead ministers to play the game of "pluralistic religious free enterprise" (Peter Berger) and come to

terms with their hearers by modifying their product in accordance with consumer demands. Or one can refuse to become accommodated, and move toward entrenchment behind theological or ecclesiastical structures where life is more controllable even if more limited.

To live in the land of the interpreters is no easy matter, and it requires a profound sense of God's presence; it requires an unusual creativity; it requires a keen sense of historical humanity.

### *The Place of Presence and Creativity*

The most fundamental fact of borderland existence I want to mention only briefly: namely, to live on the border requires a profound sense of God's presence. Only the fool-hearted choose such a place without a sense of vocation. For this is the sort of place where footing is difficult to find and where endurance is a signal virtue. Borderland existence requires a sense of the presence of God, otherwise it is impossible.

To be in such a relationship and in such a place carries responsibility, and the minister who lives in the borderland is especially challenged to be creative. There are many more things that might be said of life on this boundary, but for this time I want to concentrate on one dimension: he or she who would convey the Christian gospel has an obligation to be a creative interpreter.

The minister (and I intend the term as shorthand for the full range of ministerial roles) must be creative. I use this word not primarily in the sense of cleverness or aesthetic innovativeness or private sensitivity; I use it rather to imply the mediation of new understanding and the creation of new situations. Interpretative activity requires imagination and inventiveness, but always for the purpose of bringing about a new reality. The creativity of which I speak is indigenous to ministry; the gospel needs active, engaging, challenging conveyance of its message and its vitality if new life is to occur.

Such communication is attempted in every ministerial expression, whatever its particular mode. I am reminded of the architectural directions which were prepared in the 1950's for the new Coventry Cathedral. (Parenthetically, the first great church at Coventry was started by that earlier streaker, Lady Godiva—so streaking may serve some good cause.) The directions for the architectural competitors said in part:

The Cathedral is to speak to us and to generations to come of the Majesty, the Eternity, and the Glory of God. God, therefore, direct you.

It is a Cathedral of the Church of England. In terms of function, what should such a Cathedral express? It stands as a witness to the central dogmatic truths of the Christian faith. Architecturally, it should seize on those truths and thrust them upon the man who comes in from the street.

Creative activity should convey the gospel to "the man who comes in from the street," for that is the task of ministry—whether that ministry is expressed in word, in architecture, in painting, in practical activity, in political organization, or in pastoral counseling. Such interpreters might be poets or politicians, a John Donne or a Martin Luther King, Jr., they might be ministers in Atlanta, Washington, Kansas City, or Durham. And as they undertake the task, one can only say with the Coventry committee, "May God be with you in this great matter."

The tasks of the church are many and each task has its own integrity. Each part of the body needs the other parts. So one must understand the relation of seminary education to the practice of ministry in other forms. The academic theologian, for instance, provides materials, understanding, criticism, and structures for the interpreter to use. The interpreter takes these materials and innovatively casts them into communicable form. The theologian is an engineer (dealing with foundations, stress factors, and quality controls), the interpreter is an architect (developing plans for edifices—or sermons or activities—which enrich sensitivity and invite to use).

Now let's talk directly, let's talk about ourselves. The academic theologian needs the creative minister. The word of life must be transported across the borderland by the interpreter. What the creative communicator can do is to find fresh ways of stating and applying truth. And theology today requires this with particular urgency. Let me be frank. The characteristic academic theological utterance is a longish book or a technical article. It assumes that the reader (and it is usually a reader) has a rich intellectual background, is trained to think clearly, cares about nuances, is gifted with uncommon powers of concentration, and has a requisite amount of time. But for most of the laity these conditions do not obtain. Macaulay once commented about Spenser's great poem, *The Faerie*

*Queene*, "Very few and very weary are the readers who are in at the death of the Great Beast." The same can be said of many theological writings—especially as they are studied by laity.

But it is important that theology should be understood by the woman and the man from the street. It is necessary to entice their attention and then to mold the gospel with the help of theological reflection into a presentation—of word or act—that has some value. Because you must build a strong and rich base, your seminary years are critical. You should expect a careful, thorough, demanding curriculum, and this in basic areas. For, in the final analysis, what you have to say and do is more important than how you say or do it. Because you must utilize these materials in your own way and place, your unique contribution is crucial. You should expect a careful, thorough, demanding experience in ministerial life. For it is through this experience that your mind and heart will be fully prepared; and it is through this experience that your communication will be effective.

Creative interpretation does not come out of a void; rather, it always counts upon rich resources. The resources for Christian communication come from the scriptures, the tradition, the interpretations, the worship, the liturgies, the rituals, the symbols, and the service of Christian faith. It is the academic theologian's task critically to evaluate, recount, construct, reconstruct, systematize, analyze, and restate this inheritance. It is the creative interpreter's task to take this more abstract or historically distant or carefully precise work and translate it for concrete human experience. Great works of literature always possess greatness by taking a concrete human person and exposing the reality of that person in such a way that others recognize not only the authenticity of the person portrayed but also see common human characteristics in the specific embodiment. And the same is true for significant interpretation.

Arthur Koestler, that provocative dilettante, in his study of creative activity, says that the act of creation is found in the intersection of matrices, so that two expected things come together to form an unexpected, new thing. The borderland is the place where this transformation and humanization takes place. It is on the border where the intersection of theology with ordinary life takes place. It is in the borderlands where theology is given its most concrete embodiment.

James Denny, a Scots theologian at the turn of the century, said he would like to go into every church, hold up the cross, and say, "God loves like that." Theological education should teach you what this means, for there is a once-for-all character of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus; but the interpreter must translate that uniqueness into a multitude of concrete applications and learn to say, "God loves like that, and that, and that, and that." This is a demanding task, and it takes sensitivity and training and experience and effort to achieve it.

The inhabitator of the borderland attempts such concrete and innovative interpretation. In human brokenness, grace is shared; in violated relationships, new hope is given; in the agony of search, a presence is felt; among immoral structures, new order is set; in the midst of guilt, forgiveness is spoken. And all of this must be set within the context where those to whom you minister live; it must be spoken in language which many different people can understand; it must be used to construct meaningful community; and it must be done in such a way that attention is arrested and understanding achieved.

Perhaps we all share an Archimedean desire. Perhaps with somewhat more humility, but almost certainly with less intelligence, we can say with that ancient Greek, "Give me a place where I can stand and set my lever, and I can move the world." You who are ministers have been given such a place—by grace. You are called to live in this place—by faith. And you will survive in this borderland—by hope. You have been trained for a rich and demanding habitation.

Live creatively in that land.

Study, study hard,

let nothing detract from your integrity

and from your unique place,

Divide with wisdom the word of truth.

And may the God of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Amen



# CONTINUING EDUCATION SERVICES JANUARY-JULY, 1975

*Programs at The Divinity School:  
Courses, Seminars, Conferences, Workshops, Institutes*

“EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES IN THE CHURCH”—Mondays, January 20-April 21, 7:30-9:30 PM. Divinity School course (Christian Education 221) open to ministers, educational directors, church school teachers and leaders. Auditor’s fee, \$40. Professor John H. Westerhoff III.

CONFERENCES ON THE SMALLER CHURCH—February 13-15. Divinity School Faculty, with NC and WNC Conference Town and Country leaders. Ministers Thursday-Friday; Laity Friday-Saturday. Leadership, parish development, small church education.

“THE PASTOR AND THE CHARISMATICS”—February 24-28. In-residence seminar led by Divinity School Faculty, with Dr. Ross E. Whetstone, Board of Discipleship, and other visiting resource leaders.

PERSONAL GROWTH LABORATORY FOR BLACK CHURCH LEADERS—March 31-April 3. Leaders, Professor O. Kelly Ingram and Dr. Wm. Derek Shows. Dr. Joseph B. Bethea, Director.

COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP—April 2-4 (tentative). Sequel to 1974 Workshop, for NC and WNC Conference Communications leaders and Divinity School community.

“COMMUNITY, WORSHIP, AND MISSION”—April 9-11. Spring Lectures by The Very Reverend Edward H. Patey, Dean of Liverpool Cathedral (1971 Hickman Lecturer).

CAMPUS MINISTRY INSTITUTE—June 28-July 4. Professor John H. Westerhoff, Director, with Dr. Peter Gomes, Minister to Harvard University, and Dr. Donald W. Shriver, Candler School of Theology, Emory University. For campus ministers.

SUMMER INSTITUTE IN CHURCH EDUCATION—July 6-18. Professor John H. Westerhoff, Director, with Professors Thomas A. Langford, McMurry S. Richey, D. Moody Smith, Jr. For professional church educators and parish ministers.

SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR MINISTRY—July 7-11, 14-18. Biblical studies, theology, parish and community, preaching: “Preaching in the Community of Faith,” with Professor John K. Bergland. For ministers, spouses, laity.

## Albert Outler, D.H.L. (Duke)

Duke University does not award many honorary degrees to divines, perhaps least of all to professors who have left it to go elsewhere. The bestowal of a D.H.L. last May on Albert C. Outler, who preached two baccalaureate sermons over Commencement weekend, paid tribute not only to a Methodist theologian and ecumenical statesman, but to a faculty member retiring this year from a "rival" seminary as a lifelong personal and professional friend of Duke. The editors of the REVIEW are proud to publish one of those two sermons, as a tribute to him and as a typical challenge to his countless former students and perennial admirers. —C.L.

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Albert C. Outler was born in Thomasville, Georgia, in 1908. He received the A.B. degree from Wofford College in 1928, the B.D. from Emory University in 1933, and the Ph.D. degree from Yale University in 1938.

He began his academic career with his appointment to the Duke Divinity School faculty as instructor in 1938, was promoted to assistant professor in 1939 and to associate professor in 1941. During his stay at Duke he played a notable role in developing and strengthening the academic programs of both the Divinity School and the Graduate School curriculum in Religion. In 1945 he accepted appointment as associate professor in the Yale Divinity School. Three years later he was appointed to Yale's Distinguished Timothy Dwight Chair of Theology, and elected Fellow of Silliman College. In 1951 he accepted an invitation to Southern Methodist University as Professor of Theology, a position he held until his retirement in 1974.

Outler's scholarly interests and competencies are wide-ranging. Among his peers he is primarily acknowledged as one of the outstanding theologians of his generation. Through his teaching, writing, lecturing, and vigorous participation in numerous professional societies, he has exercised an influential leadership role. In addition to scores of scholarly

articles, he has published six books. He has received appointment to twenty-nine named and endowed lectureships, including most of the prestigious lectureships in the field of Religion (e.g. James A. Gray Lectures at Duke in 1961). Among the numerous learned societies to which he has belonged, including Fellowship in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he has served as President of the following: the American Theological Society, the American Society of Church History, and the American Catholic Historical Association, the first Protestant to hold office in the last-named society.

As a Methodist clergyman he has been called to numerous tasks of leadership within his denomination, on both the national and international scenes. Beyond this he has been one of the most highly respected and influential American Protestant church leaders in the ecumenical movement. During the last twenty-five years he has served with distinction on numerous working commissions, and has been a leading spokesman at the major ecumenical assemblies in America and around the world. In particular, at assemblies of the World Council of Churches in Lund (1952), New Delhi (1961), and Uppsala (1968), and at the Conference on Faith and Order in Montreal (1963), his influence was strongly and constructively felt. In 1962-65 he was one of the few Protestant churchmen invited to attend the Second Vatican Council as a delegate-observer.

Outler's unusual distinction as an ecclesiastical statesman, both within his denomination and in the ecumenical setting, has not been achieved at the expense of his role as scholar. Indeed his major contribution, and the recognition it has evoked, has been due in large measure to the remarkable coalescence of these two roles in one man. In the many church assemblies where his presence has been felt, he has embodied those qualities which he has with unrelenting consistency commended as the *sine qua non* for all ecclesiastical deliberations; namely, intellectual integrity, responsibility, and honesty. His unusual intellectual endowment and his loyalty to sound learning, in congruence with his warm commitment to the conscientious and thoughtful delineation and resolution of the real issues confronting the Church in the world, have informed and shaped his career as one of the most notable religious leaders of the day.

FRANKLIN W. YOUNG



# An Effectual Calling?

by ALBERT C. OUTLER

One of the real attractions of President Sanford's gracious invitation to join you in this commencement—apart from the honor involved and a nostalgic love for Duke that has lingered over the years—was the notion of a *special* commencement sermon for the candidates for “professional degrees.” For this symbolizes a problem all too often settled by assumption in our universities and not reflected on as deeply as it deserves: viz., what it means to be a *professional person*—in your own self-understanding and in the world into which you are headed.

This particular service, then, is one of a cluster of ritual events designed as a landmark in your lives. A great university is in the process of certifying that you *are* “professional persons,” with all your various degrees and fields, and it is laying its own reputation on the line in doing so. It is saying—to you and to society—that you have crossed that magic threshold between the tyro and the expert, between general competence and a speciality, between literacy and real learning—or however you would want your new status defined. All of us also understand the futuristic aspect of the event: we realize that you aren't all that expert *yet*; we know that your special competencies are more fledgling than fully fledged. Even so, you *are* moving now from one slope of a watershed over to the other and you're being launched off into your budding careers with respectable credentials.

And what does it all mean? What will it amount to? What is it that your transcripts and diplomas will be trying to tell the rest of us about your professional capacities, motivations, prospects? How *did* you get started on the adventure that has brought you to this hour? What will keep you hanging in there for the rest of your life, if, indeed, you do? What is it, if anything, that will set you apart now from the generality of folk in our contemporary society? These are real questions that will

The Baccalaureate sermon for candidates in the graduate and professional schools, Duke Chapel, May 11, 1974.

affect your personal and professional identity from here on, and they deserve pondering.

Occasionally on an airplane (or elsewhere) a stranger more inquisitive than most will ask me, "What is your line of work?" Sometimes the answer—that I am a professor—stops the inquisition then and there; not many people are eager to know what a professor professes or what else he thinks, either. If I take the other tack—"I'm a minister"—this daunts some and opens the sluices for others. Some of my medical friends tell me that they often fudge in such circumstances, lest they be exposed to unsolicited rehearsals of symptoms. Lawyers pose a different problem: our popular stereotypes of lawyers are so diffuse that the bare fact of being a lawyer is not a conversational gambit by itself alone.

But what is it that is being groped for in these casual queries about another person's career? What will *you* have become, tomorrow afternoon, when that "professional degree" is finally conferred?

Our ordinary language on this point is hopelessly confused. The Random House Dictionary has as its first definition of "profession": "a vocation requiring knowledge of some department of learning or science." But definition #2 is as follows: "Any vocation or business." The most one can make of this performance is that the profession of lexicography does not require enough logic to distinguish between particular and universal predicates! Then, there's the equally confusing distinction between "professional" and "amateur"—which implies that "professional" is defined by one's eye on his bank roll. Only the other day I was reading one of those tell-all pieces about "hit-men"—in which it was commented that these are "*professional*" killers (largely, one gathers, because they do it for money and in cold blood!).

Nor do the traditions of the original professions, as they come down to us from their medieval origins, shed much light, either—for they emerged in a class-conscious society largely as escape mechanisms whereby people might evade or transcend the normal social predeterminations of their birth and breeding—a sort of merit system within a caste-system. But that past is long gone now, and the modern professional often gets caught both ways in a society dedicated to an egalitarian dogma. Intelligence of sorts—and special skills such as yours—are still thought prerequisite in most professions, but the

notion of a professional élite flies in the face of our egalitarian creeds. Who today, for example, would buy old Plato's notion that we should have philosophers for rulers or that philosophers should *be* rulers? Many an evening after Cronkite, I am tempted to suppose that almost anybody could rule us better than those now in power *or* their critics. Still and all, it would never occur to most folks to make philosophers, clerics, or medics their first three alternative choices to those mobs in Washington—or elsewhere. Indeed, one of the richest comic veins in American anti-intellectualism over the centuries has been the “over-educated” parson, professor or doctor—with lawyers often exempted for reasons we'll leave to explore some other time.

Meanwhile, the traditional professions have lost ground to a whole host of new ones: technologists in prolific species, realtors, beauticians, journalists, ad-men, etc. Some of these have come a long way in short order: journalists from Grub Street to the status of a fourth branch of government, ad-men from brazen to plausible deceivers. Thus, a “professional” would seem to be almost anybody who claims to be—and who is accepted as such by any sizable number of other people. Even the Academy has joined this populist tendency. We are busily bestowing masters' degrees on people who haven't really mastered anything—doctors' degrees for curricula once denominated baccalaureates.

No wonder, then, that many professionals are left threshing about in an identity-crisis or that many have openly allied themselves with the market place: its practices and values. We are increasingly hard pressed to justify our professional aspirations in altruistic terms—or to reaffirm those traditional standards that once defined our roles. This is doubly tragic in a society that is tearing itself apart and also as you try, even now, to project your future out to that point, a decade or so from now, when you may find yourself reassessing your choice of a career—perhaps when it's too late for a really satisfactory alternative. None but the bovine (or the predestinate) escape such second and third vocational re-assessments—and I've seen cows staring at dogs with what *may* have been their equivalent of retrospective wonder!

I suppose that my most earnest exhortation to you is simply this: for God's sake (and humanity's) don't settle too easily for the notion that professionals are all those people listed in the *Yellow Pages* (or even in *Who's Who*). Don't discard

too readily whatever that prime motivation was that first set you on the road leading to *this* place and time—and that is, even now, opening up a special sort of future for you. There is something noble at work in that mysterious alchemy of interests, intentions and self-understanding that mixes into any *deliberate* choice of a given professional career: something not altogether self-serving and not the simple sum of one's aptitude tests. You chose—in whatever sense you are willing to use the verb “to choose”—to *be* a professional person: something like that professional person you have begun to become.

I hesitate—largely on your account (not mine)—to use the word “calling” in this context. It seems to conjure up for many people caricatures of experiences they have never had: inner voices, epiphanies—*that* sort of thing. And yet most of us (Skinnerites always excepted) know that there is something uniquely human and free about our basic decisions. Our choices of careers, or mates, or locales are always influenced by a host of accidental circumstances, but they still finally turn on some inner sense of the valid consonance between who one thinks he is and *what* he would really like to be. Otherwise, it was not a truly *human* decision.

A professional, therefore, is a person who has chosen a service role in society—for pay, to be sure, but with a taproot of loyalty to the public good and to his profession's significance for that good. Odd as it may sound, the professional is a man of *virtue* (or at least of virtuous aspirations). In making his vocational choice, he somehow tipped the balance between self-aggrandizement and self-investment toward self-investment, even if only by a little. I know ministers who never were on any Mount of Transfiguration who nevertheless give themselves in ways disproportionate to their earthly rewards; this is part of what is meant by the phrase, “a *good* minister.” I know doctors who do not vary their patient-care to fit their fees: their scruples and standards are plugged into a different circuit. I know lawyers whose basic love of justice often betrays them into idealisms they may not often profess in public. And so it goes, for all the good professionals that I know.

What it comes down to, then, is this: a true professional is a person with a code, a conscience and a commitment, all intended to be life-long. A professional finds part of his life's essential meaning *in* his work (by contrast with those whose work is the distasteful price they pay for “making a living”

in order to find meaning elsewhere and otherwise). A professional has a freedom freely joined to a sense of professional responsibility: to his discipline and to a covenant with his peers as to what the standards of excellence in that discipline require of him.

The true professional's conscience is the distillate of the demands he lays upon himself: his motivations, intentions, self-criticisms. It is that inner disposition of his heart and will that has been informed by the traditions of his calling but even more profoundly by his personal concerns for an optimum human good. A true professional is one whom the rest of us can trust to do his best, in every circumstance, with or without reward or applause. He is the doctor who scorns impersonal routine, the minister who doesn't bother to notice who's watching, the lawyer convinced that justice is more than the will of the strongest, the engineer who will not settle for minimums, the professor whose curiosity outlasts his lifetime and whose delight in learning and teaching is never jaded.

The true professional's commitment is a life-long covenant to keep on learning and sharing and exploring as long as his calling and life's breath hold out together. He can take criticism without panic for he knows that it is his own competence that must assess the integrity of his work. Moreover, since he has internalized the norms of his profession, he is *self-critical* in a way that allows his *next* effort always to be better than the last.

Now, I'm sorry it sounds so quaint in a society that has sanctified self-seeking, but the plain fact is that you (i.e., the honest-to-God professionals amongst you) are persons *under self-denying vows!* The Hippocratic oath is sometimes scoffed at nowadays, but if ever it comes to be wholly disregarded, then we'll all be at the mercy of the unscrupulous just when we are the most helpless. A minister's ordination vows exceed what we actually expect of him, but if he were not under those vows, I'd not want to be under his ministry. The lawyers' oath at the bar doesn't weed out the shysters, but it verbalizes a commitment on which society depends more desperately than we sometimes remember. A Ph.D.'s diploma is a certification that here is a person with scholarly tastes, habits, and a conscience that will guide a whole life time of inquiry and teaching—not from outside pressures but from one's own inner norms.

I know, of course, the shadow side of all this idealistic talk as well as you do. I've lived with professionals all my life, and



I know myself well enough to be ashamed of our foibles, failures and treasons. And yet with all our flaws (which could serve for another sermon) I'm still convinced that deep inside our professional codes and commitments there is an implicit religious dimension that needs to be made explicit, rather than left unavowed or tongue-tied. The true professional is (or might better be) a *religious person*: in both the Latin sense of *religare* (to bind oneself to values that are more than utilitarian) and also in the Judaeo-Christian sense of religion as the hallowing of life (our stewardship to God for talents, time, vision, and all the rest). However far short of our professional ideals we may fall, it is just those ideals that continue to remind us of our grounding in a moral, spiritual universe, our accountability to God's righteous judgment, our radical dependence upon *his* grace and providence.

On their basic level, therefore, our professional values are personal and inward. On a second level, they are oriented and evaluated. Only on a third-level are they market oriented—which is not to disparage the market orientation by a whit. But you can write it down for a rule that any man whose primary orientation is the market place is not a true professional, whatever his label!

But if this is true, then we are talking about religious faith as the ground and atmosphere of a true professional's mindset and lifestyle: as the vital balance in one's life between *eruditio et religio*. We are talking about one's awareness of God's encompassing grace and of his moral purposes in and for his human family; about one's inner dedication to values that are cherished and validated by something over and beyond affluence, fame or fortune. For this is faith—to be aware of the Holy and to trust its promptings in all our efforts in the hallowing of life—all of life. And this is love: that life—all of life—shall be served as if it were sacred, as indeed it is.

One version of the Golden Rule for professionals could be framed by imagining the kind of person you'd want to deal with in a crunch, when you need someone more expert than a good friend, something more personal than a machine, somebody more reliable than a wheeler-dealer. Your answer here will tell you a lot about your own professional conscience and commitment. Let me run through a few of my own answers and see how they match yours—and let that serve for our conclusion, for now.

The professionals I've known and respected and am still most grateful for—in the ministry, medicine, law, teaching, technology, whatever—have, first and foremost, been people with liberal culture and a humane spirit. They have been people who had learned how to learn and how to teach, forever lured on by new intellectual and spiritual horizons. The academic colleagues I cherish most (including some I remember most gratefully from my Duke days, like Shelton Smith and Harvie Branscomb) were men whose delight was in tireless inquiry and mind-opening insights. It was from them that I learned the radical difference between the true and false joys in the academic life and my life has been the richer for this and will be—to the end.

The best professionals I have known have had no fixed prejudgments as to the limits of human achievement, and so have never accepted anything as quite good enough. There's a hint of perfectionism in all the great ones—along with gracious realism about our human shortfallings. And always there's this extraordinary power of *attention* (to their patients, parishioners, clients, students, experiments, research projects—whatever) that keeps their navel-gazing down to a decent minimum. Whenever I see a person literally absorbed in a socially significant and self-normed project—and only marginally distracted by what else is going on about him—it's a safe bet that I'm watching a real pro at work: somebody I'd trust with more than my money!

Finally, the best professionals I know are persons of authentic religious faith (some of whom are embarrassed to confess that faith because they're still confused as to the difference between what they think they remember from Sunday School and their own contemporary mindsets). But, their codes and consciences have radii that reach out into that encompassment of mystery and grace in which we all live and move and have our significant human being. Over and beyond earthly rewards and satisfactions (which they do not despise), they've a sense of being upheld and justified by the same redemptive love offered to us all by God in Christ—God's Holy Spirit sustaining us in all the agonies and ecstasies in any life worth living, any death worth dying. And so we may look for our final assessment, not to our peers, but to That One who has the right finally to judge and finally to justify: "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of thy Lord."

It was in something like this faith that the second century Christian who wrote II Peter formulated *his* prescription for a truly effectual calling in this life, a formula that may serve *us* as a valid code for true professionalism, even today:

Add to your faith virtue, knowledge to virtue, self-control to knowledge, fortitude to self-control, dedication to fortitude, brotherly kindness and love to them all. These are the gifts which will save you from useless and barren knowledge . . . from becoming short-sighted and blind. . . . And this is why it really is worth whatever it takes to make your calling and election sure . . . in the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (II Peter 1:5-11)

Let us pray:

Almighty God, who art thyself truth, love and all good, give us that love of truth that will lead us into true freedom and into that love of mankind that will sustain us throughout our life-long covenants of service here in the making—in gratitude and joy, through Christ our Lord.

Amen



# Conversing with the Text

## Old Testament Exegesis—a Part of the Pastor's Job Description

by JOHN BRADLEY WHITE (M.Div. 1972)

### FOREWORD:

A few years ago, James D. Smart wrote a perceptive and disturbing book entitled *The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church* (Westminster paperback). The problem is, he said, not that the Bible is being deliberately ignored, but that the pastor is often unable to recover a meaningful Word from it. Visits to various churches in the Durham area have convinced me of the correctness of Smart's perception. The intent of the morning Scripture Lesson and the content of the sermon are often only remotely related. And increasingly the central task of ministry, interpretation and proclamation of the Tradition, is being replaced by skills in which the pastor feels more competent: counseling, community organization, parish administration, etc.

Although it is uncomfortable for me to say so, part of the fault may lie with biblical scholars and seminary curricula. Courses in biblical studies have tended to focus entirely upon the *historical* meaning of the text, and influential scholars have denied that the *contemporary* meaning (if any) was their proper task. (see, e.g., the article "Biblical Theology, Contemporary" in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. I, pp. 418-432.) Courses in homiletics have tended to focus upon sermon construction and communications skills to the neglect of the central problem of the transition from *then* to *now*. Indeed, without that central concern, seminaries have, perhaps justifiably, seen no reason why homiletics should be a required course. And commentaries have usually been at one of two extremes: either grammatico-historical but theologically tone-deaf, or shallow popularizations by persons ill-equipped for the scholarly task. Very seldom has a single scholar-churchman felt the need or had the courage to approach *both* meanings of the text in print.

This two-part article is an attempt to aid alumni of the Divinity School and others in overcoming their not-strange “silence” about the Tradition. Written in two installments by graduate students in our Department of Biblical Studies, it will attempt (1) to describe in comprehensible language the rationale and methodology for the recovery of the historical meaning of the biblical text (installment I), (2) to discuss various assumptions evident in a transition to a contemporary meaning, and (3) to illustrate both through the study of a specific text (installment II).

I invite your remarks about the appropriateness or helpfulness of this project, since the materials will be used for instructional purposes within the Divinity School.

LLOYD R. BAILEY

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Conversation involves both speaking and listening. When two people stand face to face, each being able to look the other “in the eye”, conversation has the best opportunity for success. In this situation, not only direct speaking and listening take place, but also awareness of bodily gestures, speech inflections, calm or nervous expressions, etc., which one or the other of the participants might have. Such physical observations are part of the communication process. Yet, even in direct confrontation, one person may easily fool another into thinking one thing when something entirely different is meant. Consequently, when the element of sight is taken away and people are not face to face, communication is made more difficult. In a telephone conversation, the listener may not catch the irony which the speaker is seeking to convey, or the speaker will be unable to see a cynical gesture on the part of the listener. Going a step further, when the conversation is contained in a letter, the ambiguities and possibilities for misunderstanding become more apparent. Although the words are there on paper, the inflection of the writer, the circumstances of the writing, the “state of mind” of the writer, the wit, a tongue-in-cheek comment, or a joke may not be fully apparent. The reader may misrepresent part of the letter or lift a portion of the letter out of context. The goal of conversation, communication, is thus very difficult to achieve.

When St. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, some in the Corinthian church did not fully understand what Paul was attempting to communicate. The evidence for such a misunderstanding comes from Paul's allusion to his disastrous visit to the church (2 Cor. 2:1) which caused him great personal sorrow (2 Cor. 12:14-21; 13:2) and his severe letter which cost him many tears (2 Cor. 2:4; 7:8). In 2 Cor. 1:13, Paul urges his readers to listen carefully to his words ("I hope you will understand fully.") lest more misunderstanding should take place (pastors should take heart that even Paul's sermons did not reach every parishioner!). If the problem of misunderstanding was a reality to parishioners in the first century world of ideas, who were aware of the conditions in the Corinthian church, then how much more difficult it is for contemporary church people, living in the present century, to understand Paul's letter! For persons of the twentieth century, the difference of life-style, and the variance of world-view, not to mention the problem that we have only a copy of copies (hence, no autograph, the original written by Paul) of his letters, make communication of Paul's message to contemporary believers a most difficult challenge. Yet as pastors, communicators of God's message *in this age*, such a task is our burden and such a challenge is our responsibility.

The first step toward understanding Paul's words, however, is that we *not* forget who we are. We cannot surrender our present in an attempt to jump into the first century. Such an attempt would be doomed to failure, not only because we would be sacrificing our knowledge about the world, but also because we would cease to view honestly our own needs and human condition. When we accept as literal the apocalyptic imagery that Paul uses to portray the coming of Christ (cf. 1 Thes. 4:13-17), we have rejected a scientific view of the universe. Likewise, when we overemphasize Paul's directives to the Corinthian church (e.g., the veiling of women, 1 Cor. 11:4-12) and attempt to lift these from the first century into the present, we sidestep concrete issues that face the contemporary Church (such as, e.g., the oppression of women in society even *by* the Church). Instead of retreating in embarrassment because our world-view may be contradictory with that of the first century, we need to be keenly aware of our human condition (political, sociological, spiritual, etc.), so that we will be able to direct the Gospel's power to these areas of our life. In seeking

a conversation with Paul by means of his letters to the Corinthians, we cannot begin with a dishonest view of *ourselves*.

A second step in an attempt to understand Paul's letter is that we must realize that Paul's words were not directed to us but to the people in Corinth, i.e., to a particular place, set of circumstances, and time. Instead of overlooking the spirit and mentality of Paul's world, we need to be keenly aware of the *ancient setting* and environment of the text. Conversation with Paul demands that we do not have a dishonest view of *Paul and his age*.

It is the aim of biblical exegesis to make conversation possible with an ancient text. In order to achieve "true communication", however, one *must* use the exegetical method, i.e., arrange a conversation between the interpreter (and his or her world) and the text (and its world). Such a conversation must involve both speaking and listening. On the one hand, exegesis aids us in the proper framing of questions which one must address to the text. Questions such as the following will allow the meaning of the text to *come forth* (the Greek verb *exegeomai*, thus the English "exegesis," means "to lead out"): "Who is speaking?"; "To whom?"; "Under what circumstances?"; "What type of literature is it?"; and "Why were the words preserved?". Questions such as these aid our *listening* to the text so that we may hear the "inflection" of the words or even "see" the "gestures" of the speaker. This dialogue of addressing the text and listening for its answers is the process of exegesis. It is, indeed, a conversation with the text, and it should be the *only* way we, as contemporary interpreters, approach Scripture.

The purpose of this article is to develop a conversational method which can be helpful in the communication process, and to illustrate the type of dialogue necessary to understand what the text meant and what it means. The goal is to produce a usable guide in sermon preparation by a pastor. Although the focus of the article will be upon the Old Testament, the method itself will prove valuable for New Testament study as well.

Why is such an article needed? Although there is a wealth of material which deals with individual exegetical skills, this article will place "under one roof" a complete exegetical outline. But more than that: the "how to" aspect of biblical exegesis, although very important to master, only scratches the

surface of the questions that must be raised. The question of method in exegesis is merely a catalyst to other fundamental questions with which the student of Scripture must come to grips. From the perspective of the Old Testament, among these important questions are the following: (1) How does the Christian exegete understand the tradition of the Old Testament, particularly when the Old Testament is used as a source of Christian preaching? (2) What are some of the presuppositions which are involved in moving from conversation with the text to the sermon itself? and (3) How can we as pastors deal with exegesis when we work under a severe time limitation (how quickly Sunday comes!) and when so many other important matters demand time in the parish setting?

### *The Exegetical Crisis*<sup>1</sup>

A generation of pastors who have cut their "theological teeth" on *crisis* theology, as neo-orthodoxy is often called, and who have recently read of the "crisis" in the Biblical Theology Movement, which Brevard S. Childs has described,<sup>2</sup> may well not wish to entertain another crisis! But, unfortunately, we do find ourselves in an "exegetical crisis". Neo-orthodoxy (the Barthian movement in particular) emphasized the theological content of the Bible (the Word of God theology) and was, in part, a corrective to the scientific and technical historical-critical movement of the Nineteenth Century. Yet within recent decades the theological meaning of the biblical text (i.e., what it means

1. Cf. George M. Landes, "Biblical Exegesis in Crisis: What is the Exegetical Task in a Theological Context," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, XXVI (1971), 278-289.

2. Cf. Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970). Childs notes that there has been "a period of slow dissolution" taking place within the so-called Biblical Theology Movement for almost two decades (p. 87). Among the crises which face biblical theologians are the following: (1) the problem of revelation in history (Eichrodt versus von Rad); (2) the problem of what unifies the Bible (covenant, various theologies, Yahweh); (3) the problem of a distinctive biblical mentality (Semitic versus Greek thought); and (4) the growing isolation of the theological meaning of the text from the technical methodology employed by biblical scholars. For further reading cf. the following: Langdon Gilkey, "Cosmology, Ontology, and the Travail of Biblical Language," *Journal of Religion*, 41 (1961), 194-205; J. Christiaan Beker, "Reflections on Biblical Theology," *Interpretation*, XXIV (1970), 303-320; James Barr, "The Old Testament and the New Crisis of Biblical Authority," *Interpretation*, XXV (1971), 24-40; and Roland E. Murphy, "The Role of the Bible in Roman Catholic Theology," *Interpretation*, XXV (1971), 78-86.



for today's men and women of faith) has been increasingly isolated from the scientific and technical side of biblical study. As a result, the work of many biblical scholars has not proved helpful to the pastor who is engaged in the proclamation of what the Word means for modern humankind. To a great extent, much recent biblical criticism has reversed the Barthian emphasis upon the theological meaning of the text. The first aspect, then, of the "exegetical crisis" is the separation of the critical investigation of the text from the task of affirming what the text means in our modern setting (i.e., the theological meaning of the text). A second aspect of the "exegetical crisis" deals with the changing role of the parish minister in relationship to the preaching of the contemporary Word to the Church. We must now investigate both of these aspects of the "exegetical crisis".

First of all, exegesis, as taught in seminary, has been frequently limited to the historical-critical method, and theological matters (What is the interpretation, *hermeneutic*, of a given text?) are not addressed. For example, in a typical course in which an Old Testament book is studied in the original language, class time is usually consumed by linguistic questions (admittedly very important), to the virtual exclusion of the theological import of the text.<sup>3</sup>

The gap between the technical analysis of a text and its theological meaning becomes particularly significant when one begins to discuss the question of the viability of biblical theology. Can biblical theology say anything to the modern believer regarding the variety of contemporary human problems that face society and the believing community? Krister Stendahl has gone so far as to say that the function of biblical theology is merely descriptive (i.e., technical), asking only the question, "What *did* the text mean?". For Stendahl, any question of the Scripture's normative meaning (i.e., "What does the text mean for today?") is considered the task of systematic theology!<sup>4</sup> This distinction does not understand exegesis as conversation, i.e., as the *communication* of the meaning of the text to the interpreter's own situation. Stendahl's exegete must be a person who never engages the text with anything but a technician's tools. The conversationalist (although armed with his or her tool box!) also brings himself or herself (a subject), a context (a pastor

3. One should note Landes' personal reflections, p. 279.

4. Krister Stendahl, "Biblical Theology, Contemporary," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, A-D (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), pp. 418ff.

searching for God's message to a particular people) and a credo (a belief in God's guidance in the life of humankind). The conversation which takes place cannot become chaotic, because it takes place within the boundaries of specific questions which the interpreter brings to the text.<sup>5</sup> More importantly, conversation can never become a sterile "operation" on the text, for the "give and take" of the conversation always makes the interpreter vulnerable to being challenged and threatened by the text itself!

Unfortunately the structure of seminary education aids the compartmentalization of exegesis as a technical science, for there is often little dialogue with other areas of the theological curriculum (e.g., pastoral psychology, theology, Christian ethics, Christian education, etc.). The result of defining exegesis as a purely descriptive endeavor, only interested in the past meaning of the text, has been to increase the chasm between the biblical and other fields and, even more serious in its consequences, to expand the gulf between the pastor and the biblical scholar.<sup>6</sup>

In order to overcome this isolation of exegesis, one must emphasize exegesis as conversation with the text: a speaking and listening. For example, the following areas may be helpful in expanding the range of conversation: "Does the text reflect ethical themes?" (cf. e.g., Mic. 6:6-8; Pss. 15 and 24; Prov. 8; etc.); "What is the canonical setting of the text?" (e.g., How does the entire Book of Isaiah function theologically as a unit within the canon?); and "What is the history of interpretation of a given text?" (How is the text understood by the New Testament, the Mishnah, the Church Fathers, etc.?).<sup>7</sup> When one asks

5. The boundaries and limits of exegesis as conversation are discussed by J. Louis Martyn in a paper, "An Open Letter to the Biblical Guild About Liberation," which will appear in the forthcoming *Festschrift* for Paul Minear, edited by Paul Holmer.

6. As biblical scholarship grows more and more technical (the centrality of Ugaritic studies for Old Testament study, for example), one can expect the gap between pastor and scholar to widen unless each realizes the responsibility he or she has to converse with the text (both what it meant and what it means).

7. Cf. Childs (pp. 102ff.) for his proposal for "canonical criticism." A very helpful work dealing with the role of the canon in exegesis is J. A. Sanders, *Torah and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972). A recent survey of current perspectives in Old Testament theology is Gerhard Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972). John L. McKenzie's *A Theology of the Old Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1974) is unique in that it undertakes a theology of the Old Testament after the critiques of Childs and others. He concludes that Old Testament theology should find its "center" in the *person* of Yahweh (p. 23). Old Testament ethics is an area which needs more investigation. A recent volume edited by J. L. Crenshaw and J. T. Willis, *Essays in Old Testament Ethics*,

the question regarding the contemporary meaning of the text (“What does it mean today?”)—if that question is to be fully answered—the interpreter must inquire and take into account what the text has meant to other interpreters in other periods. The Biblical text is a living document, i.e., a witness to God’s activity which has been interpreted throughout the history of believing communities (both Jewish and Christian). In the sense that conversation with the text includes conversation with other interpreters (Augustine, Rabbi Akiba, Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Luther, Barth, etc.), exegesis is indeed a *mutual* conversation. Our listening to other interpreters (including our own colleagues in the ministry and our parishioners!) aids one’s understanding of a text in the present and makes exegesis an *on-going process*.

Victor Paul Furnish has reminded us that one should not speak of “*the* exegesis” of a passage, but of “*an* exegesis”.<sup>8</sup> If exegesis were done by an omniscient robot, using technical, descriptive methodology, one might well speak of *the* exegesis of a text. A modern interpreter’s conversation with the text, however, demands that he or she return again and again to the text in order to gain further insights about it. Upon returning to a given unit the pastor may not merely correct a previous conversation but may discover new insights because of a different set of priorities or demands which must now be addressed. Once again there is an element of control which does not allow the dialogue to become subjective. That element of control is the proper framing of questions asked of the text.

The second focus of the “exegetical crisis” concerns the growing complexity of the minister’s role. In many forms of ministry, and even in the parish, the pastor often no longer envisions *the* primary task as the delivery of the Sunday morning sermon. However the exegetical method which we are describing is not merely for one who prepares sermons. In fact, in whatever form of ministry one may be engaged, conversation with the text should be *the* means by which the Bible is utilized.

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J. Phillip Hyatt, *In Memoriam* (New York: KTAV, 1974) seeks to fill this void and direct more scholarly work into this area.

8. Victor Paul Furnish, “Some Practical Guidelines for New Testament Exegesis,” *Perkins Journal*, XXVI (1973), p. 3. Furnish also correctly points out that the distinction between exegesis and exposition (characteristic of *The Interpreter’s Bible*, for example) should be avoided, for linguistically the words denote the same process, i.e., interpretation (p. 2).



The interpretation of the biblical tradition is essential to all forms of contemporary ministry, and from unique situations, the interpreter may bring unique priorities to bear upon the text (e.g., from industrial ministry, clinical pastoral psychology, institutional chaplaincy, teaching, etc.).

For the parish minister the crisis is often seen in the frustration which many pastors experience with exegetical method viewed *only* as a technical procedure. With the growing demand for specialization and the accompanying reduction of time to spend in study and reflection, many pastors who conscientiously seek to use the Bible properly are justifiably disgruntled. If every exegesis, by definition, is to require the analysis of *every* commentary, a vast knowledge of ancient languages, and the resources of a theological library, can one realistically expect such exegesis to be utilized in a pastor's sermon preparation? No, because frustration with the method would produce "instant exegesis", which is another word for eisegesis: the reading *into* the text of one's own preconceptions rather than letting the text communicate in proper dialogue.<sup>9</sup>

Because the meaning of a text is never self-evident, a thorough analysis of the text is *always* demanded. Therefore exegetical method, properly understood, can never be rejected! Although exegesis is a time-consuming endeavor, it need not be cause for frustration. The interpreter must seek to deal with as many critical questions addressed to the text as possible during sermon preparation. In exegesis that is conversation, moreover, the pastor must not only consider the technical questions but also must never cease to be excited, astonished, and even flabbergasted at how the text informs the contemporary situation. The integration of community concerns into the dialogue taking place provides the possibility of a creative encounter between interpreter and text. Our frustration with method should end when we hear the text addressing us!

In the study a pastor should, consequently, attempt to develop exegetical skills and apply them in every instance that Scripture is utilized in ministry. Exegesis is not, therefore, a "one-night stand" which resulted in a seminary term paper. On the contrary, it is the continuing conversation that we as pastors have with the biblical text. Although one can spend a semester "doing" an exegesis of a passage (remember that some scholars

9. Landes, p. 298.

will spend a life-time on the exegesis of a few verses!), exegesis is the *life-style* for ministry and for the proclamation of the tradition. As one assesses the experiences and the common life of the parish, one is involved in the exegetical process. The mutual interaction which takes place between pastor and context (church, family, community, nation, etc.) becomes part of the concerns that are brought into the conversation with the text. Such conversation is a style of theological activity which includes every facet of ministry and the whole of a minister's life.

Unfortunately the failure to use the proper exegetical method has led to misuse of the Old Testament in preaching and has inhibited its value for Christian congregations. When the Bible is used uncritically, often the Old Testament is not seen as having integrity apart from the New Testament message. There is a danger that the Old Testament will be "Christianized" by interpreters in such a way as to pervert the original message of the text. How often, for example, has Noah's behavior in Gen. 9 been classified as "unchristian," particularly by those preaching on the evils of strong drink? Likewise the danger becomes very apparent when one hears the "let us make man" in Gen. 1:16 interpreted as the first appearance of the Trinity in the Bible! In terms of the lectionary cycle, quite often one might assume that the Old Testament has a predictive function. Note how many Advent texts are from the prophets (Mal. 3:1-7b; Isa. 11:1-10; Isa. 62:10-12; Isa. 9:2, 6-7), giving the implication of prediction. Similarly, the Old Testament readings for Lent often reflect the "suffering servant" passages from Deutero-Isaiah (cf. 52:13-53:12). Conversation with the text demands that we engage in dialogue with the Old Testament in a spirit of honesty toward its integrity as it witnesses to the faith of our spiritual ancestors. Our reading of Isa. 9:6 should include the recognition that the young prince mentioned there is perhaps Hezekiah, in whom Isaiah sees the embodiment of Yahweh's care for Israel (just as a later community recognized that same concern in the incarnation of Jesus Christ). Old Testament exegesis which properly engages in conversation with the text calls for a creative use of the Old Testament tradition and a maintenance of the Old Testament's *own value*. D. Moody Smith, Jr., has recently written the following: "Where the Old Testament is ignored, an understanding of man as creature, indeed as historical and societal creature, usually disappears, and

the New Testament is wrongly regarded as only a handbook of personal piety and religion."<sup>10</sup>

### *Searching Out A Useful Exegetical Method*

"True exegesis involves, of course, much sweat and many groans."<sup>11</sup>

—Karl Barth

One of the drawbacks to outlining exegetical methodology is that the implication arises that exegesis has a rigidly defined sequence. Although a sequential questioning of the text is often helpful and should be followed if possible, conversation and dialogue may ebb and flow in unstructured ways. Consequently, the interpreter's conversation with a text must flow with the current caused by the interaction between exegete and text (no sequence, therefore, should be canonized!).

The first step in the conversation process is to listen. How does one isolate a text to which he or she may listen? Although the question of the precise structure of a text must come after other preliminary questions have been asked, one can initially and tentatively isolate a text by using helpful paragraph divisions in English Bibles (warning: these divisions may not reflect the divisions of the Hebrew Bible nor does any paragraph division automatically constitute a strictly defined unit of material [cf. below, p. 37]), or by utilizing the text unit given in a particular lectionary. The reader should note, however, that these suggestions are tentative and are useful only as an aid to "get into" a passage. Upon further study and reflection a passage may be expanded or reduced as a unit is more strictly defined.

In beginning to listen to the text it is often helpful to read the text from several translations aloud and perhaps even write the text down. One should listen to the "soundings" which arise uniquely from the text itself. One should, therefore, listen for certain themes (justice, righteousness, mercy, confession, obligation, forgiveness, etc.) which may be present, for changes in speaker or mood which may indicate multiple authorship

10. D. Moody Smith, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New," in *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring*, ed. by J. M. Ebird (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), p. 65.

11. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. by Edwyn D. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 17.

or the beginning of another unit, and for the harmony of the passage in relation to the material surrounding it (Does the surrounding material have the same theme, speaker, mood, etc., that is found in the passage under study?). In a listening session with the text an interpreter must "come clean" with himself or herself and face the text with an honest self-image. Such honesty demands that the interpreter bracket all preconceived notions which one might hold regarding the text. Also no hasty conclusions should be reached regarding the implications that the text might have for one's community or personal life. The danger in a preconception or an early conclusion is that the exegetical process might become short-circuited. If conversation with the text is to be helpful to the pastor, we must respect the text's integrity in order not to force an interpretation upon it. After a true listening to a text, one may be surprised at the direction *the text* moves the interpreter! Listening should issue in some type of response on the part of the exegete. Questions should arise out of the listening process which one may wish to record and refer to at other points during the conversation. Moreover it is only *after* listening that one should begin to consult secondary literature. Although a good theological library is important, there is no substitute for one's personal question-and-answer session with the text.<sup>12</sup>

Although there is not (and should not be) one standard exegetical outline, the reader may find the next six areas of study helpful in the framing of questions to direct to the text. *Text criticism*, the first of these areas, is a necessary task for all interpreters because (1) no autographs of the biblical text survive; consequently, the transmission (first oral, and then written) of the text has made possible a variety of errors, and (2) the idiosyncrasies of the Hebrew language (its script, phonology, orthography, etc.) cause serious problems for the trans-

12. For most pastors the luxury of being able to use a theological library is a rare privilege. For one's personal library good investments are commentaries and reference works. Perhaps the most useful one-volume commentary is *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. by Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968). A standard multivolume work is *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962). A supplement to IDB which will update many articles and expand various entries is expected to be published by Abingdon Press in 1976 under the editorship of Keith R. Crim, V. P. Furnish, and Lloyd R. Bailey. Among the helpful commentaries on various books of the Old Testament are the following series: The Old Testament Library Series (Westminster Press); Hermeneia (Fortress Press); and The Anchor Bible (Doubleday).

lator. Unfortunately text criticism is neither used nor appreciated as it should be because (1) people who do not know the biblical languages do not feel equipped even to begin text criticism, and (2) the general (but mistaken) feeling among students is that all textual problems have been resolved.<sup>13</sup>

The aim of text criticism is to establish the most reliable (quite often the oldest) text. For the most thorough job of text criticism, a knowledge of the biblical languages is necessary in order that a comparison may be made of the ancient witnesses: Targumim (Aramaic); the Peshitta (Syriac); the Septuagint (LXX, Greek); the Vulgate (Latin); etc.<sup>14</sup> Since we cannot return to the *ipsissima verba* (very words of the biblical speakers), text criticism can aid us in problems caused by (1) conflicting witness of the ancient versions and (2) various scribal errors which have crept into the text.

Although it is impossible to describe every problem that may beset the Masoretic text (MT) in the scope and purpose of this article, the following examples may serve to emphasize the importance of adequate text criticism. Often there are accidental errors which may be present in MT. Metathesis (location-exchange) of consonants is one example (cf. e.g., Middle English "asked"; Modern English "asked"). One should consider the textual variant in Prov. 14:32: "The wicked man is overthrown through his evildoing, but the righteous finds refuge in his 'death' (MT: *môt*), 'integrity' (LXX: *tôm*)."<sup>15</sup> The consonants *m* and *t* have been incorrectly reversed in either the MT or the LXX. Which is the original and which is

13. A very helpful guide for text criticism for persons who do not know the biblical languages is Lloyd R. Bailey's unpublished paper for use by students in the introductory Old Testament course at Duke University Divinity School entitled "Text Criticism (for the beginner, who knows little Hebrew or Greek)." An attempt has been made to incorporate some of Professor Bailey's suggestions into this discussion.

14. With the discovery of the documents from Qumran and their subsequent publication, cf. *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955—), the publication of Targum Neophyti by A. Diez Macho (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1968—), and the appearance of the expected volumes of the Syriac Old Testament (published by the Peshitta Institute of Leiden University), the process of comparing various other witnesses to the text will become more exciting and accessible for all. Also the publication of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (an up-date of BH<sup>3</sup>, now appearing in fascicles) should prove most helpful to the person who uses Hebrew in his or her sermon preparation. One should not discount the work of scholars such as Mitchell Dahood and Marvin Pope (among others), who are making important contributions to Hebrew philology in their work with North-West Semitic languages.



the metathesized error? If the MT is correct, it should be pointed out that one would then have evidence for a belief in life-after-death (most scholars reject a concept of after-life in the Old Testament). Also one should note that the Syriac, in this instance, agrees with the LXX. The MT reading is probably in error and one should read with the LXX, *tôm*, "integrity" (cf. Prov. 19:1; 20:7; and 28:6).

Another common accidental error in the text is haplography ("half-writing"), the omission of an element, particularly if two parts of a sentence are similar. A possible example is Gen. 47:16 where the MT reads as follows: "And Joseph answered, 'Give me your cattle, and I will give to you in exchange.'" The context suggests that the word "food" be understood, and the word is indeed in the LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch. What possibly took place was that the scribe wrote "(give) to you (*lkm*)" and then his eye skipped the similarly sounding and appearing word *lhm* ("food"), which immediately followed.

A third type of error is caused by the nature of the Hebrew script, in which the consonants often originally were not divided into words. Usually consonant division would be clear from context, but occasionally ambiguity was possible, thus accounting for a variant in the versions. A common illustration is Amos 6:12, where the context suggests a negative answer to a rhetorical question. The MT reads, however, "Does one plow with oxen?". The "with oxen" (*bbqrym*) of the MT should probably be divided into *bbqr ym*, which would read properly with the context: "(Does one plow) the sea (*ym*) with oxen?". Here the negative answer is apparent.<sup>15</sup>

As one begins to investigate the text of a given passage, it is important to note that a mere survey of different translations

15. For a brief discussion of some of the errors which can be present in a text cf. D. R. Ap-Thomas, *A Primer of Old Testament Text Criticism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 41ff. and Martin Noth, *The Old Testament World*, trans. by Victor I. Gruhn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 349-355. On the development of the Old Testament text, one should consult Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Old Testament Text," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, Volume I, ed. by P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 159-199. One of the most helpful volumes on the printed texts of the Old Testament is B. J. Roberts, *The Old Testament Text and Versions* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1951). A volume which supplies general introduction to the problems in Old Testament text criticism (but heavily emphasizes the role and importance of the Septuagint) is Ralph W. Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974).

will not always reveal the textual variants of a given text. Although differences in translation result from one translation's use of a variant reading, differences can also result from the choice of words used by the translators to render the same word in the text. Translations, both ancient and modern, may reflect eisegesis (the conscious or unconscious "reading in" of personal belief) on the part of the translator. The MT, for example, reads in Deut. 26:5: "A wandering Aramean was my father, and he went down to Egypt." This same verse in the LXX reflects the translator's interest in the third century conflict between the Seleucids (Syrians) and the Ptolemies (Egyptians), for it renders the following: "My father *abandoned* Syria and went down to Egypt." Job 19:25 is a verse which deals with Job's vindication by his redeemer/avenger/advocate at a particular time. Is this time before or after his death? Jerome's Vulgate translation seems to reflect Christian eschatology when he renders the time as "on the last day" (an obvious reference to the end of the world and the resurrection of the dead).

How does the exegete working from English materials track down a true variant? He or she should first consult the ancient versions which have been translated into English (of course realizing that these translations reflect a host of variant readings in hundreds of manuscripts!).<sup>16</sup> The footnotes of most recent editions of English Bibles refer to some major textual variants (one should note which reading a particular English version will use). Finally one should consult the variety of secondary literature (articles and commentaries) which may refer to the existence of textual variants in a given passage.

How does one go about evaluating a variant once it is discovered? This question, as fate would have it, is a most difficult area for the person without a knowledge of the biblical languages, but the interpreter can (and must) make useful decisions based on personal research and on the evaluation of data in commentaries and articles. First of all, the significant variants which are present in a given passage should be listed, with special note given to original translations (LXX, Targumim) as opposed to revisions of a translation. For ex-

16. For the LXX, cf. *The Septuagint Bible*, trans. by Charles Thomson (Indian Hills, Colorado: Falcon's Wing Press, 1954); the Syriac, *The Holy Bible*, trans. by G. M. Lamsa (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1957); and for the Targumim, *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch* (New York: KTAV, 1968, reprint).

ample, if one finds a variant in both the Old Latin and the LXX, he or she has really only found one variant, because the Old Latin is a translation (a revision) of the LXX (one can note that a little homework on “versions” will be helpful!). Scholarly opinion gleaned from the secondary literature which supports a particular variant should be listed as well. Secondly, the variants and the scholarly positions that support them should be evaluated. In doing so, it is necessary that one proceed to the text to see if it supports the position of scholars. Among the questions one might ask are the following: “Does the context of the word in question support a given interpretation (i.e., the immediate context, the whole Book, the total area of Biblical belief)?”; “Is the *meaning* of the proposed variant proper in the context (compare the range of meanings a word has by consulting a concordance such as Young’s)?”; and (if one is to replace MT) “How could it have become corrupted (scribal errors, etc.)?”. In the final analysis, one *may* assume that the majority opinion of scholars (particularly if there is near unanimity) is heavy weight to accept or deny a variant reading. Yet the interpreter should never be satisfied with majority opinion until he or she becomes convinced of the argument!

For purposes of clarity the interpreter should seek to use a translation which accurately renders the most reliable text in a clear fashion. The pastor should have a variety of modern translations at his or her disposal. Under most circumstances a paraphrase of Scripture should be avoided, for most paraphrases reflect the theological stance of their authors more than of the biblical text!

A second area helpful in the framing of questions to the text is literary criticism. Here the goal of conversation with the text is to discover the authorship, date, and the historical circumstances of a given text. Hence, literary criticism deals with the following important questions: “Who wrote it?”; “When?”; “To whom?”; “Why?”; and “Under what conditions?”. When one deals with material from the Pentateuch, the process of literary analysis is often referred to as source criticism. This designation refers to the sources called Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomist, and Priestly writer.

The problem of multiple authorship is one which must be dealt with in literary criticism. Frequently one may become aware of a change in style or vocabulary or an inconsistency or



duplication which can betray more than one hand on the material. One example of a duplicated story is the familiar one of David and Goliath in 1 Sam. 17. Here two different stories have been blended together in the tradition, and it is the problem of the literary critic to isolate the characteristics of each story. In 1 Sam. 17:12-31, 41, 50, and 55-58 one has a story of David who is introduced as a shepherd (not a musician in Saul's court, cf. 16:23) who takes provisions to his brothers on the battlefield (17:20). There he engages Goliath, the Philistine (vv. 41 and 50). *After* the battle he is introduced to Saul and given a place in Saul's army (vv. 55-58). This version of the story contradicts several aspects of the tale that is given in chapter 16 and the rest of 17. For instance, in 1 Sam. 17:12ff., David's family is introduced for the second time (cf. 1 Sam. 16:18ff. for the first introduction). Moreover, in 1 Sam. 17:12-15, David's father is known as an Ephrathite of Bethlehem, whereas in chapter 16 Jesse is already well known to the reader. Given the contradictory facts of these two stories, it is possible that the verses which intrude in chapter 17 may belong to an alternate literary tradition. In these verses David appears on the scene unknown but ready to become the savior of Israel (not unlike the stories concerning the earlier "judges" of Israel).<sup>17</sup>

Often in cases where multiple authorship might be present it is important to discover a characteristic style, vocabulary, or tone of a given writer or speaker (thus expediting the problem of multiple authorship). A knowledge of certain stock phrases can be helpful in this regard. For example, the Book of Deuteronomy possesses phrases which are unique to the D strata and thus aid in one's recognition of the Deuteronomist, e.g., "love Yahweh your God" (Deut. 11:1); "the commandment which I am about to command you this day" (Deut. 4:2; 11:8; 12:28; etc.); and "the place which Yahweh will choose, to make his name dwell there" (12:11; 14:23; 16:2; etc.).

Often we are aided in the recognition of the date by historical allusions given in the text. The Psalter is an example of materials that originated both from the early times in Israel's history and from the post-exilic period. Ps. 19:1-6 is an example of very ancient material as shown by its dependence upon a Canaanite hymn to the sun (note the imagery of the rising of the

17. For other helpful examples and an interesting introduction to literary criticism, cf. Norman Habel, *Literary Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

sun god in vv. 4-6).<sup>18</sup> Other psalms are more helpful for dating in that they have more apparent historical allusions. Ps. 79:1f. reflects the period after the destruction of Jerusalem (“they have laid Jerusalem in ruins”). Ps. 129, moreover, alludes to an even later period after the return of the exiles to their homeland (“Yahweh is righteous; he has cut the cords of the wicked”).

The dating of material is important for the interpretation of a text, since the message is directed to a *specific* people, in a specific time, and in light of a specific set of circumstances (thus, the Bible is not a set of timeless propositions). Understanding of these “specifics” of the writing of a text aids one’s understanding of the text’s theological perspective. For example, for the Priestly writer, the idea of circumcision becomes crucial because of the crisis of identity within the Israelite community which, in exile, had lost Jerusalem, the temple, and the locale of its stability. By stressing Abraham’s circumcision, in Gen. 17:9-14, one can recognize the Priestly attempt to make this symbol authoritative for the whole community (note the punitive admonition in v. 14 that the uncircumcised male was not to be considered a part of the community!). Circumcision, then, was something that the Israelite man would always have with him—a lasting personal symbol of his uniqueness and covenant with God.

The quest for the authorship of a text is aided by an investigation of the theological assumptions or intentions which are present in a given text. The characteristics of God presented by the theologian (or “school” of theologians) we know as the Yahwist are discernible and distinguishable from the Elohist. On the one hand, the Yahwist (in Gen. 2:4b-3:24) emphasizes Yahweh’s nearness and intimate contact with humankind. Yahweh is described in very human terms (anthropomorphisms) which almost go so far as to portray Yahweh with human limitations. Yahweh walks through the garden in the cool of the evening, molds Adam with his hands as a potter molds clay and then breathes life into the model, and searches Adam out and converses with him. On the other hand, the Elohist characterizes God in a different way. Whereas the Yahwist emphasized God’s nearness, the Elohist visualizes God as more majestic, and thus further removed from the human scene. This majesty is por-

18. Cf. E. Sellin and G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, trans. by D. E. Green (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), pp. 284ff. and M. Dahood, *Psalms I* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1965), p. 121.

trayed in Gen. 28:12 in Jacob's dream about God's dwelling place as a throne with the angels of the heavenly king present. Gen. 21:17 describes the Elohist's view that God does not converse directly with humankind but uses intermediaries to convey his message.

The point in one's being able to recognize source (or author) is that thereby one can often discern the intention of a passage *for its own addressees*. The universalism of the Yahwist (e.g., Gen. 12:3, "all the families of the earth can gain a blessing through you") reflects a time of prosperity and promise for Israel (the time of the United Monarchy) in which Israel *could* be a blessing to her neighbors (Moabites, Ammonites, etc.) by treating them with justice. Likewise, the prominent theme of "fear of God" (i.e., obedience to God, cf. Gen. 22:8ff.) in the Elohist writings (cf. Gen. 20:11; 42:18; 50:19; Ex. 1:21; etc.) reflects a later theologian's hope that Israel would be obedient to Elohim ("God") in the face of the danger of syncretism with Canaanite religion (after the time of Elijah).<sup>19</sup> Literary questions, then, lead the Biblical student directly to certain basic theological questions which are indispensable to communicating the meaning of a text.

*Form criticism* is a third important area of Old Testament exegesis. Form-critical analysis is largely (although not exclusively) based upon the premise that there is a long oral pre-history lying behind much of the Old Testament. This oral stage of literature includes songs, poems, sagas, wisdom sayings, and a host of other types of orally transmitted literature which originated in the folk history and in the scholarly circles of Israel and were only at a later time preserved in writing.<sup>20</sup> The goal of form criticism is to understand the situation out of which a specific type of literature arose, including its long

19. Hans Walter Wolff has written two important articles emphasizing the "kerygma," i.e., the message which the Yahwist and Elohist directed to their contemporaries: "The Kerygma of the Yahwist," *Interpretation*, XX (1966), 131-158 and "The Elohist Fragments in the Pentateuch," *Interpretation*, XXVI (1972), 158-173.

20. Nevertheless Gene Tucker, a former Duke Professor, has recently warned us that form criticism should not be limited to the oral stage of literature. He notes the following: "Though techniques of form criticism are especially useful in the analysis of the oral stage of biblical literature, they are applicable as well to the written stages and to material which arose as literature. The form critical analysis helps, among other things, to determine whether a particular book or unit arose orally or in writing, and to understand the situation in which a specific piece arose." Gene Tucker, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 8.

pre-history, so that one may discover the function of the material within the Israelite community and the intention of the writer, i.e., what he sought to achieve.

The discipline of form criticism is now coming into maturity, and as a result the concepts and questions which have characterized form-critical analysis are now being tested and challenged. In earlier phases of the movement the typical or general characteristics of the biblical material were emphasized to the exclusion of the individuality which a given unit might possess. Recently, however, scholars are attempting not only to look at typical characteristics but also to see the uniqueness of a passage (when you have seen one prophetic judgment speech you have *not* seen them all!). One should keep in mind that in the following outline, there is some generalization for the sake of clarity.<sup>21</sup>

The first task of the form-analysis outline is to conduct a *structural analysis* of a given text. Such an analysis seeks first of all to isolate a unit by looking for introductory and concluding formulas which mark the beginning and the ending of a unit. In Ps. 134:1-2, the phrase, "bless Yahweh", serves to introduce a unit (v. 1) and to conclude it (v. 2). In the prophetic literature a familiar introductory formula is "hear this word" (cf. Amos 3:1; 4:1; and 5:1). In Jeremiah a familiar introductory phrase is "the word of Yahweh came to me" (cf. 1:4; 2:1; 7:1, etc.). The phrase, "blessed is", is a familiar one in wisdom psalms and often introduces units (cf. e.g., Pss. 1:1; 34:8; 41:1; etc.) One should attempt to structure a unit using a range of structural principles. These include rhetorical or stylistic devices (acrostic [alphabetic] poems, parallelism, keyword association, etc.), "institutional patterns" (declogue [Ex. 20], the trial form [Hebrew, *rīb*, e.g., Jer. 2], the seven-day week [Gen. 1:1-2:4a], etc.), elements of content

21. There is presently under way a multi-volume form-critical commentary which will cover the entire Old Testament. This work is being edited by Gene Tucker and Rolf Knierim. Several scholars who are now working on this "form-critical project" have recently contributed to an issue of *Interpretation*. One will find articles in that issue by George W. Coates, Dennis J. McCarthy, Roland E. Murphy, and Tucker to be helpful in surveying form-critical method in a variety of literary genres. Cf. *Interpretation*, XXVII/4 (1973). Rolf Knierim's article in that same issue, "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered," (pp. 435-468) is one of the most recent attempts to rethink the earlier work of form criticism and to analyze recent critiques and problems which have arisen in the movement. His footnotes provide an excellent bibliography for further reading in form-critical studies.



which form a logical development, process of thought, climax and anticlimax, and other systematized themes (especially true for narrative material and longer units [cf. Hos. 1-3 or Isa. 1]).<sup>22</sup> It is in the area of structure that one may bring out the individuality of a passage (this being an underemphasized facet of form criticism). Rolf Knierim insists that we aim toward expressing the uniqueness of a given passage. Note the following: "Not only must the structural analysis of the individuality of texts be included into form-critical method, it must, in fact, precede the analysis of the typical structure if the claim that such a typicality inherently determines an individual text is to be substantiated."<sup>23</sup>

The second element of the outline is the determination of *genre*. Normally one uses "genre" to refer to a typical unit of human expression which, in the first instance, can either be written or oral. Typicality means that one would expect to find several examples of a similar genre in biblical and ancient Near Eastern literature. One should note that genres such as prophetic judgment speeches, wisdom sayings, family stories and sagas, and hymns of lament may have originally had oral settings but now have become part of literary works. Genre, however, should also include typical forms of human expression other than linguistic ones; hence, one should also see genre as being a type of human activity or behavior. Knierim is correct to define genre broadly, to include activity and behavior, and thereby to recognize as genre certain rituals (the march around Jericho in Jos. 6 or the repentance ritual at Mizpah, 1 Sam. 7:6) or symbolic prophetic actions (cf. e.g., Jer. 18:1-12; 16:1-12; Hos. 1 and 3; and Ezek. 4:1-3). While one again must note that genre is an element under discussion at present, Knierim's definition is a helpful one: "A genre is a typical unit of expression through activity or behavior, or through the spoken or written word."<sup>24</sup>

22. Knierim's procedure regarding structure has been followed here. One should note his discussion, pp. 460-461. For further reading in the structuring of a passage one should consult the following: Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, trans. by Hugh C. White (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967); R. E. Murphy, "Form Criticism of Wisdom Literature," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 31(1969), 475-483 and "A New Classification of Literary Forms in the Psalms," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 21 (1959), 83-87; and George W. Coates "The Wilderness Itinerary," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 34 (1972), 135-152.

23. Knierim, p. 461.

24. Rolf Knierim, "Form Criticism: The Present State of an Exegetical

The third aspect of form-critical analysis is the determination of the *life setting* (German: *Sitz im Leben*) of the genre. One must ask of the text the following: "Where did this particular genre originate in Israel and where was it used (in the cult, school, law court, etc.)?" The distinction between origin and use is an important one, for it reflects the fact that units of expression can pass through different life settings. It is the task of the interpreter to attempt to recover both the original life setting and the new life settings through which the text may have passed. For example, Isaiah 6 is a report regarding the call of Isaiah. In one life setting, the genre is a memoir of Isaiah's reflection on his call. Yet this call also functioned to authenticate the prophet's message (Isaiah demands a hearing because he was called by God); thus, a second life setting would be in the context of the prophet's defense of his message in the face of his enemies. Yet one must not forget the *event* itself which provides the original life setting, i.e., in the temple. A second example of a new life setting for a genre is the use of the Priestly Torah by the prophets. This instruction, given by the priests to the people, has been taken out of its original life setting and has been utilized by the prophets in their proclamation of judgment (cf. Isa. 1:10-17; 8:11-15; and Jer. 7:21).<sup>25</sup>

Finally we come to the fourth aspect of text-analysis which is, to a great extent, the culmination point of our recent form-critical dialogue with the text. This aspect seeks to discover the *function* and *intention* of a text. Form-critical method should be flexible enough so that the questions of structure, genre, and life setting are related to and converge upon the meaning of the text within the community. Normally, a text survived in Israel because it fulfilled some function within the Israelite community (to explain the origin of something, to educate, to function in worship, etc.). Discovery of that function (i.e., how a genre was used) should aid in the determination of its intention (i.e., what it expresses, its goal). As in the case

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Discipline," paper presented to the Form Criticism Seminar—Hebrew Scriptures, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, New York, October 27, 1970. For further discussion regarding the definition and use of "genre," cf. W. G. Doty, "The Concept of Genre in Literary Analysis," in *Proceedings*, ed. by L. C. McCaughey (Society of Biblical Literature, 1972), pp. 413-448.

25. Westermann, p. 203. Knierim, *Interpretation*, p. 464 notes that life setting should no longer be seen as simply *institutional* but broader in scope to include the background (*geistige Heimat*) which underlies a text. Likewise, the relationship between genre and setting needs further examination (cf. p. 449).



of life setting, a text may reflect multiple functions, particularly if the genre is, as Claus Westermann notes, "a borrowed form."<sup>26</sup> The trial imagery used by the prophets had its original function in the law court (first function: legal) but was then utilized by the prophets to provide an indictment of the people (second function: prophetic judgment, cf. e.g., Mic. 6:1-2). The intention of the prophetic lawsuit (bringing Israel to trial) is to make the people aware of the seriousness of their breach of the covenant and their failure to live up to its concomitant demands. The so-called "Song of the Vineyard" (Isa. 5:1-7) originally functioned as a vintage festival song with its goal being entertainment and fun. The song for Isaiah, however, functions as a parable of judgment with the shocking intention of having Judah realize her sins.

A fourth area of exegetical method is *tradition history*. This facet of exegesis concerns the growth and development of biblical materials (the term "redaction criticism" is often used to refer to the final stamp which is placed upon material, e.g., one can see the hand of the final editor in the optimistic ending of Amos 9:8-15 [Deuteronomistic or perhaps post-exilic editing] which reverses the threatening tone of the prophet's message). This aspect of criticism is heavily dependent upon the conclusions we have already reached in our conversation process with the text (literary and form criticism especially). A presupposition of tradition history is that Old Testament texts have developed over long periods of time and that, once a tradition originates, it goes through various stages of preservation in successive communities. Stories are thus passed down from generation to generation (either oral or written), and each generation makes the story "its own", i.e., expands, reinterprets, and includes within the scope of the story its own concerns and world view. It is, therefore, the purpose of tradition history to trace this process, with the hope that various stages of meaning and interpretation can be recovered.<sup>27</sup>

Recently Terence E. Fretheim has convincingly shown various stages of interpretation within the Jacob traditions.<sup>28</sup> Fret-

26. Westermann, p. 199.

27. Walter E. Rast, *Tradition History and the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 18.

28. T. E. Fretheim, "The Jacob Traditions: Theology and Hermeneutic," *Interpretation*, XXVI (1972), 419-436.

heim notes that as the traditions about Jacob passed through several generations, the story was being enhanced with the contemporary concerns of that generation. To the Yahwist, Jacob, the shyster who is ambitious even before his birth (cf. Gen. 25:26, Jacob's grasping at Esau's heel!), who deceives his father (Gen. 27) and receives Esau's rightful blessing, is a mirror image of Israel herself, a sinner who has yet been the recipient of God's grace. The transformation of Jacob at Peniel (Gen. 32:22-32) is a significant point for the Yahwist, for after this event Jacob becomes a *servant* and in Gen. 33:1f. greets Esau as a vassal to a king. The point (*Kerygma*) which the Yahwist makes for his own time is that, like Jacob, Israel (which now possesses the land) should not become arrogant or forget her role of service (just as our father Jacob served!) to the Edomite neighbors and the Aramean enemies. In the Elohist story Jacob is no longer presented as a shyster, but is now the example and model of faith. Such a transition in Jacob reflects the concerns of the Elohist's ninth century community, beset by the danger of the adoption of Canaanite religious practices. In Gen. 35:1ff., Jacob speaks to his entire company to put away false gods. The message should have been clear to the contemporary community of the Elohist: "Listen to what Jacob said, attempt to imitate his devotion and faithfulness to God, and put away false gods!"

To the exilic community Deutero-Isaiah uses the ancient Exodus tradition in a creative way to assure the people of the continuing activity of God in their present set of circumstances. The Exodus tradition is echoed throughout the poems of Deutero-Isaiah (e.g., 40:3-5, a highway in the wilderness; 42:14-16, Yahweh leads his people in a way that they do not know; 48:20-21, the Exodus from Babylon; 49:8-12, entry into the land of promise; etc.). The Exodus theme possessed a special meaning for the Israelites in that it described their story of community identity. Yet Deutero-Isaiah did not merely recite the ancient Exodus motifs (thus only emphasizing the past activity of God). On the contrary, Isaiah "transposed" the ancient event "into a higher key" as he announced the coming salvation as an ongoing and distinctively *new* Exodus: "Behold I am doing a new thing, now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isa. 43:19).<sup>29</sup>

29. Bernhard W. Anderson, "Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage; Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. by B. W. Anderson and W. Harrelson (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), p. 191.

A fifth area of exegetical analysis concerns particular elements which may be unique to a given unit. *Content criticism* properly identifies and explains important historical allusions and circumstances, institutions and place names, as well as examining key words, phrases, and themes. If there are particular motifs present in the text, these should be examined and analyzed for their development (cf. the "master-slave" motif in Gen. 24).<sup>30</sup> "Covenant" would be an important theme which would need further analysis insofar as it might provide background to a given unit. The evidence of ancient Near Eastern traditions and folklore will often be helpful in understanding a passage (cf. e.g., the ancient Mesopotamian creation and flood stories, the parallels which exist between Israelite prophecy and the Mari letters, and the colorful stories from Egypt such as the *History of Sinuhe* with its parallels to the David and Goliath story).<sup>31</sup> The so-called covenant lawsuit in prophetic literature (cf. Amos 3:1-2) would be an area in which the relationship between the prophet and the covenant might be explored. The appearance of a place name in a text can have interesting implications for the understanding of the text as a whole. One such example is the Song of Songs 6:4, where the ancient capital of the Northern Kingdom, Tirzah, is mentioned (cf. 1 Kings 15:21). Could the mention of this ancient name be evidence that the "descriptive song" (Song of Songs 6:4-10) may be an early composition and may point to a northern provenance?

In taking up a sixth area of biblical exegesis, the *contemporary horizon* of the text, one should refer to something which was said at the outset of this article: that conversation with the text involves an honest view of the text and what it means as well as an honest view of *ourselves*. The purpose of our dialogue with the text cannot rest with a conclusion regarding what the text *meant*. Our goal is not merely to learn something

30. Klaus Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition*, trans. by S. M. Cuppitt (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), pp. 56ff. Koch uses the term "history of motifs" (*Motivgeschichte*), which is a difficult term to define. Many scholars seek to avoid the use of "motif" because of the difficulty involved in describing a motif with precision. Among the "motifs" which Koch lists are the following: 1) the typical affairs of the house and family (e.g., 1 Sam. 1); 2) the relationship between father and sons (the Joseph Story); and 3) the singling out of a man by God to be a divine instrument (Judg. 6:15; 1 Sam. 9:21).

31. A useful aid for the pastor is J. B. Pritchard's *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958). This book is an abbreviated paperback version of Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*.

about the past, but to discover something about the present and ourselves (the conversation with the text involves the interpreter!). We have already noted that the Old Testament itself is a process whereby each generation develops ancient traditions so that they might speak with clarity to their present. Each successive community was not satisfied with a presentation of historical facts but demanded that there be a representation and reinterpretation of past events for “this day” (cf. Josh. 24 and the ritual of covenant renewal). The Word must always be the living Word. To accomplish this the interpreter must become engaged with the text in conversation to the point that he or she becomes vulnerable to its message (a hearing of God’s Word should turn around our preconceived notions and humble our pastoral pride!). In beginning honest conversation with the text the pastor is involving his or her own life so that *the* history of the Old Testament becomes one’s own history as it addresses human concerns. We must be willing for our preconceived opinions and cherished values to be called into question.

For Christian pastors the conversation with the Old Testament is particularly perilous, for we are faced with the question of the role of the Old Testament in the proclamation of God’s Word to the Church. It is centrally important that the Old Testament be seen as an integral part of the Christian proclamation, thus avoiding the danger of seeing the Old Testament as a type of *preliminary* study of human existence which is in some way “completed” by the message of the New Testament.<sup>32</sup> The Old Testament is, in fact, especially valuable for its realistic presentation of man as a concrete historical person who loves, forgives, laments, sins, prays, etc. Karl Barth, in an amusing quotation, confirms this emphasis upon man as a physical creature presented in the Old Testament: “it is a good thing that we have the Old Testament with so many tangible things, so that we see the Gospel is not purely a spiritual thing, merely for soul and heaven. Rather, it is for soul and

32. Herein lies the danger of the Bultmannian view that the Old Testament should be interpreted in terms of the question of “what basic possibility it presents for an understanding of human existence (*Daseinsverständnis*)”. Here, the Old Testament only gives a “preunderstanding” to authentic existence presented in the New Testament. R. Bultmann, “The Significance of the Old Testament for the Christian Faith,” in *The Old Testament and Christian Faith*, ed. by B. W. Anderson (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 13.

*body*, heaven and *earth*, inward and *outer* life. There is no hair on my head that is not an interesting thing for God!"<sup>33</sup>

Both testaments, taken together (not separately), "constitute the pattern of God's redemptive dealing with his people."<sup>34</sup> The relationship, therefore, is not a complementary one but an integral one. The Old Testament, moreover, gives a clear picture of humankind, the heir of God's promise of redemption, whose life is lived in the arena of responsible decision-making, failure, success, living, and dying. The writers and speakers of the Old Testament direct words of encouragement, challenge, or judgment to humankind in the midst of humanity's activities. The New Testament does not negate this message nor does it resolve the tension of human existence. On the contrary, the New Testament further affirms God's redemptive plan.<sup>35</sup>

As pastors we do not converse with the text because the biblical situations are "like" our contemporary ones, and we may then compare the "now" with the "then". Our interest in conversing with the text is not an antiquarian one with the past. It is, rather, a part of the perpetual demand placed upon men of faith to speak God's Word in the present. Paul Scherer has noted the need to speak authentically to the present: "Far from being 'like', in a very real sense every Biblical situation *is* our situation—though the two may in no instance ever be identified."<sup>36</sup> Scherer's insight is a key one regarding our conversation with the text. We must always seek to understand the past and the meaning of the biblical text for its own addressees, but we can in no way lift that hunk of history out of its own time into the present. The interpreter must, of course, determine what areas of the human condition were *originally* addressed

33. *Karl Barth's Table Talk*, recorded and ed. by John D. Godsey (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962), p. 32.

34. Paul Scherer, *The Word God Sent* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 38. Cf. H. W. Wolff, "The Hermeneutical Problem of the Old Testament," in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. by Claus Westermann, English trans. ed. by J. L. Mays (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963), pp. 187-189; and R. E. Murphy, "Christian Understanding of the Old Testament," The Robert Cardinal Bellarmine Lecture, St. Louis University Divinity School, October 28, 1970, in *Theology Digest*, XVIII (1970), 321-332.

35. D. Moody Smith has stated that man's creatureliness and responsibility in the Old Testament are neither "resolved nor negated, but redeemed by the Gospel message of the New Testament" (p. 65). One would agree with Professor Smith's statement with the understanding that the redemption of the New Testament is but a *continuation* of the redemptive activity of God throughout the history of interaction between God and his people.

36. Scherer, p. 38.



in a given text. Moreover he or she must faithfully evaluate his or her own present to determine the *contemporary* human condition.<sup>37</sup> Now in the midst of the conversational dialogue the interpreter must faithfully announce the Word for the present. Only in the interaction between the interpreter and the text can faithful announcement take place. The text cannot speak alone, for such a speaking would involve a simplistic equation between past and present; nor can the interpreter speak without being firmly grounded in the tradition and the history of interpretation which witness to God's action throughout the centuries and join one in the mutuality of conversation with the text.

In the act of preaching the pastor opens up to the congregation the conversation which is taking place. In the proclamation of the Word the ancient human concerns are affirmed as our concerns, given humankind's historic life of sorrow, joy, triumph, defeat, birth, and death. Preaching becomes an invitation for others *to hear* and *identify with* these human concerns and an opportunity for God's people *to participate* in the continuing redemptive activity of God.<sup>38</sup> Just as the pastor is vulnerable in his or her conversation with the text, so are God's people vulnerable to being challenged into insecurity by hearing the Word.

37. Lawrence E. Toombs, "The Problematic of Preaching from the Old Testament," *Interpretation*, XXIII (1969), p. 304.

38. The pastor may find helpful a series of articles published in *The Methodist Theological School in Ohio Journal*, Fall 1967-Winter 1972, entitled "Preparation for Biblical Preaching," by Simon DeVries (Old Testament), Edward Meyer (homiletics), and Robert Tannehill (New Testament). The articles are arranged as follows: 1) The Preacher Approaches His Text (questions which come to mind when the text is read); 2) The Preacher Studies his Text (background and structure as well as a verse-by-verse analysis to understand the intent of the passage as the original audience would have understood it); and 3) The Preacher Develops his Text (includes some false directions that a sermon might take). For an analysis of this series and other recent literature in this area cf. Lloyd R. Bailey, "From Text to Sermon: Reflections on Recent Discussion," in a forthcoming issue (1975) of *Concilium* dealing with liturgy. Other recent works of value for the pastor are the following by Elizabeth Achtemeier: *The Old Testament and the Proclamation of the Gospel* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973) and "The Relevance of the Old Testament for Christian Preaching" in *A Light Unto My Path: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Jacob M. Myers*, ed. by H. N. Bream, R. D. Heim, and C. A. Moore (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), pp. 3-24.



Focus on  
Faculty

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ROLAND E. MURPHY, O. Carm.  
Professor of Old Testament

My first contact with Duke was in 1967-68, when I was a Visiting Professor in the Department of Religion, which was chaired by Dean Thomas Langford. When I became a “free agent”, as it were, in 1970, and was Visiting Professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, I was contacted by the then Dean Robert Cushman and invited to return to Duke as a faculty member of the Divinity School. I was delighted to accept, because of pleasant associations with Duke faculty and students, and returned to find myself once again working with Thomas Langford.

In these days of “ethnic identity” I suppose I should begin my story accordingly. I was born in Chicago of Irish parents, and received a Catholic parochial school education. Because the priests and brothers of the Carmelite Order staffed Mt. Carmel High School on the street where I lived (*Dante Avenue*—can you imagine that on the South Side of Chicago, in “Studs” Lonigan days?), I came to know them well and decided to become a Carmelite. Life in the prep seminary in Niagara Falls was mainly studies and sports. After a year of novitiate, given over to prayer and consideration of the Carmelite lifestyle, I entered college at the Catholic University of America, where I majored in philosophy and languages. Four years of theology at that institution followed, and I realized that my summer work for an M.A. degree in Philosophy (eventually obtained) was being submarined by an interest in Bible and Hebrew. After being ordained to the priesthood and serving in a parish in Chicago in 1943-44, I was sent back by my provincial superior to Catholic University to train in biblical studies.

The most stimulating courses in graduate study were those in Semitic languages, so I determined to get an M.A. in Semitics after getting the doctorate in theology. In 1948 I was invited to lecture in the Department of Semitic Languages at C.U. of A., and a teaching career began—at the University and also at Whitefriars Hall, where I taught the Carmelite seminarians

(until 1969). I received a fellowship from the American Schools of Oriental Research in 1950-51 for archeological work in Jerusalem; it was enough to find out that I was too "bookish" (and impatient) to pursue that field. My specialty in Semitics was to be Christian Arabic literature but I was diverted from this in 1956, when the administration asked me to transfer to the school of theology at C.U. of A. to teach Old Testament. They offered me the opportunity to study in Rome at the Biblical Institute, where I received the Licentiate in Scripture in 1958. From then on my concerns were mainly Old Testament, although the experience in Semitics stood me in good stead.

During all this time Catholic biblical scholars had close association with their Protestant and Jewish counterparts in the Society of Biblical Literature and in other ventures. When the ecumenical breakthrough occurred in the early '60s, I was invited to teach as a Visiting Professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1965-66. This was followed by an invitation to do the same at Yale Divinity School in the fall semester of '66. Then the first Duke interlude came—and we are back to my first paragraph.

It was a good experience to live at Duke—as faculty fellow at York in '67, and at Brown in '71. Since '72 I have been living at Chapel Hill with the Jesuits in a wooden frame house, part of which was the house of the first president of UNC! That's having the best of both worlds: living in Chapel Hill and teaching at Duke. We are all active in the Newman student center there, which is side by side with the Methodist center.

One of the most exciting features of my extracurricular activities has been the giving of biblical institutes at various places over the last ten years, running from "Seminary in the Mountains" (Mt. Rainier) for Protestant clergy to Old Testament lectures for Catholic diocesan priests in Worcester, Mass. None was more pleasant than the "mini-course" in Psalms at the Convocation here at Duke in November, '73. Last Spring I gave a paper on the authority of the Bible at a three-day meeting of the Belmont College-Wake Forest University ecumenical institute. I have been elected as theological consultant (along with Brevard Childs and Albert Outler) for the theological education committee of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. This derived from my close work with the faculty of Union Theological Seminary in Richmond where, along with Duke's James Price and Fred Herzog, I have served on the editorial

council for *Interpretation* since 1965. Other editorial activities have included the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, the international theological review, *Concilium*, and the *Jerome Biblical Commentary* (1969).

I have always identified my priest ministry with the service of the Word—the study and teaching of the Bible—and I have found great joy in it. This opportunity came at a time when a biblical movement was about to vitalize the Roman Catholic Church at home and abroad (the *Divino afflante Spiritu* encyclical of 1943 played an important role in this). I was privileged to teach many seminarians, and also laity, and to participate in the new Catholic translation of the Bible (New American Bible, 1970). And now I find it a pleasant challenge to teach Bible to Duke Divinity School students in our common effort to understand the word of God and to live by it.

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JOHN H. WESTERHOFF

Associate Professor of Religion and Education

There is still a rumor circulating in some quarters that professors, if not a little lower than the angels, are a little more than human. Writing autobiographical vignettes for colleagues, students, and alumni tempts me to perpetuate this lie. Who seeks to expose his/her sin, weaknesses, inadequacies, and failings? Indeed, who is not anxious about revealing his/her feelings along with thoughts and achievements? Nevertheless, if I am to help you know me as a person (the aim of these ramblings), I will have to risk revealing more than the surface of my life. But where to begin? So much of my childhood and youth has been repressed. At best I reflect negatively on those years—with one exception. Every summer I attended Camp Lincoln in the Adirondack Mountains of New York. Here I discovered myself, and perhaps because of that experience mountain climbing, canoeing, sailing, biking, and wilderness camping are still among my favorite activities.

My college years remain a paradox: important to my growth and development, I rarely mention them. Having been raised in an Ivy League, upper middle-class professional community, my attendance at Ursinus College in Collegeville, Pennsylvania, was a mark of failure. However, it was here that I matured

psychologically, if not intellectually. While my B.S. in psychology was no great academic achievement, I count as my achievements such accomplishments as class and student government presidencies. I recall the joys of fraternity life (it helped my social development), the tennis team (still my favorite sport), waiting on tables at a gourmet restaurant (today my hobby is cooking), and meeting Barnie, my wife. She has played a more important role in my life than I will ever find words to acknowledge. While we have had our ups and downs and there have been days when we affirmed our love but questioned our ability to live happily together, we have shared a host of significant experiences, not the least of which is parenting three wonderful children.

Spiritually and intellectually, my life began at Harvard Divinity School; these years remain among my most memorable. Shortly after arriving in Cambridge, Barnie and I were married and became houseparents at a Boston University girls' dorm (that too was an education!). Barnie completed her graduate studies in physical therapy and paid my bills. I locked myself in the stacks of Widener Library. Uninterested in community life or extracurricular activities, I thrived on scholarship and the academic life. My most significant influences were people: James Luther Adams, Paul Tillich, Krister Stendahl, George Williams, G. Ernest Wright, and Arthur Darby Noch.

While yet uncommitted to the parish ministry, I spent my weekends working in the Needham Congregational Church. Money influenced me to take the job, yet within that community I identify my conversion and growth as a person of faith, and my commitment to serving Christ and His church. My spiritual mentor and friend during these important years was the Reverend Dr. Herbert Smith, a Harvard divinity graduate and my "pastor and teacher." He helped me learn how to apply the theory I acquired at the University to the life of the parish. Any success I have known as a minister of the Gospel can be attributed to him.

Ordained as a minister in the United Church of Christ, I moved with Barnie to Presque Isle, Maine, and our first church. Here in potato country I acquired the skills necessary for ministry. By supporting my experimentation, praising my successes, and forgiving my failures, these people educated me in ways a divinity school or field education could never have done.

My years in the parish ministry were good, but there were

some ministerial duties I found difficult. I am shy and often feel insecure. While I love people and desire contact with them, confronted by a group I will most likely stand alone and sometimes have difficulty making conversation. As a result I'm often lonely; all of which might be difficult, for those who have witnessed only my compensations, to believe.

After two happy years in Maine, I was called back to Needham, Massachusetts, to assume responsibility for the church's educational ministry. Without any "how-to" courses to prepare me, I assumed responsibility for a church school of over a thousand children and a youth group with more than three hundred young people. I can remember securing and training two hundred teachers and, with the aid of a director of religious education and three intern-seminarians, experimenting with a host of educational endeavors. During those years I also had the opportunity to share in the development and promotion of what was then the new United Church of Christ curriculum. Such experiences and a lot of reading introduced me to religious education. By temperament, when confronted with a new problem I first seek to understand it theoretically. I have never been interested in "how-to" books. I'm happiest when I'm struggling to understand a problem in a new and different way, and I become thrilled by the challenge of applying creatively my new understanding. I prefer to find my own solutions than use someone else's. I'm insecure when nothing is changing and happiest when surrounded by crisis, change, and problems. I celebrate the fact that the creative spark which is in all of us was never destroyed in me. I also believe that my classical academic education at Harvard was excellent preparation for my ministry.

From Needham I was called to the First Congregational Church, on the campus of Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts. While these were relatively quiet days, the college provided a number of challenges and opportunities. One highlight was the visit of the first two Taize brothers to live in this country. It was Brother Christopher, a lawyer and social activist, who introduced me to the spiritual life. He and Father George, my Russian Orthodox priest, historian of worship, advisor at Harvard, greatly influenced my life.

During these years I framed my somewhat eclectic nature. For example, I find most meaningful "high church" sacramental worship; I crave the intimacy of life in a small faith community;



I am most at home with liberal theology and the progressive tradition; I affirm free church congregational polity; and as a Christian I am committed to action for radical social change.

The arts too are part of my life. Whenever doubt surfaces, I am apt to turn to the Credo in Bach's *B Minor Mass* or the medieval galleries of an art museum. I'm a lover of the contemporary arts, but I feel my roots in the past. Both reason and the affections are important to me, but the focus of my concern is the will.

After only two years in Williamstown and eight in the parish ministry, I was called to join the staff of the Division of Christian Education in the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, a national agency of the United Church of Christ. Among other things they asked me to create a new magazine on education in church and society. I pointed out to them that I didn't know a great deal about education and even less about editing. They pointed out to me that that was an advantage: I didn't know what I couldn't do. With that challenge I headed for offices in New York and Philadelphia and a bedroom in New Jersey. For the next eight years I lived a strange life, which brings me back to my children.

Jill was born in Presque Isle, Jack in Needham, Beth in Williamstown. Anything I could write concerning how I feel about them would sound sentimental. But I know I owe them more than they will ever owe me. I therefore hurt because, while I feel so deeply about them, for eight years I ignored them. During those important years Bernie assumed the sole responsibility of their nurture; she deserves all the credit for their many good points, and I deserve the blame for their shortcomings. I often feel guilty about those years. Nevertheless they were very significant in my continuing growth.

During this time I lived a number of lives and traveled throughout most of Europe, Latin America, and every state in the Union except Alaska. I became socially radicalized and joined Blacks, Mexican and Indian Americans, the poor, welfare mothers, farm workers, and, most recently, women in their struggle for liberation and justice. I conducted what seems like a million continuing education events for ministers and professional educators. I edited an award-winning magazine that often disturbed the complacency of the church. I taught a variety of subjects at a variety of institutions: for example, Education and Mass Communications at Union Theological



Seminary in New York, and Education for Social Change at Princeton Theological Seminary. I joined a Boston-based educational consulting firm (T.D.R. Associates) and acted as a consultant to Mr. Rogers' neighborhood, trying to discover a means for influencing early childhood education in the United States. I worked for NBC-TV creating "Take a Giant Step", a Saturday television show on values for youth; it lasted two seasons, though I failed in my goal to transform network children's television. I worked with the American Association of University Women, creating a national educational program to prepare women to engage in social change. I worked with the Human Relations Division of the National Education Association on educational resources related to minority issues, and I developed a new planning process for institutions called "Futures Planning," which has been used with diverse groups such as a Texas school board and the Religious Education Association.

During those years I wrote over a hundred articles, two books (*Values for Tomorrow's Children* and *A Colloquy in Christian Education*), and a series of curriculum resources for youth on liberation education. During my sabbatical year I was both Lentz Lecturer in Education at Harvard and director of an experimental program in Religious Education at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary. At the same time I helped to develop a new curriculum for religious education based upon the Biblical concept of Shalom. I also began a doctoral program at Teachers' College, though I was not sure for what end.

Mostly, as you might guess, I was away from home. Four days a month with my family was all I could spare. I accomplished a great deal, but life was not as I wanted it to be.

Then, as if by Providence, I was returning from a trip (Barnie and I were to leave the next day for Europe for our first vacation in many years) and was hit in an airport parking lot, sustaining a fractured neck. They called it a miracle. Eighty per cent of those who are injured as I was die, and the rest are totally paralyzed. I am a non-statistic. I *know* I live by grace! While the accident put me in bed for six months, it also gave me an opportunity to reflect upon my life. During those reflective days I still edited *Colloquy*, wrote a new book, *Generation and Generation*, and continued my studies at Columbia, focusing on anthropology and the history of religion and education. My dissertation was on William Holmes McGuffey and his Readers.

During this period of my recuperation I received the invitation to join the faculty at Duke Divinity School. That, too, was, from my perspective, an experience of providence and grace. Now I am at Duke, and while I haven't been here very long, I cannot recall a single time in my life when I have felt more fulfilled. I feel that I'm doing what God has called me to do, and I have been reunited with my family.

I feel it is an awesome responsibility to teach. I suffer a good deal along with my teaching. Anxiety over whether or not I'm really helping my students to learn is constant. I sometimes get depressed after class because I judge myself so severely. And yet teaching brings me joy. Of course I have my own definition of a professor: a professor is one who professes what he/she believes at the moment so as to provoke others to think for themselves. I therefore worry when people take notes (I change my mind frequently and I would hate to spend the rest of my life refunding people's money). I am also caught in a tension between wanting to give every moment to my students and engaging in my own research and writing. Already I have outlines for two new books and a half dozen research projects. I'm still intent on framing an alternative future for education in the church.

But first, I'm concerned about preparing some parish ministers for their role as educators and others to specialize in the church's educational ministry. Second, I'm concerned about religion in higher education and the preparing of Ph.D.'s to teach. I also have a dream of taking my interests and knowledge of religion and education into other facets of university life. I hope to grow through opportunities to be with my colleagues and students. I want to be more with my family and become more involved in my church, community, state, and nation. I cherish the excitement of being part of a great university and divinity school, the clash of many minds, the stimulation, criticism and encouragement of colleagues, students, and family.

As you can see, I'm quite human. If I have any uniqueness, it is my optimism. In spite of an awareness of sin, I live in faith by hope that the social gospel of love and justice will one day be realized. And I'm committed to playing my small role in God's kingdom building. My presence at Duke I understand as an opportunity to be faithful to that commitment. I'm grateful!

## Book Reviews

*Eerdman's Handbook to the Bible.*  
David Alexander and Patricia  
Alexander, eds. Eerdmans.  
1973. 680 pp. \$12.95.

Intended as an aid for "Bible students at every level", this lavishly illustrated volume provides information about the biblical world (e.g., everyday life, money, calendar, history), the biblical text (e.g., versions), commentary upon each of the biblical books (both Testaments), and a dictionary-index. Beautiful color photos are common (almost one per page) and helpful maps-diagrams are scattered throughout. Supplementary articles are provided at the appropriate places (e.g., "Clean and Unclean Animals" within the discussion of Leviticus). The language is admirably clear; a high school student would be able to read it with comprehension. Technical terms and foreign language vocabulary are avoided.

The individual articles have been written by a variety of scholars, largely British (but to advertise them as "the world's leading biblical scholars" is an exaggeration). One could describe them as "conservative" in their scholarship (hardly "Fundamentalists"), and they generally insist that the OT be interpreted in light of more authoritative NT teaching. The following remark is typical (p. 32): "... the prophets were unable fully to understand all the implications of their own teaching. The source of their utterance ... was in fact 'the spirit

of Christ within them'." There is a separate section entitled "Christ in the Psalms" (p. 329). Yet the authors are often open and cautious in their positions, e.g., "Whether or not scientists are right in saying that we evolved from lower forms, there still had to be a first male that was truly human" (p. 24). Or again, speaking of Genesis 1: "This is not a treatise on geology, biology, or any other science" (p. 127). Even while suggesting that the Jonah story may be literally true, they can make such helpful remarks as, "Argument over this must not be allowed to blind us to the whole point of the story" (p. 448). At other points, the authors will try desperately to adhere to the letter of the text, in the face of serious evidence to the contrary. For example, the discussion of archaeological results at Jericho, showing no signs of habitation at the time of the Israelite conquest (13th cent., B.C.), need not contradict the biblical story (Joshua 6), since the signs may have eroded away just as mud-brick ruins from earlier periods of the site are known to have done (p. 214). Whether other (non-soluble) signs would have thus eroded is not asked, however! A more serious example of this mentality is found in the discussion of Exodus 6 (where God's proper name is said to have been revealed for the first time, although other passages reveal its use prior to this time, e.g., Genesis 4:1), where the "explanation" flatly contradicts the biblical text (p. 158).

Sometimes an author will pass quickly over opposing points of view, seeming to imply that they are hardly worthy of consideration. The debate over sources in the books of Samuel (based in part upon duplicate accounts of the same event) is brushed aside with, "On closer inspection, however, most of the so-called duplicates emerge quite clearly as two separate if similar events. . ." (p. 231). The extent to which this clarity is dictated by preconceived notions of inspiration remains unquestioned, as do the implications of the episodes not covered by the term "most". Or again, the discussion of "Literary Criticism" (pp. 182-184) mentions "source criticism", but the most important implications (in Pentateuchal studies) are covered in only four lines, giving none of the supporting evidence or the theological insights derived from the method. One might at least expect one clear example or bibliography for further study! The article concludes by noting that "More recently, however, it has been argued that the differences [upon which the sources J, E, D, P are based] . . . have no significance." Does such a mere observation establish anything?

Perhaps the editors have tried to do too much in a single volume, with the result that really helpful explanation is impossible. Can a complex prophet like Hosea be meaningfully discussed in three pages (large print with wide spaces between sections)? No attention is called to the changed political situation since the time of his early contemporary, Amos, which is crucial for an understanding of their radically different theologies. Likewise, no insight is

given into the causes of the debate over the merits and dangers of kingship (I Samuel 8), and hence the crucial theme of the tension between living under the covenant and under the state is unrecognized.

I turn now to a series of selected assertions which are in error or which may be debated. "Cush" does not invariably refer to "The Sudan" (p. 671), for it may denote the Mesopotamian Kassites as well. The earliest OT manuscripts in Hebrew prior to the discoveries at Qumran are not the 9th century A.D. codices (p. 69), but the Cairo Geniza fragments of the 8th century or earlier. Why is the Hebrew word *Torah* translated by "Law" (pp. 122, 124), a notorious and prejudicial inaccuracy? May one discuss the chronology of Israel's kings with no mention of the evidence in the Septuagint (pp. 269-271), in view of the recent work by Shenkel (1968)? Is the tension between "true" and "false" prophets one of the "old morality" vs. a "new morality" (p. 370)? Is it not rather a problem of sources, i.e., the Mosaic (conditional) covenant vs. the Davidic (unconditional) one? There is no mention of this crucial insight, even in the discussion of Isaiah, nor is there even discussion of the covenant with David under the general discussion of "covenant" (p. 123). Masonry of the surviving Temple wall does not go back to the time of Zerubbabel (p. 310)! Can one seriously assert that Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead (p. 141), given the OT view of man? Why is the KJV described as "the Authorized" version (pp. 76, 78, 79), when in fact the work of Cover-



dale (1535) was likewise "authorized" by the King of England, and both the Great Bible (1539) and the Bishops Bible (1569) received "authorization" from the Church as well (whereas the KJV did not)? Does Jesus' riding on an ass signify humility (p. 458), or is he following an ancient custom by which kings always ride this animal rather than a horse?

In conclusion: this is a beautiful book, which will undoubtedly be helpful to conservative laity, who may justifiably lament that far too much space is wasted. However for serious theological students of whatever perspective it has little to commend it. It is too brief, incomplete, and flawed with errors. And there are many who will not be able to accept its conservative and Christocentric stance, under which much of the OT message is obscured.

—Lloyd Bailey

*Sex in the Bible.* Tom Horner. Tuttle. 1974. 188 pp. \$7.50.

As the jacket truthfully proclaims, this book "is not a sensationalized account for the puerile voyeur". Tom Horner is actually the Reverend Thomas M. Horner, alumnus of the Duke Divinity School (1949), Ph.D. of Columbia University, former teacher of Bible at the Philadelphia Divinity School, later parish priest and chaplain to Episcopal students at Skidmore college.

As to the book itself, if it had been of prurient interest it would have been issued as a cheap paperback, with a lurid cover. On the contrary, the publisher, with offices in Rutland, Vermont, and Tokyo, Japan, specializes in

superior craftsmanship. This book, printed and bound in Japan, is a printer's work of art and will probably soon be a collector's item. It could not have been produced at all in its present form in the U.S.A., and therefore is not overpriced. Even the proofreading is almost perfect, unusual in these days.

As to content, the author follows his own ideas, not paying much attention to the several works on the same subject that have appeared during the last decade. The arrangement is topical, with such headings as marriage, divorce, adultery, seduction, rape, prostitution, virginity, homosexuality, and the like. References throughout the Bible on each topic are brought together and discussed realistically, each one viewed "like it is" for the common reader, not the scholar. Where there is a controversial point, Horner states his own common-sense view without dogmatism.

The next to the last chapter, entitled "Jesus Christ and Sex", affords opportunity for discussion of some controversial ideas that are floating around today. For example, was Mary Magdalene a former prostitute? Possibly, but there is no conclusive evidence. Did she and Jesus have an "affair"? There was an attachment, but not of a sexual nature. Was Jesus married, as a recent book claims? No proof whatever, just an interesting speculation. Was Jesus a homosexual? Again, no proof at all. Behind these conclusions the author presents good reasoning, which will be clarifying and edifying to any reader looking for fact rather than speculation.

The last chapter presents in translation a few selected "Love Poems from the Bible". It is significant that the concluding selection is Paul's great hymn from I Corinthians 13. Thus in the end the spiritual transcends the physical, and we are left with what the reviewer regards as a true impression of the subject as a whole. Congratulations, Tom!

—W. F. Stinespring

*The Politics of Jesus.* John Howard Yoder. Eerdmans. 1972. 260 pp. \$3.45.

It is hazardous for a simple ethicist and a non-biblical scholar, whose Greek is rusty indeed, to assess the worth of this exciting book of John Yoder, well-known Mennonite scholar, and president of Goshen Biblical Seminary. There is certainly an awesome support of footnote documentation from biblical scholars, as well as theologians, for his exegesis and interpretation.

His thesis is a bold one. In place of the usual "spiritualized" or privatized reading of the import of Jesus, or an anachronistic radical interim-ethic, Yoder interprets the ministry of Jesus as presenting to men "one particular social-political-ethical option" (p. 23), highly relevant to contemporary Christian action in today's world. He builds his case primarily on Luke. He makes much of the Messianic mission of Jesus to preach good news to the poor, to "proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord", which is interpreted in terms of the jubilee year in the Jewish tradition, when debts are wiped out and economic inequities broken down. Thus, in the Lord's prayer, "forgive us our

debts" is to be taken literally, as monetary debts, for "debt is seen as the paradigmatic social evil" (p. 41) and becomes the mandate for a Christian disciple, then as now. Yoder does not hazard any suggestion as to how this economic discipleship might be translated into the terms of large-scale policy in modern capitalistic societies.

As Yoder reads it, the political message that Jesus brought is that of non-violent resistance to the principalities and powers. He rejected the way of the Zealots. The radically new concept of power is found in the cross, which is the mark of what Nietzsche might call the "transvaluation of values". "Servanthood replaces dominion, forgiveness absorbs hostility" (p. 134). The concept of the principalities and powers Yoder reads in an Augustinian sense, as fallen or perverted creatures or structures. In the cross, Jesus breaks the grip of the powers, and this message St. Paul proclaims as the central liberating word for the early church. It should be the central witness of the church today in both its "conscientious participation" and its "conscientious objection".

Yoder's passion for his thesis leads him to some highly tendential statements: "The one temptation the man Jesus faced . . . was the temptation to exercise social responsibility in the interests of justified revolution through the use of available violent means." (p. 98) The *one* temptation? And some rather presumptive claims: "The more we learn about the Jewishness of Jesus . . . the more evident it becomes that he could not have been perceived by his contemporaries otherwise than



we here have portrayed him.” (p. 114)

Yet withal this book performs a notable service to Christian ethicists, for it lays to rest for good and all the anemic, spiritualized, other-worldly, Christology with which modern evangelical churches are cursed. It establishes strongly the socio-political character of the Christian gospel. It is good to have a study of Jesus which upsets and shoves around the comfortable furniture of the mind of the religious establishment and the pretty pictures on its walls. This not just to upset, but to make a cogent case for a revolutionary Christ. Further, for this reviewer, Yoder is most persuasive in his case against the “liberal” pacifist position, which would validate the way of non-violence because it works, and his case for a “vocational” pacifism whose worth is not judged by its pragmatic success as strategy, but by its integrity in faithful witness to Christ. The question of how such a vocational Christian pacifism should or might be translated into the terms of American foreign policy, however, remains unanswered.

—Waldo Beach

*Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics.* Carl F. H. Henry, ed. Baker. 1973. 726 pp. \$16.95.

Carl F. H. Henry, the editor of *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, says in the preface that the “flexuous modern outlook offers no solid basis whatever for ethical norms” and thus “inevitably leads to nihilism”. It is to meet this challenge and correct this situation that Henry and his conservative co-authors set out

here to probe “once again the heritage of revealed ethics”. Accordingly, this work “provides more than illumination on the Christian lifestyle. It lays bare the very foundations of the [sic!] biblical ethic, expresses its content, indicates its impact upon man and society in the past, expounds its relevance to the problems besetting our own age, and wrestles some of the frontier moral dilemmas of the emerging future.”

That is an ambitious program, even (or especially!) for a dictionary which covers several hundred topics and is written, according to the dust jacket, by 263 “evangelical authors”. I think it only partly succeeds. The principal distinction of the book is that, whatever the varieties of subject-matter and despite sometimes conflicting moral teachings, all the authors do embrace a biblicalism.

The entry on “status of women”, for example,—after citing both OT and NT texts—concludes with a somber warning: “When a woman tries to usurp the place and responsibilities given to a man (and vice versa), there will be a disruption. For the true believer liberation comes through obedience to the truth of God and renouncing one's rights in the service of others (John 17:17; Rom. 15:1-3; Gal. 5:13).” I was unable, incidentally, to identify a single woman among the 263 authors! Or again, while the entry on “adultery” acknowledges that fornicators will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9-20), the author allows that Jesus' attitude toward the woman taken in adultery was forgiving (John 8:11) and therefore “if adultery is not tolerable to God,

neither is it the unpardonable sin"!)

There are numerous other examples, but within a brief review perhaps these will suffice to illustrate the tenuous hold the editor's intention has at virtually every point of specific moral advice. The entries achieve better success at a methodological or meta-ethical level. What seems to be the common or coherent referent throughout is a formal appeal to scripture as "the only infallible rule of faith and practice". But I think that this tends to function as a formal principle only, and that the moral guidance which is predicated on this "infallible rule" is rather broadly and dissimilarly formulated (compare, e.g., the variant entries for conscientious objection, ecclesiastical cooperation, and councils of churches).

An interesting exception to this otherwise general characteristic of the entries is "euthanasia", where an unambiguous prohibition is located in simple assertion of the 6th commandment. But the "heritage of revealed ethics" fails us again if we suppose a similar (not to say uniform) application is to be made to abortion or war or capital punishment. Indeed, while "genocide" is alleged to be "the most extreme violation of the 6th commandment conceivable", the "abolition of the death penalty presupposes the falsity of Christian principles"! But there is no need to labor this abuse of scripture; all of us know the devious uses to which scripture can be put, and especially when those who use scripture suppose themselves to be immune to any interpretive influence than that of Holy Spirit.

The most instructive and useful articles are descriptive, data-based definitions; but even these are, soon or late, usually prejudiced by the so-called "conservatism" of authors and frequently concluded by hortatory admonitions (compare, e.g., the final paragraph of the entry on "ethical relativism").

Even though articles range from "abandonment" to "Zoroastrian ethics"—and include "Watergate"!—I don't think I would pay \$16.95 for this book. If you know the "evangelical bias", you can—say 99 times out of 100 tries—accurately predict the content of these entries, or surely their "moral slant". If, on the other hand, you share the view that anything purporting to be *the biblical ethic* is a figleaf of somebody's imagination, you would be a little skeptical of what you read here anyhow. The problem, in last analysis, is not that these authors are uninformed or ill-intentioned; but that, in critical assessment, they are unbiblical. Nothing finally substitutes for primary sources, not even the best reference works, but my own opinion is that both *A Dictionary of Religion and Ethics* (Matthews and Smith, eds., 1923) and *Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Macquarrie, ed., 1967) are superior to *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*.

—Harmon L. Smith

*John Wesley: A Theological Biography*, Vol. 2 Part II. Martin Schmidt. Translated by Denis Inman. Abingdon. 1973. 320 pp. \$12.95.

This is the concluding volume of a three-volume work which was

published in its original German issue in two volumes (1953, 1966). Dr. Schmidt is Professor of Historical Theology in the ancient Ruprecht-Karl-University, Heidelberg, East Germany, and has made valuable contributions to Wesley scholarship. His background as a Lutheran and his careful work among primary sources, especially some not readily available to British and American scholars, make this trilogy something of a landmark in Wesley scholarship. Probably the most valuable is Vol. 1, which utilizes many little known German sources to illuminate Wesley's spiritual and theological pilgrimage to the epochal year of 1738, when his heart was "strangely warmed". The remaining two volumes (Vol. 2 of the original German edition) forsake the chronological for a topical arrangement, dealing in general with "John Wesley's Life Mission" in ten chapters surveying ten aspects of that mission. It is highly doubtful whether in fact, except in the very broadest sense, Wesley's "course remained constant after his conversion on 24th May 1738," as Dr. Schmidt asserts to justify this topical arrangement. The topical treatment has real value in itself, however, and the work would have had still more value if fuller research had been conducted on each theme as a theme, and greater discipline had been exercised in eliminating material which though interesting in itself did not contribute to an understanding of the announced topic.

Vol. 2, Part 1 described "The Beginnings of the Evangelistic Movement", especially Wesley's relations with the Moravians, the geographical spread of the move-

ment, John Wesley as organizer, his relationships with the Church of England, and the opposition to Methodists. The present volume moves on to other aspects, dealing more fully with Wesley himself than with his movement as a whole.

Chapter 6, "John Wesley as Preacher", points out that Wesley "conceived of preaching as a theological task" and that "his sermons themselves developed into doctrinal statements of principle". Dr. Schmidt devotes 53 out of 57 pages to analysing a number of Wesley's major sermons, to be found in the first four (of nine) volumes which constitute the doctrinal standards of Methodism. Valuable as this is, however, it leaves unexplored Wesley's homiletic methods, and his many sermons which were not primarily theological in content.

Chapter 7 really continues the theme of Chapter 6, under the title, "John Wesley as Theological Writer". The author gives a useful survey of the diverse nature of Wesley's theological and ethical writings, but the bulk of the chapter is occupied with an analysis of some major works, the brief *The Character of a Methodist*, the *Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion*, *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, *A Christian Library*, and the life of John Fletcher. Dr. Schmidt emphasizes Wesley's similarity as an author to Martin Luther.

Chapter 8, "John Wesley as Pastor", although drawing upon some evidence in his *Journal*, is based mainly upon a careful study of Wesley's correspondence with a group of people with whom he was on fairly intimate terms—

the Reverend Samuel Furly and his sister Dorothy, Sarah Ryan and Sarah Crosby, Ann Bolton, Lady Maxwell, the Reverend John Fletcher and his wife Mary Bosanquet, and John's brother Charles. Close attention is given to a study of Wesley's letters to his own wife. This is valuable as far as it goes, but is far from being a definitive study of its announced subject because it is based upon a limited field of evidence, completely omitting, for instance, Wesley's announced pastoral ideals and his pastoral training for his preachers, as seen in the *Minutes* of the annual Conferences; nor is there any study of the pastoral implications of Methodist fellowship meetings and philanthropic activities.

The latter defect is partly remedied in Chapter 9, "John Wesley as Educationalist", a very brief study of Wesley's successful experiment in founding Kingswood School. The closing chapter, entitled "John Wesley: Take Him for All in All", contains a perceptive analysis of Wesley's single-minded pursuit of evangelism (in the broadest sense), a pursuit in which he was as remorseless with others as with himself. Dr. Schmidt also summarizes the varied tributes paid to Wesley by his contemporaries, and compares him with other great Christian leaders of modern times.

Altogether this is a work well worth the attention of both general reader and Wesleyan scholar. It is well documented: indeed almost one-third of the volume is taken up with footnotes, bibliography, and a somewhat limited index. One must complain, however, about the disposition of the voluminous (and valuable) notes

at the end, with no information provided in the running heads about the pages or even the chapters to which they refer. Almost inevitably, there are a few misprints, such as "Welsey" for "Wesley" (p. 7), "Congers Middleton" for "Conyers Middleton" (p. 110), "oustanding" for "outstanding" (p. 117), and "dichotome" for "dichotomy" (p. 214). Nor can all Dr. Schmidt's claims, even in his special field of historical theology, be accepted as they are stated, as when he compares Wesley to the German Pietists, saying, "Like the latter, Wesley demanded that Holy Communion should only be administered to earnest Christians." (p. 11) In fact one of Wesley's key principles was that the Lord's Supper might be a converting as well as a confirming ordinance, witness his words to the Moravian Molther, "I believe it right for him who knows he has not faith . . . to communicate" (*Journal*, Dec. 31, 1739). Dr. Inman's translation runs smoothly, and the translator has served the reader well by some corrections and additions, especially in the footnotes and the bibliography. The minor shortcomings are amply atoned for by many valuable insights, cogently stated, arising from Dr. Schmidt's scholarly background and enthusiastic research.

—Frank Baker









