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"I think we've heard more than we care to know." While reading AIDS and the Church, I remembered hearing that comment in reference to another issue. AIDS and the Church provides much needed information on the evolving HIV/AIDS crisis. HIV/AIDS is a global crisis about which we need to hear "more than we care to know." In light of ten years experience with AIDS, Shelp and Sunderland compare the churches' responses to past epidemics with their response to the AIDS crisis, explore various churches' responses to AIDS, move us from past failures to ministry in epidemics, and prepare us better to confront AIDS and any future epidemics. Drawing from William H. McNeill's masterful study, Plagues and People, Shelp and Sunderland state "AIDS/HIV sets before the church a choice, either to respond in a manner that buttresses social divisions and prejudices or to be a prophetic servant and priestly community that comforts hurting humanity, reconciles estranged populations, and stands in solidarity with people oppressed and isolated by fear and prejudice."

The book covers the up-to-date scientific information on physical components of the disease, theories about the discovery of HIV, the cellular immune system, and the origin and transmission of HIV; and the global impact of AIDS. The fact and the figures of the pandemic are overwhelming.

The clinical and psychosocial effects of HIV/AIDS are covered in detail: How the disease affects individuals, their families and friends, economics, and the public at large. Reading these chapters one realizes how greatly we are all affected by HIV/AIDS and how we can affect it. "A compassionate response . . . to people touched by this insidious virus is an obligation, not an option, for the people of God" (p. 77).

Shelp and Sunderland's analyses provide a clear understanding of God's call to ministry for persons touched by HIV/AIDS. For persons struggling to help others face the issue of HIV/AIDS and all of the other issues which "tag" along, i.e., homosexuality, I.V. drug users, etc., the authors articulate a clear and convincing biblical justification for ministry which details the many personal issues caregivers must address with this overwhelming issue. Shelp and Sunderland understand the "complexity of the challenge, the difficulty of the task, and the level of commitment needed to initiate an adequate response."

This book provides a much needed response to the initial reactions of fear and condemnation of persons with HIV/AIDS. It is a must for all caring Christians who are responsible for teaching others.

Linda S. Droge-Blauwkamp


The life of the urban poor, particularly the African-American, seems a hopeless, no-win situation. Unemployment, single-mother families, and life below the poverty level create a never-ending cycle. Over the years attempted solutions, particularly the quick-fix remedy, have been numerous. While Christian organizations have had a successful work in our nation's slums, the problems continue to mount, despite the best efforts.

John M. Perkins, founder of Mendenhall Ministries in Mississippi and an African-American himself, has devoted his life to healing these situations. Beyond Charity will more effectively equip individuals intent on making their lives count in the inner city. But heed this warning: His ideas are not for everyone. Only the bold and stalwart need apply.

The first step, of course, is to let God shape and mold one's life. "Unless we ourselves have experienced the transforming love of God personally," writes Perkins, "we cannot expect God's love to transform others"
Then we must live what we claim to be. That sounds easy enough, but the real mark of love and concern, Perkins challenges, is for Christian families to leave their comfortable homes in middle-class suburbia and move into these communities—to model life-changing lifestyles. Equally as important as social responsibility is evangelism. The two go hand in hand.

The chapter on "Wholesome Care," describing practical ways Christians can develop an "environment of hope," is excellent, insightful reading.

Again and again, I was reminded as I read, God calls his servants to work and live in the ghetto just as surely as he calls others to Christian ministries in the pulpit or foreign mission fields. The call to the inner city is a high and noble one and not without danger, suffering, brokenness, and failure, but the rewards are immeasurable.

Joyce E. Carroll


In a tradition that confesses Sola Scriptura, the Bible will always have relevance for the moral life. C. Freeman Sleeper's The Bible and Moral Life competently demonstrates the vital, yet complex, relationship between Scripture and ethics.

This book's strength is its sensitive explanation that the Bible is not a "moral recipe book." Writing in a style that is accessible to laity without being simplistic, Sleeper shows that "answers" to moral questions are not to be quickly found with little effort and a biblical concordance. The Bible does not so much provide specific moral rules, but "shapes our moral perspective," forming the ethos, customs, or life-style of a particular people.

Sleeper examines four differing, but complementary, strands within the Bible that inform the moral life: law, prophecy, apocalyptic, and wisdom. The scriptural background material he presents is informative and readable, giving the kind of biblical knowledge one wishes for the average person in the pew. He also examines how various denominations have used Scripture in their social witness statements.

In the move from the Bible to ethics, the book falters a little. Sleeper is better at the "descriptive," than the "prescriptive"—more able to examine and analyze others' perspectives than to present his own. Positively, one does not sense a strong agenda or bias fueling the discussion. I never quite grasped Sleeper's own ethical method, although it certainly owes some debt to H. Richard Niebuhr's "responsible" model.

Well suited for group study, this book provides possible questions for discussion.

Stephen Mathonnet-VanderWell


Parker's studies of John Calvin's exegetical corpus were published separately (New Testament in 1972, Old Testament in 1986) in Scotland, but happily have now been united in updated form by Westminster/John Knox for the American market. They form an excellent entrée to an area of Calvin's work which is daunting by its vastness, but rich in resources for the church.

The volume on the New Testament contains much for the historian of exegesis about Calvin's use of Greek and Latin texts, and a detailed treatment of the biographical context of the commentaries. For the pastor, theologian, and general reader, however, the marrow will be found in Chapters 3, 4, and 8, where Calvin's basic hermeneutical principles are discussed. The focus of the Old Testament
volume is more theological, with substantial excerpts from the commentaries themselves to illustrate Calvin's engagement with Scripture.

Among the significant issues discussed by Parker, I would include Calvin's subtle views of the relationship between the words of the text, the mind of the author, and the Word of God; his doctrine of divine "accommodation" in revelation; and his critique of allegoresis, connected with his preference for a historical exposition of the Old Testament which is thoroughly christological. This latter attribute of Calvin's exegesis has, of course, powerfully shaped Old Testament exegesis in the Reformed tradition. Parker's discussion renews our opportunity to understand this revolutionary re-appropriation of the Old Testament at its source.

Even Calvin nods occasionally, and Parker's generally admiring portrait of Calvin the exegete does not gloss over his limitations. He belonged to his era, as we belong to ours, and like us he did not always rise above the prejudices of his time. He sometimes lapses into facile moralizations, or lets preconceived theological notions control his reading. Yet, those who have had recourse to his commentaries can testify how often Calvin speaks to us across the centuries, because he has allowed the Bible to speak to him.

Those who want to immerse themselves more fully in Calvin's exegesis will be glad to know that the Old Testament commentaries, available up to now only in antiquated nineteenth-century translations, are being edited and translated afresh by an Edinburgh-based team in which Parker is a prominent participant. The first volumes have been published recently by Eerdmans/Pater Noster Press. The republication of Parker's studies, obviously timed to coincide with this project, should stimulate interest among theologians, pastors, and religious educators in reading more of Calvin's own words on the Word.

David E. Timmer


We are now standing on the doorstep of the third millennium of Christian history. What will be the fundamental challenges facing Christian moral thought? Since Christian ethics is not obsolete, what can prepare the Christian community not only to accept but also to work faithfully as we step through the doorway into the future? To prepare us for this great challenge Wogaman has written Christian Ethics.

Wogaman believes that we need to know the mistakes and failures as well as the insights and triumphs of Christian witness during the past two thousand years to be prepared for the new era. Starting with the Bible itself, he moves into the early New Testament church, and continues through the next two millennium. In the process he discusses major thinkers, movements, and theologies, and reviews Christian thought about sex, politics, economics, feminism, racism, liberalism, war, culture, and the environment.

Wogaman believes that Christians must be reintroduced to the immense legacy of Christian ethics as it has defined and addressed moral problems. Therefore he sets forth the biblical and philosophical legacies of Christian ethics, citing six points of tension. Throughout this comprehensive work he shows how historical periods, major thinkers, and Christian movements have addressed these tensions. He concludes that these six tensions have persisted throughout two thousand years and have not been resolved yet. Therefore we need to understand, accept, and be aware of these tensions.

Finally, the book addresses fundamental challenges facing Christian moral thought. Wogaman raises new issues in Christian ethics as well as old issues recycled in new forms. Only in this brief section are we presented with the author's view. This section needs expansion.

I learned a great deal from two sections of the book: the discussion of Martin Luther King, Jr. as a liberation theologian, the four
contributions to Christian ethics by liberation theology, and his unbiased presentation of encyclicals of the Roman Catholic Church from 1891 to 1991. These two sections alone make the book worth reading.

Christian Ethics is a truly comprehensive and powerful ecumenical work that achieves a delicate balance between the urgency of today's moral questions and the integrity of the traditions of the Christian community. Its non-judgmental survey of Christian ethics encourages us to remember that the ultimate reason for doing Christian ethics is to respond in love to the Almighty God who is the author of boundless love.

Carl E. Gearhart


Critical Caring is a noteworthy attempt to find the territory where psychology, religion, and feminist hermeneutic intersect so that a new and helpful understanding of caring might emerge. It is a detailed exploration of the concept of pastoral caring and the essential role it plays in the work of pastoral psychotherapy.

Deeply sensitive to the ways in which religious structures and beliefs may hinder caring and erode one's psychological and spiritual health, DeMarinis is well aware that words, particularly religious vocabulary, may have a wide variety of connotations. For this reason, DeMarinis exerts considerable effort in defining her terms. Critical caring, for example, signifies "the ability for careful judgment and appropriate concern to work together for crucial intervention."

In part one of Critical Caring DeMarinis outlines her philosophy of pastoral counseling. She begins with a description of the critical caring worldview, which asserts that human nature is driven by two instincts: the relational and the religious. She then relates critical caring to the context of pastoral psychology. Her philosophy also outlines a feminist perspective of human development and a definition of the pastoral therapeutic relationship. Finally, DeMarinis composes a clinical model for approaching the work of pastoral psychotherapy. In part two of Critical Caring this model is applied to four clinical cases, each involving women for whom religious beliefs or theological orientations present psychosocial and/or spiritual problems.

Critical Caring is a thoughtful and insightful articulation of feminist pastoral psychology. DeMarinis brings to this work her extensive education and experience in the fields of psychology, religion and ritual studies. This lends credibility to DeMarinis' approach, but also limits the usefulness of Critical Caring for the average church worker. The protracted definitions and long, drawn-out theory of part one will test the patience of pastors with limited time and limited experience in psychology. However, DeMarinis' clinical model, involving six "episodes" of therapy, and its application in the case studies, provides a helpful resource for pastoral counselors. As an approach to counseling, the clinical model offers wisdom to pastoral care workers, whether feminist or not.

Alice M. Hartmans


This collection of articles is a worthy part of the literature of a constantly changing—and reforming—church (ecclesia semper reformanda) wherein the voice of every member deserves to be heard. These eleven authors—mostly men (!)—are often portrayed as the "unfavored" children of the church but they are faithful. We should note that the editors have carefully chosen representative scholars from various church disciplines: Scripture study, dogma, history, morality, liberation theology, and even canon law. Before rushing to one article or author—with
or without some pesky prejudice—be sure to read the introduction and the conclusion.

You will discover that the editors refer to five principles which they see as valid foundations for suggestions for reform. These correlate with the 1990 Call to Action statement: A Call for Reform in the Catholic Church: participation, conciliarity, pluralism, accountability, and dialogue. "An essential preamble to these principles is that they must be based on solid theological reflection. It is not a matter of merely imitating the structures of post-Enlightenment democracies in the secular world" (p. 253). These principles are not unfamiliar to students of the church. They have been part of the efforts of good will in every age since Paul went to meet with Peter with Abraham, Jacob, and Moses on his mind. Arguments that ensue into 1994 are fueled by many things even though these principles stand in ready access in the traditions of Christians. Greg Dues writes with similar focus when he lists tolerance, patience/compromise, facilitation of healing, theological reflection, and listening in his Dealing with Diversity (Mystic, CN: Twenty-third Publications, 1988). The genius of these articles lies in their reminding us of simple, tested principles rather than in their negative criticism. There are and will surely always be some things wrong. Any reforming we do is based on some "normative premises: (1) the recognition that all forms of social structure are human creations, partial, historical, and open to revision, is a view truer to historical reality than the belief that social and church order should reflect an unchanging hierarchical cosmos; (2) democratic, participatory forms of government are more appropriate for the expression of respect for persons and safeguarding against abusive relationships than hierarchical and monarchical systems of government that treat the governed as rightless dependents" (pp. 11-12).

As witnessed in the New Testament, Christians have been taught, have lived by, and have been judged by principles of participation, conciliarity, pluralism, accountability, and dialogue. Faithful to the study and the proclamation of these Scriptures plus the law, wisdom, and prophecy upon which they were built, we are well advised to consider the contributions offered in this little collection. Do not forget that these articles are not the only things written by the authors. These are offered to remind us that interested parties must work in the spirit of good will guided by the Holy Spirit to make the church a place where souls find rest: true knowledge of God and a gentle yet humble attitude in the face of the burdens of life in society (cf. Mt. 11:25-30).

Michael A. Danner


This volume's avowed aim is to document the proliferation of non-traditional religions and quasi-religious movements in North America. It contains about 1,200 entries, ranging in length from a few sentences to several double-column pages, with many brief entries on persons (e.g. Aleister Crowley, Gandhi, Mary Baker Eddy) and on things and ideas (e.g. Black Mass, Dungeons and Dragons, Koan, Succubus). Longer pieces systematically treat various religions, cults and sects, both well-known and obscure (e.g. Satanism, Hinduism, Mormonism, Scientology). Also included are historical Christian heresies (e.g. Nestorianism, Modalistic Monarchianism) which the authors attempt to relate to contemporary sects and cults.

The authors have no interest in scholarly detachment. The longer entries dealing with the history and teachings of the various groups and movements conclude with an examination of how they deviate from orthodox Christianity. Given their commitments, the analyses are generally fair and objective. This volume contains a good deal of material that would be difficult to find elsewhere, but has no pretensions to be serious scholarship. It relies heavily on the popular press, unattributed reports, and other reference books. The writing style is occasionally 'purple,' and many
entries would have profited by the removal of trivial and extraneous material: the black and white photographs are of little interest and poor quality.

The natural audience for this reference work seems to be individuals who have no understanding of Christian theology but who want to learn how a non-Christian religion or a heterodox Christian sect compares to mainstream Christianity. Prolonged exposure to this book creates a depressing sense of the boundlessness of human credulity, but it succeeds in giving the reader a view of the fecundity of the religious imagination on the contemporary scene.

Donald H. Wacome


The evangelical contributors to this volume provide a market basket full of food for the person hungry for knowledge about discipling the city. Harvey Conn writes chapters on "Genesis as Urban Prologue" and "The Kingdom of God and the City of Man." Some of the sixteen succeeding chapters contain shipments of information about "The Role of Women in Discipling Cities: A Historical Perspective" (Ruth A. Tucker), "Being Disciples: Incarnational Christians in the City" (Manual Ortiz), "Profiles of Effective Urban Pastors" (Raymond J. Bakke), and "Getting to Know Your City" (Judith Lingenfelter).

In his chapter, "The Lifestyle of Urban Disciple-Makers," Greenway illustrates his theme with "an illuminating story told about Samuel Zwemer, the 'Apostle to Islam' in the first half of this century. On furlough, Zwemer was attending a reunion of his college classmates on the beautiful estate that one of them owned, overlooking Lake Michigan. An old friend said to Zwemer, 'Do you realize what you're missing by spending your life out there in the Middle East?' "Yes, I think I do," replied Zwemer. Then gesturing toward the beautiful estate, he said: 'I too would enjoy having a place like this. But there is another world!'"

Viv Grigg asks in his chapter "Church of the Poor," "How do the poor escape poverty?" He replies, "Throughout history the poor have escaped poverty through migration. My grandparents' migration from The Netherlands illustrates the truth of that observation."

Robert Linthicum's salutary contribution, "Authentic Strategies for Urban Ministry," informs the reader that "four types of leaders in every urban community make it function: gatekeepers, caretakers, flak catchers, and brokers. Every community has them. They make it run."

There exists an occasional lack of gender consciousness by some authors. Aside from some sexist language, this book could be worthwhile reading for all urban pastors and church workers.

Robert J. Hoeksema


Although its title is not distinctive, The Doctrine of God certainly delineates the subject in a significant and helpful manner that will prove useful to mature theologians and pastors, and nearly indispensable to seminary and other ministry-oriented students.

The book reviews the questions relating to the knowledge of God. While breaking no new ground, it is an excellent introduction to the issues. The meat of the book is elsewhere, however. The longest chapter on the attributes of God makes a most helpful distinction between the persons and the nature of God. It is the nature of God per se that is "wholly other"; or as Calvin puts it—"we should not pry into His essence."

Issues of the divine impassibility and immutability relate then to God's nature rather than the persons. As Bray himself writes: "A solution along these lines would make it possible for the eternal God to
be involved in human affairs without compromising either the simplicity of his divine nature or the authenticity of his involvement in the time-space framework" (p. 85). Or later, "God’s personal response to his creatures does not mean that his essence is mutable. Relationship is intrinsic to the concept of person, and anything which pertains to that must be regarded as consistent with his being" (p. 101).

Insights into expression of the Trinity are the greatest contribution of this book. Not only does it provide a readable history of the doctrine (which some have failed to accomplish), but it stresses and develops Tertullian’s insight that the Trinity is a distinction of persons, not nature or attributes. "Thus the unity of God is his ousiai (= essence, being) and the Trinity is found in the hypostases, in each of which the ousia is manifested in its fullness" (p. 157). This doctrine of "co-inherence, or circumincession, means that each of the hypostases is a complete manifestation of the divine essence" so that "every divine attribute applies equally to all three hypostases" (p. 158). Bray develops this by contrasting Eastern (mystical) and Western (rational) theologies not only in the formative period of the Cappadocians and Augustine, but throughout the medieval and modern periods via individual analysis of each member of the Trinity—Father, Son, Holy Spirit. He concludes that on the one hand the Eastern Church must be wary of Arianism because of its strong emphasis on the Father, while on the other hand the Western Church must constantly be aware of the dangers of Sabellianism due to its emphasis on the equality of persons within the Trinity.

Bray concludes his work with a challenge for those evangelicals involved with constructing a systematic theology today. God’s biblical revelation must be absolutely normative. Insisting on such does not mean we begin and end in history. Because God is logical and coherent, theology must be systematic, attempting to contain all the rich diversity of the biblical text. But at the same time, to understand its message truly we cannot “neglect the eternal present, which is the true dimension in which we experience the integration of our own mind and thought with that of the Bible" (p. 234).

Ronald B. Mayers


The theme of this reader on urban ministry can be found in the introduction by editor Eleanor Scott Meyers, president of the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California. She postulates that among the urban poor, churches most often become involved in providing direct services in an attempt to address the needs of their neighborhood. As a result of this direct involvement with services, church members are able to gather volumes of information about the area around them. She writes: "Relying on this information congregations could develop ministries that affect public policy. However, this potential benefit ... is often left dormant because many in the church disagree or are unclear about the relationship of the church to the development and maintenance of public policy" (p. 21).

This volume examines new visions for our cities, ministry in them, and the spiritual well-being of their inhabitants—all inextricably linked, say the contributors—to issues of the political, the economic, and the social. Contributors are urban pastors, community organizers, seminary professors, and church leaders.

By dealing with such issues as homelessness, hunger, violence, health care, drugs, domestic violence, and mental illness, the authors collectively make the point that any future attention to the needs of the cities must include an analysis of the roots of such problems and their systemic perpetuation. In short, the church must become involved in public policy if it is to meet the challenges of ministry in our cities effectively. From the perspective of my own involvement in urban
ministry for the past several years, I can only
cheer the conclusion.

This important work advocates a ministry
of involvement in public policy issues as well
as a contextual education for urban pastors and
future urban pastors. This new paradigm for
urban involvement would mean the
globalization of our seminaries and the
ecumenization of our urban efforts, two rather
beneficial outcomes from our efforts at re-
visioning. Meyer's book brings us a dialogue
of a refreshing new vision for leadership in our
cities.

Barbara Pekich

_Essentials for Chaplains_, edited by Sharon E.
Cheston and Robert J. Wicks, New York:

To describe the contributors to this book
as college and seminary professors, practicing
counselors, and advisors to professional
counselors in training, helps to understand the
composition and rationale for this book. The
introduction indicates "the goal (of this
volume) was to provide succinct practical
material on key topics, as well as suggested
readings . . . ." This volume then becomes an
attempt by the editors to extend their care and
concern to counselors "in the field."

"Burnout" obviously is a common
syndrome in the helping professions. Other
topics (arranged in chapters) include sexual
abuse in children, the aging, women's issues,
and people in crises. Other more familiar
issues given consideration are grief, guilt and
shame, and anger. Each contributor has just
one essay. I suspect different writers, as well
as subjects, will appeal more to some readers
than others.

To me, the revealing word in the title is
"essentials." This book will not make anyone
a counselor. It does provide a handy reference
to the experienced and trained counselor to
review and "bone up" for a particular kind of
counseling situation.

Some chapters, therefore, help us to
respond professionally and positively to
feelings encountered in the client, i.e., anger,
guilt, trauma. Other chapters help us in a
general way to understand a particular clientele, i.e., women, children, "the
chronologically gifted" and issues peculiar to
them. All essays help us avoid being
stereotypical. The essay on the elderly
(chronologically gifted) a term coined by The
National Gerontological Nurses Association
states "We need to set aside our dogmatic
symmetry of thought about the elderly and
speak to wonder, play, passion, and creativity
in our lives (p. 66)." Father Killackey in this
same essay makes a strong pitch for the
collaborative interdisciplinary model for
pastoral ministry. I would heartily concur.

I sensed a common difficulty which the
eyessayists tried to overcome: translating the
rich dynamics of experiential learning from
their classrooms into the contents of a book,
the black and white of the printed page. Who
has not returned from the mountain-top
experience of a great conference and attempted
to convey the experience to a committee,
congregation, audience and find her listeners
bored to death?

George P. Timberlake

_The Eternal Triangle: Pastor, Spouse, and
Congregation_, by Robert L. Randall,

The vocabulary jumps out at you when
you begin to read this book. Skipping the
preface and the introduction renders one
incapacitated as far as understanding what is
going on. Randall provides a glossary at the
back that must be practically memorized if one
is to understand what the book is really trying
to say. Become familiar with the glossary first
and then read as much of the book in as few
sittings as possible. As I was not able to do
this, I found myself constantly referring to the
glossary, which was both cumbersome and
frustrating.

Once past the vocabulary, it is possible to
enjoy the remarkable insight that Randall has
about the relationships among the pastor,
his/her spouse, and the congregation. These insights include possible causes for the conflicts that occur in this unique three-way relationship and how these conflicts can be addressed. The book also explores the causes for common situations and feelings that people in any of the three positions might have. Randall’s many references to actual situations and stories help to clarify what he explains in technical language. A preponderance of negative examples, however, caused me to question whether he had found any well-adjusted "triangles" in his research. It would have helped to have more positive examples.

Overall, I think this is a very helpful book. It shows tremendous insight into the relationships between clergy and the church and the dynamics that govern or instigate certain actions and reactions. It helped me to understand better some of the dynamics occurring between my wife and me and the church we serve. If it hadn’t been such a chore to glean the information, it would have been more helpful. I was uncomfortable with the new terms that Randall introduces. But frankly, I do not have any suggestions on how to avoid this. Many of Randall’s "new" words are necessary because there are no viable synonyms without stigma or prejudice attached.

The best option, I believe, is to become familiar with the glossary and then read the book in one to three sittings. The information contained in this book is worth the effort.

Rick Christy


Clapp contests the glorification of the family among evangelicals, the presumption that the first social responsibility of a Christian is to one’s country, the too uncritical embrace of capitalism, and the assumption that the "traditional" family reflects the "biblical" family. I recommend this thoughtful volume to anyone interested in the family and the church.

This book is well-organized, with delightful headings. Clapp sprinkles it liberally with biblical references and illustrations from history, nature, culture, and personal experience. He draws from Drs. Seuss and Smedes, from Don De Lillo and Doris Lessing, from poets, playwrights, and musicians, the Moonies and the Mormons.

The author depreciates individual spirituality and privatized religion with no connection to the church. He demythologizes our culture: "the myth of the woman as natural shopper." He decries seeking satisfaction in consumption and the supermarket as a paradigm of paradise.

God’s most important institution on earth is the church, not the family. The church is the primary vehicle of God’s grace. Clapp warns against shaping our children into clones and states a sentimentalized family will remain infantile and undeveloped.

The book contrasts the Old and New Testament views of marriage and celibacy, reminds the reader of our Lord’s singleness, and says "Christian singleness is key because it uniquely witnesses to true Christian freedom." Christian homes are dangerous places for children. In his interesting chapter "Welcoming Children and Other Strangers" Clapp provides a chilling quote on how children and infants have been, and are being, abused.

Preachers will find fodder for sermons here. Church members will be pushed to reflection on some of their attitudes and presumptions. Clapp’s acknowledgments and notes will send some readers scurrying to the local library to investigate his sources.

Robert J. Hoeksema


In this work on the doctrine of the Trinity, Ted Peters asks the crucial question, "How can our eternal God relate to our
temporal world?" Answering his own questions, Peters clearly and concisely examines the theological and scientific approaches to the doctrine of the Trinity and its relevance to our temporal experience.

In the first and second chapters, the author identifies the contemporary challenges to Trinity talk. These challenges range all the way from the relevance of Trinity talk, to religious practices, to the feminist critique and interreligious dialogue.

In a logical and theological order, Peters examines contemporary theologians and their talk about the Trinity in the third chapter. These "Post-Barthian Reconstructionists," are theologians who in one way or another owe the dialectical theologian for the restoration of Trinity talk to theology. Guided by "Rahner's rule" ("the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity" and vice-versa), Peters critiques the Trinity talk of Jungel, Rahner, Moltmann, Boff, process theism, La Cugna, Jenson, and Pannenberg. It is not surprising that Peters, who wrote his dissertation on Pannenberg's hermeneutics, would adopt the German theologian's radically eschatological approach. The author summarizes the chapter on this note: "God is in the process of self-relation through relating to the world he loves and redeems. God is in the process of constituting himself as a God who is in relationship with what is other than God." (p.145).

The first three chapters lay the foundation for Peters' constructive theology. In the fourth chapter, then, Peters discusses modern scientific concepts of time and its relation to eternity. He then applies these concepts of time and eternity to a doctrine of the Trinity. Peters deserves credit for taking some very difficult issues and stating them in a clear and understandable manner.

"God as Trinity" raises several questions on the doctrine of the Trinity. Peters' purpose attempted to demonstrate how God's future intersects our present. By focusing on God's coming in the future, he has adopted Pannenberg's radical eschatological approach. Doesn't this radical eschatological approach run the danger of agnosticism?

Regardless of this concern about Peters' methodological approach, "God as Trinity" makes an essential contribution to the debate on the doctrine of the Trinity, especially in lieu of recent scientific research. Pastors will appreciate Peters' clear, almost deceptively simple approach to a difficult subject.

Barry L. Wynveen


In today's society, we often see those who are lost in the abyss of technical and impersonal psychotherapy or those who are on a co-dependent quest to save all who need help. In each of these extreme positions the healthy mix of theory and people skills is lost. Les Parrott III does an excellent job of outlining the personal skills needed to counsel and minister to the adolescent. At the same time, he supports his position with the wisdom of Erikson, Glasser, Piaget, Rogers, Jung, and other leaders in this field. Parrott is able to give us a resource that can enable us to be better counselors to adolescents and others.

Parrott wanted this book to be a resource to those who have relationships with adolescents. Often, this type of book is written as an encyclopedia of answers, but this is not true of Helping The Struggling Adolescent, which promotes awareness of the challenges facing adolescents and those counseling them. It is not "some box of tricks," it is a solid outline of the problems, the tools, and the person needed to reach adolescents today. In this style Parrott succeeds in his desire to create a resource for pastor, parent, and counselor.

This book also succeeds in educating the reader on the most prevalent problems facing the youth of this world. Parrott's simple "four question" format covers the most important aspects of each issue presented. This style lends itself to disclosure, insight, action and
prayerful resolution. Parrott's book is not a play-by-play to cure an adolescent, it is a tool that models positive counseling and shares helpful insights.

The other exciting aspect of this work is the centrality of the Gospel. Throughout the chapters Parrott is able to interweave psychology and theology. In many ways it is a liberating theology for the adolescent, a message that focuses on God's grace and plan. The Gospel is an important tool for the counselor of a struggling adolescent and Parrott is able to illustrate this in a powerful way.

When adolescents are able to solve their problems with reasonable success and feel increasingly confident in their abilities to cope, periods of struggle gradually become less frequent and less intense. Only then will fulfillment begin to outweigh struggle.

Les Parrott has given us a book that will enable us to counsel adolescents effectively. This book is indeed a resource for those working or living with adolescents and an aid to counsel them in the image of God's kingdom. I look forward to reading Les Parrott's next book, Helping The Struggling Adolescent: A Counseling Guide to see how it complements this book.

Paul D. Fazio


Joseph J. Allen, director of theological and pastoral education for the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, presents in this small volume both a plea and an argument for the ministry of spiritual direction. He does this from the perspective and mind set of a minister in the Eastern Christian Church. This tradition witnesses to the mystery and magnificence of God. The faithful are constantly in search of a means of connecting with the risen Lord who alone can lead them into the holy presence of God. Their theology runs deep and their religious practices are demanding. With these notions in mind, we are not surprised to read that the author considers this whole ministry of the inner way "risky" and that the author of the foreword, Edward Huenemann, puts this book in the context of the search for the decent human being. Fr. Allen structures his work here under ministry, history, theology, and psychology. These together, he writes, "emerge within a concrete methodology."

Fr. Allen challenges the contemporary Western reader in his criticism of the notion of total depravity and in his acceptance of the notion of "theosis" (deification, i.e., true humanity is realized only in relationship with the divine prototype of humanness). At the same time, he elicits a harmony within those who have grasped John Calvin's notion in his crest: "my heart I give thee, O Lord, gladly and sincerely." "Such commitment," E. Huenemann writes, "is the essence of Orthodox spirituality, as this exploration shows" (p.xiv). If this little book does nothing else, it expresses Fr. Allen's deep belief that spiritual direction lies at the heart of discipline and decent life style of humankind. Various external forms of government and instruction may or may not cooperate; they are little more than "instruments for the external ordering of common life" (p.xiii).

The author proceeds through his methodology in a reflective manner. His description of ministry focuses on the notion of the "spiritual physician" (iatros pneumatikos) and the reconciliation that "embraces" the very world we live in and all creation. He traces lines through the more modern history of salvation by reminding us of various relationships in spiritual direction that have guided persons on the "inner way." He then looks at the spiritual dimension of spiritual direction as the necessary theological foundation for this ministry. This is all too brief and surely depends upon the context of a faithful Christian reader. He ends this section at the "place of the heart." More than a physical symbol, he approaches the life and
ministry of Jesus at this juncture. The direction dimension of spiritual direction is then critiqued in terms of the psychological elements that have come to influence the trends of the human search for meaning and healing. Psychology is one among many methods of learning about who we are in God's creation but it can never stand alone as the determiner of human value and meaning. We cannot pretend that these methods—even if we attempt to qualify them as Christian—become "religion." The true meaning of life lies much deeper within the mystery and magnificence of God. It is reached only through willing the faithful risk of the inner way.

The book ends with a personal appendix. I use the word personal because the author briefly introduces us to matters of spiritual direction. Like first impressions, we decide whether or not these figures might become friends and mentors.

Michael A. Danner


In his preface, Glen H. Stassen, Professor of Christian Ethics, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, claims he has written his theories for a just peace "clearly and not abstractly—with real people in mind" (p.9). If he is referring to fellow scholars and political activists, then he probably has succeeded hands down. But if he intended to challenge common folk in the pew—average, everyday people who live in the shadow of oppression and the threat of war—he has failed. For the latter, aside from the illustrations, the message in Just Peacemaking may be tedious, incomprehensible and boring. And that is too bad.

Stassen turns to the Sermon on the Mount as a model for just peace—no surprise, really. Here Jesus' words speak clearly of non-violence and non-resistance. But Stassen sheds different light on the familiar words. While this scripture has often been interpreted in a dyadic pattern, he shows that Jesus' emphasis was on a third, often overlooked, imperative. Stassen calls this "transforming initiative," pointing the way to deliverance and grace. For instance: 1. Judge not (traditional piety); 2. By the same judgment you'll be judged (mechanism of bondage); and the vital imperative: 3. Take the log out of your own eye (transforming initiative). And then Stassen goes on to compare Romans 12 to the Sermon on the Mount, spelling out seven transforming initiatives.

Included also are pertinent and detailed chapters regarding the agreement to get rid of Euromissiles, and even background information regarding the decision to go to war against Iraq. At the close of each chapter are study questions for use in group study.

This book is chock-full of information: everything from analyzing scripture to the history of the peace movement itself. It will surely be a valuable resource for many years. The only thing it lacks is the inspiration needed to motivate.

Joyce E. Carroll


Our days are accompanied by life's rhythms and motions—from the churning legs of a hungry baby, to the fatigue one feels after strenuous labor, to the reaching, bending, breathing, stretching, stepping, yawning that fill our moments. Pamela Ann Moeller deepens our awareness of these rhythms, then points us to the same movements in the pages of Scripture. This book is about embodying gospel for our congregations and communities. The author's premise is that bringing theology together with senses and movement is long overdue in the preaching act. Most preaching, she allows, is first and foremost cerebral—head to head—but we do our listeners and ourselves a disservice by not intentionally bringing movement into the homiletic endeavor, striving
to bring the text to life. This is kinesthetic homiletics.

Moeller writes of our bodies being a voice, a voice without words, yet capable of expressing the full range of emotions. The way one walks, shuffles, struts or strides speaks volumes, and she would have this brought to our pulpits. She encourages preachers to ask what the text is doing—what actions are being revealed—perhaps even before we ask what it is saying. Read the text silently, then aloud, then standing, then walking about. Listen for the gestures and rhythms, move with the text, watch for the emotions. How do you move when you are angry? Sad? Befuddled? How would you react if someone crashed your dinner party and poured perfume on the guest of Honor? If you were unable to speak a psalm, how would you present its poetry to another? Some preachers will thumb through this book and quickly assume it’s not for them. It’s too different, even awkward. Yet for many who have stood nearly motionless while proclaiming God’s Word, this book could be a step toward incorporating our bodies with our words, adding a fresh dimension to our preaching. Our movements help to draw listeners actively into the text so they can feel as well as hear it.

The largest portion of the book is devoted to exploring human movement. Included are nearly three dozen illustrations to heighten awareness of how we move. Some will absorb this entire book seated; to follow the suggested motions solo, yet alone in a group setting, simply will not happen. Others will find they are already doing what the author suggests, yet now with expanded awareness. Pamela Ann Moeller writes with a vision—that more of us who proclaim the gospel will also embody the gospel, being not just speakers of the Word, but doers. No sermon manuscripts are included, as kinesthetic homiletics does not translate well to page. The book is concerned with applying our imaginations, taking risks, and stretching in new directions. These are pages worth consideration.

Thomas Bartha


It is refreshing to read a book that makes no apologies for the megachurch and presents these large and fast growing churches as consumed with the "magnificent obsession" of the Great Commission. According to Vaughan, "some critics of large churches would ask me to apologize for this ministry God has so graciously provided. Gratitude, rather than apologizing for God, seems somehow more appropriate" (p.11). This perspective seems to be the motivation for a trilogy of work on the large church which John Vaughan, director of the Church Growth and World Missions Center of Southwest Baptist University, has created. Megachurches & America’s Cities takes its place alongside The World’s Twenty Largest Churches and The Large Church as a survey and update on large growing North American churches.

Vaughan is helpful in defining some new terminology for the science of church growth; for example, he discusses the differences among megachurch, megaministry, and metachurch. He also illustrates the importance of the city or geographic area in which the church exists, "The size of the church in relation to its city or ministry area is the significant factor rather than church size alone. A Church of any size can be a megaministry church" (p.42). It simply depends on the impact that the particular church is having in saturating its sphere of influence with the gospel and the resulting conversion and discipleship of the unchurched population within the ministry area.

Included in this book are fifteen tables related to the saturation and growth of churches in American cities. People trying to determine where God wanted them to plant a church would do well to study them. A person wanting to know more about a church’s potential for ministry should do the same. It is not really a book about how churches grow as much as it is an exposure to the megachurch phenomenon. The last two chapters, Predictable Changes in Growing Churches and
Megachurches: High-Impact Ministries, take a closer look at the megachurch and are helpful to those seeking more then a statistical analysis.

John M. Scholte


Questions, such as the one which forms part of this book’s title, are a valuable tool. Time and again, Corduan applies them with illuminating clarity to the “intellectual and spiritual quest” concerning the relation of mysticism and evangelical Christianity, especially as set out in New Testament teachings. At the outset, he astutely notes that “the issues are complex; the questions to be raised and answered must be carefully formulated” (p. 12) without prejudging the outcome. Thus, pertinent questions often serve the reader well in setting out the parameters of the issue being discussed, for example, in the definitional characteristics of mysticism (W.T. Stace, William James), or in themes concerning ‘perennial philosophy’ or ‘disparate pluralism’, ‘unanimity’, and ‘ineffability’. That Corduan clearly states his biblically based presuppositions concerning true, theology, and methodology is laudable as well, for it gives readers a useful frame with which to engage and evaluate the subject matter being presented.

Using the loose, yet sufficiently formulated definition of mysticism as “an unmediated link to an absolute,” philosophical and theological questions thread their way through the chapters on a common core, an objective referent, and language concerning mystical experience. The “cut ‘n thrust” of Corduan’s questions expose a nucleus of interconnecting themes which are dealt with briefly but adequately. In his conclusion, the New Testament is shown to support a carefully qualified “trinitarian mysticism” (p.132).

Though Corduan’s overall treatment is evenhanded, “Mysticism in Christendom” (ch.6) is lamentably cursory with regard to its five selections. To summarize St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross together in less than three pages is quite inadequate to their contribution; to criticize their mystical schemata as based on “reward” rather than “grace”, and as lacking suitable regard for “scriptural judgment” (pp. 111, 112), is not sufficiently substantiated in the argumentation. Notwithstanding, this book deserves careful attention and may serve readers as a welcome point of departure.

Sharon Dawn Johnson


Prejudice is not simply a word in the dictionary. Prejudice is a disease that inflicts many, destroying both the person who hates and the one who is hated. Grounded in myths, misinterpretations, rumors, ignorance and caricatures, it is the senseless culprit that has contributed greatly to the Native American’s modern history of pain. This prejudice needs to be done away with. This is the challenge that David A. Rausch and Blair Schlepp put before us in Native American Voices.

Prejudice can be dealt with through education. Therefore, one of the purposes of Native American Voices is to provide a readable historical overview of the Native American Nations of the "lower forty-eight." Native American Voices does this and more, discussing the cultural contributions and current status of the Native Americans and sharing with us the problems and prospects that the Native American must be allowed to face realistically in the future. In so doing Native American Voices takes us the readers on a journey that is historical, insightful, painful and yet joyful—in the sense that, in spite all that has been done to it, the Native American community in the United States today is a dynamic community with unbelievable potential.

Native American Voices carries forward its purpose by first giving us an overview of six regions of what became the United States
and the variety of tribal groups that settled there. It then takes the tribal groups of each area and discusses their lifestyles and customs. This section will show many ties to the Bible and to certain beliefs and customs of the ancient Jews. The book moves us emotionally and intellectually forward by discussing Native American life before and after the arrival of the Europeans. Some of the atrocities mentioned will remind us of other historical times when hatred and blind prejudice was allowed to rule. To help broaden the reader’s knowledge of these great nations Native American Voices explores various encounters with the white government and the white man’s religion. A key conclusion in this section, which everyone who wants to evangelize another person from a different culture should know, is that there are many similarities between Native American religion and the Christian faith. If we learn about the religion of Native Americans’ and use that in sharing Christian theology and faith we will win a greater audience.

The last section of this book, which I feel is the best part, deals with the dynamic community of the Native American itself. It explores the unique psyche of the Native American, contributions as well as assets, problems as well as prospects. It does so by starting with and identifying the eight psychosocial stages of psychoanalyst Eric Erikson. Erikson held that these eight stages were the traditional life stages found in Native American cultures. With the help of these stages Native American Voices encouraged us to see the awesome toll that the European incursion has had on this dynamic people. As a result we find mistrust instead of trust, doubt instead of autonomy, guilt instead of initiative, inferiority instead of industry, role confusion instead of identity and despondency instead of continuity. It is a wonder that this culture has survived: Native American Voices celebrates its tenacity to survive.

Native American Voices is an excellent book with room for improvement. One illustration describes the graves of the Apache at Fort Sill, Oklahoma: "Each stone is engraved with an impersonal number." While this is true it is not the whole story. If the authors had gotten out of their car and walked in the cemetery they would have discovered that the names of each Apache buried in the cemetery has his or her name on the other side of the stone. Greater atrocities done to the Fort Sill Apache could have made the authors’ point even stronger. The second area that I believe needs improvement is documentation. Native American Voices has an excellent bibliography but not a single footnote. This book is filled with quotes from books, individuals and public documents but none of these is footnoted. There are various facts in the book that I also believe needed documentation.

This kind of book has been long in the making. I encourage everyone to examine its pages in depth. I also encourage the authors to look again at this work and do a little more foot work.

Carl E. Gearhart


Tulane University’s department of Judeo-Christian studies annually sponsors guest lectures, most of which deal directly with relations between Christians and Jews. The book prints nine recent lectures.

The two lead lectures are a historical pair by Sean Freyne, of Trinity College, Dublin, entitled "Christians in a Jewish World," and "Jews in a Christian World." When Christianity was considered a Jewish sect, there was much "mutual vilification . . . about the proper understanding of what constituted Israel" (p.27). Freyne offers the prayer in Job 42:2-6 as therapy for any continuing vilification. When Constantine declared his conversion to Christianity, there were three issues over which the church was contesting the rabbinate, (1) the Messiah, (2) Temple and land and (3) Torah. The construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was the chief symbol of Christian dominance.
The most significant lecture in this collection is that of Jurgen Moltmann. Under the title, "Christology in the Jewish-Christian Dialogue," he takes seriously the Jewish "no" to Jesus: "The question is not about resentment or a stubborn reaction of defiance, but a 'not-being-able-to-accept'" (p. 86). Since, as they see it, they have no evidence of redemption of God's covenant people nor redemption of the world, Moltmann interprets the current standoff on Christology in the light of Romans 11, a hardening which God set upon Israel for the opportunity for the Gospel to win the "full number of the Gentiles" (11:25-26). Then Israel will see redemption and recognize their Messiah.

A fault of the collection is that only one of the nine lectures is from the Jewish side of the dialogue, and that one only tangential to the main issue. Jakob J. Petuchowski, of Hebrew Union College, discusses the close parallels between the Lord's Prayer and Jewish Liturgy.

The progress in the Roman Catholic rapprochement with the Jewish people in and since the Second Vatican Council is the subject of a lecture by Lawrence E. Frizzell, of Seton Hall. A new expression of this is in the recently published catechism. The remaining lectures in the book do not specifically deal with the Jewish-Christian dialogue. Christian hagiography, Heidegger's supposed philosophy of religion and an attempt to find a basis for the amalgamation of Christianity, Judaism and Islam for the sake of world survival are the topics.

Sylvio J. Scorza


This book offers considerable resources for those engaged in pastoral ministry. It represents a compilation of the best of the practical writings on pastoral ministry authored by Wayne Oates over a long career as Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, and Senior Professor of Pastoral Care at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

The value of the book lies in its eliminating the necessity of locating the specific works of Oates, much of which is out of print. It places in the hands of the student or pastor the outstanding contributions of Oates toward pastoral ministry in one single volume, setting forth his clinical insights and exhaustive search for scriptural understanding in the fields of practical ministry.

Included are chapters from his books: Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care; The Christian Pastor; Pastoral Counseling; When Religion Gets Sick; Anxiety in Christian Experience; Your Right to Rest; Your Particular Grief; Convictions That Give You Confidence; On Becoming Children of God; The Bible and Pastoral Care; Confessions of A Workaholic; The Revelation of God In Human Suffering; Protestant Pastoral Counseling; The Religious Care Of The Psychiatric Patient; Pastoral Counseling In Social Problems; and The Struggle To Be Free.

Frank J. Shearer


The promotional material provided by the publisher well describes the contents: "This resource brings together the work of many leading composers of contemporary psalms, including David Clarke Isele, Hal H. Hopson, John Weaver, Joseph Gelineau, Howard Hughes, Peter R. Hallock, Richard T. Proulx, Jacques Bertheir (Taize), Jack Noble White, and James Barrett. It draws upon a variety of sources and offers approximately two hundred musical settings, most of which are responsorial. . . . Provided are musical settings for a variety of occasions in the congregation and for liturgies of each Sunday—such as daily prayer, marriages, and funerals. Some are published for the first time. The settings range from old to
contemporary forms and include plainsong, Anglican chant, and Gelineau psalmody. This collection also contains canticles—scriptural hymns such as the 'Magnificat.' The music is prepared so that it may be used by a cantor or choir with the congregation."

I enjoyed reviewing this book and am grateful to have it in my library (the honorarium for writing this review!) but doubt, because of its level of musical sophistication, that many RCA congregations will be able to use it. But the minority who can should check it out.

Merwin Van Doornik


Stanley J. Grenz wants to "revision" evangelical theology, because he believes that "there are signs of growing dissatisfaction with traditional ways of doing church," (p.14). Grenz argues that the "old way" in which evangelicals did theology no longer speaks well to the contemporary post-modern era. That "old way" of "evangelical propositionalism" typified by Carl F. H. Henry does not communicate well to people today, Grenz maintains. Therefore, it must be replaced by a revised theological method which not only is in step with contemporary intellectual developments but also, and more importantly, communicates the message which is at the heart of the Bible. Revisioning Evangelical Theology is Grenz's contribution to the ongoing discussion concerning what theological method can assist evangelicals in the task of being the people of God in the contemporary context (p.17).

This is really an excellent book. It is well thought out and has great intentions. Grenz, the professor of theology and ethics at Carey/Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, exhibits a thorough understanding of the sources and character of evangelicalism. Although in the past the emphasis in evangelicalism has been on intellectual and doctrinal elements, Grenz believes that in recent years this has begun to dissipate. For Grenz, the heart of evangelicalism lies in something that was handed down all the way back from the Puritans, namely, an inward experience of God's grace, or spirituality. To the evangelical, religion is, first of all, a matter of the heart which entails a personal attachment and commitment to Jesus Christ. Thus, rather than speculative theological propositions, the new method which Grenz is proposing ought to flow out of discipleship. He states, "Evangelical theologians ought to move away from conceiving their task as merely to discover divinely disclosed truth understood as the single, unified doctrinal system purportedly lodged within the pages of the Bible and waiting to be categorized and systematized" (p.88). Grenz rather, wants to see theology as "practical" and "helpful" to Christians. "God speaks to us through the Scriptures," he says, "not to make us scholars, but to make us Christians" (p.135).

Professor Grenz suggests three "pillars" or norms for the doing of theology. They are: (1) the biblical message, (2) the theological heritage of the church, and (3) the thought-forms of the historical-cultural context in which the contemporary people of God seek to speak, live and act" (p.93). However, of these three norms, the author leaves no doubt that "the evangelical movement has consistently sought to give primacy to the first norm, that of Scripture." (p.108)

In the formation of a new theological method for the evangelical movement, Grenz also employs what he calls an "integrative motif." At first, the author identifies "the Kingdom of God" as this motif. However, he feels that that alone is not sufficient. The "content" of the Kingdom must be defined and Grenz sees that definition as "community." Thus, he finally settles on two very closely related motifs—"the reign of God" and "the community of God." He explains it as follows: "The concept of community fills the concept of the Kingdom of God with its proper content. When God's rule is present—that is, when God's will is done—community emerges" (p.162).
The book concludes with a fine description of the often misunderstood relationship between the Kingdom of God and the church. Borrowing liberally from Reformed theology, Grenz bypasses the dispensationalism often advanced in evangelical circles and speaks of the church as a "product" or an "outgrowth" of the Kingdom.

There is much worthwhile reading here. It seems to this reader that the greatest merit is its attempt to communicate the evangelical vision to our contemporary post-modern era. Rather than the rational, doctrinal approach of the past, the author envisions a systematic theology that is helpful and practical as well as thoroughly biblical. Grenz also has a passionate desire that the church get beyond individualism which has so dominated evangelicalism. Here his emphasis on community and the corporate nature of the church should be a helpful corrective. This will be, however, a difficult task to accomplish, especially in an American setting.

Probably the thing that surprised this reviewer the most was the minute attention which was given to evangelism and the incorporation of the lost into God's community of faith. More of an emphasis on God's mission to the world would have balanced this out. However, Professor Grenz is to be commended on his efforts to make evangelical theology speak to our world today. Hopefully, Grenz is not a "lone ranger" in this cause, and others like him will help "revision" evangelical theology so that its important message is heard and believed.

John C. Koedyker


"Faithful congregational life depends on participation in the public sufferings of God." So begins this revised edition of a book originally written in the early 1980s, which explores a strategy of parish mission/ministry in response to urgent ethical concerns. In writing this work, Hessel visited clergy and lay leaders in parishes around the country to gain a fresh view of what congregations are doing to develop whole ministry.

Hessel cites several trends in society today that make it even more imperative than a decade ago that the church become involved in social transformation. He observes that global issues and eco-justice are urgent responsibilities; since 1981 government at all levels has steadily withdrawn support from the poor; mainstream denominations are inclined to focus their attention on international issues while religious revivalists' efforts are moralistic and simplistic.

In the second half of the book the author explores some traditional modes of social ministry such as advocacy, public policy activism, etc. but includes several components not generally perceived as forms of social ministry. Hessel identifies correctly that prayer, preaching, education, pastoral care and an empowered lay ministry present their own opportunities for congregations to engage in ministries of justice and transformation. These modes are too frequently ignored as having potentially significant impacts.

Finally, Hessel, who has provided a rationale for social ministry and some suggestion to engage in it, now concludes with specific actions to take when a congregation commits to "whole ministry," including prioritizing and choosing a focus.

Social Ministry issues a challenge to the church that it has ignored for too long. The challenge is to live the gospel faithfully with a passion for justice and a commitment to transformation. Only by doing so, says Hessel, will we allow the church to be God's church revitalized and renewed.

Barbara Pekich
The twelve essays which comprise this book have been collected to recognize and honor the ministry of Douglas Steere. Steere, the well known Quaker, has been a significant voice in the arena of ecumenical spirituality. His early concern for cross-denominational interaction led in 1965 to his co-founding the Ecumenical Institute of Spirituality which continues to be a viable forum of exploration and dialogue. The contributors of this volume, all members of the Ecumenical Institute, examine some themes previously explored by Steere.

The cast of writers, hosted by Steere's long-time friend Glenn Hinson, include Doris Donnelly, Tilen Edwards, Edward Farrell, Morton Kelsey, Jean Leclercq, John Mogabgab, and Basil Pennington. The articles range from "Theological Perspectives of Spirituality," "Action and Contemplation," "Discernment: An Ignatian Perspective on John Woolman's JOURNAL," "Spiritual Perspectives on Peacemaking," "Spirituality in the Dialogue of Religions" to "Centering Prayer and the Friends." As in any volume of collected essays there is a great variety of style and quality. Invariably each person will have personal favorites. Personally I was most impressed with the chapters on "Listening in the Rule of Benedict" and "Along the Desert Road: Notes on Spiritual Reading."

The potential reader should be aware that this volume is not an introduction to Douglas Steere or his writings. In fact, one article never mentions him. Rather it is an appreciation and affirmation of the major themes that he has played out in his own life. One could perhaps argue one of the greatest purposes of a book is to stimulate the reader's reflection. In my own case this book succeeded. It can generate a number of very important questions, especially for those of us who engage in ecumenical conversations. I found myself asking, while we can and need to interact with others of different traditions, how willing should we be to borrow from that tradition? And further, what are the parameters of ecumenical spirituality so that it remains Christian? Regardless of one's taste or interest, readers in spirituality will find something to challenge and enrich their lives from this helpful and readable collection.

Tom Schwanda


The Teaching Minister sets forth an understanding of the role and imperative of teaching in the church. Its thesis is "that theology is important, that the irreplaceable function of the church is to help people understand their lives in the light of ultimate reality and understand ultimate reality in the light of their lives" (preface). "The job of religion from time immemorial has been that of 'explaining the meaning of life in ultimate terms.'" The pastor's task is that of teaching the Christian faith. The authors maintain that the failure of the mainline churches is avoiding the most basic and essential task of teaching the Christian faith. The main task facing the mainline churches today is recovery of the teaching ministry, committed to engaging the important issues of the times from a perspective solidly grounded in the Christian faith. "To avoid losing itself, the church must recapture its older tradition ... to speak with authority on matters of the Christian faith, on the understanding of life in ultimate terms." (p.23)

To support their contention, Williamson and Allen trace the place of teaching in the formative literature of the Jewish and Christian communities. They highlight the prominence of teaching in the Jewish synagogue; in the ministry of Paul; and in the role of Jesus as a teacher-preacher. They proceed to note the place of teaching in the history of the church, citing a number of the church fathers who upheld the tradition of authoritative teaching passed down by those who had publicly taught.
the apostolic faith. They note that Augustine devoted Book Four of his *On Christian Doctrine* to arguing that the purpose of preaching is to teach the Christian faith. They appeal to the heritage of the teaching office found in the thought of the reformers, with strong quotes from Luther and Calvin to support that contention. They refer to Richard Baxter who insisted the duty of the pastor is to engage in "personal catechizing and instructing everyone in parishes and congregations who will submit thereto."

"Churches must recover their capacity to think theologically," (p. 66) and understand faith intelligibly to bear a credible witness. Their conclusion is the prominence of the teaching sermon, about which they describe fifteen helpful characteristics, and the place of teaching in all other representative aspects of congregational life such as educational curriculum and programming, worship, counseling and administration/program development.

The book is helpful on a practical level for pastors and educational staff.

Frank J. Shearer