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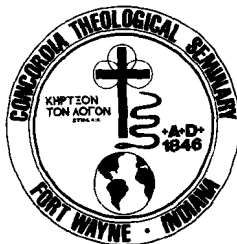
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Book Reviews

MEMOIRS IN EXILE, CONFESSIONAL HOPE AND INSTITUTIONAL CONFLICT. By John H. Tietjen. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.

There is an advantage often in reviewing a book after it has received other reviews. There is also a bit of guilt involved in procrastinating so long. In the present case I am glad, because the reviews I have read of Dr. John Tietjen's *Memoirs* have not been kind or fair to him nor empathetic to his struggles and situation; and, with the exception of a review by Leigh Jordahl, they have shown little understanding of what was happening before, during, and after his tumultuous administration as president of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. With this review I wish to give John Tietjen and his many colleagues, friends, and followers a fairer hearing and a fairer commentary on his memoirs. I am well qualified to do this because I was his colleague and next-door neighbor while he led the seminary and because I know the background and all the principals, all the issues and events of those turbulent years (1969-1974) which changed more than most realize—or might care to admit—the LCMS and the lives of Tietjen and all of us involved.

Tietjen, the historian, writes not a history, autobiography, apology, or hagiography of himself, but his memoirs, a unique genre. One's memoirs may be limited to only part of one's life, and may be selective and presented in any way and for any purpose the author desires. But there is a risk in writing memoirs, especially if one's readers choose to judge one's memoirs by strictly historical and critical standards. For memory is often fragile and not always accurate, even in the most honest and most scrupulous of men. "We construct meanings and remember our constructions," Jeremy Campbell points out in his *Grammatical Man* (p. 226). And he goes on to say:

There is evidence, too, to suggest that we reconstruct information when retrieving it from memory. Only the gist of the information is stored. The details are added at the time of recollection, on the basis of what we expect to have been true. Reconstruction may seriously distort that original information, but the rememberer may be quite unaware of the distortion. If the material given to us is consistent with our knowledge and expectations, it is more likely to be recalled correctly, but if it is inconsistent, then there are likely to be systematic distortions.

This will be true of Tietjen's memoirs or those of Vespasian or Benvenuto Cellini or any one else. But allowing for this, Tietjen's *Memoirs* will be of great value to the historian, the Lutheran theologian, and anyone who cares to know what happened at Concordia Seminary

and at Seminex while John Tietjen was president or how it feels for a minister of the word to be put out of his call and to undergo such extreme experiences as John Tietjen did. For John Tietjen is without doubt a principled, sincere, and honest man—that is clear from his *Memoirs* and his history. And so, although employing a narrative style throughout, reminiscing and, like Herodotus, reconstructing past conversations as they would probably have taken place, Tietjen offers the reader a true account of things and the reader will learn much from his book.

Tietjen briefly outlines the purpose of his book in a preface. He owes a debt to posterity, to tell what happened as he experienced it and to give his side of a very partisan struggle. His purpose is to write without recrimination or self-justification. Throughout the book he traces a recurring theme in the history of the church, the tension between "confessional hope and institutional conflict." I think he succeeds, and better than one would expect from one so deeply involved in "institutional conflict," that is to say church war.

The book is written in an epic form. The obvious theme of the story is a great contest or war between two individuals, each with large followings, representing two divergent ideologies, loyalties, parties, theologies, and theories of politics in the church. Each side is in search of its own "confessional hope" in the midst of institutional conflict. The protagonists or heroes in the unfolding drama are Dr. John Tietjen, newly-elected president of Concordia Seminary, and Dr. J. A. O. Preus, newly-elected president of the Missouri Synod. Each of the two great warriors has his own army, his elite or scraggly "troops" (as they were so often called during the controversy), his inner council of strategists, and his own machinery and style of warfare. This is the plot of Tietjen's epic.

There is a little understandable *schmaltz* and occasional rhetoric in the book—and some errors as Tietjen at times recounts not his, but others' perceptions and stories. For instance, early in his memoirs Tietjen relates at least one fictitious account provided him by Fred Danker, a highly original and imaginative professor who believed in redaction criticism—and practiced it. According to Danker I had engaged in conversation with Jack Preus, my brother, in my seminary office commencing at 3:15 p.m. on March 29, 1970. From outside my window in Sieck Hall Danker allegedly heard us speaking. During this conversation I had told Jack that members of the exegetical department were "clamming up," not publicly admitting what they really believed and had taught. Jack had told me that he was planning to conduct an investigation of the theology at the

seminary. Now this account is clearly fictitious. Jack never visited me in my office at the seminary. My home with its privacy was quite near by. It was physically impossible to listen to a conversation through my office window. Danker, two offices down the hall, could, if he wished, listen through my door, which was, conveniently, almost always open. But, more importantly, the date is wrong. It was half a year before that Prof. Martin Scharlemann and I had told Jack that the exegetical department was no longer speaking openly about its uncritical use of the historical-critical method. And almost immediately after he was elected president of the synod Jack had made it clear that he was going to investigate the theology of the seminary—at least the exegetical department—according to the criterion of the *Book of Concord* (see preface, p. 14). Perhaps Tietjen inserted this piece of fiction for literary purposes. At any rate it illustrates the danger one faces when one writes memoirs and cites as fact other people's recollections.

But I am getting sidetracked and ahead of myself. Tietjen's plot itself is right on target. It fits the facts in the controversy and the events through which we all lived, as well as his basic theme. Like many epics Tietjen's *Memoirs* start *in medias res*. To understand the plot the reader will require some background and context. Early in 1969 Dr. Alfred Fuerbringer unexpectedly retired from the presidency of Concordia Seminary, while remaining on as a non-teaching professor. The process of calling a new president was immediately implemented by the Board of Control; and Dr. John Tietjen, who had received few nominations compared with many others, including Dr. Ralph Bohlmann, a young professor, and Dr. Martin Scharlemann, a seasoned professor, was chosen—a surprise to almost all. The electors were the Board of Control; the Board for Higher Education; Kurt Biel, president of the Missouri District; and synodical president Oliver Harms, who in the nature of the case could control the election. Harms, who was strongly pushing fellowship with the American Lutheran Church, was persuaded that Tietjen would be an ideal president to lead the seminary and thus also the synod to a more open posture toward the ALC and world Lutheranism. At the 1967 New York Convention Harms had tried (unsuccessfully) to bring the LCMS to declare fellowship with the ALC. This was to have been the first step in an elaborate scheme, devised by Dr. Richard Jungkuntz, executive secretary of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, and Dr. Walter Wolbrecht, executive secretary of the LCMS, and others, to bring the LCMS into membership in the Lutheran World Federation and ultimately into the orbit of the World Council of

Churches. If not clearly delineated and outlined, the plan had at least been adumbrated in a book written by Tietjen in 1966, entitled *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?* In this book Tietjen clearly broke with the historic Lutheran doctrine of church fellowship and offered a "union" definition of "confessional Lutheranism" and a new formula for inter-Lutheran relationships. Harms was under the influence of Wolbrecht and Jungkuntz and other leaders at the seminary. And they were following Tietjen's prescriptions. There was always the outside chance that Harms would not be re-elected at the synodical convention scheduled to meet in Denver in 1969; so the election was held, and the call was extended and accepted with celerity.

But things went wrong at Denver. Harms had not counted on the mounting dissatisfaction throughout the LCMS toward the seminary faculty in St. Louis. Except for Scharlemann and a few professors in the department of systematic theology, the exegetical department had taken over the theological leadership of the school. The so-called historical-critical method with its fuzzy, non-Christian presuppositions and its ever-changing, bizarre, sometimes irrelevant, sometimes heretical conclusions was used with uncritical abandon by the members of the department; and the faculty and students were confused by this departure from the *sola scriptura* principle and the canons of responsible exegetical scholarship.

But many of the pastors and lay people in the synod were not confused; they were suspicious and angry. Harms was defeated at the convention. On the primary nominating ballot he received only 417 votes while Preus received 436, with a small sprinkling of votes going to other candidates. Wolbrecht (who had been pounded and largely discredited in the pages of *Christian News* by Dr. Waldo Werning and other anonymous writers as "Boss Wolbrecht" and who had been informed by a "mole" in the floor committee on elections that Preus was ahead in the balloting, something which the convention and Preus did not know) then made the supreme mistake of issuing an impassioned *ad hominem* philippic from the floor of the convention against Preus. Jack was permitted to take the floor to defend himself and disavow Wolbrecht's charges that there had been illicit politicking by *Christian News* and others in campaigning for his presidency. In this way Jack was given more exposure. In the first ballot Harms received fewer votes than he had received nominations. In the second ballot Jack won decisively by 55 votes, 471 to 416.

The Harms-Tietjen forces understood far better than the disorganized Preus supporters the significance of Jack's election. It meant the setback

and possible disintegration of the entire ecumenical program which had been so carefully planned for Missouri. Even if the LCMS in Denver established the first step of fellowship with the ALC, Preus would do nothing actively to implement it. But worse—and something not fully realized by Wolbrecht, Harms, Tietjen, and others outside the seminary community—Preus was committed to find out what was taught at the seminary concerning biblical authority, inspiration, and inerrancy and just how the Bible was being interpreted—and to do something about it.

There was a tremendous amount of positioning and politicizing before and after the Denver Convention. On the Harms-Tietjen side, meeting before and during the convention, were prestigious pastors, leaders, and officials: Dr. A. R. Kretzmann, Dr. O. P. Kretzmann (in his last appearance at an LCMS convention), Pres. Rudolph Ressmeyer, Pres. Bertwin Frey, Rev. Dean Lueking, Rev. Harlan Hartner, Prof. Richard Caemmerer, Tietjen himself, and lesser figures (few of whom are mentioned in Tietjen's book). On the Preus side, meeting before and during the convention, were, in the main, active laymen and pastors who had not gained a great deal of renown: Mr. Larry Marquart, Mr. Glen Peglau, Mr. Richard Hannenberg, Rev. O. A. Gebauer, Pres. Edwin Weber, Rev. Waldo Werning, Mr. Art Brackebusch, and many others. Tietjen's supporters were convinced that Jack was using Rev. Herman Otten, which was not true. Although Jack had some communication with Otten, others (e.g., Peglau and Werning) were writing regularly for Otten's magazine. Jack's supporters were worried that Harms would somehow steal the elections; Tietjen's were concerned that Preus was controlling Otten. Both concerns were unfounded.

And now the Tietjen epic unfolds. With force and pathos he tells his story, relating the events and battles of the war as he experienced them. Anyone who went through these struggles, as I did, a foot-soldier on the other side—bitter struggles between good friends and colleagues and Christian brothers—cannot fail to be impressed by Tietjen's story. The dispassionate outsider, too, will learn much about the dynamics and phenomenology of theological warfare. And anyone at all who reads Tietjen's memoirs, whatever his theological or personal predilections may be, will find himself in sympathy with a man who is thrust into leadership of a cause he does not fully understand, a position (the presidency of Concordia Seminary) for which he has no experience, and a church war which from the outset (one perceives from his *Memoirs*) he senses he will not win. I lived through these events of Tietjen's tenure at the seminary and never saw him compromise or bend. From his book I see something

different: how hard it is for a man and how hard it is on a man to go through five years of bitter theological and ecclesiastical warfare and then to be put out of his divine call. Tietjen, who always seemed to me to be a strong and private man, bares his soul in his book. He reveals his deep feelings, his frustrations, his disappointments, even his bitterness at times. His *Memoirs* are worth reading for that reason alone. Church wars take a heavy toll.

But now I wish to offer some observations and commentary on the book and on the war. I hope that they may be helpful to Lutherans who seek to retain their confessional identity and to anyone who might read these pages.

1. Tietjen, for all his background in Lutheran church relations and as director of the Division of Public Relations for LCUSA, really did not understand what was happening in ecumenical endeavors worldwide or at the seminary. Fellowship with the ALC was foisted on the LCMS. The rank and file, engrossed in their own parochial interests, did not really care. Outreach and missions had slowed down. The "glory days" of the seminary were coming to a close, although the faculty was unaware of the fact. The seminary, with its embarrassment over its past (Pieper was not even used as a textbook in some dogmatics classes), its pedantic, unproductive interest in "scholarship" (few books of substance were produced by faculty members in the years preceding Tietjen's arrival), its preoccupation with un-Missourian and un-Lutheran theological fads emanating from just about any source and touching just about any topic, and its exalted opinion of its own uncommon consequence impressed Tietjen long before he received his divine call to be president. Like the faculty, he failed to see that the seminary had grown apart from the synod and had lost the synod's confidence. Like the faculty, he was unaware of the poverty of the ecumenical movement, the continuing involvement in fellowship negotiations, and the historical-critical method. Lutheran pastors and people were not interested in those kinds of things, not even if they were baptized with "Lutheran presuppositions" or the predicate "confessional." Thus, Tietjen started off in the wrong direction.

2. A word about the two combatants is now in order. Tietjen seemed to exude self-confidence and determination. According to his *Memoirs* he was strong on the latter, weak on the former. Jack, folksy, hesitant, and jocular in demeanor, seemed almost to lack confidence and purpose. But underneath was a man of supreme self-confidence and iron determination. Jack was a chess player, moving pawns and bishops and knights back and

forth, always protecting the king. Tietjen, like Shakespeare's Henry V at the battle of Agincourt, was always haranguing and leading his troops. Each knew exactly what the other's goal and game plan was. Tietjen's goal, in brief, was to lead the seminary and the synod into fellowship with nominal Lutherans world wide on the basis of formal confessional loyalty and into a more open posture toward new and progressive theological trends (i.e., the historical-critical movement). Jack's goal was to maintain the authentic confessional Lutheran doctrine and practice which had characterized the synod since its inception. To achieve this goal he had to turn the seminary around, if not like Saul of Tarsus, then like a ship at sea. And to achieve this goal he had to remove Tietjen and to keep the faculty majority always off balance.

To carry out their objectives neither saw fit to employ theological means. There was a reason for this. Jack saw and insisted from the very first that there was a serious controversy in the synod, emanating from the seminary and centering in the doctrine of Scripture, but spreading out to articles touching the gospel itself. But Tietjen, egged on by a militant faculty majority, which was alarmed by the threat of a full-scale investigation, adamantly and without making any investigation himself refused from the outset to admit that any false doctrine was taught at the seminary. He canceled all meetings between the exegetical and systematic departments, saying that it would be disastrous if the church learned how great the cleavage in the faculty was regarding the historicity and reliability of such pericopes as Genesis 3 and the stories of Jesus' miracles and sayings. His actions were too late. The students knew what was being taught, and so did the pastors throughout the synod. The faculty opposition to an investigation only made Jack more suspicious and determined to find out what was really being taught. Tietjen's *Memoirs* trace the many meetings and negotiations which were calculated to blunt an investigation, but which inexorably led to what was finally a fair and honest inquiry.

Since it was not possible to debate according to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, both adversaries employed the strategies possible for them. Tietjen, a master in media and public relations, made use of the press. His advisors and cohorts smeared Preus as a Caiphaz and "Chairman JAO," while Tietjen marked him as un-Lutheran and un-confessional and "legalistic." In the last stages of the controversy Jack was branded as one who obscured the gospel. I rather doubt that Tietjen himself was responsible for that type of slander, but it was all over the campus and in the papers, religious (*Missouri in Perspective*) and secular.

Only *Time* and *Christianity Today* gave Jack and the old Missourian type of confessional Lutheranism a fair hearing.

Meanwhile Jack resorted to "canon law," the synodical handbook. He quickly studied and learned *Kirchenrecht* and soon after his election was deftly and masterfully deploying the *Kirchenregiment*. Ralph Bohlmann was his "court theologian." Bohlmann was the executive secretary of the CTCR and on leave much of the time from the seminary. He wrote many things for Jack, including the *Statement on Scriptural and Confessional Principles* which was used to "evaluate" the faculty theologically (p. 105). Previously Bohlmann and I had met a few times with Dr. Paul Zimmermann, chairman of the investigating committee, at the Mark Twain Hotel in St. Louis to help him ask the right questions of faculty members who were reluctant to answer questions forthrightly during the investigation. We felt justified in such action, for certain faculty members had made it clear that they were not going to answer unequivocally the questions asked by the investigating committee. It was only toward the end when it was too late that Tietjen and his supporters used theology as their weapon and accused Jack and his supporters of aberrations in respect to law and gospel, legalism, and so on, a belated and futile attempt to justify their position on doctrinal grounds. They protested their own "confessional position" and stance, without ever explaining what it meant (pp. 227, 260, *passim*). Theirs was not a *quia* subscription to the confessions—how often did Tietjen proclaim that they were not bound by the exegesis of the confessions?—and imputed to Jack and the synodical leaders a bogus theological position supposedly based upon synodical tradition rather than Scripture and the confessions. But the counter-attack was incredible. In the end few really believed such an argument.

However, Jack was vulnerable on another front. Again and again, using the synodical handbook, he harkened back to the position of the synod, rather than to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and his only act of discipline was to put out of office four district presidents for violating the synodical handbook (because they had ordained Seminex graduates in LCMS congregations) rather than the Scriptures or the confessions. Thus, Jack for good and necessary reasons set in motion a bad precedent which has been followed to this day, to the detriment of the LCMS.

Tietjen saw this, but again too late. To a group of sympathetic district presidents, on May 17 after the initiation of Seminex, he asserted:

Look what is happening to this church of ours that bears Luther's name. . . . We have reinvented canon law and call it the synodi-

cal handbook. We carry it around in our briefcases and rarely make a move without consulting its bylaws. The Commission on Constitutional Matters, which in times past met rarely, now meets almost every month to hand down rulings about how the bylaws have to be understood, adding bylaw on top of bylaw. . . . Maybe it's time for another bonfire.

3. There was a marked difference between Tietjen and Jack as they played their roles in the controversy. Tietjen was an intensely loyal man, loyal to the students who supported him and to his friends and colleagues on the faculty and in the church at large. He was, indeed, loyal to a fault, for he trusted not only the integrity but also the judgment of his advisors. Throughout his *Memoirs* Tietjen tells us who it was to whom he listened—namely, many of the group mentioned above, but mostly colleagues at the seminary, especially his close friend, Prof. John Damm, and his brother-in-law, Prof. Andrew Weyermann. This course of action was sometimes a big mistake, for their counsel, often colored by their close involvement in the many battles, was bad and counter-productive. And it seems from his *Memoirs* that Tietjen rarely disdained the counsel given. Always loyal, he kept the loyalty of his allies; and he kept his many friends. But he made serious mistakes.

Jack, on the other hand, while seeking advice from friend and foe, competent and incompetent, and almost anyone who happened along, rarely trusted the judgment of others. Dr. Herbert Mueller, the secretary of the Commission on Constitutional Matters, was perhaps Jack's most trusted and important consultant as Jack strove to abide always by the synodical handbook. Those who tried to impose their counsel on Jack, often by virtue of their "support" in his election, were quickly, but amiably, "tuned out" by Jack. That was not always easy for Jack, as some of his would-be counselors were very aggressive. Less than a month after the Denver Convention Dr. Waldo Werning invited himself to Jack's lake cabin in Ontario to advise him and see if Jack might appoint him to Wolbrecht's position as chief executive officer of the synodical Board of Directors. Shortly thereafter Mr. Glen Peglau, another Preus supporter, invited himself up to the lake cabin to advise him and see if he could secure Jack's appointment to the Commission on Constitutional Matters. Werning and Peglau knew where the power was. But neither ever received anything from Jack (cf. *Memoirs*, pp. 223, 251), nor did he take their advice. Thus, Jack made enemies and lost friends. But nobody ever controlled him.

Tietjen, however, was a captive of his friends and cohorts and sycophants, like an ungifted field marshal directed and led by headstrong and inept lieutenants. His intense loyalty became his undoing. He was, at bottom, a follower, impressed by well-meaning, impractical mentors, not a leader. But leadership had been thrust upon him. Unlike Jack, he was always reactive in ecclesiastical warfare, off balance, on the defensive. And without the word and the confessions he had no defense, no strategy, no direction. His supreme mistake was to follow someone's hare-brained idea to start a "Seminary in Exile," one of his few proactive decisions. Thus, he and the faculty not only violated the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions by abandoning their calls (AC XIV), but also broke the synodical handbook, and so were left defenseless.

4. There are a couple of lessons to be learned from the Tietjen-Preus conflict. First, in any war a general must never underestimate his adversary. Tietjen did this; Jack did not. Jack was not only a good theologian, a good scholar, a sincere confessional Lutheran, and good church politician; he was a superb tactician in the art of ecclesiastical warfare. Tietjen, leaning on the counsel of friends and advisors who were for the most part contemptuous of Jack and his supporters, never knew what he was up against. Moreover, he did not realize or even consider that Jack was utterly sincere as he sought to supervise the doctrine taught at the seminary and in the synod. Finally, Tietjen and his colleagues did not ever sufficiently understand the thinking of ordinary Missouri Synod pastors and people. Jack did. They were God-fearing, pious people who wanted to remain Lutheran and who believed the Bible. They were not interested in ecumenical relations with other church bodies, and they were frightened by the so-called historical-critical method whose apologists could never explain it and rarely knew what it was. They were parochial in the good Lutheran sense of the word. And they should never have been taken for granted.

The second lesson to be learned from Tietjen's *Memoirs* is that a president of a church body can with resolve and pertinacity remove an able president of a respected seminary, if he wants to. As much as any Christian group of people in America the constituency of the Missouri Synod loved and respected its seminaries and professors. Tietjen was surrounded and supported by an army of celebrated scholars and competent church leaders in every sphere of the synod's activities. The faculty was loyal to him. The students revered him. How could Jack ever bring him down, even armed with the pure doctrine of the gospel and all its articles? Here is how Jack did it, step by step:

(a.) Realizing that he had been elected to address himself to the doctrinal situation at the Seminary, Jack researched all the many complaints which had been made against professors by pastors, districts, and all groups throughout the synod. And Jack frankly and honestly told the church what he was doing and that the situation was worrisome, if not alarming. Something would have to be done.

(b.) As stated above, Jack studied and mastered the synodical handbook, and he took charge of the governance of the affairs of the synod, gradually gaining influence or even control over the various boards and commissions of the synod, especially those connected with the activities of the seminary. This was accomplished by appointments to commissions and boards; appointment of special committees; feeding suggestions, in the case of elected offices, to those distributing lists of preferred candidates to delegates before conventions; and similar legal devices. Overt politicking was left in the hands of the "troops."

(c.) A *causa belli* was established. In this case it was the preservation of synodical identity, the historic doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod.

(d.) An investigation or some kind of visitation of the seminary had to take place, if its leadership was to be replaced. The investigation could center in the doctrine taught at the seminary, the spiritual life on campus, interpersonal relations on campus, or anything else. In this instance the *causa belli* in the synod became the reason for the investigation, namely, the doctrine taught at the seminary. And so the investigation, made to appear as benign as possible, was suggested, discussed with Tietjen and members of the faculty, debated, revised, and publicized in a most dignified fashion. The faculty had no choice but to oppose it, and they did so vociferously, to their own detriment. The investigation progressed to its inexorable conclusion, duly reported to the New Orleans Convention.

(e.) Another stratagem in Jack's arsenal was the attempt in a variety of ways to reconcile the irreconcilable theological differences at the seminary and in the synod, while at the same time investigating the seminary. Thus, we find Tietjen commenting in frustration, "In the hands of the Preus administration, mediation efforts meant quieting the opposition in order to confirm the actions that had prompted the need for mediation."

(f.) In the meantime Jack was blunting the effectiveness of Tietjen's role as president by keeping him from obtaining new men who shared the doctrinal position of the seminary leadership on the faculty. Jack had

brought under his hegemony the Board for Higher Education, which, according to the synodical handbook, was required to give prior approval for all new faculty members. As far as I can recall, Tietjen was able to bring in only one new professor during his five-year administration, Dr. Edward Schroeder.

(g.) To accomplish his goal Jack had to take charge of the Board of Control, which at the Milwaukee Convention and through the following biennium had successfully defended Tietjen and the faculty against the many charges leveled against them. At New Orleans new faces appeared on the board, giving Jack a six-to-five majority. A majority of one is enough. Tietjen's downfall was sealed. The seminary's future was in the hands of the board.

(h.) Another step in Jack's agenda was to ask Tietjen in a quiet and considerate manner to step down from his presidency for the good of the school and the synod. The request to resign came, not from Jack directly, but from Dr. Lewis Niemoeller, chairman of the Board for Higher Education (pp. 154-156). The request was made without any forewarning at the most hectic time of the New Orleans Convention, after the faculty majority had been thoroughly discredited by the public and extensive "Blue Book" report of the committee investigating the doctrinal conditions at the seminary. Tietjen saved Jack the trouble of leaking or announcing his request to the convention by immediately rejecting it from the convention floor.

(i.) The next step, essential to Jack's strategy, was to find reputable men in the synod to charge Tietjen with false doctrine and with tolerating the doctrinal aberrations taught by various members of the faculty and to persuade the Board of Control to suspend Tietjen on this basis. This action, along with that of the New Orleans Convention which judged the faculty majority guilty of false doctrine, was the proximate occasion of the departure of faculty and students from the seminary and the forming of Seminex.

(j.) The final step, seemingly anticlimactic but totally consistent with Jack's plan, was his *coup de grace*. Since the New Orleans Convention, on the basis of the "Blue Book," had adjudged the faculty guilty of false doctrine which could not be tolerated in the church, Tietjen had to be dealt with as the leader and defender of those who taught such doctrinal aberrations. For, although he had helped to found an opposition seminary, he still remained a member of the Missouri Synod. The Board of Control asked Dr. Herman Scherer, a board member and president of the Missouri

District to deal with the matter and determine whether Tietjen should be suspended from the synod. Scherer turned the matter over to a highly-respected pastor in the English District, since Tietjen belonged to a congregation of that district. Surprisingly he exonerated Tietjen. His decision was appealed by the two pastors who had accused Tietjen of false doctrine, and the matter was turned over by Jack to Dr. Theodore Nickel, third vice-president of the synod. A couple of years after the walkout Nickel wrote to Tietjen, asking him to abjure "certain positions" (p. 286) which he had held and fostered. When, after a meeting with Nickel, Tietjen declined to do so, Nickel published an official notice in the *Lutheran Witness* (October 16, 1977) which stated, "Dr. John Tietjen is, therefore, no longer a clergy member of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is not eligible for a call."

The aforementioned steps indicate how the president of a church body can turn the direction of a renowned seminary by ousting the leader of the seminary. Jack's strategy and execution, played out with a lone hand, was brilliant. As far as I know, nothing like it had ever been accomplished before in the history of Lutheranism. Jack completely shattered the faculty of the Concordia Seminary; indeed, neither of the two seminaries of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has ever regained its previous stature and influence in the synod—and probably never will. After twelve stormy years of leadership Jack handed over to his successor a synod considerably purged of false doctrine, committed to the traditional Missourian understanding of *sola scriptura* and confessional subscription, committed to missions and honest administration—and possessing the machinery for again ridding a seminary of its president, if he became unruly theologically or administratively—truly a remarkable accomplishment. And in doing all these things, Jack never overtly violated the Scriptures or the Lutheran Confessions, or even the synodical handbook. Tietjen, as his *Memoirs* show, saw vaguely every step of the way what was happening, but his commitment to his friends and his cause prevented him from changing the course of events.

In 1833 the *opus magnum* of the renowned Prussian general, Karl von Clausewitz, was published posthumously. It was entitled *Vom Kriege* and presented an exposition of his philosophy of war. In succeeding generations it became the basis of military studies and action, not only in Prussia, but all over the world. It is doubtful if Tietjen or Jack will ever write such a *Leitfaden* on ecclesiastical warfare in our country where the constraints of the first amendment obtain and such an effort might appear unbecoming. But the outline of the manual has been clearly provided in

Tietjen's *Memoirs*. The *Memoirs* tell us as much of Jack's philosophy of war and his victorious campaigns as of the failures of Tietjen and the debacle of his faculty. And the *Memoirs* offer invaluable advice to future bishops, church presidents, superintendents, and other officials within the Lutheran Church.

Two important questions must be broached in conclusion. First, was the bitter and costly war justified? Was it a "just war"? I am persuaded that in retrospect both parties would now say yes. For the *causa belli* was the preservation of the *sola scriptura* principle and the gospel. It is not an option for any Christian to fight such a war, but his duty and privilege.

Secondly, who won the war? According to Tietjen's honest account, Jack won almost every major battle between the two adversaries. But not only Tietjen and Jack participated in the conflict. Thousands of others—professors, pastors, people throughout Lutheranism—were involved to some degree or another. Who, then, really won and who lost? Perhaps a few observations are in order from one who was close to all the events and the major figures and groups involved.

I think that Jack left the synod in better condition than he found it. In this sense he was victorious. No longer were professors of theology offending students and the church with bizarre and heretical conclusions offered as the "assured results" of modern exegetical scholarship. The principle of *sola scriptura* and its necessary concomitant, biblical inerrancy (according to the confessional Lutheran understanding), was affirmed and practised at the seminaries. "Gospel reductionism," with its accompanying denial of the third use of the law and its ethical relativism, never clearly articulated and never clearly understood, faded away. Incipient universalism, the bane of mission endeavors, which had invaded segments of the faculty and pervaded the mission staff, was suppressed (although it was in strenuously combatting such universalism that Dr. Waldo Werning ran afoul of Jack [p. 251]). Missionary activity began to increase. The synod again came to the support of the beleaguered seminary in St. Louis. A high degree of conscious unity under the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions was restored.

But there were ominous signs of malaise accompanying the uneasy peace, won in part, ironically, by the departure of hundreds of congregations and pastors and almost an entire talented theological faculty. Working under the shadow of former teachers the revived faculty in St. Louis, not fully trusted by many in the synod, was unsure of itself. And neither of the two seminaries was able to exert the theological leadership

necessary to fill the vacuum left by the formation of Seminex. The pastors and lay people grew war-weary and unable to fight old or new enemies at the gates. Today the Missouri Synod is closer to many of the goals which Tietjen and his colleagues set than when he and his colleagues left the synod. Some level of cooperation or "fellowship" with ELCA is close at hand if the associates of the previous administration have their way. A more active role in inter Christian relationships seems already in place. At least part of Tietjen's agenda is now the Missouri Synod's agenda. Adherence to biblical inerrancy still prevails, but it is rarely any longer a factor in synodical discussions with other Lutherans and seems to have little hermeneutical significance as many pastors and teachers in the synod study the Bible and teach in the church. The Missouri Synod still seems not to have learned that there is a Lutheran hermeneutic, based upon Scripture itself and consonant with the Lutheran Confessions—a hermeneutic which must be operative in the lives and activities of the ministers, schools, and parishes of the church. The influence of Tietjen and his colleagues is still alive in the Missouri Synod.

One final observation may be made. Tietjen and his colleagues often warned that the synod, in its fear of liberalism and a low view of Scripture, would be caught up in the opposite extreme, "fundamentalism"—a subjective, triumphalistic evangelicalism. Jack and many of his supporters were acutely aware of this danger, and during his administration various manifestations of this movement were effectively resisted. Today the Missouri Synod stands in grave danger of being affected by this amorphous, emotional, non-credal, undefinable, increasingly neo-Anabaptistic movement which now permeates American culture. It is not that the synod will succumb overnight, but the influence of what can be accurately called the Methodization of American religion is quite apparent in synodical life and programs. The historic liturgy is being abandoned in some congregations. Laymen without calls are carrying out the work of the public ministry of the word. So-called "church growth" principles, more compatible with the Erasmian humanism and blatant synergism of Luther's day if not coarse fanaticism, are preferred in many cases to a Lutheran ministry of word and sacrament. Open communion is becoming common, if not rife. The historic doctrine and practice of church fellowship seem to be giving way in the synod to a more latitudinarian position. The doctrine of the ministry of the word and the divinity of the call to that office is eroding and being challenged in certain quarters. Church officialdom is claiming and gaining more power. The people are listening more and more to television evangelists, and they dislike being

criticized for doing so. Most of these gradual developments would have been opposed by Tietjen, all of them by Jack.

So who won the war? No one and everyone. This answer will be not only the judgment of history, but surely God's verdict as well (Romans 8:28,37).

Robert Preus

INERRANCY AND HERMENEUTICS. Edited by Harvie M. Conn. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989. 276 pages.

The subtitle of this volume is *A Tradition, Challenge and Debate*. This book is a symposium of essays written by fourteen different professors of Westminster Seminary of Philadelphia. This is the third such symposium offered to the public by Westminster professors since its inception in the 1940's, when a number of professors resigned from the faculty of Princeton Seminary because of the latter's departure from sound biblical hermeneutics and Reformed theology. The two previous volumes were *The Infallible Word* (1946) and *Scripture and Confession* (1973), issued at times considered critical by Westminster professors.

The authors of the fourteen chapters wish to show that they still hold to biblical inerrancy as did their predecessors, and at the same time they recognize, so they claim, the need to be aware of "those emerging disciplines of research linked to hermeneutical theology." They frequently quote from the writings of the founding fathers of Westminster Seminary, such as Murray, Machen, Van Til, Woolley, Kuiper, Stonehouse, Allis, and Young, thus endeavoring to give the impression that they are following in the footsteps of these first stalwarts. This reviewer, however, believes that, if the men mentioned were to arise from their graves and read this volume (and other writings of its contributors) and listen to what is currently being taught in the classrooms of Westminster Seminary, they would disagree.

A number of the professors contributing essays to *Inerrancy and Hermeneutics* aver that there now exist tools that are new and were not available to the founding fathers. They claim that current scholars must be aware of the new methods and employ them in their exegetical endeavors and so reach new conclusions on doctrine and ethics. Thus Conn states: "In faculty writings, the school participates in an exploration of the emerging disciplines . . . that are linked to hermeneutical theory.

Its concerns over issues relating to the full trustworthiness of Scripture have not diminished; it has just taken them into new avenues of research. Structuralism and redaction criticism are being used by Westminster exegetes" (p. 223).

Clearly the kind of hermeneutics now being employed at Westminster Seminary is not the same as the hermeneutics used by the framers of the doctrines of the historic Westminster Confession and by the founding fathers of Westminster Seminary. The reader is told, among many other things, that what the text said in biblical times is not necessarily what it means today. One must operate with the concept that texts have two levels of meaning, one for biblical times and one for now. The views of Thistleton and other linguists are adopted in place of the hermeneutical principles that once controlled Protestant biblical interpretation.

In the last chapter (14) of this volume, "Evangelicals and the Bible: A Bibliographic Postscript," John R. Mueller lists many different current approaches to hermeneutics, showing the divergent theories that have characterized recent Roman Catholic and Protestant hermeneutics, many of which the readers are urged to consider seriously. The theological literature shows that many new winds are blowing in Christendom which do not promise reliable insights into God's word. It would seem that Westminster Seminary is heading in the same direction as Southern Baptist Seminary, Fuller Seminary, and other formerly conservative seminaries in the United States.

Raymond F. Surburg

LUKE THE THEOLOGIAN—THIRTY-THREE YEARS OF RESEARCH (1950-1983). By Francois Bovon. Translated by Ken McKinney. Allison Park, Pennsylvania: Pickwick Publications, 1987. xvi and 510 pages. Paper, \$35.00.

Francois Bovon has made an enormous contribution to Lucan studies in his summary of Lucan theological research from 1950 to 1983. It is difficult to imagine undertaking such a task, but Bovon does it masterfully, with a clear understanding of the trajectories in Lucan scholarship in this half century. Bovon's approach to the huge amount of literature available is commendable for a number of reasons:

- (1.) He organizes Lucan scholarship into topics that allow him to trace the development of arguments and trends among various schools of

thought. His chapters include the following: "1. God's Purpose, Salvation History, and Eschatology"; "2. The Interpretation of the Old Testament"; "3. Christology"; "4. The Holy Spirit"; "5. Salvation"; "6. Reception of Salvation"; and "7. The Church." An appendix is entitled "Chronicles in Lucan Studies." Each chapter is further subdivided to give specific direction to Bovon's summaries. For example, in chapter 2, on the Old Testament, his three subdivisions are "I. Lucan Hermeneutics"; "II. Typology"; and "III. The Text of the Old Testament." This approach allows the reader to focus on one particular aspect of Lucan research and become exposed to the literature on that subject.

(2.) Bovon is exhaustive but representative. It would be unmanageable to summarize everyone who has written on a particular subject, but Bovon chooses those scholars who have either made unique contributions to Lucan interpretation (what he likes to describe as innovative suggestions) or those scholars who have entered the debate to help clarify, expand, or summarize the current discussion. For the English-speaking reader, Bovon tends to highlight the German and French contributions, which is helpful in giving the scholar access to a wide range of foreign language material and in determining whether or not particular articles and books are worthwhile reading. Bovon's summaries of the various authors are always fair and comprehensive, with an unparalleled ability to sense the significant nuances in the argument from one author or school of thought to another. He usually gives his own judgment and critique of the author he is summarizing with a flair for fairness and economy. Even though he cannot summarize everyone, his footnotes are invaluable, offering either a brief synopsis of others who have dealt with a particular subject or a bibliographical reference for the reader to pursue himself.

(3.) At the end of each chapter, Bovon offers his own conclusions about the literature which he just summarized and the issues which they represent. This is the greatest strength of the book. It is refreshing to read a scholar who candidly and forthrightly tells his readers what he thinks about the debate and offers his own analysis of the issues. And Bovon is very clear in his analysis, highlighting for the reader the major issues and their significance. These are not bland summaries, for they engage the reader and force him to make a judgment on Bovon's analysis. If one is at all familiar with the trends in Lucan scholarship, this exercise of debating with Bovon's critique is pure pleasure.

For those interested in Lucan research, Bovon's book is invaluable. He will give them access to all the important works by means of a concise

and accurate summary of the purpose of the author. This book also highlights the value of recognizing the history of various interpretations. A study of the development of the diverse views on eschatology and salvation history allows the student to see how Luke-Acts has influenced New Testament criticism in the twentieth century. Of interest to Lutherans is the greater emphasis on Acts than on the Gospel of Luke in current scholarship, especially as the Paul of Acts relates to the Paul of the epistles. As one follows Bovon's odyssey through these arguments, the traditional interpretation keeps popping up here and there as a unifying thread in the discussion. For the pastor who struggles with higher-critical commentaries, Bovon will show him the source and development of current critical interpretation. For the pastor who is willing to invest the time and the energy, this book is a delight. Every theological library should have at least one copy, and every serious student of Luke should own a copy of this masterpiece.

Arthur A. Just

HARPER'S BIBLE COMMENTARY. Edited by John L. Mays. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988. 1344 pages. Cloth, \$34.95.

Harper and Row organized and published this one-volume commentary in cooperation with the Society of Biblical Literature. The general editor amassed numerous specialists from the large pool of SBL scholars to write introductions and commentary for all the documents associated with the canon in various Christian traditions, including the components of the Apocrypha, 3 and 4 Maccabees, and Psalm 151. Because of the number and nature of the contributors to this volume, it features much diversity in content and is particularly representative of the current state of biblical scholarship—especially in the United States.

The target market for this commentary is the informed layman and Bible student. It is carefully organized and, in spite of having many contributors, each section follows an established format. There are several introductions at the start of the volume that place these documents in their historical and literary milieu. Introductions also preface each of the seven literary groupings. Because the scope of this commentary is so inclusive, comments are made according to each pericope or section and not verse-by-verse. There are no footnotes and few technical terms, yet the content and vocabulary are by no means simplistic.

A volume with this many contributors often contains some disparity in quality, content, and coverage. This one is no exception. For example,

after David Clines comments in an introduction that the Documentary Hypothesis "has been challenged recently at every point" (p. 83), John Kselman goes on to speak of J and P creation accounts in his notes on Genesis 1-2 (p. 87). Other common critical presuppositions will concern the confessional Lutheran: the composition of the "Deuteronomistic History"; the authorship and dating of Isaiah and Daniel; the supposed flexibility of "Jesus tradition"; the prominence of Q in synoptic research; and the supposedly pseudepigraphal nature of several New Testament documents. Especially troubling conclusions in the New Testament section are the late dating of Matthew (A.D. 90) and the redactional understanding of Romans and 1 Corinthians. The material on the use of rhetorical criticism to understand Pauline epistles is helpful, and the inclusion of documents too often ignored by Protestants is a real bonus. There is, however, unevenness in the amount of commentary on some documents (e.g., Romans is covered in 37 pages and Daniel in 11 pages).

A positive aspect of this commentary is that most contributors deal seriously with the text in its so-called "final form." The familiarity of these scholars with their allotted document is visible in perceptive, if terse and debatable, textual notes. These notes tend to summarize and clarify the text; they generally are not of a doctrinal or homiletical nature. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of this volume does not lie specifically in its assistance to our understanding of various texts, but in its aid to our understanding of how texts are currently being interpreted.

Charles A. Gieschen
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ACCURACY OF TRANSLATION AND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION: THE PRIMARY CRITERION IN EVALUATING BIBLE VERSIONS. By Robert P. Martin. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989. 89 pages.

It has been a long time coming, but finally a major publisher has offered a sensible and substantive evaluation of the NIV. This criticism is all the more timely because Zondervan has been boasting of late that finally the NIV has replaced the Authorized Version as the best selling English Bible in the world. Not much credence, however, should be given to this triumphalism. Thomas Nelson has its own poll which says that not only is the old AV still number one, but also the New King James Version is number two, the NIV not even appearing in the running. So much for the polls released by the public relations offices of large

publishers.

This book is all the more important because of the publisher. The Banner of Truth Trust has consistently produced the very cream of the crop of Calvinistic-Puritan commentaries and theological treatises in the English-speaking world. The publisher took on this subject some years ago in *The Banner* (October, 1976) and presented a commendable, even-handed debate on the merits of the NIV. Nevertheless, the issue was left quite open-ended, suggesting perhaps that nothing of any consequence was at stake. This present publication has endorsed a critique which claims that the NIV undermines the very foundation of historic Protestantism—the verbal view of inspiration. In centering the argument here, Robert Martin has, indeed, cut through all the advertising verbiage and glowing endorsements of the NIV. In eighty-two easy-to-read pages he strives to make really only one decisive point: one cannot claim to hold to a verbal view of inspiration and still use the NIV.

Martin has six chapters, each nicely leading the reader along in his argument. Stating first the philosophy behind the translating technique used in producing the NIV (chapters 2-3), he next documents, with examples, the results of this philosophy and its implications for verbal inspiration (chapters 4-6). In Appendix A he notes the many changes in the revisions of the NIV since it first appeared. In Appendix B he tackles the issue of archaic language and modern translations. Finally, in Appendix C he makes clear that he has no interest in defending the *Textus Receptus* and offers some sound criticism of certain extreme elements, particularly in the United States, who argue for this textual standard more from an emotional than from a rational basis. It would be difficult to fault Martin here. There are indices of both authors and Scripture passages mentioned.

Regarding Martin's Appendix C, treating the issue of text criticism, several observations could be added. Martin earned his doctorate from a Southern Baptist school, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (the largest seminary in America), from which a flood of dissertations on New Testament textual criticism has flowed forth in recent years, Martin's among them. He reflects, in his assessment of the discipline, the typical confidence that conservative theologians in America have carefully projected since the days of B. B. Warfield, the first conservative churchman in America to gain proficiency in the discipline. Prior to the nineteenth century, the discipline of text criticism was seen by confessional Protestants, as well as by Roman Catholics, as the single greatest threat

to *verbal inspiration*. The variety of textual variants seemed to invite an infinite number of possibilities, which did not seem to fit the paradigm of *verbal certainty*.

Furthermore, Martin neglects to note that christological battles were fought, from Servetus onward, with Socinians, Arians, and Deists, over certain key textual variants. This fact explains the quotations which Martin extracts from Bengel, Kenyon, and others (p. 76, n. 1). These authors stressed the innocuous nature of textual criticism just because it was in this field that the antitrinitarians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries offered the biggest challenge to traditional orthodoxy, including the editions of the texts of the original language used in the Reformation.

Furthermore, textual criticism still provides plenty of theological controversy. Martin lulls us all to sleep when he gives us this assurance (p. 76):

Far from being an enemy of truth, where its task is pursued using sound principles, textual criticism is the friend of truth and a valuable aid to the church in drawing the precise boundaries of "biblical" faith and practice.

Nowhere, however, does he mention what these "sound principles" are. For the last thirty years, there have been at least three major schools of textual criticism, each of which, like the three popes of the Western Schism, have anathematized the others: (1.) the rational eclectics; (2.) the rigorous eclectics; and (3.) the majority-text school. Each group has, in turn, its own sub-groups. Each school has produced its own edition of the "original" Greek New Testament; each differs from the others, sometimes on important points, because each is operating from a different set of "sound principles." Perhaps an indication of the school to which Martin belongs is the open copy of the third edition of the Greek New Testament of the United Bible Societies which appears on the cover of Martin's book, but perhaps, again, it is merely the preferred edition of the publishers. Whatever the case, Appendix C is the weakest link in Martin's otherwise excellent essay.

This treatise is an easy-to-read, brief, and important analysis of the NIV, but it is not the best work on the subject. Jakob van Bruggen's *The Future of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978) still holds that position. Martin's book is, however, the best in print at the moment.

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THE LIVING PSALMS. By Claus Westermann. Translated by J. R. Porter. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989. 306 pages.

Claus Westermann is an emeritus professor of the University of Heidelberg. He has had an ongoing interest in the form of the Psalms. He grew up with missionary parents in Africa and later was in a prison camp during World War II. He considers the Psalms tools which can convey the reconciling power of God and can aid those who seek to realize their identity as humans in the image and likeness of God.

He begins with an introduction to the psalm genre, including discussions of how they came to be collected and used. He then treats some psalms in detail, under headings which include communal psalms of lament and trust; royal psalms; individual psalms of lament, trust, and praise; descriptive psalms of praise; liturgical psalms; and songs of Zion, blessing, and wisdom. He concludes with a suggestion about the relationship of the Psalms to Christ.

This book is not for someone who is looking for a devotional book. It can be helpful to someone who would like to understand current explanations of the background and inner workings of the Psalms. Westermann explores the issue of communication with God and studies the structure of the way in which the psalmists viewed themselves and those around them. He makes the observation that the lament has all but disappeared in the church. He recognizes that all the psalmists see God as deeply involved in daily life. He calls for reflection about the way in which we speak about and to God.

Some will find that the technical discussions are too much through which to wade. One wishes that some adequate explanation could have been offered for the disjunctions in the Psalms, which interrupt what our Western minds would consider to be a smooth-flowing text. No alternative to rearranging the texts is considered.

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