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Book Reviews

UNGER'S COMMENTARY ON THE OLD TESTAMENT, volumes I and II. By Merrill F. Unger. Moody Press, Chicago, 1981. 2090 pages. Cloth, \$36.00

This is probably the last work from the pen of Dr. Unger, who died a few years ago. He was professor of Semitics and Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary. Unger was well known as a very competent scholar and author of many books. Books on introduction, a revised Bible dictionary, a Bible handbook, commentaries on a number of Biblical books, books on debated theological issues and two books on the archeology of both the Old and New Testaments emanated from his facile pen. He earned his Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins under Dr. Albright.

It is interesting to have Unger's views on the entire Old Testament. Volume I treats the books from Genesis to the Song of Solomon; volume II deals with the books from Isaiah to Malachi. In both volumes the reader will find a detailed introduction preceding each book. Each introduction includes information on the title, authorship, date of composition, canonicity, issues raised by the use of the historical-method as well as a setting forth of the essential message of each book.

Each Biblical book contains a section-by-section commentary, following a detailed outline, which explains the Scriptural text, employing the historical-grammatical method, often citing parallel passages or by referring to the Hebrew or Aramaic texts.

This reviewer appreciated the excellent scholarship of Unger, and the fact that he believes in the supernatural origin of the Scriptures, as well as defending the reliability of Scripture together with its inerrancy. Miracles and prophecy are believed as Christians have done down throughout the post-Christian centuries. In isagogical matters Unger is found with those who do not question the assertions of the Biblical texts. The great theological teachings of the ecumenical creeds are adhered to by this former Dallas Seminary professor.

However, Unger follows the hermeneutics of the *Scofield Reference Bible*, with its dispensationalism and emphasis on the millennium. The hermeneutics of Chafer used in his *Systematic Theology* and advocated by Unger in his own *The Principles of Expository Preaching* underlies the exposition of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. *The Bibliotheca Sacra*, a quarterly of Dallas Seminary, in every issue, advocates and employs the principles of interpretation used by Unger. Dispensationalism postulates seven major dispensations, of which the sixth is known as the "Church Age," or the "Dispensation of Grace," during which people can only be saved by faith in Christ. But in the last dispensation, the "Kingdom Age," all Jews will accept Christ apart from the preaching of Law

and Gospel. The Messianic Age of the New Testament is an after thought, made possible by the Jewish rejection of Christ as their earthly King. The millennium will be a part of the Kingdom Age.

When interpreting many Old Testament passages and books, Unger reads back into passages facts of this alleged seventh dispensation. It is a wrong use of the principle: Scripture interprets Scripture. The eschatology as worked out by dispensationalism is read back into many Old Testament places where it is not found.

Pastors may find these volumes useful to see how a dispensationalist scholar understands the Old Testament. Assuming that the pastor or reader knows the principles of this aberrant hermeneutic, there may be found many useful insights. However, it is not to be recommended to lay people not acquainted with the interpretative principles of the *Scotfield Reference Bible*, the Bible of many radio and TV broadcasters.

Raymond F. Surburg

THRU THE BIBLE WITH J. VERNON McGEE: JOSHUA — PSALMS, Volume II. By J. Vernon McGee. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1982. 887 pages. Cloth. n.p.

This is the second in a five-part series based upon Dr. McGee's popular radio program of the same name. Joshua through Psalms is an informal study of fourteen books of the Old Testament. This volume is a changed version of his radio talks. Changes were made in this volume to make it suitable for a reading audience, while the taped radio messages were delivered with a hearing audience in mind. McGee does not want the messages to be considered a commentary on these books, especially to be consulted by professional Bible students. The author asserted in the preface: "Behind these messages is a great deal of research and study in order to interpret the Bible from a popular rather than from a scholarly (and too-often boring) viewpoint."

The fact that the radio messages have been translated into more than twenty languages for radio broadcasting and the fact that they were received enthusiastically encouraged the author to prepare them for publication. The studies of each book are preceded by an introduction and outline. The Scriptural text of all the books discussed in Volume II has been printed out. The conviction that all of man's problems can find their solution in the Bible, God's Word, has prompted Dr. McGee to go through the entire Bible in his radio ministry.

In 1970 McGee retired as pastor of the interdenominational Church of the Open Door in Los Angeles, a congregation he served for twenty-one years. A graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary he followed the hermeneutics of Scofield, which means that dispensationalism and millennialism are an essential part of his rules of Biblical interpretation. While the reviewer appreciates many

aspects of McGee's approach to the Bible, yet dispensationalism and the many covenants held by those who have espoused and follow the Scofieldian hermeneutics do not, in the estimation of this reviewer, do justice to the intended sense of the Holy Scriptures. This is not to say that the use of this book cannot edify and help one's growth in Biblical knowledge.

Raymond F. Surburg

I-II CHRONICLES, EZRA, NEHEMIAH. By Celine Mangan. Michael Glazier, Wilmington, Delaware, 1982. 219 pages. Paper, n.p.

This is volume 13 of the *Old Testament Message*, a Biblical-Theological Commentary, under the general editorship of Carroll Stuhlmueller and Martin McNamara. This commentary series comprises 23 volumes.

The author of this volume is currently a teacher in the Semitic department, University College, Dublin and at Carysfort College of Education Co. Dublin, Ireland.

The author contends that I-II Chronicles, are among the least read books of the Bible. She bemoans the fact that "there are articles and books which do not mention them. Very few people would take seriously the warning of St. Jerome: 'He who thinks himself acquainted with the sacred writings and does not know these books, only deceives himself.'" The significance of the two Books of Chronicles is that they contain a retelling of the earlier historical material found in the Books of Samuel and Kings, written for a new age, I and II Chronicles have an importance all their own.

The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are read more than the two Books on Chronicles because they, so the author contends, are the main Biblical source for the post-exilic period of Israel's history. Are these books reliable? No, so judges Mangan. She wrote: "It would be a mistake, however, to think that they present an accurate historical record of the exact way in which events of that period occurred." The fact is that this commentary on these post-exilic books is written from the historical-critical perspective and has incorporated the views of those who have and still do question the reliability and integrity of books of which Paul wrote that they were "God-breathed." The books recommended for further reading are in the same vein as those used and consulted in the writing of this commentary.

Old Testament Messages is a commentary series that shows what a revolution has taken place within Roman Catholicism since 1942, when Pius XII's encyclical gave Roman Catholic scholars the right to operate with sources used by the Biblical writers. When once the historical method was embraced it did not take Roman Catholic scholars long to catch up with Protestant and Jewish savants committed to the historical-critical method.

Raymond F. Surburg

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. By Robert A. Guelich. Word Books Publishers, Waco, Texas, 1982. 451 pages. Cloth. n.p.

Guelich's work is the first major study on the Sermon on the Mount in forty years. Growing out of his University of Hamburg doctoral dissertation research, it has been considered by several scholars as the best in recent times. Without doubt it is the most thoroughly critical and comprehensive, using a broad spectrum of ancient and modern sources. Guelich belongs to those influential of evangelical scholars who are incorporating the most recent critical technique into their studies. He teaches at Northern Baptist in Chicago and previously at Bethel in Minnesota.

Guelich painstakingly works through the text in an almost word by word, phrase by phrase fashion, making reference to the most highly regarded critics at each point. Redactional comments help place the Sermon within the congregational setting at the time of Matthew's writing. This is quite valuable.

The chapters are organized according to the verses with each concluding with several theological discussions over prominent issues, e.g. righteousness, ethics, and Lord's Prayer. It is here that the reader will not only be stimulated but take exception to some of the views offered. Any pastor preparing a sermon or Bible class on passages from the Sermon should make every effort to obtain Guelich's study. As a resource book on this subject, it is not bound to be replaced in our lifetime. Guelich makes the contribution of noting a christological and not just merely an ecclesiological motif running throughout the Sermon. The christological motif has been rarely recognized. In actual practice, however, the author never actually develops the christological motif. The radical promise is never really delivered and somehow the Sermon still comes across in its traditionally held pre-Christian hue.

Since Guelich has a wealth of material under one cover, I have found myself constantly consulting him and I shall be one of those who will not permit this research to go too far from my reach.

David P. Scaer

NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS: A HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS AND PASTORS. By Gordon Fee. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1983. 154 pages. Paper n.p.

Fee's *A Handbook* takes the student of the Greek testament text beyond grammatical identification into structural, grammatical and pericope analysis in connection with the synoptic problem. A bibliographical chapter provides data in particular fields. Included is a brief note in the method of directing exegetical data towards preaching. As with all skills, the real learning comes in the doing. This guide is highly recommended for those who want to do more.

FIVE GOSPELS: AN ACCOUNT OF HOW THE GOOD NEWS CAME TO BE. By John C. Meagher. Winston Press, Minneapolis, 1983. 270 pages. Paper, \$11.95; cloth \$24.50.

The development of the canonical Gospels is an intriguing question. For this question, Meagher offers five steps: John the Baptist, Jesus, the apostles, a certain Demetrios (cf. 3 John), and gospel of the ultimate, i.e., the Fourth Gospel. Though publicized as startling, the *Five Gospels* works with the hypothesis put forth by Bultmann that a simplified message of Jesus undergoes a complex evolution in the hands of the apostles. In addition, the preaching of the Baptist is isolated as being strongly eschatological over against the more loving message of Jesus, not a totally new, but still not necessarily widely held view. What is new is the introduction of the Gospel of Demetrios. This gospel's content is reconstructed from 1, 2, and 3 John and reverted in the earlier message in which Jesus was not central. The Spirit is given a prominent role.

Contrary to Meagher, the preaching of the Baptist, Jesus, and the earliest apostles was strikingly similar, especially in such topics as repentance and eschatology and Jesus as the Gospel's center already in His own preaching. Such a radical evolution in such a short period of time from the Baptist to the apostles does not meet the evidence. Meagher does recognize a rival gospel in the early church and attempts to reconstruct it. He does call attention to the often overlooked fact that our New Testament documents surfaced among the plethora of documents all claiming a similar divine authority for themselves. The Gospel of Demetrios may have well been the de-Christianized Hellenized document Meagher suggests.

On the side, how the writer views the origin of the resurrection doctrine is not totally clear. It seems to be a result of the Gospel preaching, a view also associated with Bultmann. What is certain for Meagher is that after Jesus' death the apostles scattered and left the burial to others. *Five Gospels* is creative and speculative to the point of imaginative fancy. Scholarship certainly wants to reconstruct the early church situation, but the evidence will certainly lead in directions other than suggested here. If traditional views are rejected because they involve the supernatural, they are on the surface more plausible.

David P. Scaer

"The Bible and Its Traditions," MICHIGAN QUARTERLY REVIEW. Edited by Michael Patrick O'Connor and David Noel Freedman. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1983. Vol. XXII, No. 3. Single Copy, \$3.50

The *CTQ* does not generally receive scholarly journals for review. This special issue of the *Michigan Quarterly* was sent with a specific request for review. This issue numbers over 500 pages with approximately thirty-five essays divided under the following six categories:

The Hebrew Bible, The Christian Scriptures, Latter-Day Adaption, New Fiction and Poetry, the Politics of the Holy Land, and Religious Tradition. The divisions are so diverse that it seems that they were established after the editors perused their materials. Don't expect any valient calls to faith, but reading the Bible from a strictly human perspective is hardly without value. Who can deny at least some small vision to those who do not read it from faith? Often they see single trees, even if they are unaware of the forest around them.

David P. Scaer

THE AUTHORATIVE WORD: Essays on the Nature of Scripture. Edited by Donald K. McKim. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1983. 270 pages. Paper, \$10.95

Fourteen essays from twelve theologians present current discussions on the nature of Scriptures. The scholars operate with a commitment to the Bible as the norm for the church and to the generally accepted current procedures of interpretation. Thus the most radical and likewise the most conservative views are avoided and for an overview this can be a weakness. Still the book is extremely useful in gathering these previously published materials of so many pacesetters between these two covers. It does not do justice to the historic position. For example, Rogers who gives a brief history gives hardly more than a page to Luther and plays the old saw that for the reformer "Christ alone was without error and was the essential Word of God" (p. 204). Why sell Rogers' view as Luther's? Bloesch, recognized as an 'evangelical' more or less, regretfully puts forth neo-orthodox view as if it were the traditional one (pp. 117-53). Throughout, the Lutheran tradition is avoided for the Reformed. It becomes clear that the problem of relating the divine and human words is a philosophical problem (Plato) stemming from Calvin and not Luther. If this general thread in nearly all the contributions can be recognized for what it is, the reader can profit from these essays.

David P. Scaer

JAMES BARR AND THE BIBLE: CRITIQUE OF A NEW LIBERALISM. By Paul Ronald Wells. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Philipsburg, New Jersey, 1980. 406 pages. \$12.00.

This is the doctoral dissertation of Paul Ronald Wells, produced as a part of the requirement for the Doctorate in Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam. Since 1972 he has taught Systematic Theology at the Faculte Libre de Theologie Reformee, Aux-en-Provence, France. The subtitle of the volume tells the reader where Wells places James Barr on the theological spectrum.

James Barr, famous professor at Oxford, has specialized for years in the fields of biblical semantics, interpretation, and authority. He

has not hesitated to criticize Old and New Testament Biblical critics and has taken issues with some of the reigning views and theories of our time. If he has been hard upon critical Biblical scholars, he has been even more severe on those who followed the views on the Bible of the Protestant Reformers and those scholars and theologians who have rejected the historical-critical method.

In this dissertation Wells has analyzed Barr's criticisms of both modern theology and fundamentalism and his rejection of traditional views of inspiration and authority. For Barr the Bible, at best, represents a record of a progressive human tradition. Five of the six chapters of this volume set forth the distinctive views propounded by Barr in his books and many journal articles. Wells has listed over 70 books, journal articles and papers on pages 380-384.

Chapter six contains Wells' conclusions relative to the position embraced and advocated by Barr, together with suggestions. Wells is seen in this dissertation defending the historic Calvinistic or Reformed view on the nature and authority of Scripture. Wells believes the theology taught to him at Westminster Seminary, Pennsylvania is correct and that Barr's theology is seriously deficient.

Raymond F. Surburg

ONE GOD IN TRINITY. Peter Toon and James D. Spiceland, editors. Cornerstone Books: Westchester, Illinois, 1980. 177 pages. Cloth, \$12.95.

Beginning his contribution to this volume of essays, Brian Hebblethwaite of Cambridge writes: "The most striking feature of recent British trinitarian theology--at least where England is concerned--is the frankness with which orthodox trinitarianism is being questioned or even rejected" (p 158). Hebblethwaite himself discusses two major patristic scholars who have radically called into question the traditional trinitarian and christological doctrines, Maurice Wiles of Oxford and Geoffrey Lampe of Cambridge, but one could easily enumerate others in England whose thinking has been progressing down similar paths: J. A. T. Robinson in his *The Human Face of God*, for instance and the authors of the *The Myth of God Incarnate* (John Hick, Dennis Nineham, Don Cupitt, etc.). Indeed, there is a renewed interest in the doctrines of the Trinity and Christology, especially in the question of their continuity with the primitive Church's original kerygma. This interest has, for example, engendered renewed debate about Arianism and its true historical antecedents. While this new debate has, it would seem, been largely elicited by the negative evaluation of persons like Wiles, the doctrine of the Trinity has not been without its defenders and some of them are eloquent indeed.

Most of the essays in this book were given at a conference of the historical theology group of the British Tyndale Fellowship held at Durham in 1978. While their interest in the question of the Trinity

was no doubt grounded in the debate in England, the contributors represent various Christian traditions and come from five countries. As the Preface says: "Surely international co-operation in the exposition and defense of the Faith is a good thing" (p.v.) A listing of the essays indicates the scope of the book's discussion: "The Meaning of the Trinity" by Roger Nicole; "The New Testament" by Bruce Kaye; "The Discernment of Triunity" by Christopher Kaiser; "The Patristic Dogma" by Gerald Lewis Bray; "The *Filioque* Clause" by Alasdair Heron; "Karl Barth" by Richard Roberts; "Bernard Lonergan" by Hugo Meynell; "Jurgen Moltmann" by Richard Bauckham; "Process Theology" by James Spiceland; and "Recent British Theology" by Brian Hebblethwaite.

While none of the essays are long, all are informative and stimulating. To be sure, some are more provocative than others. The attempt by Christopher Kaiser to give an empirical basis to God's triunity by using the empirical-phenomenological model of discernment (derived from thinkers like Rudolf Otto and Mircea Eliade) was extremely interesting, perhaps because he did such a masterful job at the near impossible. Bray's article on the patristic period reflects the same moderation that is becoming identified with his work. But most provocative of all were the articles on Karl Barth and Jurgen Moltmann. Roberts very well explicates the centrality of the Trinity for the complete Barthian approach, and Bauckham does a marvelous job relating Moltmann's attempts to relate the doctrine of the Trinity to the crucified Christ. These two articles especially deserve a reading and could easily be starting points for much worthwhile discussion. The essays on Lonergan and process theology merit attention as well. In the midst of the debate by some that the doctrine of the Trinity is useless and unnecessary, it is helpful to realize that some theologians of international and even of historic stature recognize in the Trinity a *sine qua non* of the Gospel itself and of a proper theological exposition of the Biblical message.

This book is not ponderous reading. I mention that simply to encourage our students and pastors to read it. It is necessary that we once again recognize the essential role our doctrine of God plays in our presentation of the Gospel. If God is the subject and the author of our salvation, it is well that we learn to speak of Him.

William C. Weinrich

THE CHURCH. By Wolfhart Pannenberg. Translated by Keith Crim. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1983. 175 pages. Paper. n.p.

The Westminster Press is putting out what will eventually be an edition of Pannenberg's dogmatics in paperback. Now republished are *Basic Questions in Theology*, Volume I and Volume II (1983) in arrangement with Fortress Press, the first publishers (1970-1).

These first volumes were constructed from essays delivered in the 1960s. They set forth Pannenberg's prolegomena that history is revelatory. The God of the Old Testament and Jesus is the universal God. *The Church*, is translated from Part II of *Ethik and Ekklesiologie* (1977) and has not appeared previously in English translation. Any possible trade of universalism implicitly in the prolegomena approaches the explicit here.

Working from a concept of a revelatory universal history, Pannenberg sees, quite expectedly, the ecumenical movement as a step to the final goal of the unity of mankind. Within this dimension, Pannenberg addresses other theological issues. First addressed is the problem that in the Christian European nations only fifteen percent are regular church goers. From my own observation this is at best a slight exaggeration, unless regular participation refers to Christmas and Easter. These "churchless Christians" are not held responsible for their disinterest in the church. Denominationalism must bare the blame. How does he explain that nearly 45% of all Americans attend church in spite of an aggravated denominationalism here? The church for Pannenberg reflects the unity to which all mankind is striving. He is quite willing to let the pope serve as the leader of all Christians, since church unity can be expressed through his office. Nowhere does he suggest that individual churches surrender their distinctive characteristics but that each should offer the other mutual recognition. Not merely church unity but that of all mankind is the real goal. Consider the following from the last chapter.

Christians and non-Christians alike share the insight that if they are to achieve their human destiny of unity through peace and justice, they must achieve it through unity with God. This basic insight into the meaning of religious for the unity of mankind can grow in spite of the remaining disagreements in our understanding of God and of the ways in which is to be worshiped. It can also be the starting point for a new closeness even in the areas of disagreement. This closeness has already been partially achieved as the result of reciprocal relationships between the Christian and non-Christian religious traditions.

(p. 154)

Two chapters are devoted to a discussion of the Lord's Supper. No one, not even non-Christians should be barred from receiving this sacrament of unity. Pannenberg's historical method of doing theology leaves open the question of a specific historical occasion for the supper's origin, but still he contends for its historical character. (Christian baptism is not instituted specifically by Jesus, but is the church's own tradition developed from John the Baptist's baptizing of Jesus). The Lord's Supper is disconnected from any specific interpretation of Christ's death and is to be celebrated within the context of His coming. For the record, the *manducatio oralis* does not refer

to receiving the bread and wine, as Pannenberg claims, but to the actual reception of the body and blood (pp. 147-8).

Pannenberg, using a traditional Lutheran vocabulary, writes a dogmatics for a church caught between the World Council of Churches and Vatican II, both of which are frequently quoted to support his understandings. In accomplishing this he is what the book jacket says he is, "one of the world's most influential theologians." But is he really a prophet or a theological meteorologist, clever enough to read the signs?

David P. Scaer

PASTORAL THEOLOGY: ESSENTIALS OF THE MINISTRY.

By Thomas C. Oden. Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1983. Paper, 372 pages. \$14.95

Pastoral theologies, whether in the written form of a book, or in the oral form of a lecture tend to be without definable form. Oden's work does not suffer from this at all. Even before getting down to the practical, he has six chapters presenting the theology of call, ordination, and ministry. Another five chapters discusses the pastor's relationship to the congregation. We are nearly half way through the book before we face the general divisions of Pastoral Counsel and Crisis Ministry. This is the kind of a book deserving a warm endorsement. Where else are discussions found on ministering to the poor and dying? Oden writes for an ecumenical audience, Protestant as well as Roman Catholic. He is acquainted with Lee Thoran practices and makes use of them. Such an approach has a few recognizable drawbacks in such obvious areas as infant baptism and communion practices. These are counterbalanced by the opportunity to profit from observing how clergy of other traditions handle similar problems. Never are the differences glossed over as insignificant and the theological and historical background for these are presented. For a pastoral theology here are some thoughts to digest over a longer period of time. Oden proves that pastoral theology is still theology and not sociology parading around as the inadequate substitute which it always is. What is highly disturbing is chapter four, "Women in the Pastoral Office" - disturbing for two counts. The issue more than any other remains the most sensitive issue in such confessional churches as the Missouri Synod as the key to total involvement in the ecumenical movement and Oden's convincing winsome approach. He puts himself in the place of an opponent of women's ordination and then through a series of arguments brings himself and the readers to the opposing opinion. For example if Genesis 2 provides the basis for an all male ministry, then Genesis 1 suggests no division based on gender at all. If the maleness of Jesus presents a model, then why doesn't his being a Palestinian and Jew

also offer restrictions? Persuasive for those less informed! 1 Corinthians 14 is mentioned as an objection to women pastors, but Oden offers not one word of rebuttal. The suspicion lurks that those who endorse the practice realize that the Biblical restrictions are never really answered.

David P. Scaer

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS ENCYCLOPEDIA. Volume I and II. Washington, Missouri: Missouriian Publishing Company, 1983. 1790 pages. Cloth, \$31.95; paper, \$24.95.

Since the turbulent history of the Missouri Synod began in the mid-1960's *Christian News* has been a major artery of news circulation. Many would happily erase the memory of these years, but for those who want a more than gentle reminder these two volumes will serve admirably and exhaustively. These two gargantuan volumes (each measures 11" by 17" by 2") contain articles from 1973 through 1983. Letters and brief news notices are omitted. With a lengthy index, these volumes will be consulted by researchers for years. Where do you get so much in one place?

Lutheran (Missouri) In Perspective should drop the other shoe and offer its articles in such volumes. Then we can have both sides of the story on the same shelf. The *Christian News Encyclopedia* because of its size will need its own shelf.

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF RELIGION IN AMERICA SINCE 1865. Edited by Edwin S. Gaustad. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1983. 610 pages. Paper.

A panorama of American religion is presented by bringing the writings of prominent religious leaders together in one volume. Religious matters are brought up to date so as to include the opinions of Dr. J.A.O. Preus and Dr. John Tietjen on the situation of the Missouri Synod in the 1970's. Readers may discover they were unaware of the great movements that have affected religion in America. A minimum of editorial comment is provided. The reader is pretty much left alone with the raw data.

TRADITIONS OF MINISTRY: A History of the Doctrine of the Ministry in Lutheran Theology. James H. Pragman. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1983. 208 pages. Paper.

No theological book in the English language could have been more welcome in the Lutheran Church in North America at this time than Pragman's historical survey of Lutheran thought from the Reformation to the present on the doctrine of the ministry. A much wider selection of materials on this topic is available in the German language (e.g., Heubach's *Die Ordination*), but this does little to satisfy the desire for readily available information for English-speaking pastors and school teachers. As the Missouri Synod through its commission on theology is currently addressing the question of ministry, especially the relation of the pastor to other full-time church workers, this work could not be more timely.

Dr. James H. Pragman, a theological professor at Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska, does not tackle the current questions, but he does gather the historical evidence necessary for answering them. The cause of much confusion on the doctrine of the ministry is the language barrier preventing twentieth-century Lutherans from historically investigating their German roots from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. Proposed contemporary solutions are often offered without any reference to how Lutherans have previously resolved this issue. Pragman fills in the gaps, and any attempt to discuss the office of the ministry without use of his study would be unconscionable. The first six chapters cover Luther, the confessors, the Orthodox theologians, Pietism, the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, with a final brief chapter laying out the lines of the current discussions. Today's debate differs little from the past, as the discussion of the ministry has moved between the poles of viewing it either as office or function.

Those who are sensitive about their particular position on the ministry will be impressed by Pragman's fair treatment of the historical positions. Whereas some material on Luther's view is available in English (e.g., Haendler's *Luther on Ministerial Office and Congregational Function*), virtually nothing in English is available on the intervening years. How many are aware of the complex process of selection of pastors in the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy which involved the clergy, the officers of the state, and the people? Pietism switched the emphasis away from a concern about a pastor's correct beliefs to the sincerity of his personal faith. Muhlenberg's successful struggle to be recognized as pastor of the Pennsylvania Lutheran congregations, in confrontation with the traveling preachers and especially Zinzendorf, did much to establish a viable Lutheranism along with a high regard for the pastoral office. The nineteenth-century controversy, first with Loehe, then Walther and Grabau, is carefully spelled out. Twentieth-century matters are even rounded out to include the Wisconsin Synod position that the pastoral office in local congregations is not specifically mandated and the Association of Evangelical

Lutheran Churches' position paper on worker priests. Whatever Lutherans have said about the ministry is here.

Since Pragman's study included material from as late as 1979 and 1980 AELC publications, it could have been rounded out with a discussion about the unauthorized ordinations of Seminex graduates beginning in 1974, which led first to the suspension of certain district presidents from office and, secondly, to the formation of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. The issues of who may authorize ordinations, who may ordain, and who may be ordained—issues addressed in all other centuries of Lutheran history by Pragman—led to the first real schism in the Missouri Synod. While underlying causes may have been at the heart of the rift, the superficial cause was the claim of the schismatic group to insist on the validity of one of the congregational traditions of Lutheran ministry. A chapter here would have added a little more bite to an already absorbing work. The chapter on Luther should have been deferred to an entire book, as the reformer can still be cited on all sides of this question. He had no use for the popish ceremonies but had high regard for ordination to the point of never tolerating the celebration of the Lord's Supper by an unordained man.

Since the controversy on the ministry is continuing in our day, this book should be read by every Lutheran pastor and church worker in America. Pragman gives a theologically penetrating and readable look at the four centuries which intervene between Luther and today. The reader may learn that many of the views he holds may indeed not have come from Luther. Pragman has made it possible for us all to be a bit more knowledgeable on this question. For this we owe him a debt.

David P. Scaer

WHAT ARE THEY SAYING ABOUT PAPAL PRIMACY. J. Michael Miller. New York: Paulist Press, 1983. 103 pages. \$3.95.

Any rapprochement within Christendom faces its highest hurdle with papal primacy and infallibility. Both Lutherans and Anglicans have dialogued with Rome representatives. Miller shows that even the Reformers (e.g., Melancthon and the earlier Luther) could assert that papal primacy is a human, not divine, institution.

On the basis of the Biblical data, dialogue participants agree on a nonexclusive Petrine primacy but will not concede that Rome is its sole inheritor. Miller offers compromise by viewing Petrine supremacy as a divine institution established by the New Testament and papal primacy as a divine design disclosed through an act of history. Since for Rome her history has always been canon, this is not a really new idea.

LUTHER ON CONVERSION: THE EARLY YEARS. Marilyn J. Haran. Ithaca, New York and London: Cornell University Press, 1983. 218 pages. Cloth, \$24.95.

A doctoral graduate from Stanford University, where Dr. Lewis Spitz is the recognized Luther scholar, and now an assistant professor at Barnard College of Columbia University, Haran provides the first one volume, in depth, scholarly analysis of Luther's concept of conversion. As conversion is necessarily closely related to the Reformer's concept of faith and so fundamental for his Reformation theology, it is amazing that this subject has not been taken up previously. The first chapter presents the various understandings of how conversion was understood from New Testament times to Luther. Haran understands Luther's view of conversion first as God's activity in the incarnation, second as occurring in man through faith and third as the experience of confronting God in the future life. Haran interprets the tower experience not as Luther's coming to faith, but as his personal reflection on what he previously discovered; thus, she favors the later date of 1518 for the tower experience. The topic is presented with impeccable scholarship and sobriety—perhaps too much.

Luther's conversion, i.e., his personal self-awareness of justification, must rank after Paul's conversion as the most world shattering personal experience. Indeed, the entire western civilization was different because of this experience. An analysis of this type is not only valuable for understanding the Reformer, but also this fundamental point in Lutheran theology; especially now since a Baptist or revivalistic understanding of conversion as a decision of the will has become so influential. The reviewer was constantly tempted throughout the reading to ask whether the author was in any way affected by her study of Luther's personal agonies in his own conversion, or was it simply another topic in the history of religion suggested by the anniversary year. LCMS readers will be interested to know that several, Concordia Publishing House publications are mentioned and that the names of Uuras Saarnivaara and Lowell Green come prominently into the discussion. The Luther anniversary year is being productive far beyond our dreams. Haran's work belongs among the productions of the highest magnitude.

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