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Theology, News and Notes

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The Church as Community

The Biblical Basis of Community

The Eclipse of Community In American Protestantism

Implications of Community for the Individual

Implications of Community for the Church in Society

Eugene L. Smith

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The Church as Community

One of the concepts and realities that is most deeply affecting the modern church renewal is that of community. In the interest of furthering the grasp of this dimension of the church and especially of interpreting it to and stimulating dialogue about it from our alumni, the editorial board of *Theology, News and Notes* has decided to devote the next six issues to this theme and its implications for the evangelical wing of the church. The present issue will seek to assess the meaning and state of community in the church, while succeeding issues will assess its implications in significant areas of the life of the church.

To this end the board is pleased to present this guest editorial by Dr. Eugene L. Smith which establishes the context and theme for the series.

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**THE CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION AS A SUFFERING AND SAVING SERVANT**

EUGENE LEWIS SMITH

One of the basic readings on the nature of the Christian congregation is Isaiah 53. The Christian finds the primary meaning of this chapter in the profile of Christ. From that insight comes an invaluable derivative meaning: its implications for understanding the nature of the congregation — a body of which Christ is the head.

We are faithful to scripture in finding in this chapter a basic clue to the nature of the congregation as well as the character of Christ. The true congregation is a group gathered in his name, and within which he is present. The writers of scripture did not distinguish between a person and his...
community as we in our 20th century individualism. Ask a devout Hebrew of biblical times whether this chapter referred to the Messiah or to the nation of Israel, and he would not have understood what we mean by the question. The person and his community were inextricably linked in the biblical understanding. The best of contemporary psychology understands this linkage which is basic to the nature of personality. Unfortunately much contemporary biblical scholarship reads scripture through the distorting glasses of 19th century individualism in a way which clouds understanding of persons, as well as of the community, as well as of scripture. The figure of the suffering and saving Servant applies to the church as well as to Christ, its Head.

Verse 1 is the prologue:

Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
In our time, the number here described is each day larger than the day before. The church which can lead them to belief must be among them as a suffering and saving servant.

Verses 2 and 3 describe many congregations. I mention only one:

For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. The Brooklyn Pentecostal congregation called "The House of the Lord" is described in every phrase. Established churches saw no comeliness, no beauty, there; thought its worship was without form; despised and rejected it; its membership was steeped in sorrows and acquainted with grief; others esteemed it not. Yet that congregation has grown like a young plant, like a root in dry ground: through its witness the lost have found their Savior; through its prison evangelism the jailed have found freedom; through its visitation the lonely have found acceptance; through its behavior police have learned a new respect for black power.

The reader who will let this scripture speak to him about the kind of life and witness to which every congregation is called will find illumination in every verse. For lack of space here we use only a few illustrations.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. A United Methodist Church in Lubumbashi, Congo (Kinshasa), includes many tribes in its membership. In 1960 savage rioting broke out between the Lunda and the Baluba. When the Lunda had the upper hand, it was Lunda church members who defied their own tribespeople and, at danger and some injury to themselves, protected Baluba in the sanctuary. Two weeks later Baluba similarly saved Lunda. So a congregation—wounded for the transgressions and bruised for the iniquity of its community—suffered the chastisement and accepted the stripes which helped heal the community and make it whole.

Does the reader think of any American congregation thus willing to be the suffering and saving servant of a community?

Most congregations, of every denomination or of none, prefer their own security. Thinking only of themselves like sheep who have gone astray and have turned to their own way, and Christ—as well as the leaderless communities—bears their iniquity.

Verse 7 echoes to me the life of congregations in both Russia and in Mozambique (silent under persecution); verse 8 of refugee congregations in many countries—people feeling they are "cut off out of the land of the living," "bearing the transgressions" of the great powers—yet witnessing to the Lord of all lands, the Savior of every people.

Verse 10, 11 and 12, in their rich promises, amply warrant the title for the chapter, "The Suffering and Saving Servant." All the promises are conditional: "when he makes himself an offering for sin." Here is the essential meaning of ordination, and the essence of the congregation's responsibility to its community. The rebellion of the unconverted part of ourselves at the Christian obligation to be willing to be an offering for the sin of mankind is only a sign of our need for a deeper conversion.

When we meet this condition, the promised results are clear. The will of the Lord will prosper even in our hands; we shall see results and be satisfied. Many shall be counted righteous. The tiny, despised congregations which have grown like roots out of dry ground shall know greatness and strength, just because they have been willing to pour out their souls unto death; to be numbered with the transgressors; to bear the sins of many; and to make intercession for the transgressors.

The church as community is the body of which Christ is the Head, finding its life as the suffering and saving servant of the neighborhood where it is located. To such congregations is given power effectively to reveal the arm of the Lord; and lead persons to saving faith.

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MANAGING EDITOR: Bernice Spencer Bush.
In the introductory section to his little book, *The Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society*, G. E. Wright notes:

One article to which since the Renaissance we have clung with astonishing tenacity is a humanistic notion of the individual. With single-minded intensity the Western world has concentrated upon man the individual, upon his value, his worth, his rights, and his freedom with the result that the sense of the meaning and purpose of community has been evaporating (P. 20).

Unfortunately this is especially true of the evangelical wing of the church. In spite of our deep commitment to the word of God and the gospel, all too often our congregations know little of the biblical sense of Christian community. We function and think of ourselves primarily as an aggregate of individuals. Here we are deeply influenced by both the society in which we live and the heritage that is ours. American society has been atomized by the technological complexity of our age. In his excellent study, *Christian Community and American Society*, Waldo Beach notes the change that has taken place in the spirit of American life since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The earlier period was characterized by "confidence in man and optimism about history." Man was "hero, free and valiant, mastering his environment through energy, courage, piety, and Yankee ingenuity."

Today, on the other hand, he is much less self assured. His image is that of a "victim of ominous impersonal forces over which he has no control." The common mood is a "sense of loss, of bewilderment, of moral confusion." Beach notes: "the semantics of twentieth century man is negative; crisis, dilemma, loss, predicament, anxiety, dread, fear—these are the key title terms" (*Christian Community and American Society*, p.93). And yet these feelings appear in an age of abundance and affluence where, according to the American dream, all ought to be happiness and contentment. On the contrary, one finds a basic unease, a "suburban sadness", aimless, low-keyed unpleasantness. Beach then goes on to note that the theme that recurs again and again in sociologists' explanations of this state is loss of community—that shattering individualism of an industrialized, urbanized, technological society. Man is now *mass man*, depersonalized and alone in the crush and complexity of an industrial economy. There exists no longer in his relationships that high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion, and continuity in time that constitutes community. He is atomized and individualized.

For the evangelical church this is exacerbated by an individualistic pietistic heritage, concerned in the main with the individual's act of faith and the individual's need for peace, rest, and joy in the midst of the struggle and storms of life. For us, all too often, right conduct has primarily to do with personal ethics and true devotion is principally concerned with individual Bible study and personal prayer. As Wright puts it:

The self-centeredness of the pietistic search for salvation tends to exclude vigorous concern with community. Hence, the modern Christian searches his Bible in a manner not unlike the pagan's study of his sacred literature, the purpose being to find inspirational, devotional, moral enlightenment for personal living and nothing more (*Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society*, P. 21).

Unfortunately, this judgment on the modern Christian's use of scripture is all too true. Consequently, it is imperative that we start our discussion of Christian community by setting it in its biblical context.

The concept that man in essence is not man-the-individual but man-in-community is central to the biblical world view. In the Genesis account of creation, man is identified as "Adam", a biblical word for man that lays stress on his corporate side. Adam is more properly "mankind" than individual man. Further, the basic statement of creation in Genesis 1:26 immediately notes that man was created "male and female". By the order of creation, then, the social nature of the individual man is vividly clear. "By God's will, man was not created alone but designated for the 'thou' of the other sex" (G. von Rad, Genesis, P. 58). The author of Genesis 2, using a slightly different conception, has man discover no community among the animals (actually no "help corresponding to him"), and makes the judgment, "It is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18).

Secondly, when God sets the process of redemptive history in motion, he does so by creating a "people" not by dealing...
with individuals or confronting each individual. True, he began by calling Abraham, but he did so in order to give him the covenantal promise of land and posterity—to make of him "a great nation" (Genesis 12:2, 15:5, 17:4, etc.). The historical realization of this divine choice and promise is the Mosaic covenant, which is summed up in the phrase "I will be your God and you shall be my people" (Ex. 6:6, 19:5; cf. Lev. 26:12; Jer. 11:4; Ezek. 11:20, etc.). The basis of this concept is a "political anthropomorphism" (as G. E. Wright so aptly puts it) which draws upon the concept of the "suzerain-vassal treaty" as the form the Lord God uses to structure his relationship to his people.

For this important background to the Mosaic covenant, see G. E. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and in the Ancient Near East. (Especially helpful for conservatives is the study by J. A. Thompson, The Ancient Near Eastern Treaties and the Old Testament.)

In this type of treaty the suzerain binds his vassals to himself by reminding them of all his beneficent acts toward them which obligate them to perpetual gratitude and allegiance. He would then lay upon them the stipulations which they must meet if they are to continue in his favor. Now the "ten commandments"—so-called, although the biblical term is the "ten sayings" (cf. Ex. 34:28, Deut. 4:13)—are, in point of fact, the covenant itself (see Ex. 19:5, 24:7-8, and esp. Deut. 4:13, 5:1-3). Its opening lines read: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." This brief statement (brief yet so meaningful to Israel in the light of the dramatic deliverance three months previously at the Red Sea) forms the analogue to the suzerain's historical prologue and roots and grounds the covenant in the Lord's free and gracious deliverance of his people from Egyptian bondage.

Although the "historical prologue" is here exceedingly brief and concise, the opposite is true in the renewal of the covenant by Joshua with the twelve tribes at Shechem in Joshua 24. Here the historical grounds are long and detailed, beginning with Abraham and the patriarchs, continuing through the deliverance from Egypt, and concluding with the taking of the Promised Land (Josh. 24:2-13).]

Note how this prologue anchors the covenant in God's gracious acts on behalf of his people. God has freely, graciously, and with unmerited favor redeemed his people from slavery in Egypt and now binds them to himself with his covenant as their Overlord, using as the grounds and motive for their accepting it his gracious acts of past redemption and deliverance. Now this serves to stress the fact that biblical community has a deep sense of the meaning and manner of its formation in historical events. In both the Old and New Testaments the central affirmation is that God has acted in history, freely and graciously, to create a people for himself, to call out a people for his name's sake (I Peter 2:9-10). Biblical community is, therefore, not some kind of social contract in which a group of individuals has agreed to relate as self-contained entities for whose essence this association is accidental. On the contrary, biblical community exists because God as Lord of history has created "a special community, revealed to it its manner of life, provided for it the means of interpreting events by chosen spokesmen, and by unmerited acts and promises has given to it hope in the midst of the tragedies of history" (Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society, P. 76). Man has been created by God to live in community and God has created this community by his redemptive acts in history forming the covenant people of God in the Old Testament which finds its culmination and fulfillment in the body of Christ—the people of the new covenant in the New Testament. The divine answer to the alienation of man from his Maker, his fellow, and himself, so poignantly portrayed in the tragic events of the primeval history of Genesis 1-11, is the reconciliation affected by the redeemed and redeeming community—the church. Here man finds his true essence—man-in-community.

Thirdly, one of the essential features of biblical anthropology is its corporate character. Man's true essence can only be found within the living historical context of a people. As Waldo Beach puts it, "in the Biblical world view the very 'being' of man lies 'in between' the 'I' and the plural others, human and transcendent, with whom he is in dialogue" (Christian Community and American Society, P. 20). There are many indices in scripture of this primary corporate structure of biblical anthropology. Since H. Wheeler Robinson pointed it out, much has been written about the Old Testament concept of "corporate personality." Put briefly it refers to the fact that the Old Testament knows no careful, precise distinction between the individual and the community of which he is a part. There is a fluidity between the one and the many, the individual and the people, that is constitutive of biblical anthropology. "Corporate personality" simply describes in a short formula the teaching of the Old Testament regarding the union between the individual and the community. It refers to the Old Testament conception of man in which "an entire group, its past, present and future members might function as a single individual through any of its members conceived as representative of it" (Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel, P. 1). This concept is eminently real; it transcends the purely literary or ideal personification, making the group a real entity entirely actualized in each of its members. The idea possesses a marked fluidity: the human mind passes quickly back and forth from the individual to the collectivity and vice versa.

This idea cannot be set forth in any more detail than this. There is abundant proof for it in the data of scripture. The reader may refer to the original article by Robinson quoted above or to the excellent study by J. de Fraine, Adam and the Family of Man.

Thus there is no substantive disjunction in the biblical view of man between the "I" and the "we", between the self and house of Israel. This provides the background for that radical identification in the New Testament between Christ and his body the church and for the fact that the Christian member of the new community finds his identity in his organic relation to the body of Christ. Thus, for example, Paul in I Corinthians 12:12, in dealing with the Corinthians' misuse of spiritual gifts, gives a definition of the church using the body as an analogy, but says: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." He clearly means the church and thereby shows that Christ is not simply an individual man but the corporate man, radically identified with his body the church in mystical union.

The church then is, not simply an institution, still less is it a building. It is the fellowship of those who believe—life-in-common based in the corporate life of Jesus Christ.
To be in Christ by faith and to be in this fellowship is one and the same thing by virtue of the corporate personality that unites Christ and his body the church. The community is not an addition of secondary importance. For this purpose Christ is given to us, that, reconciled to God by God we may live in God's love and draw our life from it by living in the community, the body of Christ. The new life Christ gives us is life in his corporate life. Precisely this is the new life—life in the community in love instead of life by oneself in isolation. We in the evangelical wing of the church desperately need to recapture this corporate dimension of life in Christ. We are heirs to an emphasis on individual salvation, individual righteousness, and that aspect of piety and the devotional life that is concerned with individual Bible study and personal prayer and we are influenced by the shattering individualism that structures American life. As a result we have all too often forgotten that that act of faith by which we became Christians ushered us into and constituted us members of the body of Christ, the church. We have forgotten that the statement, "only through the church, the redeeming community, do men come to faith" is equally as true as its corollary, "only through faith do men come to the church."

For Christ gives us true life in and with his corporate life. The church, then, in a real sense is Christ's continuing presence in the world; it has a reality that is greater than the life of the individual believer or the sum of the lives of those who are its members.

The believer, according to biblical teaching, is not the individual "I", but the "I" in its brotherliness, the I-in-community. This I-in-community is the central factor which determines what the Christian believer is and will be, for God has created us as beings who depend upon one another for the creating of the very identity which makes us uniquely individuals. This creative ground is gained by a radical acceptance of one another and a loving opening of oneself to the community. In the words of Emil Brunner:

Sin consists in the fact that the self is closed to God and man, but faith signifies that a man becomes open for God and for his brother, that he is willing to be open and communicate himself. God reveals himself as the one who wishes to be with us, and therefore faith is the will and readiness to be with our fellow humans, communicative life. It is therefore in the nature of the case impossible that as a believer one should be or wish to remain a solitary, one who lives for himself. It is just this living for oneself, this existence of a 'Monad without windows,' which is abolished by faith. Faith is 'communicating existence' (The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and the Consummation, P. 26).

This means that the same features that characterize God's relationship with us must now characterize our relationships with one another. Now God's relationship with us is a gracious relationship. He does not deal with us, relate to us, because of what we are, but in spite of what we are. He is the God of grace whose nature it is to turn toward his people in love and forgiveness — and so he sent his son into the world to redeem the world, that the world through him might be saved. So, therefore, our relationships with one another must now be gracious relationships. We must deal with one another not because of what we are but in spite of what we are, since scripture adjures us that we should be imitators of God by loving as Christ loves us (Eph. 5:1-2). This means, then, that the church, the body of Christ, must be characterized by a loving openness towards one another and a radical acceptance of one another. This is the creative and supportive ground which is the central factor in the determination of the Christian — the realization of his own worth and identity and the shaping and directing of his life.

Finally, this biblical understanding of man as man-in-community — the I in its brotherliness — stands in contrast to two radically opposed anthropologies of modern western thought — radical individualism and radical collectivism. As Beach puts it:

In the individualism assumed in much eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ethics, politics, and economics, the 'ultimate' self is a self-contained identity, who has, to be sure, social relations of every kind, but for whose essence these associations are accidental. In the Biblical world view, on the other hand, the very 'being' of a man lies 'in between' and the 'I' and the plural others, human and transcendent, with whom he is in dialogue.

On the other hand, the corporate image of man is not the collectivistic view underlying modern totalitarianism. Man man' of East or West has lost his uniqueness, his separate identity in his passionate or resigned loyalty to a finite God of a political or economic sort. Lacking any transcendent point of detachment from the crowd, his identity is reduced to a mechanical likeness to all the others in the sand heap. In the Biblical view, by contrast, there is individuality—not individualism—in that man is called by One beyond the crowd, by a Voice addressing him in his uniqueness, to whom he responds in obedience. Herein is the significance of the Biblical preoccupation with names and naming. 'I have called you by name,' says the Lord. In the physical, animal, and human worlds, the richness of diverse kinds is preserved in the God-given names of all creatures. The divine 'Thou' calls a man into being with a name of his own and emancipates him from the tyranny of the collective (Christian Community and American Society, pp. 20-21).

In biblical anthropology, then, man finds his true identity as man-in-community in the reconciled and reconciling community, the church, the new humanity reconciled with God by God and therefore reconciled with one another. This is the primary affirmation and context within which both the nature of the life of the church and its message and mission must be understood.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


This little book, undertaken at the request of the study department of the World Council of Churches, is an excellent study of the implications of the corporate nature of biblical anthropology for life in society. Well grounded biblically.


As the subtitle indicates this is "a study of St. Paul's application of Old Testament and early Jewish conceptions of human solidarity."

Although somewhat technical, it is a definitive treatment of the New Testament application of the biblical concept of the corporate nature of man.


This facet book, No. 11 in the Biblical Series, is a reprint of Robinson's pioneer article, published in 1935.


As the preceding pages have so forcefully demonstrated, the biblical vision of redemptive history is a vision of a people, drawn from every tongue and tribe and kindred and nation, called into being by the creative Word of God. To be in Christ is to be in the fellowship of Christ's body, which is the church. To be called into loving fellowship with God is to be summoned into a community of love—a community of mutual understanding and sympathy, of shared concerns and celebration, of mutual admonition and mutual intercession—a community above all of forgiveness. Life in Christ is life together.

Yet, as a matter of fact, the average Protestant congregation in the United States experiences this "life together" all too seldom. For the most part, people in the church touch each others' lives only tangentially. One suspects that very little intercession actually goes on in the life of the local church, and then realizes that it is a matter for rejoicing if there is any at all. Christian people do not really know one another; why should they be motivated to pray for each other? Genuine concerns and problems are jealously guarded in secret—until it becomes painfully apparent that there is need for professional therapy. Mutual admonition dies a'born again in the conviction that "It's none of my business, after all," and suffers a demonic resurrection in backbiting and slander. Celebration smacks of folk rock and psychedelic art, and to tell the truth, there doesn't seem to be much to celebrate anyway. Efforts to remedy the blight are likely to consist of frantic programming, producing Christian social gatherings with all of the intimacy of the average cocktail party. In all candor, an extended acquaintance with what passes for fellowship in many Protestant churches could lead the observer to wonder whether there might not be some deliberate conspiracy to prevent precisely the kind of genuine personal knowledge and confrontation which the biblical vision of community demands.

How is the student of American church life to account for this poverty in life-style, so obvious in white Protestant congregations? What are the factors in the history of the American churches which have conspired to frustrate the promise of evangelical community?

A reflective examination of American church history suggests a constellation of forces which, working in inter-relation, have contributed to this frustration. The listing of factors here is not meant to be exhaustive; other conditions could be mentioned in order to fill out the picture. But the following appear to have played significant roles in the development of the contemporary situation.

Most students of the eclipse of community and the growth of individualism in American life wrestle with the question of the role of the frontier in shaping the direction of that life. Few have stated the case for its significance in as stimulating a fashion as Sidney Mead, who writes:

Americans have never had time to spare.
What they did have during all their formative years was space . . .
It is not too much to say that in America space has played the part that time has played in the older cultures of the world (The Lively Experiment, pp. 5-6).

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Mead spells out the implications of the spaciousness of the American continent by suggesting that

the binding ties of habit, custom, and tradition were largely broken, for their formative influence on the individual depends finally upon his inability to escape the society of his peers. The American could always believe, however much the actual situation in which he found himself might contradict the belief, that he could, if he wished, move on in space. He could ignore the traditional boundaries of habit, class, custom, and law and begin anew, unfettered by these ancient restraints (Ibid., p. 7).

A note of caution may well be inserted at this point. Few of those who emigrated toward the frontier were free from the influence and pressures of their peers, the frontier providing its own forms of group experience, as T. Scott Miyakawa has reminded us in his *Protestants and Pioneers*. The role of the frontier in promoting individualism was not as pervasive nor as direct as the more enthusiastic advocates of the Frederick Jackson Turner thesis have supposed. But the fact remains that many of the pioneers were released from their past by the experience of the vast reaches of American space, and the resources of that expanse were integrally related to the rise of the middle class, to which subject we shall return.

A second factor in the constellation of forces underlying the eclipse of community in American Protestantism is the impact of modern revivalism. Modern revivalism begins in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Winthrop Hudson locates the watershed with the coming of the Second Great Awakening.

The new revivalism was markedly different from the revivalism of the First Awakening under Jonathan Edwards when the outpouring of God's spirit was regarded as a by-product of the faithful preaching of God's Word. Christians 'waited' for these earlier revivals, Calvin Colton remarked, 'as men are wont to wait for showers of rain, without even imagining that any duty was incumbent upon them as instruments.' In the Second Awakening, however, a change began to be introduced. More and more preachers sought to provoke a revival by utilizing 'means' that were calculated to cause the hearers to make a decision and to make it right... Herefore the revival had always been in a sense an end in itself; now it became an adjunct to other ends, and discourses could be written on 'The Necessity of Religious Institutions' (*Religion in America*, p. 136).

The divergence of modern revivalism from the older model can be seen full blown in the figure of Charles Finney. Exactly one hundred years after Jonathan Edwards had registered his awe at 'the surprising work of God' in Northampton, Finney could write that a revival 'is not a miracle, or dependent on a miracle in any sense. It is a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means... You see why you have not a revival. It is only because you don't want one' (*Lectures on Revivals*, pp. 12, 32).

With this decisive shift in theological perspective and the undeniable success of Finney and his "new measures" in recruiting adherents for the churches, forces were set in motion which would breed an ever-growing religious individualism. In the succeeding decades of the last century, "revivalism in one form or another became the accepted technique of practically all the voluntary churches, the instrument for accomplishing the denominations' objective of evangelism and missions" (Mead, *The Lively Experiment*, p. 122). With the passing of the decades, the fatal implications of Finney's understanding of revival were worked out with a vigor that undoubtedly exceeded his intentions. Individual man with his religious competence and his decisions increasingly occupied center stage, and steadily edged the note of God's sovereign grace into the background. The important consequence for our discussion is that the church as community would be a victim of the success of revivalism. The church as community—the church as mother of the fruitful and guardian of the means of grace, into which one is called by God's mercy and by which one is nurtured and sustained—steadily fades from view, and is replaced by the church as a religious association of converted individuals who gather together in pursuit of certain mutually accepted purposes.

Another force contributing to the waning of community in the American churches and closely related to the factors already mentioned is the decline of church discipline during the latter half of the last century. By the end of the period, there is not only a general cessation of the practice of discipline, which a half century before had been integral to the life of the churches, but clergymen are on occasion attempting to demonstrate that discipline was an intruder in the household of faith. Detailed study of Presbyterian congregations in the northern United States indicates that the decline in discipline begins much earlier, a fact which takes on added significance for the American churches in general because of the strong theology of discipline in Presbyterianism. In the metropolitan congregations of the eastern seaboard, all of the indices of decline can be seen in the years 1860-1880. The dating of the decline occurs a little later in the midwestern churches, and a little later still in the far west. What is happening is that church discipline has become a casualty of the increasing mobility of the American people and the growth of population centers across the nation. The factor of competition between the denominations, always implicit in American pluralism, shows itself more and more with these developments. As the average man finds his religious options increasing, the concept of "the church of his choice" takes on new meaning. In the face of new denominations and multiplying congregations, discipline of the offending member becomes difficult and costly. Many a pastor and congregation simply abandon the effort, and one has the suspicion that there is increasing reliance on revivalism to compensate for the loss of those members who more and more simply fade from view. By the turn of the century, church discipline is virtually dead. For our study, the significance of this development lies in the abdication of responsibility for mutual correction and nurture, the exercise of which is so necessary for the health of any community worthy of the name.

The loss of community in American Protestantism is to be seen in the context of the loss of the sense of community in American life in general, as well as in relation to the factors already mentioned. In his discussion of *Christian Community and American Society*, Waldo Beach notes that a common mood of [recent] studies of American life, urbanized and industrialized, is a sense of loss, of bewilderment, of moral confusion. In the stead of the positive terms of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century language — progress, growth, hope, character, vision — the semantics of twentieth-century man is negative: crisis, dilemma, loss, predication, anxiety, dread, fear — these are the key title terms (P. 93).

(Continued on page 13.)
EDWARD JOHN CARNELL MEMORIAL

By now all alumni have received the reproduction of the portrait of Dr. Carnell. Comments from those who attended the unveiling of the portrait are summed up by Frank Farrell, B.D. '51:

"The unveiling of the excellent portrait of Dr. Carnell — moving in its likeness — was in a certain sense like the reappearing of an old friend and teacher whose person and wisdom had seemed prematurely withdrawn from us. But the negative aspect was muted by the accompanying tributes, reminding us of how much we had for which to thank God, who had equipped him with splendid gifts and had sent him forth to enrich us all."

The portrait is now on view in the library.

The final part of the Carnell memorial project is the publication of Dr. Carnell's inaugural address, which is now being prepared for the printer.

As alumni we have committed ourselves to an expression of our debt to Dr. Carnell. Each of the segments of this tribute has cost more than projected. An additional $800 is needed to complete the final phase. We have confidence that you will respond to see this project through.

Fuller President David A. Hubbard, Alumni Association President James Morrison, and Mrs. Edward John Carnell at the unveiling of the portrait of Dr. Carnell.

DEAR FULLER ALUMNI:

The service on October 15 at which the portrait of my husband was unveiled was a memorable time for our family. We were so pleased that you wished to remember him in this way.

Thank you for sharing with us some of the special ways in which he had a part in your lives.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Edward Carnell, Jean and John

CONTINUING EDUCATION

The alumni cabinet has appointed a task force on continuing education for Fuller Seminary composed of Ray Anderson, B.D. '59 (chairman); Gary Demarest, B.D. '50; David Wallace, B.D '51, Th.M. '53; William Ebling, B.D. '59; Loy McGinnis, x '59; Richard Avery, B.D. '67; Harlen Alcorn, B.D. '65; Robert Ives, B.D. '62; Ralph Winter, x '50; Calvin Schoonhoven, B.D. '58; and ex-officio members David Hubbard, B.D. '52, Th.M. '54; James Morrison, B.D. '56; Robert Munger; and Bernice Bush.

Out of its three meetings these conclusions have been reached:
—There is a definite need for continuing education that is not being met by existing programs.
—It is our feeling that Fuller should undertake a program of continuing education, both for alumni and for others.
—An extra-mural program of continuing education can be self-supporting.
—The most feasible type of continuing education seems to be a credit course offered extra-murally for 3 units, on a quarter system. These credits would be applicable toward whatever degree the Seminary would be currently offering, dependent upon the qualifications of the student.

The task force will move ahead into these areas in the immediate future:
—A presentation of our findings to the joint faculties of the Seminary asking for the appointment of faculty members to work with the continuing education task force on proposed curriculum and course outlines.
—A survey of the alumni presenting proposed course outlines and seeking some indication of interest as well as other suggestions for course units.
—The development of a pilot proposal for an initial course in continuing education to be offered in a designated part of the country. This proposal is to be placed in the hands of the Seminary administration with the recommendation that it be put into operation.

THE ALUMNI FUND

As a parish minister (like many of you), I feel this new year will be an interesting one. We have been working on budgets and projected income. We all know the forecasts of recession and cutbacks.

It is easy to get so busy looking at the hill right before us and not see the mountain in the distance. Our concern in theological education is not for this year, but the leadership in the church a generation from now.

Therefore, our support of the Seminary must reflect our confidence we shall go over the mountain with well trained leaders guiding the church tomorrow. To prove it, we give today in spite of the hill of adversity that is in sight.

Giving to date has been good, but it must be better. Send your check today for the alumni fund.

George V. Erickson, B.D. '61
Alumni Fund Chairman

THEOLOGY, NEWS AND NOTES EDITORIAL BOARD

Your alumni publication now functions under an editorial board selected by the alumni cabinet. You will find the board listed on page 3.

Publication of TN&N was suspended for a few months to allow the board time to take a hard look at the publication, develop policies, and schedule editorial emphases. The next six issues will relate to the general theme established in this issue and emphasize certain areas:

"The Church as Community in Counseling"
"The Church as Community in the World Community"
"The Church as Community in Evangelism"
"The Church as Community in Christian Education"
"The World Community of Churches"
"The Church as Community in Worship"

In later issues it is planned that Fuller faculty will handle the book reviews on subjects in their fields.

It is the desire of all of us that the new format will spark more interest and be of greater value to you. Your comments — both pro and con — will be appreciated.
1950

GARY DEMAREST was elected chairman of the General Council of the Synod of Southern California. He is also a member of the California Board of Education Citizens Committee.

RALPH GWINN has accepted the appointment of professor of philosophy and religion and acting chairman of the division of humanities at Tarkio College in Missouri.

1951

DEAN BLACKWELDER has returned to Brazil following his furlough.

CHARLES CORWIN is home on furlough and teaching at Westmont College. ROBERT DUHS, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Biloxi, Mississippi, is chairman of the executive committee for the Gulf Coast Crusade for Christ, in cooperation with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

FRANK FARRELL assumed the duties of associate editor of World Vision magazine in September.

1952

WILLIAM AINLEY is now pastoring the Granger Presbyterian Church in Washington.

HUBERT BROM is senior minister of Beulah United Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He had been pastor of the Saint Andrew United Presbyterian Church, Biloxi, Mississippi, for the Gulf Coast Crusade for Christ, in cooperation with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

1953

LENOX PALIN has accepted the pastorate of the San Gabriel Union Church. He was formerly at the First Baptist Church in San Pedro.

1954

MONRAD BERGSESEN is now serving the West Side United Presbyterian Church in Seattle.

RICHARD CARR has been decorated with the Meritorious Service Medal at Wheeler AFB, Hawaii.

ROBERT SKIVINGTON is on furlough from the Philippines, studying in the School of World Mission.

1955

JAMES BURROUGHS (M.R.E.) is on furlough and plans to return to France, this time to work with Torchbearers.

1956

WARNER HUTCHINSON has been named executive secretary of the American Bible Society's Overseas Distribution Department. He has been ABS secretary for Asia since 1968, having joined the Society in 1966 as eastern regional executive secretary.

SPENCER SUTHERLAND (B.D. '55, M.R.E. '69) is now back in Vietnam after a year of furlough and study at Fuller.

C. PETER WAGNER'S (B.D. '55, M.A. '68) "Latin American Evangelicals: the Threat Within," appeared in the November issue of World Vision magazine. Peter will be visiting professor in the School of World Mission in the winter quarter.

1957

IRV HOFFMAN is on furlough from France, where he is associated with North Africa Mission.

ROBERT BAIRD visited campus in July. He was visiting professor at UCSB during the summer.

JACK BURKE received the Ph.D. degree from UCLA and is now director of the International Student Services Office at the University of Houston. He is chairman of the community section of the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs.

GLENN JOHNSON is new assistant chaplain at Swedish-American Hospital in Rockford, Ill. He left the post of chaplain with the Arabian American Oil Company in Saudi Arabia.

HASKELL STONE visited campus in July. He is now a private manpower consultant for training within the poverty areas.

1958

BART BUELL is now back in Japan with Overseas Missionary Fellowship after spending his furlough in Scotland and the States.

We are happy to announce the marriage of FREDERIC WILLIAM BUSH (B.D. '58 Th.M. '60), assistant professor of Old Testament, to Miss Bernice Spencer, assistant director of public affairs at Fuller, on December 13. The marriage service was conducted by GARY DEMAREST (B.D. '50) with Fred's three children participating. Fred and Bernice will be continuing their respective responsibilities at the Seminary.

ALVIN JEPSON has been named director of development at Columbia Seminary.

RANDY KLASSEN's article, "What Does God See in the Church," appeared in the November issue of His magazine.

PAUL (B.D. '58) and ELIZABETH (M.R.E. '62) LARSEN had their second daughter in July.

1959

OSBORNE BUCHANAN is pastor of the Clementon Community Church in New Jersey and is also serving as the executive director of the Evangelical Missions Information Service.

1960

DANIEL BAUMANN is on sabbatical leave from Bethel Seminary, studying at USC and UCLA. His recent article, "Becoming as Little Children," appeared in the December issue of Christian Life.

DOUGLAS BEYER is the new pastor of the Westside Baptist Church, Topeka, Kansas.

THOMAS ERIKSON is the new pastor of the Whitworth Community Presbyterian Church, on the college campus in Spokane, Wash. JAYMES MORGAN (B.D. '60) preached the installation service.

1961

LADELL BONES (M.R.E.) has returned to Colombia after her furlough in the States.
JOHN MILLER and Linda Earl were married in August.

1962

CHRIS SMITH and Barbara are the proud parents of a new daughter, Valerie.

PETER YUEN is working with the Discipleship Training Center in Singapore.

1963

DAVID BENTLEY is now on furlough. He has been in Jordan for the past 4 years with the Conservative Baptist Foreign Missionary Society.

WILLIAM BOYD received the M.A. in education from Andrews University, Michigan, in June.

LAWRENCE CARAWAY and Renate have a new baby, Stephan Charles, born August 15.

MICHAEL CASSIDY and Carol Bam were married in Capetown, South Africa, in December. Michael was in the States in November.

ERIC SCHILLER is at the University of Iowa pursuing a Ph.D. in hydraulic engineering. The Schiller’s are the parents of their second child, Daniel Eric.

1964

ROBERT BASON (B.D. ‘64, Th.M.’68) has returned from a survey trip through Africa. He met with Dick Peace (B.D. ‘64), Chris Smith (B.D. ’62) and Michael Cassidy (B.D. ‘62). In Ethiopia Bob saw Roger Erickson (B.D. ’66) and Al Strong (B.D. ’50). Bob has joined the public relations staff of Westmont College.

WARD GASQUE (B.D. ’64, Th.M. ’65) received the Ph. D. from Manchester University. He is now on the staff of Regent College, Vancouver, and recently visited Fuller’s campus. Ward’s article, “The Historical Value of the Book of Acts,” appeared in the June issue of The Evangelical Quarterly.

CARL TAYLOR is now serving as pastor of the Elim Covenant Church in Moline, Illinois. The Taylors also have a new son, Eric.

DONALD TINDER became assistant editor of Christianity Today on July 1st. He was awarded the Ph.D. by Yale University.

1965

JOSEPH CALMES is a Manpower Specialist with the Tri-County Mexican American Unity Council, Inc. in Salinas.

JOHN DRUMMOND (x ’65) was ordained by the UPUSA and has accepted the position of assistant in the First Presbyterian Church of St. Cloud, Minn.

MICHAEL HALLEEN is the new chaplain at North Park College. Previously he served as pastor of the Evangelical Covenant Church in Elgin, Illinois.

1966

WAYNE ANDERSON has been appointed minister to students at Park Street Church, Boston. He was previously interim pastor of Ruggles Street Baptist Church, Boston.

1967

RICHARD AVERY was ordained into the ministry of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in June. He is now serving as assistant minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Burbank.

DAVID BRAND and Marilyn have a second child, Sara. Dave is assistant to the pastor of John Knox Presbyterian Church in Seattle.

EDWARD DAYTON’s article, “Facts, Figures and the Call of God,” appeared in the November issue of World Vision magazine.

KEITH JACKSON was ordained by the Presbytery of San Jose at Union Presbyterian Church, Los Altos.

DON MATHIESON was ordained by the UPUSA in June. Don was married to Beverly Marcom in July. They live in Glendale, where Don is associated with the Glendale YMCA.

DON WRIGHT is under appointment as a missionary to Japan under the Baptist General Conference.

1968

ROBERT DOOLING was ordained at the First Presbyterian Church in Sherman Oaks, where he serves as associate pastor. The Doolings recently adopted a baby.

ANNE FROHLICH (M.R.E.) has joined the editorial staff of Pioneer Girls, Wheaton, Illinois.

DONALD MADDOX (x’68) was ordained into the ministry of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and is now serving as assistant minister at the Cranbury Presbyterian Church, New Jersey. He received his B.D. from Princeton in June.

TERRY WINTER (D.Th.P.) has left his position of ministry at Granville Chapel in Vancouver, B.C., to engage in full-time evangelism.

1969

DAN ANDERS is pastoring the Central Church of Christ in Houston, Texas.

RON BAKER (x’69) visited campus in June. He is a B.D. candidate at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

RON CRANDALL (D.Th.P.) was married to Bonnie Lee Dixon on September 6 in Marlette, Michigan. Ron is associate minister, West Anaheim United Methodist Church.

PETER HINTZOGLOU (D.Th.P.) is now assistant minister of the Silverlake Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles.

ROBERT HUBBARD and Pam Iverson were married in June. Bob is serving as youth minister at Covina Evangelical Free Church and also working at the Gospel Broadcasting Association.

LINDA LEATHAM (M.R.E.) and ROBERT BRYANT (x’69) were married in October in El Paso, Texas.

LOWELL LINDEN is the new youth minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Anaheim.

FRED NIEGOCKI is now serving as assistant pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in Lompoc, where WALLACE TURNER (B.D. ‘51) is pastor.

DAVID SCOTCHMER was ordained by the UPUSA and has been commissioned to work under the direction of the National Presbyterian Church of Guatemala.

RANDALL SHELLEY (x’69) was married to Kathleen Swift in September.

JEFF SILLIMAN was ordained and installed as pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Richfield, Utah, in November.

GARY SMITH has been called as associate pastor of the Peninsula Baptist Church of Torrance, where WAYNE FRASE (B.D. ’55) is pastor.

ROBERT STEWART has been named associate minister of the Redeemer Baptist Church, Los Angeles, working with WILLIAM EBLING (B.D. ’59).
Placement Opportunities

These churches or organizations have contacted the Seminary for assistance in filling a vacancy. If you are interested in any of these positions or other possibilities, please contact Bernice Bush, Fuller Theological Seminary.

ADMINISTRATOR. American Board of Missions to the Jews, New York.


PASTOR. Calvary Baptist Church, Dinuba, Calif. B.G.C. Pastor is only staff. Membership 175; attendance 150.

PASTOR. Calvary Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, N.C. Independent.

MINISTER OF VISITATION-EDUCATION. Christ Church of Oak Brook, Ill. Independent. Executive suburban area. Membership 500. Have minister and associate.

PASTOR. Community Church of Monterey Peninsula, Carmel, Calif. Independent.

YOUTH DIRECTOR. East Glenville Community Church, Scotia, N.Y. C.C.C.C. Responsibilities include youth; preaching and visitation on occasion.

MINISTER OF YOUTH. First Baptist Church, La Jolla, Calif. A.B.C.

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. First Baptist Church, Ontario, Calif. A.B.C.

PASTOR. First Baptist Church, San Pedro, Calif.

MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. First Baptist Church, Sioux Falls, S.D. A.B.C. Baptist college in area.

MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. First Christian Church, Phoenix, Ariz. Two others on ministerial staff. Responsibilities include C.E. and youth. Membership 1200; attendance 600.

ASSOCIATE MINISTER. First Christian Church, Santa Monica, Calif. Shared pastoral responsibilities; main emphasis youth and C.E. Membership 300; attendance 175. Pastor is only other staff.

PASTOR. First Congregational Church, Eureka, Calif. Old established church in rural area. Membership 200.

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. First Covenant Church, Tacoma, Wash.

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. First Presbyterian Church, El Centro, Calif. U.P.U.S.A. Membership 500.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION. First Presbyterian Church, San Luis Obispo, Calif. U.P.U.S.A.

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. First Presbyterian Church, Sioux City, Iowa. U.P.U.S.A. Have pastor and director of evangelism. Membership 1450; attendance 450. Responsibilities include C.E. and youth.

PASTOR. Granada Hills Baptist Church, Granada Hills, Calif. A.B.C. Membership 130; attendance 85. Church operates elementary day school of 165 pupils; have principal and teachers. Have part-time minister of youth.

PASTOR. Hinckley and Friesland United Presbyterian Churches, Minnesota. U.P.U.S.A. Two churches are 5 miles apart. Attendance of 125 and 25.

PASTOR. Julian Community Baptist Church, Julian, Calif. A.B.C.

PASTOR. Knox Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis, Minn. U.P.U.S.A.


PASTOR. Parkway Baptist Church, Tempe, Ariz. C.B.A.

STAFF MEMBERS. Pioneer Ranch Camps, IVCF, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

PASTOR. Planada Community Church, Planada, Calif. Independent. One-man staff.


YOUTH LEADERS, MARRIAGE COUNSELOR. Three positions with Caribbean Evangelistic and Missionary Association, Barbados, W.I.

ASSOCIATE MINISTER. True Light Presbyterian Church, Los Angeles, Calif. U.P.U.S.A. Bi-lingual—English and conversational Cantonese. Possibly replace senior minister, retiring in June.

MINISTER OF YOUTH. Bethany Bible Church, Phoenix, Ariz. Membership 1200. Four-man staff.

MINISTER. The Congregational Church, Wasco, Calif. Independent. Membership 220. Minister is only staff.
In searching for a common principle of explanation under-lying “the anatomy of American melancholy”, Beach indi-
cates that the loss of community recurs as a shared theme
among the various studies. And behind the failure of com-
munity, sociologists point to the city, the machine, the bu-
cracy. (Pp. 94, 103.) Surely the conditions of an “industrial-
ized, urbanized, technological society” have played a large and
tragic role in robbing modern man of his communal experi-
ences, and the church has been caught in the drift, accommod-
ating and conforming where she might have resisted or com-
pensated, often without the theological equipment to under-
stand what was happening.

Other elements contributing to the eclipse of community
could no doubt be commented upon, such as the development
of the denomination and denominational machinery in Ameri-
can church life, with its orientation toward purposive associa-
tion rather than religious community. The rapid growth of
those denominations which were able to capitalize on the condi-
tions of the frontier, because of their stress on lay leader-
ship and/or congregational autonomy, with their antipathy to-
ward creeds and their emphasis on the right of private inter-
pretation of the Bible, would also play a role in diluting the
sense of community in American church life.

A great deal of the foregoing can be summed up by saying
that the loss of community in American Protestantism is due
above all to the “middle-classing” of the American churches,
a development which has been proceeding apace for a cen-
tury and more. The generally hysterical reaction of white American
Protestantism to the labor unrest and strikes of the 1870s to
1890s is a graphic index of how far removed the churches
already were from the realities of life among the urban poor.
Congregations were already deserting the city in pursuit of a
constituency emigrating to suburbia. The growth of religious
individualism and the eclipse of community parallels the identi-
fication of white Protestant churches with the mood and value
structure of the middle class.

Shaped and molded by the social and economic forces that
underwrote the growth of the middle class in the United
States, the religion of bourgeois man is, as H. Richard Niebuhr
outlines,

intensely personal in character. The problem of personal
salvation is far more urgent . . . than is the problem of
social redemption . . .

The corollary of the emphasis on self-hood is the activist
attitude toward life which prevails in the middle class. The
very existence of the class depends on the technical manipu-
lation of things and the management of persons . . . Business
is the very essence of existence and industry the method of
all attainment. This practical rationalism characterizes not
only the middle-class conduct of economic enterprise but also
its conceptions of ethics, politics, and religion. The values of
religion are regarded less as a divine, free gift than as the
end of striving; the method of religion is held to be the method
of constant activity; the conception of God is the conception
of dynamic will; the content of the faith is a task rather than
a promise. (The Social Sources of Denominationalism, pp.
82-83.)

The ideas of sin and righteousness which flow from this per-
spective are largely conceptions of discrete actions of discrete
individuals, with little appreciation for the realities of social
sin and righteousness. The religious ethics of the middle
class is marked throughout by this characteristic of individual-

ism. The good which is to be sought in ethical life as in
religion is the moral welfare of the individual” (Ibid., p. 87).
Although rich in self-discipline and an emphasis on personal
responsibility, this morality, Niebuhr goes on to observe,
is incapable of developing a hopeful passion for social
justice. Its martyrs die for liberty not for fraternity and
equality; its saints are patrons of individual enterprise in re-
ligion, politics, and economics, not the great benefactors of
mankind or the heralds of brotherhood (Ibid., pp. 87-88).

The community and fellowship of which the New Testa-
ment speaks cannot survive in the climate we have described,
and have not survived in white, middle-class, Protestant America.
The rediscovery of the biblical concept of koinonia and the
search for spiritual community in our day reflect a growing
awareness of the poverty whose roots we have tried to describe.
Confronted by the clamor of the dispossessed and their search-
ing critique of middle-class morality, coming to terms with the
weaknesses as well as the strengths of modern revivalism,
recognizing the necessity of recovering church discipline, Ameri-

can Protestantism may yet see the ending of a long and

tragic eclipse of community.

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discipline as the key to renewal.

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achievements of revivalism in American life, conservative evan-
gelicals cannot afford to ignore the part of the story which he has so
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has demonstrated the extent to which middle-class attitudes had
domesticated the Protestant churches

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the dean of American church historians. An attempt to demonstrate
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A classic discussion of the role of socio-economic forces in shaping
the life-style of the churches, Niebuhr's volume focusses primarily
on the American scene.
Implications of Community for the Individual

Is there a place for individuality if the church is the community of Christ? For those who would equate the corporate church with the church in community, the answer is — not necessarily! The church as a corporate entity is much more efficient when individuality is merged into loyalty and particularly gives way to uniformity. The corporate structure demands that the community act in unison, but the kind of submission which produces perfect unison does not always produce true community, a fact most choir directors will readily support!

But if we allow for a distinction between the corporate church and the church in community, it does not necessarily follow that the individual is no longer a significant category of being. For community is not formed by the extinction of the individual in the process of creating unity, but rather by the expression of the individual who creates community through the response of saving faith and sustains community by the exercise of responsible commitment to the total body. This principle is well illustrated by viewing marriage as community. The marriage vow is a highly individualistic act of relinquishment which creates a new type of relationship in which each partner in the relationship participates as a functioning individual. In fact, the loss of individuality (personhood) on the part of either partner destroys the true community in the marriage and produces an unhealthy, distorted relationship.

In the early enthusiasm of the primitive church as recorded in the second and fourth chapters of the Acts, the Christian community came together in a unique demonstration of communal life, which, by the way, I am convinced failed not because it was ill-conceived but because it was immaturely developed. When Luke writes of this Christian community he says, "Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common" (Acts 4:32).

It should be fairly obvious that the common life was created by individuals who relinquished the prerogative of private rights and private subsistence through their own volition. In no way was this a relinquishment of individuality but rather a perfecting of individuality through the consecrating act of love and devotion expressed in practical and tangible forms. Nor is there any suggestion that this relinquishment was a one-time forfeiture of individual right to property, but it is certainly implied that every day they each had to say, "None of the things we possess are our own exclusively!" In other words, community is always in the process of being created by the consecration of individuality to the good of others.

Out of this example of community the first implication of the church as community for the individual emerges. No one

Ray S. Anderson, B.D. '59, is pastor of the Covina Evangelical Free Church, Covina, California. He is a graduate of South Dakota State College. Ray serves as vice president of the Seminary's Alumni Association, and is heading up its Continuing Education Task Force.
who claims a representative portion of the grace of Christ can maintain exclusivity with regard to his individual existence. At this point, exclusivity is an aberrant form of individuality. For once the individual acts to relinquish exclusivity in order to create a new relationship, his individuality can only find true fulfillment through the consecration of himself to the highest good of that relationship. This is completely understood within the community of marriage, where the right to exclusivity of individual rights is quickly interpreted by the other partner as a threat to the integrity of the marriage relationship.

The individual is free to consider his responsibility to the body of Christ, and in the consideration move devotionally into some concrete expression of community existence, or he can opt out of community and retain his exclusivity. But he is not free to lay claim to the body of Christ without taking seriously the community of Christ. In other words, the Christian cannot have exclusivity and community both. And if the basic premise is accepted, that the church as the body of Christ is intrinsically the community of Christ, the authenticity of a Christian experience as a purely private and exclusive right is open to question!

The fact that the church has not honestly faced this implication is evidenced not so much by the movement of secular agencies into the field of benevolence as by the presence in the church itself of so many individuals who are sitting on their rights to exclusivity! By implication then the church as community challenges the popular concept that the highest act of individualism is private ownership, whereas, in fact, the highest act of individuality is the relinquishment of that prerogative for the welfare and edification of the other. There is no other conclusion allowable if we consider the life and person of Jesus Christ as the model of a new humanity. What does this mean? It means at least that the human needs of others who are in the community of Christ are embraced in that initial movement of faith wherein we receive the grace of Christ himself. And that to be "in Christ" is to be accountable to our brother for our stewardship of the necessities of life.

But if there is a stewardship of "necessities", how much more is there intrinsic to community a stewardship of grace! And here comes to light a second implication of the church as community for the individual. The community of Christ is God's ordained means for the grace of realized forgiveness. It was to the community of Christ in Ephesus that Paul wrote, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32). Certainly Paul must have in mind the words of Jesus who met with his disciples on the day of the resurrection itself and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit... if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23).

The implication is clear. While the individual can intellectually believe and with his heart grasp the truth that God has forgiven him in Christ, he will not experience this forgiveness until it is mediated to him by the body of Christ. It is not that any person, or even the church as a corporate body, has the power to forgive sins. This is not only God's prerogative but it is also his will as revealed through Christ. The individual, then, who understands the gospel and trusts himself to Jesus Christ as Savior must come to the community of Christ to have that forgiveness, that grace authenticated in a fellowship that confirms the spiritual reality through personal commitment.

It is not unusual to find Christians within the church who have received intellectual assurance of forgiveness and yet who are unable to forgive themselves. The church which proclaims a message of forgiveness without providing a community where forgiveness can be experienced not only isolates the individual with an "untouched grace", but drives out of the church those who leave the doctrine of forgiveness to seek the fellowship of forgiveness where they can find it.

It was Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Life Together who first dared to say it:

It may be that Christians, notwithstanding corporate worship, common prayer, and all their fellowship in service, may still be left to their loneliness. The final break-through to fellowship does not occur because, though they have fellowship with one another as believers and as devout people, they do not have fellowship as the devout, as sinners... our brother breaks the circle of self-deception. A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person.

Because sin is a loss of reality through self-centered action, forgiveness will never be real until restoration comes in terms of relationship with God, and the community of Christ mediates the truth of that restoration through its acceptance of the individual. Only the community of Christ can authenticate the forgiveness of sins for the individual. In this sense, we enter community with Christ when we can honestly meet each other in the reality of our spiritual needs and then trust ourselves to each other as to Christ himself.

Herein lies the crux of the church as community. As individuals we each desire to draw closer to Christ. And ordinarily this is the greatest frustration for the individual. He is told to read his Bible and pray daily. These private "devotions" are said to bring one into communion with Christ. We are warned that if we do not have a consistent devotional life in private, we will be unequipped and unprepared to live with others and, of course, avoid the world which strangely enough Christ seemed to have such an affinity for! The result of this emphasis has been to create a generation of neurotic Christians who find a private Christ no comfort to their anxieties and personal devotions to be totally impersonal. So then Christ is shaped into a thousand images that flicker on the walls of the private sanctuaries of the individual left to himself.

Here again, the implication of the church as community has a distinct bearing upon one's relationship with Christ. In no place in the New Testament is there support for the premise that one meets Christ more totally alone in the closet. Jesus did say, "When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret" (Matthew 6:6). But at no point did Christ suggest that he would meet with us in secret; instead, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

It is certainly indisputable that our relationship with God as Father is uniquely individual and to a degree mystical. There is much value and even need for private meditation, private prayer, and private meditation upon God's Word. But the very phrase "private devotions" is a contradiction in terms! The devotional life of Jesus was not his time spent (Continued on page 19)
Implications of Community for the Church in Society

THOMAS F. JOHNSON

The church is involved in the life of the world because the church is what the world is meant to be and what it will be when Christ the King returns. The church is the people of the kingdom of God — men, women and children in whose lives God reigns. This is what the world is meant to be, God's creation responsive to its Creator. This is what God-Man himself. The church is to "make disciples of all the nations, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19). The disciples are to go out in the name and authority of the risen Jesus and reproduce themselves, as it were. They are to turn the world, the nations, society, the human community, whatever term one desires to use for men outside the church, into followers of Jesus Christ, obedient to his commandments in every aspect of their existence.

Thus, the church as community has only one implication for the life of the church in society, though from that one many corollaries are to be inferred. That one implication is the task of discipling, the mission of bringing the world into obedience to Jesus Christ. In terms of the Rev. Samuel Wolcott's hymn:

Christ for the world we sing;
The world to Christ we bring.

One final piece of prolegomena needs clarification: it is God who will accomplish all. Whatever success the church has in following its calling, it is God to whom all praise and glory belong. Furthermore, besides the fact of his continuing grace, apart from which the church is no different than the world, God himself will bring history to its culmination. He will intervene decisively and "supernaturally" in his creation.

He alone, ultimately, will make disciples of all nations, in 'new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Pet. 3:13). That is the eschatological proviso that is written into our marching orders. The church is to be militant, and joyously so, for the decisive battle has already been fought and won by Christ the King. But we must also remember that V-Day is his as well. He will bring the kingdom to earth, fulfilling himself the mission of his body, and answering its ancient prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

So then, when we speak of the mission of the church, or the role of the church in society, we are talking about the same thing: the task of discipling the nations. In light of this fact, there is no room for a divorce between missions, or evangelism, and the various forms of social concern. One without the other is meaningless, unbiblical and disobedient to the great commission of discipleship. Jesus did not bifurcate man into soul and body. He neglected neither forgiveness nor healing. He related to the individuals he met as whole persons. He knew that spiritual and psycho-physical existence were not separable, even in theory.

The church sins against her Lord when she disobeys his commission by seeking to bring the reign of God only to man's psycho-physical aspect. Neglecting the proclamation of the good news of God's forgiving love in Jesus Christ and concentrating solely on bringing the kingdom to a man's body and mind, via programs of social action and mental health, treats something less than the whole man and ministers something less than the whole Christ. This has been the error, traditionally, of a theology based upon God's immanence. Jesus not only healed the paralytic but the first thing he said to him was, "My son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5).

The church also sins against her Lord in disobedience of his commission to make disciples when she seeks to bring the kingdom to man in his spiritual aspect alone. "Saving souls" was never Jesus' way. He saved persons. Even the most cursory reading of the gospels cannot fail to point up Jesus' concern for men's bodies and minds, as well as their spirits. He healed. In him men are reconciled to God, and in his community, his body, the church, men are reconciled to each other. There they find that God cares about them as they are.

He cares about them as families, as on both sides of the generation gap, as poor and wealthy, as unemployed, retired,

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or overworked, as Negro, white, Puerto Rican, or Mexican-American (and all that it means to be any one of these in the crisis of these days). He cares, through his church, about people as they live in cities or on farms, as frustrated New Left and fearful Old Right, as napalmed and napalmer, as Arab and Israeli.

Discipleship does not close its eyes to men in need, as they are, but rather seeks to be the instrument of God's saving reign to the whole man. "Soul saving" is disobedience to Jesus Christ and has ever been the error of docetic Christianity. In Christ, faith and life, evangelism and social action, cannot be separated. Remember the words of John:

This is how we know what love is: Christ gave his life for us. We too then ought to give our lives for our brothers! If a man is rich and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against his brother, how can he claim he has love for God in his heart? My children! Our love should not just be words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action (1 John 3:16-18 TEV).

The question now arises, how does true love, in obedience to the great commandment and the great commission, show itself in action in our time? How does the church serve the kingdom of God today? How does making disciples of the nations look in practice? These are all the same question. We must descend from the level of the general to the plane of the specific. How do we become, concretely, instruments of God's loving reign here and now?

The ways of involvement are myriad. The church, as God's redeemed and redeeming community, is implicated in the life of the world, in society, at every level. Therefore, no individual's account of how the church shows love today will be exhaustive. The following discussion, then, is only partial and suggestive.

I. THE CHURCH AND THE FAMILY. The church is the instrument of God's loving rule with regard to the family. The disintegration of this primary social unit in contemporary American society is of deep concern. The rising divorce rate, as an index of growing sexual and parental irresponsibility, and the generation gap are special problems that call for the application of God's kingdom.

But here, as in all the other areas of social action that we will mention, the church has no special expertise in the implementation of specific programs. That is why God's people commit themselves cautiously to proposed means for achieving kingdom ends. But we do commit ourselves, knowing that merely to enunciate certain guiding principles of how men ought to act is really not to be involved in the world as Jesus was. Though the safety of pontification is appealing, we would rather, with Luther, "sin boldly, but believe even more boldly in the grace of God." Forgiveness gives us that kind of responsible freedom.

With regard to the family, the church provides adequate pre-marital counseling. She seeks to prevent family problems before there is a family. Sex is discussed freely and openly in a Christian context with high school and college students. Trained personnel, either from within the congregation or friends from outside (e.g., from local colleges or community agencies) teach potential parents what family living involves. The effort to prepare for life together is made conscientiously. It avails little to decry the divorce rate if we have done nothing to stem the tide in our own communities.

Further, the church can serve the interests of God's loving reign by being a bridge over the generation gap. She can be a mediator between youth and the "over-30s". Providing to her own members and to the community an opportunity and a forum for understanding each other is no small task. No solution to the bad side of this division (and there is a good side) will be found until we begin to listen to each other.

Lowering the voting age may be an excellent way to bring alienated youth into the system. Making the political processes more responsive to their concerns may help. But it may not. We have taken the horror that was 1968 all too well in our stride. Young people will not forget so easily the assassination of Martin Luther King in Memphis, the assassination of Robert Kennedy in Los Angeles, and the attempted assassination of themselves and their hopes in Chicago. Does the system, the establishment, the centers of political, social and economic power in this country offer them any hope of a better America, of an end to the Vietnam War, of a significant attack on racism and poverty? The past year said, "No." If the church says, "Yes", and then shows it in action, instead of being the high priest of status quo, she will bring God's reign to the generation gap.

II. THE CHURCH AND MINORITIES. Another major area of concern for God's people, another aspect of the world that they seek to bring into obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ is that whole range of suffering associated with race, urban living, unemployment, poverty and discrimination in housing, schools and jobs. What would God's love have us do in the face of these afflictions? How can we be instruments of God's rule here?

Frustrating as the experience has been, the church has no choice but to continue to put her own house in order and to be God's prophet against these injustices which our society continues to inflict on minorities. His prophets in all ages have never been measured by the results they achieve but by their faithfulness to their calling. We must continue to be as specific and relentless against social evil as were Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah.

With Father Theodore Hesburgh of Notre Dame and of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission we deplore further delays in school desegregation. Fifteen years is broad enough an interpretation of "all deliberate speed." We further refuse to let the Black Manifesto be used as an excuse, a smoke-screen, for further inaction on our part as churches. We also realize that for white Christians the "action" is not in the ghettos but in the suburbs where we live. We must use the power God has given us to turn the majority to justice in the service of God by the alleviation of suffering. We confess that we, as white Christians, do not know best how to minister to the black community, but that our black brothers do. We lead our congregations to understand that they, for a while, may have to suffer discomfort, insecurity and financial risk so that others who have so suffered, and beyond, can gain their true freedom and rightful equality. We do this in a number of ways—by preaching, teaching, counseling, giving, taking a stand before local school boards and city councils as Christians in behalf of specific reforms, by working for the election of responsive civic leaders, and by a host of other practical, grassroots actions.

III. THE CHURCH AND WAR. What does it mean to "make disciples of all nations" in the light (or darkness) of war?
When Christ comes again as King, the nations shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Isa. 2:4).

What does that mean for us as instruments of his kingdom now? The next world war will be nuclear, from which no significant humanity can survive. All wars, even Vietnam and the Middle East, have the potential for extension and escalation into such a global conflict. How is the church to serve God's loving rule in a world and nation that lives, economically, by war?

The church opposes war as disobedience to God's will. That is her witness to the kingdom of light in the kingdom of darkness. But she also recognizes that God is concerned about justice and suffering in this age. War will not cease until God himself ends it at the consummation of history. Until then, there will be wars, all in sinful opposition to his will, but some less evil, less unjust than others.

It is possible that more injustice will be done, more suffering inflicted, more evil perpetrated by not fighting than by fighting. In such a case, Christians will fight as "agonized participants". World War II, for many Christians, was such a case. It was a matter of choosing between lesser evils.

A new complication, however, has entered the picture, since Hiroshima. It must qualify even further the agonized and limited endorsement the church gives to participation in some wars. That new factor is nuclear weapons and the very real, day-to-day possibility of the annihilation of the human race. If any war, such as in Vietnam or the Middle East, has the potential of becoming a world war and if world war means nuclear war, then the church must ask herself whether there can be any conflicts, anymore, that qualify even for "agonized participation".

While it prays for God's kingdom to come, is the church not driven beyond national loyalty to international commitment? In the dark light of the stockpiling of nuclear weapons by the nations, are we not forced to press for strengthening the United Nations to the point of arming it to keep the peace?

Beyond the general problem of the church and war lie many specific difficulties. Not the least among them is the Vietnam War. The church opposes that war as in no way qualifying as a just war or a lesser evil. At this late date with over 35,000 Americans and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese killed, only blind nationalism and a superficial reading of the history of the conflict could justify continued involvement in Vietnam. The church must continue to say that Vietnam was never morally justifiable for this nation, and the price we have paid in integrity and spiritual values cannot be measured by a body count. The greatest challenge of this war lies ahead of us: the church must help the nation to repent and to build a better, more kingdom-like world.

Another area of special mission suggested by the war is the problem of the militarization of American life. From a kingdom point of view, is it tolerable for such a large portion of our national budget to be spent for war and defense? And Vietnam is not the sole cause of this dominance, for we have been told recently by the president that even if the war ends soon, there will be no significant shifting of funds to desperate domestic crises. Why not? Because the money has already been budgeted for new military programs for the balance of the 1970s. The church has a clear witness here, to press for the demilitarization of American life.

Such a program of action would also include draft reform, preferably the elimination of the oppressive institution, and the establishment of a volunteer army, a proposal favored by Senators Mark Hatfield, Hugh Scott, and other Congressional leaders. Until such a time, other reforms, such as selective conscientious objection and the option of alternate forms of service (e.g., VISTA, Peace Corps), would seem to be constructive steps in the direction of making the draft more just and morally sensitive.

Many more issues could be discussed and an attempt made to apply the church's commission to "disciple-ize" the nations to specific problems. The wasting of our natural resources, the pollution of our environment, the war in the Middle East, prayer and Bible reading in the public schools are all such important issues—issues that call for the application of God's loving reign, the kingdom.

In each of the areas that we have discussed and in those that remain untouched, the church by God's grace brings the kingdom, not only by seeking political, social and economic justice and the embodiment of love in action, but also by sharing its faith in the King with all those encountered. Sharing our personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is mandatory and vital, as is our Christian social action. As was said earlier, the two are inseparable. Both are involved in our commission, and we cannot opt for one or the other. Both constitute our task.

The Rev. Ernest T. Campbell in a recent article in Presbyterian Life put the crucial need for evangelism with social action in strong terms:

In our rush to improve society from without, we tend to forget that no society is substantially and authentically changed until men are renewed from within... There are some hurts men and women feel that are so deep that they do not come out except by prayer and fasting.

This is not to say that the church's only mission is evangelism. Such an unChristlike error must not be repeated. But it is to say that conversion is an essential part of our commitment to the kingdom. As Christ's messengers we bring the good news of God's forgiving love with an earnest plea for reconciliation (II Cor. 5:20). But God's good news is always good news for the whole man, that he is loved as the suffering person he is, cared for in body, mind and spirit.

May God give us his grace, so that the church will continue to share the healing of Jesus with all who are in any way afflicted.

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Submitted "A reader in Christian social ethics from the Bible to the present." An anthology, every period in church history included. Gives excellent historical perspective to contemporary questions. Bibliog.
(Continued from page 15)
alone in prayer and meditation with his Father but in his expressions of love, healing, and fellowship with others.
May I suggest that we come closest to Christ when we meet him in our brother, and further, that the communal life of the church is the place where we are most likely to have our personal devotional life nourished?
If we take seriously then the church as community, there must be provision for a devotional experience in common where we study and meditate upon God’s Word in open fellowship with one another, where doctrine is never separated from the agony or the ecstasy of the other members of the body of Christ, where the physical as well as the spiritual, the temporal as well as the eternal, and the body as well as the soul are touched with grace and truth.

The church as the community of Christ offers true individuality to the one who dares to relinquish the right to be alone. For the one in community there is the reality of forgiveness which cannot be denied without rejecting another’s love, and above all, a Christ who can be touched with devotion and One to whom the estranged and alienated person in the world can turn with understanding and commitment. It is not just community — it is the community of Christ!

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This is Bonhoeffer’s finest statement of community as the experience of the Christian in relationship with others and of the church as community. The last chapter on “Confession and Communion” is particularly helpful in the area of personal honesty between Christians. Bonhoeffer’s emphasis on confession as a means of community between Christians will raise some questions, but he does expose a critical weakness in the typical Christian community.


Miller, who is the author of The Taste of New Wine, presents an appealing case for awareness and openness in personal relationships in a very readable style. The book is most helpful in following through the implications of his approach to relationship in the areas of Christian education and church renewal.


This novel by the author of Cry the Beloved Country details the destruction of a good man through his own inner problems when he could not break through to community with others at the level of his real needs. The setting is South Africa and the culture is typically Afrikaner, but Pieter is each of us and his experience is the tragedy of every church where community fails.


Golding, who is the author of Lord of the Flies, is a master at creating an intense, compelling psychological drama. This novel tells the story of Father Jocelyn, a priest who builds a 400-foot steeple on a medieval cathedral as a result of a vision from God. This preposterous scheme is almost made to work by his fanatical faith, even at the expense of every relationship to those who were close to him. As his own identity and the steeple tremble on the pinnacle of destruction, it becomes clear to him that his religious zeal has led him away from God as it led him to break fellowship with others. The story could well be a modern parable of the grotesqueness of Christian individualism.

January 1970
Book Reviews


In the past ten years there has been much investigation of the African independent movements. Turner’s African Independent Church and Barrett’s Schism and Renewal in Africa are outstanding among the more recent comprehensive treatments of the subject.

Oosthuizen’s book covers some of the same ground. He commences with a geological survey of the independent movements in various parts of Africa. He suggests a typological classification of churches, Christian sects which he defines as “Jesus Christ plus something else,” and nativistic movements. The last category embraces both the prophetic movements where Christ is still given a significant role and the messianic movements where Christ’s position has been usurped by a black Messiah.

The author, professor of missiology and ecclesiastical history at Fort Hare University College, South Africa, devotes more time than other books on the subject to a theological analysis of the leading beliefs of the independence movements. Included in this evaluation, according to biblical norms, are the subjects of eschatology, the Holy Spirit, and the use of the Old Testament.

Professor Oosthuizen analyzes a vast amount of data with keen theological and anthropological insight. He is obviously well versed in his subject and rightly deserves to be considered as an authority on African indigenous religion.

By the phrase “post-Christianity” in the title of his book he appears to consider all the groups apart from “churches” as being beyond the point of “no return” on their way back to pre-Christian African beliefs. Corrective measures by missions and churches may prevent the continued development of independent churches, but little hope is apparently held out that present movements may be returned to more biblical standards.

Furthermore, corrective measures now or in the future may be difficult without a radical change of perspective. The author correctly attributes the rise of independentism to “the misunderstanding by White-dominated non-indigenous churches of the psychology, philosophy, languages, culture and traditions of the African, resulting in very little communication in depth and leading, via frustration, to fanaticism” (p. 61). He does not emphasize, however, that this lack of cultural sensitivity is basically a theological failure and not an anthropological one per se. As a result, there is good stress upon theology and anthropology but in a fragmented and compartmentalized fashion. The wholistic biblical viewpoint which comprehends both emphases in a unity (theological-anthropological), and for which we have a model in the incarnation, is never effectively stated. It is, I feel, only when missions and churches see that they have failed theologically, and not merely in finding adequate points of contact for the process of communicating the gospel, that they will be prepared to make the necessary changes.

There is a very detailed and helpful footnote apparatus, but a bibliography would contribute even more to its usefulness.


Dr. Pfeiffer, who is assistant professor of psychiatry at Duke University, has written a layman’s guide to psychiatry, which should prove helpful for a small segment of the population who has had a taste of psychology, but who has not studied the subject beyond the introductory college course.

The book is written by a psychiatrist, and hence is clinically oriented. Dr. Pfeiffer approaches the subject from the viewpoint of disordered or abnormal behavior, rather than talking about the various aspects of mental health, or illness, and then relating the symptoms to the illness. In so doing, his rationale is apparently an attempt to equip the layman with a handy guide to recognize symptoms of mental disorder.

The author in reality is an editor, since he admits that he is not presenting a new point of view in the book, but rather “a new integration of many different points of view.” So, both the weakness and strength of the work is that it is eclectic. Obviously, some divergent views do not lend themselves to integration, no matter how hard Dr. Pfeiffer tries. But the book serves as a thumbnail catalog of some of the major viewpoints of psychiatry.

There is no attempt to recognize the area of religion or faith in the book. Nor should there be, this being an introduction to clinical psychiatry. But for the parish minister, it is worth the price to have an easily-read handbook to abnormal behavior symptoms.

RADICAL CHRISTIANITY AND ITS SOURCES, by John Charles Cooper (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968, 150 pp., notes, $5.95), is reviewed by Keith M. Bailor, B.D. '57, assistant professor of history, Riverside City College, California.

This over-priced tract is a candid apology for the “death of God” movement. The author, a minister in the Lutheran Church in America and professor of philosophy at Newberry...
College in South Carolina, claims that "This book is a study of the roots, the historical and social factors that make the new reformation necessary;" i.e., he claims he has attempted "a two fold task" in this book: one, "documenting the failure of the church to be the church in the revolutionary days of the twentieth century," and two, "demonstrating the loyalty and rationality of those critics who have so severely chastised church theology and practice (and been so ignored) that they have been forced to proclaim that 'God is dead.'" This last point is without question the major burden of the tract.

Professor Cooper has certainly not given us a "study" of the historical and social roots; rather, he has nicely summarized some of those factors. Nor has he added anything startlingly new to the failure of the church to be the church; at least, there is nothing new for those who will read this short book.

However, the author's somewhat fractured attempt to "demonstrate the loyalty and rationality" of the "death of God" theologians remains his chief objective; and while this may sound rather far-fetched, perhaps some will find his argument worthwhile. Very briefly, he is persuaded that American Protestantism, by its over-identification with American culture, is committing the same mistake that medieval Catholicism did; but, the 20th century Luther (i.e., Paul Tillich) has been ignored; thus the "radical reformers" of our century (Altizer, Hamilton, et al) have been driven to extremes in order to rescue the (institutionalized) church from complete irrelevance.

Every appeal to historical analogy is tenuous, to say the least, and this one is no exception; but perhaps the author has erected an impossible hurdle by suggesting that Altizer and Hamilton are somehow in the same tradition as Menno Simons—although some might be more than willing to admit a parallel between Altizer and Servetus, or Hamilton and Socinus.

Nevertheless, the author is not unaware of the difficulties of his position, nor is he unsympathetic towards those who hold older, more familiar theological positions. Yet it does appear to be a bit difficult to think of the "death of God" posture as both loyal and rational, in a New Testament context.


The author states at the outset that "creeds and confessions generally need commentary because they are highly compressed and carefully worded documents." He could have also added that confessions are finally formulated as the result of a great deal of the give and take which we call compromise. For some this fact dilutes the force of a confessional statement; for others it enhances its value because of its unifying persuasion. Dowey, Princeton Seminary professor and chairman of the committee which framed the Confession of 1967, had two priorities in the back of his mind when he wrote this book: (1) to make the historic creed and confessions of the church (The Nicene and Apostles Creeds, The Scots Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism, The Second Helvetic Confession, The Westminster Confession, The Shorter Catechism, The Barmen Declaration) more accessible to the average interested layman; (2) to offer his own interpretation of how C-67 should be used as a cutting edge in the life of the church today.

In developing these two themes Professor Dowey offers valuable insights into the theological understanding of confession-making, into the drama of the historical situations which surrounded each particular confession, into the strengths and weaknesses of the confessions, and into the behind-the-scenes dynamics which influenced the wording of C-67. However, all of this is merely introductory to his primary concern that the actual words of the various confessions be understood. Therefore, the general format deals with word by word, phrase by phrase commentary. Well over half of the book (157 out of 272 pages) handles C-67 in great detail.

Since the publication of this book in the fall of 1968, many conservatives, particularly Presbyterian types, have found in its confirmation of their long-held contention that C-67 actually contained a hidden agenda. Dowey admits in his introduction that this is a personal and not a consensus commentary. He states, "The writer, for better or for worse, did not consult fellow members of the committee that first put forward The Book of Confessions and the Confession of 1967, nor members of the study and revision committee." In a book of this type no one would expect the author to hide his bias and Dowey doesn't even try. For example in his comments regarding the C-67 section on the Bible, he makes it clear that the value of the Bible for him is as a witness to God's revelation in Jesus Christ rather than being synonymous with it; it is descriptive rather than analytical; it is a portrait rather than a photograph. He also contends that "the Scriptures in which the church hears the word of God and through which the Spirit bears witness to the Word incarnate do not need to be bolstered artificially." (Presumably such "artificial bolstering" would include trying to add credibility to the Bible by such approaches as inerrancy and propositional revelation.)

In conclusion, let me say that Dr. Dowey's book is "must" reading for anyone who does not fully understand what it means to be part of a confessing church. It can also be used with great profit in a study group setting. As Dowey suggests, the best way to read this book is with the text of the confessions before you and an open Bible. Whether you agree with Dowey or not, you cannot come away from this book without a new appreciation for the confessions of the church including C-67.


After teaching 41 years at Columbia Theological Seminary, Dr. Robinson has retired. Those who have benefited from his books, or who remember his Payton Lectures at Fuller in January 1970
1949 (published by Eerdmans as Christ, the Bread of Life) can only hope that he will use his new leisure to prolong his effective writing ministry.

As is usual in Festschriften, these nine essays are contributed by distinguished scholars in order to honor a colleague. But a most unusual supplementary testimony is furnished by the fact that both of Dr. Robinson’s sons are contributors. Whether their father, a renowned apologist for a conservative reading of the Reformed faith, could agree with all that the sons affirm is beside the point; the fact remains that a love for the Word runs in the family.

Oscar Cullmann sets a high tone for the book in the opening essay, “The Relevance of Redemptive History,” although those who have read Salvation as History will find nothing new here. Is the claim true, however, that Cullmann does not want to be considered leader of a theological “school”? The conditions set out for the contributors to his own recent Festschrift would indicate otherwise. The second essay, “Jesus is Lord,” proves again the skill and precision with which F. F. Bruce handles not only the N.T. evidence for a high Christology, but the English language as well. This is masterful exegetical writing, carrying forward Dr. Robinson’s arguments presented in Our Lord but making constructive use of the methods of Formgeschichte.

Bo Reicke’s study of “Paul’s Understanding of Righteousness” contributes to the debate over whether justification is collective or individual, concluding that “individual anthropology” interests Paul only when the evangelistic call to baptism is to the fore. Our own Dr. Ladd makes an excellent contribution, “Paul and the Law,” which does not agree with Reicke’s on every point (e.g., the freshness or tradition-orientedness of Paul), but which clarifies in what respect the law retains permanent validity for the Christian. Unfortunately, the editors have not made the proper adjustments in the page numbers in the notes (pp. 144 f.) referring to other sections of this article.


**Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament, by James Barr (London: Oxford University Press, 1968, pp. ix, 354, $9.00), is reviewed by Ronald Youngblood, associate professor of Old Testament languages, Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.**

Despite its somewhat forbidding title, this latest product of the fertile mind of Professor Barr may well become a classic in the eyes of students of Old Testament interpretation. Not all pastors and laymen will read it in depth—although perhaps all should at least scan it, in the light of his suggestive comments on numerous familiar Old Testament passages (note, for example, pp. 20, 23, 53, 57, 120) and his timely warning to all who undertake “definitive translations” of the Bible, the potentiality for which he feels is diminishing rather than increasing (pp. 298 f.). Not all philologists and lexicographers will agree with it in detail—although perhaps all will grant that, by and large, it is a model of caution and understatement.

Barr informs the reader early on that the book “is not intended to be an introduction to comparative philology itself” but that its subject is “the application of philological means to elucidate Old Testament passages which would otherwise be regarded as obscure or corrupt” (p. 10). As we might expect, then, he holds the Massoretic text, both consonants and vowels, in high regard (although not sacrosanct). While by no means denying the validity of textual treatment of a passage for the achievement of understanding (a method which assumes that an error has occurred in the graphic transmission of the passage), Barr has given us the first volume devoted entirely to a critical exploration of the methods employed by what he calls philological treatment, which “does not suggest a differing original text, corrupted by graphic error; rather, it elucidates the meaning of the existing text through the application of linguistic evidence hitherto ignored” (p. 6). The bulk of Barr’s book examines various aspects of philological methodology and generously supplies illustrative examples of how users of the method have interpreted specific Old Testament passages, often with unfortunate results.

Needless to say, no man can possibly know everything about a subject even as specialized as the one under review. Nevertheless, Barr’s apparent preference for Aramaic and South Semitic cognates over Canaanite and Akkadian cognates in explicating difficult Hebrew words and phrases may reflect rather his own academic training than linguistic actualities. This reviewer’s judgment is admittedly a generalization and is based on the examples that Barr adduces and which are in turn but a small percentage of those with which Barr himself is familiar. It may, however, tentatively explain his neglect to mention that Akkadian distinguishes gender in the third person plural forms of the preterit and stative tenses, the former of which is equivalent semantically and the latter morphologically to the classical Ethiopic perfect (p. 30); his antiquated and impossible spelling of a basic Akkadian infinitive (p. 168; see F. W. Geer, “The Treatment of Emphatics in Akkadian,” in Journal of Near Eastern Studies IV/2, April, 1945, pp. 65-67); his failure to recognize the light that Ugaritic has shed on such passages as 2 Samuel 1:21 (p. 235; see H. L. Ginsberg, “Ugaritic Studies and the Bible,” in The Biblical Archaeologist VIII/2, May, 1945, pp. 56 f.); his glowing praise of G. R. Driver, p. 75), who relies heavily on Arabic cognates; and his antipathy toward the work of M. Dahood (pp. 112, 303), who is a specialist in Ugaritic. Criticisms of this kind are not intended to detract from the undoubted values of the book but rather to deplore its lack of balance.

Slips that the author may wish to correct in future editions include the misrepresentation of the Akkadian word for “government” as “non-Semitic in origin” (p. 103) and the misquo-

By its title this book may appear to be one of the many current theological works singing the requiem aeternam deo. But the intention of the author, former dean of the Graduate School of Religion and presently distinguished professor of philosophy at USC, is almost exactly opposed to the position of the so-called "Death-of-God" theologians. For the two-fold thesis elaborated here is that a sense of God's absence has always been an integral part of any authentic religious experience (particularly with the reference to the Hebraic-Christian one), and that such a sense of absence is an indispensable means for the believing individual's attainment to greater faith and maturity.

Professor MacGregor devotes the first four chapters to analyzing the sense of God's absence in theological tradition and existential experience. Citing numerous theologians, he argues that in the history of Christian thought the absence of God has always been affirmed dialectically with his presence. Thus the deus revelatus is also the deus absconditus. But the sense of God's hiddenness for modern man unfortunately is not caused by a heightened awareness of God's transcendence and mystery, an awareness characteristic of the saintly mystic of all ages. Rather, it is more often than not caused by the hypocrisy of the religious situation, "the wickedness of the churchy and the virtue of the profane." It was against this anomalous and ignominious condition that Bonhoeffer enjoined the serious believer to live as if there were no God, and it is also largely on this basis that MacGregor purposes a "total re-orientation of religious values, a fundamental re-evaluation of what it means to be religious, involving a radically fresh reverence for skeptical anguish."

Just such a re-orientation is attempted by MacGregor in the second half of the book when he develops his basic contention that "there is no conceivable way in which I could make any discovery of God except by being separated from him." That sense of separation comes in multiple shapes and forms: e.g., in the wake of meaningless suffering and adversity, in the Sartrean hell of "other people", and in the solitary silence of the Trappist monk. Yet in each of these experiences, the absence of God may be transformed creatively into a "symbolification" of his presence, or more precisely, a sense of "presence-in-absence".

Insofar as it powerfully challenges the illusion that God's presence can be an unambiguous and permanent possession, this book may be commended for its timely criticism of the religious complacency in the run-of-the-mill church goer. However, the murkiness of the author's theological position as well as the occasional obscurity of his style weakens its usefulness. Throughout the book, there is scant reference to the biblical understanding that estrangement from God is a result, not merely of man's finitude, but of his sin. Even if this question is studied phenomenologically and not dogmatically, the intimate relation between the sense of absence and man's awareness of his culpability and fault has been firmly established by a scholar like Paul Ricoeur. On the other hand, MacGregor grossly underestimates the destructive potency of evil and suffering in man's consciousness of the divine. As one German dramatist of the last century put it: "One can deny evil, but not pain; only reasoning can prove God, feeling rebels against it." This is the problem confronting the modern believer and unbeliever, and the anguish so occasioned can hardly be relieved by theological sophistry.


The special focus of this book is a developing ecclesiology in a world come of age. Williams defines the church as a movement - "a pilgrim people moving across time and space in participation in the mission of Jesus Christ." Since participation is not guaranteed in the institution's heritage, it is necessary to reshape the institution to be the servant of God's mission in the world.

All this is predicated upon a shift from a metaphysical understanding of the church as the body of Christ to a historical understanding of the church as the people of God. The church is to point the world to its true destiny. To do this it must fulfill two tasks which can be described as helping its members to grow in maturity, and moving out into all the world in mission.

I was especially interested in what Williams had to say about the ordained ministry. He regards the pastoral image as irrelevant because we don't have a pastoral society. New forms of ministry are appearing and soon will be the norm. But the function of the ordained ministry will be the same: to guard the apostolic tradition and to train the laity for their ministry. In a stinging paragraph on page 123, Williams describes the conservative attempt to "refurbish the model" of ministry now going out of date.

If the church is to carry out its mission in the world it must do so within the existing orders which are neither those of the past generation or those of the New Testament world. This mission within worldly structures is both "word" — answering common human questions with Christian meaning, and "deed" — showing in its own life that the loss of old attitudes does not destroy the safety of our human community, and that fear of change is unjustified.

But how can the church change society, or even itself, when only a small minority is truly alive to the faith? Williams
believes a coherent minority with a strong vision can have an inordinate effect on the life of an institution. This minority is where the action is in the church.

His last chapter on "The Structures of the Church" is exciting. He sees change as good and as now normative. But he does not disrespect continuity which he defines as "the church's story". He says we must have "radical institutional freedom", something hard to find, it seems. Williams throws old attitudes, assumptions, and forms into the air knowing that if they are blown away they are only the chaff.

This is an exciting and helpful book. It is the kind of reading that can help bring evangelicals off the sidelines into mainstream Christianity.


For those whose first introduction to Peter Taylor Forsyth (1848-1921) was Mikolaski's essay in Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology (ed. P. E. Hughes, Eerdmans, 1966), this readable volume will provide a profitable continuation of their study. Selections of varying lengths have been excerpted from Forsyth's major works and arranged topically under such headings as revelation, Christ, creation, the Christian life, the church, etc. Biographical and bibliographical materials are also supplied.

Negatively, the book commits the inevitable sin of edited works, fragmentation of its subject's thought into disconnected units. One ought then to take seriously Mikolaski's intent of introducing Forsyth's major works and ideas, and not allow the book to serve as a substitute for reading Forsyth himself.

Positively, the editor's purpose is accomplished, and one is moved to want to read Forsyth more intensively. That Brunner and "crisis theology" may have been influenced by Forsyth is not impossible. The latter is very christological and his doctrine of revelation is similar to Barth's. For example: "God's revelation is His actual coming and doing. He is there in Christ, not through Christ. Revelation is self-communication, and it is self-communication, which is not the mere offer of Himself but the actual bestowal of Himself, His effectual occupation of Man-soul and not His mere claim of it, not the soul's opportunity but the soul's seizure by an act of conquest."

Another dominant theme in Forsyth is the quality of the inner life of the Christian. Again and again, the individual's experience of the living Christ is stressed, and at times sight of the corporate-social dimension of faith and practice is lost. Whether this was characteristic of Forsyth, further study in his own works would reveal. The selections chosen by the editor give evidence of such a "subjective" preoccupation.