

# Book Reviews

## Book Review Essay

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Cooper, David C. *Thomas Merton's Art of Denial*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989. 304 pp. Hardback. ISBN 0-8203-1094-8

Some people's lives seem to defy limitation and definition. They appear on the human scene almost magically, mysteriously, and shape whatever they touch for generations to come. They become the stuff of heady legends and form a kind of happy hunting ground for scholars. Their graves are never cold and silent. History is warmed when such people are benefactors, and chilled when they are tyrants.

Thomas Merton was one of these unique people. He was a Trappist monk--and a benefactor. Although a member of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (O.C.S.O.), one of Roman Catholicism's strictest orders, he became in his lifetime the most widely read monk in the world. That in itself is a contradiction and at the heart of Cooper's concern. How is it that a man who desires to lose himself in the cloistered life of Our Lady of Gethsemani Monastery, tucked away in the central Kentucky knobs and hills, becomes instead an avowed Christian humanist, addressing himself to issues of modern life in the fast lane? Or, to put it in Merton's terms, what motivates a man to move in less than twenty years from life in a "cowl" to life in "blue jeans," and that while continuing to profess allegiance to the values of contemplative spirituality? It is Cooper's aim to answer these kinds of questions.

David Cooper has more than a passing interest in Thomas Merton. Currently an assistant professor in the Department of American Thought and Language at Michigan State University, Cooper is increasingly known as a Merton scholar. In addition to this insightful and helpful book on the development of Merton's understanding of self-identity, Cooper is editing the fourth volume in *The Letters of Thomas Merton* series. (The first two volumes have been released under the titles of *The Hidden Ground of Love* and *The Road to Joy*.)

*Thomas Merton's Art of Denial* is not for those who are reading Merton (Father Louis, as he was known in the monastery) for the first time. The book as-

sumes some knowledge of Merton's life and writing interests. It is for those, like myself and Cooper, who have been hooked by Merton and want to know as much as possible how the man ticked. There is, I think, an unconscious--if not conscious--hope that we will learn something about ourselves in studying the spiritual and emotional development of Merton.

Cooper is not the first writer to pursue this line of investigation into Merton's psyche. Several books and monographs have already attempted to shed light on the hidden stream of ideas and experiences that shifted Merton from a world-rejecting monk with an identity crisis to a world-accepting monk with something of a unified vision of humanity. The mystery is heightened somewhat by the fact that all of this change of attitude and perspective happened while Merton was in the monastery, and did not change his fundamental commitment to monastic spirituality as one way to God.

Cooper's area of research is a difficult one. The broad outline of Merton's growth as a human "self" is rather easy to chart, as we will do below. But getting to the details of Merton's inner life is a bit more problematic for a couple of reasons. First, there is the sheer volume of printed material available, and the wide scope of subjects it handles. How Merton was able to produce so much in so short a time is simply a marvel. This becomes even more amazing when we take into account that for a very long time Merton was allowed only two, at most three, hours a day for writing. Of course, not everything he wrote was of excellent quality, as Merton woefully acknowledged.

A second problem facing researchers is that the bulk of Merton's unpublished writings are off limits, at least for the time being. Merton stipulated that certain of his writings not be published until twenty-five years after his death. This means, since he died in December, 1968, that these materials will not be released until around 1993-94. Notwithstanding, the Merton Legacy Trust, guardian of the larger part of the Merton collection, has allowed some publication along the way. Still there is a sizeable amount of material to be sifted through. It is not unlikely that some new twists and turns may be in the offing. Whether such discoveries will be substantial for Cooper's line of thought is another matter. Nevertheless, the final word is in the future.

The life of Thomas Merton was anything but dull. A lot of good evenings could be spent with Merton's autobiography and journals, or with any one of several good biographies that are available. The life that unfolds in these books is international in scope, full of insights on human problems and the search for God, and laced with humor. If it is true that St. Francis of Assisi loved those monks who laughed out loud at prayer, he would have loved Thomas Merton! But there was a period when life was more pain than fun for Merton.

It was as a creative and confused young man that Thomas Merton entered Our Lady of Gethsemani Monastery on a winter night in 1941. Trying to escape his past and the society that seemed only to increase his loneliness, Merton plunged full force into the apophatic spirituality of the Trappists, a cloistered order emphasizing stark simplicity, border-line poverty, total obedience, sacrificial chastity, hard work--and silence in solitude. It seemed the perfect place to bury

one's self, to die to everything but Christ. At 26, Merton thought he was ready to sacrifice everything meaningful to him, literally everything, to attain one supreme end: sainthood. What frightened Merton and his friends most is that this seemed to bring an abrupt halt to a promising writing career. But Merton's first abbot, Frederic Dunne, himself a man of letters, realized the potential of his new novice and began to feed Merton's ravenous writing urge. This brought to the forefront a terrible tension in Merton. On the one hand, he wanted to be an obscure monk, known only to God. On the other hand, he wanted to be a popular and respected writer. It is this tension that Cooper thinks Merton resolved in the "missing years."

Between 1948 (with the publication of his best seller, *The Seven Storey Mountain*) and 1957, something drastic happened to Merton that changed him totally. Merton moved from being a rigid, judgmental, Trappist monk concerned primarily with meditation and the single-minded pursuit of contemplation to more of a free spirit, with a cautious but hopeful view of possibilities for the world, and an intense desire to be directly involved in the upheavals of social life worldwide. Merton had begun his monastic journey in a very traditional way but surfaced later as a leader of monastic renewal--to say the least!

Cooper, using selective aspects of Erik Erikson's perspective on identity formation, sees the shift in these terms. In his early twenties, Merton's life was marked by identity diffusion. This confusion of self-identity can be seen in Merton's book, *My Argument with the Gestapo*, written while he was a university student but not published until 1969. This identity diffusion revolved around the tension created by the desire to display the self and the desire to die to the self. It was this man who knocked on the monastery door in the dead of night.

Merton was well into his sixth year as a monk when his best-selling autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, was released. He was virtually an overnight success. The walls around the monastic enclosure could not keep out public interest and the demand for more books. Sudden fame, coupled with Merton's preparation for ordination, compounded the tension within him and sent him into a state of nervous exhaustion. *Seven Storey Mountain* showed the world a man driven into a radical psychological realignment, according to Cooper; that is, an attempted realignment of his sense of self along strict monastic lines. The young author was a man fed up with the world and with himself.

By the time Merton published his sequel to *Mountain* in 1953, *The Sign of Jonas*, Cooper thinks he had moved into a kind of psychosocial moratorium. *The Sign of Jonas* portrays a monk intent on developing an individual piety. Later, in *4 Thomas Merton Reader*, Merton would say that books from his early period seemed to be the ones most preferred by readers. Books like *Mountain*, *Jonas*, and *Seeds of Contemplation* (1947) challenged Americans in a booming post-war economy to rethink the impact a growing materialism was having on them. As a result many young men decided to opt for the romance of the monastic life and its inherent denial of worldly values and illusions. Cooper points out that in the years previous to *Jonas*, Merton's poetic output dwindled to almost nothing. This was the sign of a real inner struggle in a man who was by nature a poet. Deny

who you are: this seemed to be the call of Christ. After all those years Thomas Merton had still not resolved the problem--to him--between being a writer, a man of the world, and a monk, a man of the Spirit.

By 1966, with the publication of *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, a new Merton was solidly in place. The turn was noticeable as early as 1957 when Merton's poetic creativity returned with a vengeance. By the late fifties, Merton had become critical of the image he portrayed in *Mountain*. It was to him a limited, truncated, even false view of an ideal monk, too ideal to ever be realized. His early monastic identity was seen as a selfish aberration of the real person God intended him to become. Love had to be turned outward--toward others. A Christian could not be satisfied to be a bystander in the turmoil of the world. "The missing years" were dedicated to half a life; the half that was missing was the life of the social order. Following Erikson, Cooper thinks with the publication of *Conjectures* Merton had reached final identity integration. Merton had become a whole man, so to speak. Merton did not jettison the spirituality of his early monastic years, rather he refined it, enlarged it, and set it in a social and international context.

What factors led to such a significant change, a change some viewed with horror, others with relish? Cooper thinks a cluster of influences were involved, some internal to Merton and some external. Cooper explores this identity change in two parts of his book, each having four chapters. The first, "The Crisis of the Missing Years," highlights Merton's troubled period of the late forties and early fifties, and focuses on some of the internal influences exacted on him. During this period Merton experienced a continuing tension regarding what he was called to become. He also had a deep distrust of the world, reflected in his judgmental pronouncements on its values. He seemed to have had a deep need for acceptance, especially from a father-figure. These years also show a growing dissatisfaction with a highly regimented Cistercian spirituality, which he regarded as increasingly restrictive of real spiritual growth. Finally Merton exhibited an almost overpowering self-doubt that he could ever become a real monk. "The missing years" cast a kind of pall over Merton, although he did have times of great joy and a sense of meaning. Clearly though, something would have to change.

There were also external influences, which we see in Cooper's second part of the book, "A Radical Humanist and the Radical Critique." Becoming a "radical humanist" was Merton's response to his "failed mysticism," according to Cooper. The radical humanist is less afraid of the world, though he must at times expose its illusions. There is no doubt that this was a period of social concern for Merton. He was consumed with issues of war and peace. Some of Merton's most pungent remarks were reserved for the war-like mentality he saw operating in the world and in the Church. Merton also wrote on matters of race and prejudice, of Catholic indifference (as he saw it) to the responsibility to love one's enemies.

Cooper highlights Merton's interest in the then-new generation of Protestant theologians. For example, there was Karl Barth with his strong Christology, and

Dietrich Bonhoeffer with his "worldly Christianity," a notion that sent shock waves through the evangelical Church. Merton drew the line with the God-is-dead theologians, viewing them as dead wrong, an idea shored up for him by the Orthodox writer, Alexander Schmemmann. Merton's appreciation of Protestant writers was augmented by a relaxed mood toward other Christians by Vatican II, a move Merton applauded.

There was also Merton's interest in non-Christian writers, especially Albert Camus, on whose work he wrote some critical essays. Merton considered Camus the most relevant of the secular writers, though he did not share Camus's pessimism and "acting as if" ethic. Merton was impressed by Eric Fromm and his insights into the human condition. Along these same lines, though not given their due weight by Cooper, was Merton's revived interest in Zen, especially as providing a helpful psychology as well as technique for Christian meditation. (This point is of significance in my overall evaluation of Cooper's book below.)

Given Merton's genius and restlessness, it was a foregone conclusion that he could never remain fulfilled by a particular system or institution, no matter how meaningful in the early going. Merton seemed to always be pushing boundaries, even when he said he did not want to do so. His protests against his instincts as a writer were in vain. There is no question that Merton entered the monastery to become a monk. And there is no question that he changed that to an identification as a writer--and a monk. Merton later referred to himself as a "Christian humanist." And this is an important point: the new Merton was more than a radical humanist, he was a "Christian humanist."

Cooper's finely written and exceedingly helpful book is a major contribution to the field of Merton studies. From one perspective, this study of Thomas Merton is also the study of Christianity in the twentieth century. In fact, Merton himself was a change-agent in many ways, and continues to be. Merton regarded the books he wrote in the late fifties and sixties to be of most value to him, as would be expected. However, I suspect his works on meditation and prayer will be of significant benefit to many generations of Christians, for it really was Merton's interior life, combined with his inquisitiveness, that sparked the identity changes we see in his relatively short life. There is a bit of irony that Merton, the prominent Catholic spiritual writer and activist (as much as he could be), and Karl Barth, the prominent Protestant theologian, whom Merton liked, died the same day. It was a changing of the guard for Western Christendom.

Cooper has designed an effective book which is easy to read and gives evidence of deliberate scholarship. The endnotes for each chapter are a bit sparse, even the weighty nature of the subject. The same is true for the general subject index. Although choices have to be made on endnotes and index content, Cooper's work is so important that many would like more identification of sources and prominent ideas than Cooper supplies.

Books are written for everyone except editors and reviewers. The rub comes that these are among the first to read them. Happy the writer who has connoisseur editors and sympathetic reviewers. That writer will have a long, happy life

and many children--or something like that. This reviewer found Cooper's book a delight. There are, however, some gaps.

For example, Cooper is one-sided in his treatment of Merton by viewing the development of his self-identity almost exclusively through psychosocial lenses. There is no question, of course, that Merton's home life, adolescence and young adulthood, fears, struggles with death, and so on, had a profound effect on him throughout his life. Psychological and social elements impacting his development should not be ignored. However, neither should we ignore God's love and call acting on him. Actually it is impossible to talk meaningfully about the development of the self, or self-identity, without a Divine/human relationship, that is, if one wishes to speak from a Christian posture.

I am sure it seems easier to chart the development of the psyche according to, say, Erikson's psychosocial model or Kohlberg's moral development model. But surely God is one of those internal/external influences or change-agents in Merton's life; Merton would say, the most important. But Cooper seems more at home with Erikson, who does indeed have wide acceptance. Nonetheless, I do not think Erikson's model carries the weight Cooper intends. It seems that James Fowler's faith development model, relatively close to Erikson, is better suited for an interpretation of Merton's changing view of the self (cf. *Stages of Faith*).

Utilizing Fowler's model, beginning with "synthetic-conventional faith," a stage usually entered in adolescence but retained in "most" Christian adults, we are able to see how Merton begins his monastic career with the desire to attain a great fidelity by conforming to the expectations of others. The monastic community at Gethsemani, steeped in tradition in 1941, would have reinforced the supposed security of this stage of spiritual development; indeed, the pre-Vatican II understanding of "the Church" tended to do the same thing. The self, then, is a rather conventional self, requiring little or no critique of the system from which it draws its identity. This certainly seems to be the mind-set of the Merton of the early forties.

It is safe to say that Merton was moving back and forth between "synthetic-conventional faith" and Fowler's next stage, "individuative-reflective faith." Merton gradually accepted, albeit uneasily, the responsibilities of his actions in moving into a monastic vocation. He accepted, for the most part, the deeper meaning implied by his decision to seek God in the closed environment of Gethsemani. Certainly Merton's creative and curious mind caused him to go behind the symbols of life and faith, and that rather early. He was rarely, if ever, comfortable with the surface level of things, even in nature. He preferred essence to appearance. If, as Fowler suggests, entrance into this stage is usually triggered by an inner restlessness, a disturbing sense of reality, then there were many occasions in Merton's novice period to push him beyond systems and rules.

"Conjunctive faith," Fowler's next stage, is very high indeed. At this stage persons are willing, even eager, to dialogue with other faith-systems, to look for truth wherever it is found. By 1957, Merton was exploring other understandings of reality as fast as he could. He saw a need to integrate conscious and subcon

scious forces in his life, partially in a new view of others "as others," as "thous" rather than "its" (to borrow from Buber, whom Merton respected). The motivating concerns of this stage, according to Fowler, are reflected in the need to see life in relation to universal love and justice. This, in part, could account for Merton's radical investment of energy in social matters as he approached mid life.

The last stage for Fowler is "universalizing faith." This is seeing life as the big picture, from the standpoint of a person absorbed with love and justice. The private self is given over to the concerns of the larger whole. This is "golden rule" living and "loving God with all you are and your neighbor as yourself," and that with little or no hesitation or defensiveness. This is the counterpoint to a judgmental spirit, operating as it does from empathy for others. Everything we know about the mature Merton points to this universalizing faith as the major characteristic of his life in the mid sixties. This stage is not a static perfectionism, but a genuine living out of self-giving. It is marked by a certain unseen joy. It is, as Merton would say, a gift of the Spirit.

I think Fowler integrates the best of Erikson with his own system. I really do not want to contend for a system as such, but I would hope that whatever system or theory we use to understand Merton's search for self-identity would incorporate both the psychosocial and the spiritual. Benedict Groschel and Gerald May, recognized authorities in the field of self-identity and spirituality, have also tried to do this. Of course, God is not bound by any system, as we see so clearly in the "fools for Christ" of the Orthodox tradition.

My concerns above relate to another, similar matter. The "radical" character of Merton's "humanism" was that it was radically Christian. He called himself a Christian humanist. This is to say that Merton would not have become a secular humanist. His Christology would not have permitted this. Cooper does say Merton's humanism was essentially Christian, but does not, in my opinion, say it loudly enough. Based on his views on war and peace, his taped conferences of the mid sixties, and his declining interest in speaking forcefully on social issues, Merton was constitutionally unable to have ever become a gun-toting "Christian" revolutionary in the third world. The radical nature of the self, as Merton saw it, lies in its relationship with the radical love of Christ, a love that gives, absorbs, blesses, forgives and dies.

In one place Cooper unaccountably errs. It is with Merton's growing interest in Zen. I think a case can be made that the Merton of the mid to late sixties was returning to a renewed interest in meditation and prayer, and that this pursuit was largely sparked by his fascination with Zen Buddhism. This has been a ticklish point for some people, even to the extent of thinking Merton was in the process, before he died, of leaving Gethsemani to become a Buddhist monk. It is difficult to put that unfounded rumor to rest, but it should be. Merton thought Zen had important psychological contributions to make to the Christian understanding of the self and its relationship with God through meditation. The "Buddha nature," for Merton, was in many ways akin to the Christian notion of self-denial, though it was lacking an essential Christology. And if one wants to talk

about integration in Merton's view of the self, how can his experience at Polonaruwa be bypassed?

I am presently convinced that had Merton lived he would have written some of his best work on meditation and prayer. It is unfortunate that we will never know. My point is that Merton's eastern trip helped prepare him to take his readers into different chambers of the Divine mind. Upon reflection, perhaps it is best we do not have these insights. Perhaps it is to our advantage that Merton left us with only a rather full outline of the spiritual journey, leaving it to us to take it and make our own discoveries of God and self.

There are yet other paths in *Thomas Merton's Art of Denial* I would like to explore. I wish Merton's spiritual sources had been able to rear their heads more often; such as the desert fathers, John Cassian, Bernard of Clairvaux, to name a few. I think *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*, Merton's last book before his death, deserves a place in Cooper's concern with the development of self-identity. I would liked to have compared Anne E. Carr's book, *A Search for Wisdom and Spirit*, with *Art of Denial*. Carr's book may well be the better balanced of the two on Merton's view of the self.

Having said all that, I want to close with a restatement of my earlier appreciation of Cooper's work. In this book he has certainly established himself as a scholar who must be reckoned with whenever serious study is given to Thomas Merton. In the final analysis, a good book is one that energizes people to discuss things that really matter, and Cooper's book does that.



James R. Goff, Jr. *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism*. Fayetteville, London: University of Arkansas Press, 1988. ix, 262 pps. ISBN 1-55728-025-8.

The history of Pentecostalism has been the subject of numerous analyses. However, while there has been considerable debate about the origins of the Pentecostal Movement, most have been as much determined by the concerns of the individual author as by the facts. Assemblies of God scholars (Menziez, Blumhofer) have endeavored to minimize the relationships between early leaders and theologians of Pentecostalism and the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. Scholars from the Pentecostal Holiness (Synan) and Church of God (Cleveland) (Conn) churches have tended to simplify a complex set of structures. Secular historians (Anderson), have noticed the relationship but have not reflected on its significance. Others (D. Nelson, I. McRoberts), following Walter Hollenweger, have attempted to deny the historical and theological relationships between the two religious traditions locating the origins of Pentecostal theology, liturgy and social vision in "slave religion." The careful historical analysis of Goff, the first non-ideological historical analysis of the origins of Pentecostalism, provides a definitive refutation of the Hollenweger theory and carefully nuances all other earlier historical constructions.

The material for this work is the life and context of Charles Parham (1873-1929), the Wesleyan/Holiness evangelist/theologian who worked out the theoretical structures for the early Pentecostal movement and developed its early organizational patterns. Goff traces the life of Parham from the early days in Kansas where he served as a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, before becoming involved with the Holiness movement after an experience of physical healing. He withdrew from the Methodist Church and began a healing ministry. This was moved to Topeka as the Beth-el Healing Home. This eventually expanded to include a Bible Institute, a temporary orphanage service and an employment office. A periodical, *The Apostolic Faith* (which would become an international standard name for Pentecostal periodicals), advertised the meetings and served to link the expanding groups of "Apostolic Faith" believers. Parham continued to be influenced by the writings of A. J. Gordon and Charles Cullis. However, most important for his development were Alexander Dowie and Frank Sanford. He visited their centers to observe and to attempt to inject himself into the leadership of their centers with the undisguised intention of taking control. From 1902-1906 Parham established the "Apostolic Faith" throughout the South, moving his headquarters to Houston. He made provision for William Seymour to go to California as evangelist, where he was invited to pastor the small mission at which American religious history would soon be changed. Parham eventually went to California in an effort to establish "Apostolic Faith" control over the mission. Under attack in the Midwest by his competitor at Zion, Illinois, W. G. Voliva, who charged him with homosexuality, Parham was unable to establish himself in Los Angeles and was expelled from the Azusa Street mission. Goff examines all the evidence and interviewed acquaintances of Parham and

concludes that the information available is insufficient either to implicate or exonerate Parham of the charges.

The Pentecostal movement expanded rapidly, but Parham was unable to retain his position in the leadership of the larger movement after the struggle with Voliva. The organization he founded continued to survive, albeit in the shadow of the larger churches organized after 1906. He moved his headquarters to Baxter Springs, Arkansas, from where he continued his evangelistic ministry in comparative obscurity.

Goff documents each development and controversy with careful detail. He chronicles the theological and ecclesiological developments in Parham's thought throughout the transition from Wesleyan/Holiness to Pentecostal theologian. One is struck by the fact that all of the theoretical structures for the appearance of what would be considered a "distinctly Pentecostal" perspective were in place several years before Azusa Street. Even more apparent from Goff's narrative is the nationwide network of evangelist/theologians and institutions which were moving together toward a consensus for which Parham was a foremost theoretician. It was he who concluded that "glossolalia" was *the* initial evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, that "Spirit-filled believers [are] the 'sealed' Bride of Christ," and that "xenoglossic tongues [were] the tool for a dramatic endtime revival" (p. 173). Each of these ideas had had its adherents in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition for more than a decade. Parham's contribution was to fuse the three.

Goff has assembled and analyzed with magisterial care all known data about Charles Parham, including never-before-used periodical literature produced by the Holiness and Pentecostal movements between 1890 and 1929. There are unanswered questions. The information about the scandals which caused Parham's downfall is incomplete and does not provide an adequate base for arriving at conclusions. It is also impossible to describe with bibliographic precision the various influences on Parham's thought. Additional research in Wesleyan/Holiness periodical literature will be necessary before the milieu of Parham's thinking can be established and the various trajectories of Wesleyan/Holiness thought described. Additional scholarly analyses are needed for other key players of the period including the racist W. Faye Carothers, Black evangelist William Seymour and Dowie follower W. G. Voliva. Similar studies are necessary for theologians in competition with the early Pentecostals, such as P. Breese, H. C. Morrison, William Sherman, A. B. Simpson and Seth Rees who did not join the new movement. These are all dissertation topics in their own right, so to suggest that they are important desiderata is not to take away from Goff's achievement. He has provided a benchmark against which other efforts will be judged.

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William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions*. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1987. xii, 227 pp. ISBN 0226363090

Christian mission has been a constant factor of the American experience. The New England Puritans came to understand their mission, their "errand to the wilderness," as creating a new order of protective and nurturing environment for the Church through the reorganization of the North American continent as was their Christian duty. Their hope was to provide a model for the spirituality of the European nations. Through the various periods of American history, the concept of mission and the target audiences have changed. Enthusiasm for the project, variously defined, has remained high. Despite the thousands of persons who "went" and the millions who supported the undertaking financially, little effort has been made to examine American mission thought using scholarly tools of analysis. Hutchison's is a pioneering effort.

The method of the volume is to focus on the interaction between the mission theory, the structure of the ideas and the main themes of American cultural development. These themes include the varying degrees of national isolationism and internationalism, the "Christ and culture" balance in the United States, the development of American national identity and the developing awareness and concept of the larger world. Special attention is given to the problem of defining the goal of Christian mission: Is the mission to civilize (that is promote American standards of social interaction, health, economics, and so on) or is it to "evangelize"?

Hutchison begins with the Puritans and Roman Catholic missions to the Native Americans. The mission efforts coincided with the development of European colonial structures and their success was usually directly related to the cooperation of colonial rulers. Others, such as Roger Williams and the Quakers, attempted to see the "image of God" in the Native Americans and found them generally to be less "sinful" than the Europeans! Eschatological analysis provided a rationalization for the lack of success: the conversion of the nations was not expected before the fall of the "Antichrist." It was Cotton Mather who provided the ideological basis for subsequent efforts. He asserted that America was new land where "true and original Christianity" was developing.

The early national period saw small beginnings enveloped with expansive triumphalistic rhetoric as mission organizations used biblical, humanitarian and nationalist rationales to encourage contributions. The American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Mission (ABCFM) was founded in 1810 and remained the premier sending agency for more than half a century. It was centered in New England and drew deeply from the Puritan ethos. The same was true of most of the other numerically significant agencies including the Northern Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists. Strategists of the period include Samuel Worcester, Samuel Hopkins, E. D. Griffin and Hiram Bingham. The most important, however, was Rufus Anderson (ABCFM), "the outstanding American organizer and theorist of foreign missions in the nineteenth century" (p. 78). Anderson insisted

that Christian religion and civilization will triumph and that cultural structures are not to be imposed since the Holy Spirit uses the exposition of the gospel to develop a thoroughly Christian civilization. He insisted that education and evangelism be done in the vernacular and that all non-evangelistic structures that had become part of the ABCFM program be discontinued. He was able to promote this understanding during more than forty years as secretary of the ABCFM.

The reaction to Anderson was strong. The new language of mission, paralleling the American national experience, became one of imperialism, as expressed in Robert Speer's comment: "There is a false imperialism which is abhorrent to Christianity, and there is a true imperialism which is inherent in it." Evangelism became a more inclusive term, incorporating all of the social programs Anderson had attempted to suppress. The new leaders were John R. Mott, Sherwood Eddy, Robert E. Speer, James Dennis and A. T. Pierson. In a context marked by the fundamentalist-modernist controversy and the 1893 Congress on World Religions, both the liberals and evangelicals shared a common vision of the superiority of Christianity and a commitment to social ministry.

The central theme of mission theory for the twentieth century has been the dialectic first articulated by Anderson which each successive organization and missiologist has since been forced to address: evangelism vs. social ministry. Hutchison documents the shifts in both "liberal" and "evangelical" circles, examining especially Gustav Warneck, Heinrich Frick, W. H. Griffith Thomas, Robert Speer, W. E. Hocking, D. J. Fleming, R. C. Hutchison, Pearl Buck, J. G. Machen, D. McGavran, H. Kraemer, J. Hoekendijk, J. R. Stott and L. Newbigin. As the discussion has continued, and as groups of "evangelicals" have legitimized social ministry, albeit on a different ideological basis than the "liberals," new independent organizations have grown up on the "right" to provide significant personal and financial resources for "evangelistic missions."

Hutchison's analysis of the development of mission theory is a magisterial effort that will serve as a necessary starting point for future work. He makes no effort to oversimplify complex data, motivations and relationships. He fairly states positions from all sides of the various ideological divides. He also indicates an awareness of material not included in the analysis, especially Wesleyan/Holiness and Pentecostal mission efforts of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The author makes no pretension of exhaustive analysis, and so to suggest areas which, if considered, might have resulted in a different portrait is not to detract from the significance of Hutchison's work. The greatest problem of the book is its focus on the "mainline" theorists. "Non-mainline" influences are interpreted only in light of the "mainline" or as reactions to that structure before 1960. The class or social location issue, which is of major import for the study of American missions, does not enter the discussion. For example, the friction between the Methodist Mission Board and the Holiness advocates who supplied many of the Methodist missionaries between 1870 and 1920 can be best understood in such terms. The key theorists for this period are William Taylor and Andrew Murray. Taylor, in turn, influenced Vivian Dake, William Sherman

Anna Abrams and Hiram Reynolds. E. Stanley Jones and J. Wascom Pickett contributed to a redefinition of mission practice which paved the way for post-Colonial Christianity in Asia. Europeans such as Karl Hoekendijk, T. B. Barratt, A. P. Franklin and Fred Squire provided the missiological theory which has made Pentecostalism the third largest Christian communion.

The interaction between Americans and Europeans between 1870 and 1900, especially the "higher life" Holiness Americans (W. Boardman, R. P. and H. W. Smith, D. L. Moody) and the conservative wing of the Evangelical Alliance (Het Reveil, Le Reveil, Basel Mission), deserves attention as a major mission program directed at the European continent with motives and theoretical structures not unlike those of the early Puritans. The particular convergence of American Wesleyan/Holiness ideology with Anglican Broad Church and Continental Pietism has been underrated in its influence on the mission theory of the twentieth century.

Another issue which merits research is the genre in which missiological reflection is presented. All of the theoreticians discussed by Hutchison spoke and wrote in genre and intellectual categories with which the academic world is comfortable. A more inclusive approach would require the analysis of missionary hagiography/history, testimonies, sermons and periodical literature as well as different sending and funding patterns.

These and other *lacunae* indicate that the history of Christian mission theory is a discipline still in its earliest stages. Hutchison has made a monumental contribution to the field, supplementing the work of Ralph Gabriel, Perry Miller and Sidney Ahlstrom.

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Kung, Hans. *Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View*.  
New York: Doubleday, 1988. 284 pp. Index. ISBN 0385244983

For those scholars who have tried repeatedly to understand the arcane world of postmodern criticism, Kung's most recent work, *Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View*, is something of a boon. This German theologian's style--unlike some of his compatriots--is remarkably lucid, and his basic argument is both orderly and well developed. In a real sense, the work breathes the atmosphere of a mature theologian who has scaled the heights of the contemporary theological world, who can see both its problems and its possibilities, and who is in earnest to communicate this wider perspective.

Ostensibly, the aim of the book is to help religion perform an up-to-date critical and liberating role for both the individual and society. This task, as important

as it is, cannot be accomplished, argues Kung, until "theology has resolved the classical conflicts that have been backed up since the Reformation" (p. 11). In other words, there must be dialogue, understanding and tolerance within the Christian household before the wider, global, perspective of the world religions can be seriously entertained.

But it is precisely this area of classical conflicts in terms of inter-faith dialogue that will, no doubt, prove to be troublesome for both Catholic and Protestant readers alike. Kung's resolution of the theological conflicts of the Reformation era, for example, is much too facile. Erasmus--Kung's choice for a mediator between authoritarian Rome and the aggressive Luther--is idealized in a way that bears little relation to the historical record. Along these lines, the author repeatedly plays a game of "what if." What might have happened if Erasmus had come forward with clear suggestions for practical solutions, and so on (p. 38). But the point is that Erasmus didn't, and what's more, he wouldn't have been Erasmus if he had. Spinning out a wish list, as Kung does, neither alters the historical record, nor does it really prepare the way for future dialogue.

The author is much more effective, however--and some would say more realistic--when he underscores the misery of contemporary dogmatic theology in general (Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant) and when he calls for the corrective of historical critical exegesis (p. 85) as the only sound basis for theology in the future. Theology, according to Kung, must become as historically attentive as the field of biblical studies already is. Undoubtedly, such an approach will hardly be appreciated by either traditionalists or neo-scholastics, but it could, if employed properly, clear away some of the more perplexing issues that have heretofore divided the churches, especially in terms of the doctrine of the sacraments and church polity.

Beyond classical conflicts, the major argument of the book is concerned with the development of future perspectives. Indeed, for this Tübingen scholar, the heart of the theological endeavor in these postmodern times is the balancing of the norm of Christian theology, that is, revelation, with the horizon of Christian theology which is none other than our own human world of experience--a world that has become remarkably diverse and complex as of late. Aided by the seminal work of Kuhn and Toulmin, Kung maintains that the paradigm of modernity no longer works very well, theologically or otherwise, since it has been successfully criticized in a number of ways. First of all, science, technology and industrialism have all become profoundly questionable for postmoderns, and the watchwords of the Enlightenment such as reason, nature and progress no longer function in the same easy and assuring way. Kung is quick to add however--lest he be seen as giving support to reactionaries--that the postmodern critique on the Enlightenment does not constitute its rejection, but instead its critical acceptance, what the Catholic scholar in one place refers to as "an Enlightenment that is enlightened" (p. 199).

Second, the social, cultural, political and religious myopia of the West has increasingly been called into question by a third world that demands to be heard. Polycentrism, therefore, must replace Western hegemony, and the areas of eco-

conomic exploitation, racism and sexism offer, in the words of Kung, "the central challenge in our century for theology, the Church and society" (p. 175). This means, of course, that the context in which theology needs to be done has grown considerably. In light of this, what the author advocates is a "critical ecumenical theology," a phrase that in a real sense summarizes the entire argument of the book. Theology must become critical in that it should be historically rather than traditionally based, and it must become ecumenical in that it should operate against the widest possible backdrop.

The problems that ensue as one attempts this latter project--that is, constructing Christian theology in light of the other major religions of the world--dominates the remainder of the argument. Yes, the Tübingen scholar does raise and answer the question, "Is there one true religion?"--an answer that, by the way, will not make conservatives very happy--but the major contribution of this section lies elsewhere. Interestingly enough, Kung has developed an objective basis to judge the truth of any given religion with respect to three principal criteria: ethical, religious and Christian. If, for example, a religion spreads inhumanity by hindering the development of human beings or by violating their basic rights, then according to the general ethical criterion just listed, one has a basis for calling this religion both false and bad. Religious practices, in other words, do not have to be tolerated simply because they are religious, and this reviewer, at least, has little doubt as to how Kung would decide the recent Salman Rushdie affair.

In sum, the style of *Theology for the Third Millennium*, its eminent readability, the flow of its argument, and the seriousness and importance of the subject under review all suggest a serious and thoughtful reading by both scholar and layperson. Clearly, Kung has written what should prove to be an appropriate guide to the future of the Church as it addresses some of its very real problems, and as it prepares to speak a relevant word to the people of the twenty-first century.

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Richard Fox. *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987, 344 pp., \$10.95, ISBN 0-06-250343-X.

I have rarely been so captivated and, indeed, moved by a biography as I was by this one. I found myself being carried along by the greatness of a man who was portrayed in a masterfully written text, and I knew that I was looking at both Niebuhr as well as twentieth-century politics, culture and theology through new perspectives and insights. The perplexities of human relationships, of political affiliations and of theological categories were dealt with from all sides, as it were, and the book was a veritable kaleidoscope of those complexities.

Nevertheless, constantly standing out from the pages was Niebuhr himself as both a man of his time and one who shaped his time. He was portrayed as a public man, antagonist, friend, colleague, preacher, teacher and devoted son, brother, husband and father. In reading this book one understands Niebuhr's spiritual faith and commitment, and also his political realism. The reader also relates Niebuhr, perhaps for the first time in a comprehensive way, to his family background and to his own family loyalties, and to a life which was lived at a frantic pace. Indeed, one gets out of breath as he or she observes Niebuhr meaningfully participating in his often turbulent life--studying, writing, lecturing, preaching, travelling. And the pictures in the book well illuminate the life of this public man.

There was grandeur in the life which Niebuhr lived, and that comes across through Fox's excellently-crafted work. There was greatness in the compelling figure of Niebuhr, and this also is revealed through the narrative. This biography is a worthy contribution not only to our understanding of a commanding personality, but also to our insight into the history of the century which we share with Niebuhr--theological, political, economic and cultural history.

Most intriguing to me was the full picture of Niebuhr: his sense of humor, his delight in a good argument, his foibles and curious mannerisms. My appreciation for Niebuhr was augmented as the author portrayed Niebuhr's own unashamed sense of morality. Fox revealed that Niebuhr's disagreements with Tillich were not merely intellectual, but personal as well. He could not forgive Tillich's sexual escapades. Likewise, his doubts about John F. Kennedy were not only about Kennedy's politics or lack of intellectual depth. They were also about Kennedy's personal morality--or lack of it. "For all Niebuhr's realism," Fox writes, "he was still the residual 'Protestant purist,' as he confessed to Frankfurter, who could not tolerate a purely amoral public arena. He of course could not endure pure Protestant moralism either. As usual he was in-between, insisting on the 'moral ambiguity' of politics" (p. 272).

One of Fox's best contributions to the study of Niebuhr is this--in order to give us a complete picture of Niebuhr, Fox does an excellent job of weaving Niebuhr's major works throughout the biography by introducing them into the proper chronological context. The author also gives an exposition of these works, and so the reader sees the background of Niebuhr's writings, and Fox's explanations help to illuminate them. Criticisms of Niebuhr's thinking are important, and are not to be overlooked by the admiration one has for this book. However, prior to such evaluations must come a comprehension both of Niebuhr and the context for his thinking and writing. Fox does that for us, and does it with consummate skill.

This book, finally, is a tribute to two people--Niebuhr and Fox. A great service has been rendered to the theological and intellectual history of the twentieth century, and to a lasting understanding of Niebuhr. Fox summarizes the essence of this biography with the final sentence in the Afterward:



Responsibility, long-term commitment, fidelity to family, devotion to the interests of future generations, willingness to admit one's faults, readiness to accept one's limits: in themselves these are neither conservative, liberal, nor radical notions. But they are an indispensable foundation for any lasting cultural or political vision (p. 336).

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Donald D. McKim, ed. *How Karl Barth Changed My Mind*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1986. 186 pp. \$9.95. ISBN 0-8028-0099-8.

This book was written as a tribute to Karl Barth on the hundredth anniversary of his birth. Although written for a specific occasion, it is nevertheless timeless in that it provides insight into the impact of this seminal theologian upon both the thinking and the lives of various people who are themselves significant men and women in the theological landscape today.

*How Karl Barth Changed My Mind* is a series of essays, most of them written specifically for this tribute, by people of various theological and ecclesiastical traditions, but who share the common experience of having been influenced--as we all have in the twentieth century--by Karl Barth. As with any work of this kind, the essays are of uneven length and quality. There are some very simple but moving tributes to Barth, and there are some essays which reopen some of those issues which were critical to Barth himself. A couple of the essays wander into the writers' own theological musings and thereby miss the point of the intention of this book. But most writers are on target in remembering that this book was intended not as a tribute to themselves, but to their teacher and mentor.

It is, naturally, impossible to assess each of the essays. Each reader will have to do that for himself or herself. However, two great impressions came to me as I read the book. First, there were reminders throughout of those issues which were so important to Barth--the centrality of Christ as Lord, the nature of the Church, the Christian concern for justice, or the life of obedience for the Christian. These kinds of emphases, forthrightly stated and lived out by Barth, influenced so many of the writers, whether their minds were changed, shaped or confirmed by these theological convictions. Were one teaching a seminar on Barth, I believe that this book might serve as either an introduction to the seminar, or as a fitting conclusion, so that the students might model the writers and reflect critically on how Barth may have influenced them.

Second, I was often both humored and moved by the personal stories and insights into the man, the person, the individual known as Karl Barth. Many had the privilege of knowing Barth personally and studying with him, and their anec-

dotes of this unassuming and gentle scholar are fascinating, especially for those of us who were not so privileged. One example from one of the best essays will suffice: after stating that "A rumped, lovable, old giant of learning, Barth acted toward us as a pastor," Elizabeth Achtemeier wrote,

I mention these things because it seems to me that part of the test of any theological system is the evidence of the working of that theology in the life of its author. Does that which is being propounded bear the scriptural fruit of the Spirit in the life of the propounder? Some of the leading theologians of the twentieth century fail that test, but Karl Barth did not. The faith he taught produced in him love, joy, peace, kindness, gentleness, self-control. He lived by what he believed and the life he lived, he lived to Christ. Perhaps that personal witness has meant more to me than anything else (pp. 108-109).

Such a well-crafted tribute hit at the core of what much of this book meant to me. *How Karl Barth Changed My Mind* provides not only theological perceptions, but both spiritual and personal insights as well, which makes the reading of Barth all the more of an enriching experience for me.

Here is a book and a tribute well worth the reading. It is beyond all doubt that any who take the theological enterprise seriously have in some measure been influenced by Barth. And the variety of perceptions in this work practically guarantees that every reader will both learn and, at times, resonate with the expressions written therein.

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Richard E. Friedman and H. G. M. Williamson, editors. *The Future of Biblical Studies: The Hebrew Scripture*. SBL Semeia Studies. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987. 207 pp. \$13.95, paper. ISBN 1555400981.

Friedman and Williamson have provided us with a book that largely describes the nature of the methodologies that are in vogue among scholars of the Hebrew Scriptures to mine the riches of this ancient corpus of texts.

In general, the book highlights the common phenomenon that is now found in the field of research in the Hebrew Scriptures: a conscious concern, critique and awareness of the methods that are current over against the time-honored historical critical approach that has reigned since Wellhausen. However, in addition to

the concern for method, there is a wide-spread recognition that a multi-disciplinary approach, including a good spirit of cooperation among scholars, is functioning. Sociological, anthropological and literary criticism of a new kind are the leading elements in current study, along with a resulting new historiography. Within these disciplines a subset of women's studies has arisen that is making some headway in reading the Hebrew Scriptures from a feminist perspective.

The book is quite even in the quality of its chapters. It includes chapters by Robert A. Oden, Jr. ("Intellectual History and the Study of the Bible"), Jon D. Levensen ("The Hebrew Bible, The Old Testament, and Historical Criticism"), Alan Cooper ("On Reading the Bible Critically and Otherwise"), Richard Elliott Freidmann ("The Recession of Bible Source Criticism"), Baruch Halpern ("Biblical or Israelite History"), Jo Ann Hackett ("Women's Studies and the Hebrew Bible"), Tomoo Ishida ("Adonijah The Son of Haggith and His Supporters: An Inquiry into Problems About History and Historiography") and H. G. M. Williamson ("Post-Exilic Historiography"). In all of these articles, the assessment of literary genre and hence the motive and purpose of the literature, is paramount for interpretation of the text. The use of sociological, anthropological methodologies is used to buttress the analysis of literary genre more or less, according to each contributor. The future of biblical studies is projected on the basis of the current practices. The book is an excellent entree into current methodologies in the study of the Old Testament.

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Crimm, Keith, Roger A. Bullard and Larry D. Shinn, eds. *Perennial Dictionary of World Religions*. New York: Harper and Row, 1989 (1981). xviii, 830 pp.  
\$22.95, paper. ISBN: 0-06-061613-x.

This useful dictionary represents a paperback reissue, unrevised, of the *Abingdon Dictionary of Living Religions*, published in 1981. The contributors, generally among the most able interpreters of their subject matters, treat their topics as aspects of living religious traditions. That is, not only are doctrines, beliefs and historical matters considered, but also the cultural phenomena associated with the religious traditions. Although the entries are alphabetically arranged by subject, the user is guided to the articles in the volume which relate to the major world religions, the several regional traditions (e.g., African Traditional Religion) and the very useful articles that deal with phenomena that cross the lines of religious traditions (e.g., eschatology, founders, pilgrimage and sacrifice).

Since this dictionary remains the best single-volume reference tool in its field, its reappearance in this relatively inexpensive edition is a boon to all who study world religions seriously.

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### Religious Traditions of the World Series

- Denny, Frederick. *Islam*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988. ix, 140 pp. \$7.95, paper. ISBN 0-06-06521-x
- Earhart, H. Byron. *Religions of Japan*. New York: Harper and Row, 1984. ix, 142 pp. \$7.95, paper. ISBN 0-06-062112-5.
- Fishbane, Michael. *Judaism: Revelation and Traditions*. New York: Harper and Row, 1987. xi, 144 pp. \$7.95, paper. ISBN 0-06-062655-0.
- Frankiel, Sandra S. *Christianity: A Way of Salvation*. New York: Harper and Row, 1985. viii, 135 pp. \$8.95, paper. ISBN 0-06-063015-9.
- Hultkrantz, Ake. *Native Religions of North America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988. ix, 144 pp. \$7.95, paper. ISBN 0-06-064061-8.
- Knipe, David M. *Hinduism*. New York: Harper and Row (projected for 1991).
- Lawson, E. Thomas. *Religions of Africa*. New York: Harper and Row, 1985. ix, 106 pp. \$9.95, paper. ISBN 0-06-065211-x.
- Lester, Robert C. *Buddhism: The Path to Nirvana*. New York: Harper and Row, 1987. ix, 144 pp. \$8.95, paper. ISBN 0-06-065243-8.
- Overmyer, Daniel L. *Religions of China: The World as a Living System*. New York: Harper and Row, 1986. ix, 125 pp. \$8.95, paper. ISBN 0-06-066401-0

This series of inexpensive paperback volumes on the religious traditions of the world represents an excellent resource for learning about world religions as historical and cultural traditions. Readers of these volumes learn about world faiths as they express themselves in the lives of people in community. The books are written from the point of view of the modern study of religion that prevails in the universities of North America, which attempts to treat the various religions fairly and accurately. Readers gain an insight into religions as they manifest themselves in time and space and not as their adherents or critics would like to present them. These authors tend to accentuate the positive dimensions of these traditions.

Because their authors are largely successful in presenting their subject matters fairly and positively, these books are especially useful for study in the churches and by Christians in colleges and universities. I know of no set of inexpensive books which succeeds so well at helping Christians understand why these non-Christian religious traditions are so attractive to so many of the people influenced by them. If we underestimate the attraction of these faiths to their adherents, or interpret it as enslavement to demonic and evil powers, we will be unprepared to give an effective witness to these people for our Lord.

If the books for sale in a typical evangelical bookstore are any indicator, evangelicals currently do not have much interest in understanding other people and their cultures and values. This is lamentable at a time when such an enormous opportunity for witness to people from other cultures and religions presents itself even within the borders of North America.

A study group in the church or church school could examine one of these volumes per quarter and explore the points of contact for the gospel in these traditions.

Sandra S. Frankiel's volume on Christianity will help evangelical Christian readers discern what a cultural and descriptive perspective does with the Christian faith. How does one deal with the many manifestations of the Christian tradition without advocating one manifestation as the correct one? What do all have in common? Are the differences fairly treated? The Christian experience of the volume on Christianity may also provide an indication of how adherents of the other traditions may react to the volumes dealing with their religions.

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