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## Theology, News and Notes - Vol. 14, No. 01

Fuller Theological Seminary

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# Theology News and Notes

PUBLISHED FOR THE FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY ALUMNI



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## Conclave Report



Left column: The Rev. John R. W. Stott, rector of All Soul's, London, lecturing at Conclave. Peter Wagner, B.D. '55, now enrolled in the School of World Mission, one of several missionary alumni on furlough present. Center column: Merrill Reside, B.D. '58, and wife Edna "happened" in from Stoney Creek, Ont. At the head table were Lois and Ron Bolt, B.D. '62, alumni second vice president who headed up the Conclave; Mr. Stott; Gary Demarest, B.D. '50, alumni president; Ron Larson, B.D. '55, alumni first vice president. Right column: Kenneth Cragg, B.D. '51, flew in from Rapid City, Iowa.



## F. F. Bruce Payton Lecturer

Dr. F. F. Bruce, author, theologian, and educator, will be the Payton Lecturer at Fuller, February 27 to March 1. His topic is *The Relationship of the Old Testament to the New Testament*. All of the lectures are open to the public. They will be from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. daily, followed by informal discussion.

*Alumni Day* during the Payton Lectures is set for Wednesday, February 28, according to Del Hovda '65, associate minister of the Church of the Lighted Window in La Canada, who is chairman of Alumni Day. Following the morning lecture and discussion, there will be a luncheon for alumni with Dr. Bruce answering questions.

## Books for Review

Books listed here are available to alumni on a first-request basis.

*Job Our Contemporary*, by H. Harold Kent, Eerdmans Publishing Company (paperback).

*The Preacher and His Models*, by James Stalker, Baker Book House (paperback).

*The Glory of the Ministry, Paul's Exultation in Preaching*, by A. T. Robertson, Baker Book House (paperback).

*Stir-Change-Create, Poems & Essays in Contemporary Mood*, by Kenneth L. Pike, Eerdmans Publishing Company (paperback).

*Jerusalem Through the Ages*, by Charles F. Pfeiffer, Baker Book House (paperback).

*The Old and New Man*, by Rudolf Bultmann, John Knox Press (paperback).

*Jesus and the Christian*, by William Manson, Eerdmans Publishing Company.

*Presbyterian Worship in America*, by Julius Melton, John Knox Press.

*No Idle Tale*, by John Frederick Jansen, John Knox Press.

*The Mountain That Moved*, by Edward England, Eerdmans Publishing Company.

*Letter to an American Lady*, by C. S. Lewis, Eerdmans Publishing Company.

*Where Faith Begins*, by C. Ellis Nelson, John Knox Press.



## The Alumni Fund

RONALD L. LARSON  
B. D. '55

First Vice President  
Alumni Association



*Progress*—We are grateful to report that at this point gifts and commitments received total over two-thirds of our goal of \$1,200. We are trusting that our alumni fund goal will be met and exceeded by the time of our annual alumni luncheon in June.

*Participation*—We wish to emphasize again our belief that every alumnus can and should have a part. To have been a recipient of the financial support of others to our Seminary when we were students brings an obligation for us in turn to be involved in underwriting the present needs of our School. May we urge you to consider prayerfully a minimum gift of at least \$10.

*Purpose*—The alumni fund this year is directed toward the chair of the dean of students. Dr. Robert Schaper is serving very capably in this office, which means that your gift is involved directly in the lives of students now at Fuller. Part of our stewardship must be given to worthy means of achieving the cause of Christ beyond the vineyard where we serve. We view involvement in this project as evidence of responsible stewardship.

## Theology News and Notes

Published for the Fuller Theological Seminary Alumni.

JAMES W. HAGELGANZ, Editor

BERNICE F. SPENCER, Managing Editor,  
Assistant Director of Public Affairs

The editorial content of *Theology News and Notes* reflects the opinions of the various authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the views of Fuller Theological Seminary trustees and faculty.

## Reflections on the Minister as Executive

EDWARD JOHN CARNELL (1919-1967)

*The following article is reprinted from the October 1956 issue of Theology News and Notes. Written by the then President Carnell, its advice to ministers is timely today.—Editor*

The other evening I was going through the *Saturday Review*. I read this journal because it keeps me abreast of what is going on in the literary world. The novel and the drama are media of communication. By grasping their message, one grasps the tone and the temperament of the age in which he lives. I would counsel all of you to do some serious reading outside of the strict field of ministerial interests. Broaden yourself, or your sermons will not answer to the contemporary world. Go through *Newsweek* or *Time*. Read everything: art, science, education, etc. Get the feel of the modern mood. Acquaint yourselves with the problems of the hour. This will put contemporaneity into your sermons. *Reader's Digest* is another helpful source. It is full of gentle wisdom for developing an interest in man.

In this particular issue of *Saturday Review* I saw the announcement of a book by the editors of *Fortune*, entitled *The Executive Life*. Wanting to learn more about this new mogul, the corporation executive, I sent for the book. It was an interesting piece of reading, for I detected many parallels between the minister as executive and the corporation executive. Human nature does not change very much. The problems of the executive suite are different in name, but not in substance, from those of the minister's study.

One of the chapters is concerned with why executives crack up. Its conclusions were somewhat like those in *Life*, where a study was made of why ministers crack up. "The true influence of work in the crack-up of an executive comes to this: a neurotic individual encounters in his work a special stress (or a series of stresses) that at some point unbearably intensifies the conflicts in his own personality; then he goes to pieces." This is the pith and marrow of the issue. A minister may become unhappy because there is someone on his board who keeps needling him. This chafes his

spirit. The abrasion soon wears away at his happiness, and he finds that his work is done. He then moves on to another parish. That is, he moves on if he is wise. Ministers that refuse to relieve a special stress are inviting a crack-up.

Executives, the book wisely observes, have learned to delegate responsibility. Let me urge this upon you as executives in the ministry. "Get your church working. Delegate wherever you can. This will conserve your strength for the things that really count. Ministers that cannot delegate are soon enmeshed in such a multitude of obligations that they fritter out their days. If a car is needed to drive children to summer camp, many a minister will take his own car, rather than delegating this to someone else. Two capital mistakes are made. First, precious time is wasted, time that ought to be put into theology and sermonizing. Second, a disservice is done to the parishioners. The laity want to work for God, and they ought to work for God. But they simply do not know how to go about it. They want to feel accepted, and the quickest way to soothe this craving is by putting them to work. And so, delegate all you can. But remember: keep supervision. It is the duty of an executive to see that the job is done. Oversee the work of those who carry out delegated assignments.

Here are the motives that inspire men to climb the managerial ladder: self-expression, sense of contribution, responsibility, prestige, and fear. Remember these when you are trying to understand the nature of man—both of others and of yourself. All men want a fruitful life. Those who know not Christ have simply missed the way. They think that by becoming a powerful executive, they will be happy. They have not thought through the implications of the book of Ecclesiastes, for the eye is not satisfied with seeing and the ear with hearing. Check the motives that guide you in the ministry. Are you after power and position? Or can you say, in the honesty of the heart, that you are in service for Christ? The industry and ambition of those who strive for earthly crowns is a rebuke to all of us. If we went at our calling with the zeal with which these executives go at their trade in steel, cattle, and railroads, the earth would be shaken.



A space in the book was devoted, quite surprisingly, to the problem of firing executives. Executives do not like to fire executives. Yet "the ability to fire another executive smoothly can be as important a managerial attribute as the ability to hire, appraise, and train executives." Let's pause here for a moment, for ministers seldom appreciate the importance of firing those who are incompetent—and doing it speedily and neatly. (Of course, we do not call it firing, but what's in a name?) Many a Sunday school is sick because the minister refuses to dismiss incompetent teachers. Dead wood collects at the top and the machinery becomes clogged. If you are dissatisfied with a Christian education director or a choir leader, apply the scalpel and drain the abscess. But always confront a person when you fire him. "Only one tactic seems universal: an executive is practically always fired verbally. Writing is too blunt an instrument for an operation that usually lacerates an executive's most delicate equipment, namely, his ego." If you must fire an assistant pastor, confront him directly. Do not damage his personality by working behind his back or by writing a caustic letter. Use diplomacy in the whole of your ministry—in taking a church and in leaving a church. Leave nothing undone in the way of courtesy and right conduct.

By the way, executives seldom admit that they have been fired. They use all kinds of evasions to avoid the pain of humiliation before others. This illustrates the tremendous power of self-respect in the human breast. Do not violate this power. A wise minister will always consider the feelings of others when he acts. Otherwise, he will win a point but lose a man. This is the main point in a recent book (*How To Win The Conference*): "Put yourself in the other man's shoes, and the argument is over. In fact, this is a one-sentence summary of this book." If you do not know the basic principles of diplomacy and courtesy, go to the library and begin reading. We are to be an offense to no man. Many a minister has blundered himself out of a good church because he never took time to make peace with the basic principle of executive diplomacy.

Here is something you might tuck away. When the editors of this book summarized their advice for young men who aspire to be leaders, they wisely observed that the man most likely to rise to the top is the man with good judgment. This takes us back to ancient philosophy and a quotation from Dr. Clark about the philosophy of Herac-

litus: "Philosophy is 'love of wisdom'; but wisdom in the proper sense consists, as Heraclitus distinctly asserted, neither in erudition nor in an encyclopedic acquaintance with facts, however useful or curious, but in unified insight into the nature and meaning of the whole of reality." Judgment, not specialized education, is the stuff of an executive—whether in an oil company or in the ministry. This is why I urge you to read widely, for this will help you in the art of sound judgment. You will learn the limits of history by entering into the dialogue of history. (Save your money and buy a set of *The Great Books of the Western World*, with its marvelous two-volume *Syntopicon*. The *Syntopicon* is an index to the great ideas of the great books. Read systematically in it and you will improve your judgment.) "The man with the B.A. degree very often ends up being president." Young engineers get jobs quicker, and usually make more money, but the engineers do not always have the kind of broad judgment and ability to get along with people that are needed in the executive suite. Bear this in mind as you strive in the ministry. Do all you can to develop good judgment. This is one key to clerical survival. It is not the man who got A's in seminary, but the man of balanced judgment, that rises to the top.

So, this leads me back to where I began: read widely, think widely, and act widely. Learn to get along socially with all men, both with those who agree with you and with those who do not. (Never compromise, of course!) Develop an intuition for good policy and sound management that will stand well over the years. May the Fuller graduate always be a 'full' individual. Narrow-minded clergymen never attain the stature of greatness. If you cannot get along with people; if you are given to complaining and unrest; if you are unable to accept criticism with a spirit of manliness—then take heed to yourselves. Leaders are men of soundness of temperament and judgment. They can get along with people well, and they can judge facts and situations with a sense of fairness.

Study the posts that control the power in your denomination. Then decide if you have talents for the holding of one of these posts. If you have, rise to your full stature and aim for one of these posts. Those who control the offices will, in most cases, control the policies of the denominations. Strive to get a high office. Restore the power to orthodoxy. Men become executives because they have



Fuller Seminary

## Where Missionaries Separate Fact from Fiction



## Fuller School of World Mission

# WHERE MISSIONARIES SEPARATE FACT FROM FICTION

by Donald H. Gill

Arno Enns has returned to his work in Argentina much more hardheaded than when he left there a year ago. Although his hardheadedness may not seem to be a particularly spiritual quality, it may pay off in spiritual dividends.

Enns is a tall, alert Conservative Baptist who has spent the past year in studies at Fuller Seminary's School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth in Pasadena, California. He has been soaking up the down-to-the-facts approach which characterizes the school and especially its dean, Dr. Donald McGavran.

As a result, Enns' viewpoint on Christian outreach in Argentina has changed considerably. Some will charge him with being coldly statistical. But to Enns it is simply a matter of finding out what is really happening and then acting accordingly. His approach is typical of the new breed of missionary being trained at the School of World Mission.

The key phrase which describes both the school's emphasis and McGavran's philosophy is "church growth." The idea involves planting, nurturing and multiplying Christian congregations in various cultural situations overseas. Beyond that it implies careful study of groups of people and how they respond to the gospel. Several disciplines, usually regarded as secular, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology and even economics, are brought to bear on the global task of Christian outreach.

Donald McGavran, now dean of the school, was a fairly traditional missionary educator in India for many

years. However, his insatiable curiosity had led him to probe patterns of response to the gospel among various segments of the Indian population. He was disturbed by the church's unwillingness to pursue opportunities of winning whole groups of people to a commitment to Jesus Christ simply by modifying its approach.

### The problem stirs action

McGavran was so stirred by the problem that in 1954 he resigned his other responsibilities in order to get the churches thinking outside the usual ruts. "This static philosophy and methodology of missions reigns supreme," he objected. "It is seldom questioned or, for that matter, exposed to view. It is taken for granted. It is the unconscious ground of most missionary thinking."

The point of his objection was the traditional "mission station approach" in which missions were tied so closely to existing operations, often in areas which resisted the gospel, that they could not respond to opportunities in areas which showed great responsiveness to the gospel.

"Missions need the truth as to what makes for sound and great church growth," McGavran declared. "All serious studies, whether they confirm,

correct or extend these findings, are valuable additions to the science of missions."

His regard for missions as a science was itself a novel idea in many quarters. Among many mission agencies the idea is still not accepted. But evidence is building up that McGavran is riding the wave of the future when it comes to missions outreach overseas.

Leaving India, McGavran took up special studies at Yale which led him to the conclusion that three-fourths of the growth of the church overseas in nonoccidental lands was through group response to the gospel. In his writings and speaking engagements he urged mission leaders to identify the points of greatest response and to pour most of their energies into developing these opportunities.

By 1960 McGavran had enough backing in his own denomination, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), to set up the Institute of Church Growth at Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon. In 1965 the Institute was incorporated into the program of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena and McGavran became dean of the new School of World Mission.

### 'God wants church growth'

As the School of World Mission was launched, McGavran and his colleagues listed ten points outlining their philosophy. Boldly, bluntly, it began with the words: "God wants church growth." Furthermore, it asserted that church growth is the test of the church's faithfulness.

They appealed for more research. Little was known about how and where the church was growing, where it was standing still and where it was declining. In McGavran's estimation church leaders were poor stewards of the Lord's business whenever they were guilty of such ignorance. He warned missionaries not to become victims of their own stories of what God had done incidentally here and there. Overall results in any given area can and must be measured, he argued.

Soon the School of World Mission had attracted enough attention to bring in further help by way of faculty, students and finances. Foundations were asked to support particular projects. Missions assigned key field personnel to spend a year at Fuller where they frequently wrote major papers based on the statistics of church growth in their own overseas situations.

Meanwhile McGavran was not over-

looking other means of thumping for attention to church growth. His several books, including *The Bridges of God*, *How Churches Grow* and *Church Growth and Christian Mission*, became working tools for many mission leaders and policy makers. His students have produced a stream of books on church growth, each focusing on some specific geographic area.

### Presentation to mission world

Along with his colleagues, McGavran has led numerous seminars, throughout the country and overseas, for missionary personnel. Wherever they have been, one can expect to find an array of charts, graphs and other visual aids showing the actual and potential growth of various denominational groups in particular situations.

Many mission boards are now beginning to consider the church growth approach to mission. Several have requested specific recommendations and a few have begun to translate principles into practice. One mission working among the Navajo Indians has enlisted Dr. Alan R. Tippett of the School of World Mission faculty to find out why after 50 or so years there has been little or no response to the gospel. He is currently studying the situation and will attempt to suggest a solution to the problem.

An Australian who worked in Fiji for 20 years, Tippett applies the science of anthropology to the task of fulfilling the great commission. According to Tippett, three million out of four million people in the South Pacific are Christian, and most of the remaining one million pagans are found in New Guinea. The Fijians are virtually all Christian. His study of response and nonresponse in the Solomon Islands, commissioned by the World Council of Churches, is now coming off the press.

### Defenses go up

As might be expected, not all mission leaders and missionaries agree with McGavran's approach. Those who have worked for years without results tend to feel threatened by the emphasis on church growth. Defenses go up. They frequently respond that the Christian mission is not to win men to Christ but to preach the gospel and leave the results to God. McGavran quickly douses this argument by pointing out that he has yet to find a mission society constitution that does not state its purpose is to win men to Christ.

In other quarters, where mission has become a vast program of good works, McGavran encounters raised eyebrows at the statement that the primary goal of the church is to win converts and multiply churches. Good deeds are necessary, he says, but doing good to the physical body is less important than doing good to the soul.

Even more opposition comes from those who say the task of the church is not to make Christian converts but to exert a Christian influence on society. The School of World Mission insists that Christian mission should be what it is biblically described to be: propagation of the gospel with the aim of winning men to faith in Jesus Christ. Then, too, there will be little Christian influence unless first, at least a sizeable minority becomes Christian.

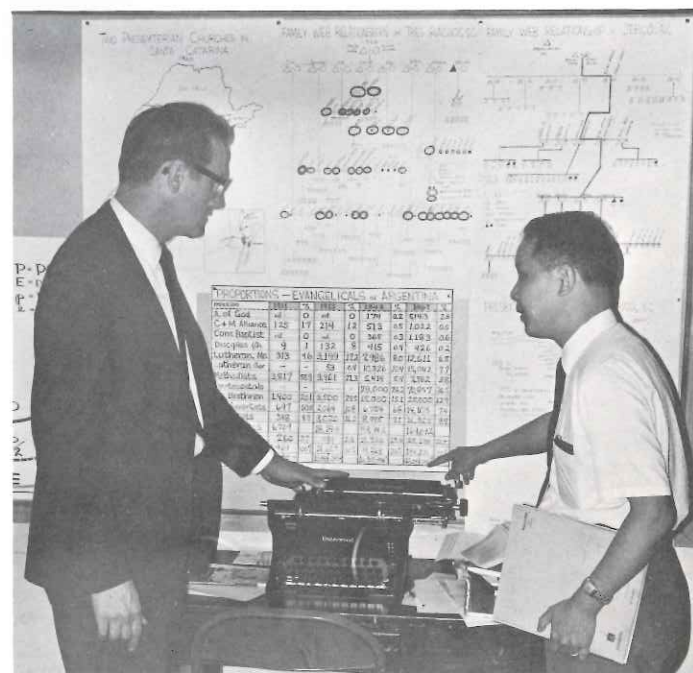
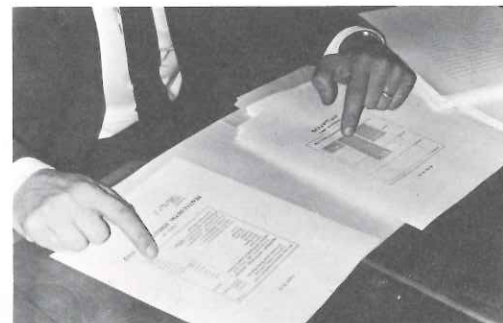
### An eye for future growth

Looking to the future, McGavran hopes eventually to increase the permanent faculty to six and to broaden the school's scope to take in candidates for the mission field (it now specializes in career missionaries who have already spent at least one term on the field). Also envisioned is a broadening of the program to include missions promotion in the home church and study of the problems facing missions on the field. Addition of Dr. Ralph Winter to the faculty this fall is a step toward two of these goals. A Presbyterian linguist with field experience in Guatemala, Winter specializes in methods of effective theological training for the local churches abroad.

The faculty is also augmented each year by two or more visiting professors who teach for one or two quarters. On tap this year are Dr. J. Edwin Orr and the Rev. Jack Shepherd, for many years head of Jaffrey School of Mission at Nyack, New York.

Dean McGavran insists that Christians ought to bring to the task of evangelism the same acumen and meticulous planning that is applied to all worthwhile human undertakings. At the School of World Mission the facts of missionary methods and results are sifted from fiction and put to a critical examination in order to plan effectively the winning of men to Christ.

Through systematic planning, says McGavran, "the days of blind proclamation of the gospel, whether any believe or not, can now give place to proclamation of the gospel where men and communities are in fact brought to faith and obedience." |||



ABOVE LEFT: The 1966-67 faculty (standing, left to right) Dr. Alan Tippett and Dr. Donald McGavran; (seated, left to right) Dr. Ralph Winter, Dr. J. Edwin Orr and Dr. J. D. Seamans. RIGHT: Arno Enns explains a chart of comparative church growth to another student who comes from Taiwan. ABOVE CENTER: Enns compares charts that are part of the paper he did on church growth in Argentina, the country where he serves as a missionary. ABOVE RIGHT: In a class for one semester students Dr. Tippett explains how certain cultural factors affect the acceptance of the gospel message.



**"Missions need the truth as to what makes for sound and great church growth. All serious studies, whether they confirm, correct or extend these findings, are valuable additions to the science of missions."**

**"God wants church growth."**

**"...static philosophy and methodology of missions reigns supreme. It is seldom questioned or, for that matter, exposed to view. It is taken for granted. It is the unconscious ground of most missionary thinking."**

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Litho in U.S.A.

made up their minds to become executives. "Take the case of one steel-company executive who rose to a position only three levels below the top-ranking finance post in his company by the time he was thirty-one. This man started out in a simple accounting job in a subsidiary, was shifted two years later to statistical work at headquarters, and there noted that the men in the upper ranks who had law degrees got into policy matters and had 'the key' to questions that stumped executives without legal training. Telling himself 'I'd like some of that,' he put in five years at night school getting a law degree. Then he made a smart decision: he *refused* a bid to enter the company's legal department, figuring that his chances for promotion were better in his old department where there were many more managers' jobs available. It wasn't long before his reputation as a lawyer spread informally to executives who would ask him for help on labor negotiations and other legal matters. Because of his training he was also soon drawn into policy discussions where he attracted the attention of high-ranking executives, and eventually was tapped to fill his present job." Do you get the point? *The man who gets to the top is the man who plays his opportunities carefully.* Study where you want to go, and go there. Let us do all we can to return the great centers of power to orthodoxy.

In closing, I do want to make another plea. Make a conscientious effort to encourage top students to come to Fuller Seminary. Medicine, law, and technology are bidding for the outstanding student. If we are going to ensure a learned ministry, we must skim off our share of the gifted youths of the land. Be the eyes and ears of Fuller Seminary. When you hear of a promising young man that God has inclined toward the ministry, join yourself to him as Jesus did to his disciples. See that he gets to a good, accredited college; and then urge him to come to Fuller. Let us keep the channels open for the really top student. Fuller Seminary wants to capture the world for Christ. But to do this we need leaders.

We also are greatly in need of financial help. If you have not approached your church about placing the Seminary on its yearly budget, do not delay this. It will take courage, I know, but the success of those who have tried testifies to what can be done. The operation of a first-class school is a vastly expensive undertaking.

Best wishes to all the alumni and friends of Fuller! My, how we appreciate your loyalty.

JANUARY 1968

## Placement Opportunities

### PASTOR

Aurora United Presbyterian Church, Aurora, N. Y.  
Village church in women's college town.

### PASTOR

Calvary Baptist Church, State College, Pa.

### MINISTER OF YOUTH

Camelback Bible Church, Paradise Valley, Arizona.  
Conservative, independent church, suburban Phoenix.  
Develop and maintain program with jr. and sr. high and college age.

### PASTOR

Cole Community Church, Boise, Idaho.  
Evangelical, non-denominational in suburban area. 150 members, 300 Sunday attendance.

### YOUTH DIRECTOR

First Baptist Church, Santa Paula, California.

### C.E. DIRECTOR

Glen Cross Bible Church, Glendale, California.  
Handle C.E. program and youth activities. 150 S.S. attendance.

### C.E. DIRECTOR

Halethorpe Community Church, Halethorpe, Md.  
S.S. attendance 300. Church is fundamental, pre-millennial and pretribulational. Suburban Baltimore.

### PASTOR

Havenscourt Colonial Church, Oakland, Calif.  
Affiliated with American Baptists of No. Calif. Integrated. Broad theological opinions represented.

### ASSISTANT MINISTER

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Hollywood, Fla.

### PASTOR

Sierra Madre Congregational Church, Sierra Madre, Calif.  
Need experienced man with emphasis on preaching and pastoral care. Evangelical, non-denominational church.

### PASTORS

S. Dakota American Baptist Convention

### YOUTH PASTOR

West Side United Presbyterian Church, Seattle, Wash.

### SUGGESTED BOOK PURCHASES

Here are a few of the books on the reading list for Seminary men interested in the preaching task, as suggested by Drs. Robert Schaper and James Daane:

*The Seminary—Protestant and Catholic*, by Walter D. Wagoner. New York: Sheed and Ward, 256 pp. \$6., 1966.

*Luther as Seen by Catholics*, by Richard Stauffer. John Knox Press, 83 pp., Paper, \$1.95, 1967.

These, and other books of your choice, may be obtained at special student discount rates by contacting the Fuller Theological Seminary Bookstore.



## His Way with His People

FREDERIC WILLIAM BUSH, B.D.'58, Th.M.'60

Frederic William Bush is Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary. A graduate of the University of Washington and Fuller, Dr. Bush received the Ph.D. degree from Brandeis University. The following is a message delivered recently in chapel at the Seminary.



In a moving little book written in 1956 entitled *Faith, Hope, and Love* Emil Brunner speaks eloquently of the agony that grips men when they honestly face the implications of what he calls the stream of time. This stream of time is unidirectional—always passing from the future, where it is not yet, through the present, where it now is, to the past where it is no more. It is irreversible. It is always from not yet to now to no more. He notes that logically man's present hangs like a mere point at the intersection of that which is not yet with that which is no more, at that intersection where in the stream of time the future passes through into the past. And yet in reality there is much more to our present than this mere point, for we still live in the past through memory and we already live in the future through expectation. By memory and expectation, therefore, our present is extended in both directions, to the past and to the future. But it is just here that the past and the future conspire to destroy our present, or at least, to render it a hell. For the past through memory brings the pangs of guilt and remorse and the future through expectation brings the torture of anxiety and fear. Since we are responsible beings the past brings naught but guilt—our hearts cry out that we have not done what we ought to have done and that there is no health in us. Since we are prone to worry, the future darkens the present with anxiety because of its uncertainty, and especially because of its ultimate uncertainty, death. In his little book *Christ the Tiger* Thomas Howard notes Hopkins' words that there is no way to keep at bay "tombs and worms and tumbling to decay." To reflect on the data of experience, he notes, is

"to be full of sorrows and leaden-eyed despairs." And so our present is made a hell by the guilt of the past made present by memory and the fear of the future made present by expectation. We almost have no present—we are not "here", but "there"—in the past and in the future.

As I have mulled over this agony of the present in my own life, I have found that the answer to it lies in the fact that there is a pattern in God's dealings with men—namely, that deliverance from the past with openness to the future is his way with his people. The biblical word which sets this pattern for me and which shatters the grip with which the past and the future close in and strangle the present is to be found in Christ's words at the institution of the Eucharist, when after supper he took the cup and said "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood." These words are very familiar for from them derives the name "The New Testament," yet what did our Lord mean by them? The term covenant and the complex of ideas behind it are both rare in the New Testament. And where they are used by a New Testament writer, there is a tacit assumption that what he means by them is well known to the reader. For it is in the Old Testament that the covenant concept is central. And so it is to the Old Testament structure of faith that we must turn in order to find out what these words mean and to see the pattern of God's dealings with men which they set.

The central themes of the Old Testament's theological structure—its faith—can be summed up under the rubrics of *election* and *covenant*. Now these terms as the Old Testament uses them do not describe a system of ideas about God or the world, nor do they set forth abstract religious principles, nor yet some set of ethical demands. Rather it is the genius of the biblical faith that these terms describe a complex of historical events together with an exposition of their meaning—events that God has immediately brought to pass on behalf of his people. Their sphere of reality is not the realm of ideas or philosophy, but history. *Election* refers to the fact that Yahweh in his sovereign grace chose Israel—called her to himself

through the events of the Exodus, the wilderness wanderings and the giving of the Promised Land. It is through these spectacular events that she becomes not just a nation but his own peculiar nation—his chosen people. *The covenant* refers to the establishment of the Lordship of Yahweh over his people—brought about by the awe-inspiring theophany at Mount Sinai where through the mediation of Moses the covenant is established by the promulgation of its stipulations or demands which the people must accept if they are to continue in Yahweh's favor. By so doing they will become his people and he will be their God. From this complex of events and institutions there emerges clearly this pattern of God's dealings with men: that deliverance from the past with openness to the future is his way with his people. Let us elucidate this pattern more fully.

The opening lines of the decalogue in Exodus 20 read: "Then God spoke all these words. He said: 'I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.'" Now the decalogue is, in point of fact, the covenant itself—or at least its stipulations. It actually takes the form of a suzerain-vassal treaty, a type of treaty widely used in the ancient Near East by an overlord or suzerain to bind his vassals to himself. In these treaties the great King would set forth for his vassals an exposition of his beneficent acts on their behalf . . . which exposition was for the purpose of motivating them to perpetual gratitude and allegiance. He would then lay upon them the stipulations which they must meet if they were to continue in his favor. So the opening lines of the decalogue—"I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery"—and others like it form the kerygmatic heart of the Old Testament, that is, the center of its proclamation of good news. For note how this prologue looks backwards into the past and roots and grounds the covenant in Yahweh's free and gracious deliverance of his people from Egyptian bondage. Prior to the deliverance he had told Moses in Exodus 6:6f: "I am Yahweh. I will free you from the burdens which the Egyptians lay on you. I will release you from slavery to them and with my outstretched arm and my strokes of power I will deliver you and I will adopt you as my own people and I will be your God." And when the mighty deliverance at the Red Sea had been accomplished and the people had arrived at Sinai, Yahweh tells them in Exodus 19:3ff: "You your-

selves have seen what I did with the Egyptians how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. From this you know that now, if you obey my voice and hold fast to my covenant, you of all nations will be my very own for all the earth is mine." So the prologue to the covenant "I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery," looks back to the past deliverance and forms a kerygma—a proclamation of good news because it anchors the covenant in God's past gracious acts on behalf of his people. The covenant then is rooted and anchored in grace. God has freely, graciously and with unmerited favor redeemed his people from slavery and bondage in Egypt and now seeks to bind them to him with his covenant—and he uses as the grounds and motive for their accepting it his gracious acts of past redemption and deliverance. So on the one hand the covenant looks backwards into the past; past deliverance forms its grounds and motive.

But the covenant knows not only a declaration of past deliverance, it knows also a promise. It looks forward into the future, for it is summed up in the statement, "I will be your God and you shall be my people." In Exodus 6, again in prospect, Yahweh tells Moses "I will deliver you and I will adopt you as my own people, and I will be your God." In retrospect after arriving at Sinai, Yahweh tells the people in Exodus 19: "You yourselves have seen . . . how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. From this you know that now, you of all the nations shall be my very own. I will count you a kingdom of priests and a consecrated nation." So the covenant looks forward to the future with the promise, "You shall be my people and I will be your God." And as Eichrodt puts it, "in this way it provides life with a goal and history with a meaning." He goes on, "Because of this the fear that constantly haunts the pagan world, the fear of arbitrariness and caprice in the godhead, is excluded. With this God men know exactly where they stand; an atmosphere of trust and security is created, in which they find both the strength for a willing surrender to the will of God and joyful courage to grapple with the problems of life."

So the covenant for Old Israel redeemed the past and opened the future and hence gave meaning to the present. It showed her that deliverance from her past with openness for the future is God's way with his people.



Now when we seek to preach from the Old Testament, it is never enough simply to determine the meaning of the text by exegesis and then elucidate the theology that informs it as we have just so briefly done.<sup>1</sup> For as important as that is in understanding the progress and the development of the saving history which culminates in Christ, it yet speaks no direct word *to me*. For you and I do not occupy the theological perspective of Old Israel. We are *not* members of that people who stood at Sinai and on the grounds and motive of God's gracious deliverance in the Exodus events were offered the convenantal promise: "You shall be my people and I will be your God." Rather we know of a new and greater Moses than he who mediated Old Israel's covenant. We belong in fact to that new Israel formed when, on the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord took the cup after supper and said: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." It is for this reason that this is the biblical word which sets the pattern of God's dealings with men *for me*. For having seen the Old Testament structure we can now see that by these words our Lord clearly understood his death to create a new covenant, so that the saving act, the gracious deliverance of God, to which we in gratitude respond is not one of deliverance from slavery in Egypt, but rather from bondage to sin and death. God has acted in history on our behalf in the death and resurrection of Christ. Our Red Sea is the Cross and our Sinai the Last Supper. Now the same pattern of God's dealings with men is fully present here, but not set forth in the New Testament as clearly as the Old. We need the Old Testament adumbration to see clearly the implications of Christ's words about the New Covenant. Standing at Sinai, Old Israel learned that gracious deliverance from the past with openness for the future is God's way with his people. And so at the Last Supper I learn that Christ has delivered me from my past and made me open to the future.

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted here and in what follows to the work of John Bright on the relationship of the Old Testament to the New in *THE AUTHORITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT* (New York: Abingdon, 1967). I recommend the work highly to all those who wrestle with the problem of the use of the Old Testament in the pulpit. Although the message I am here setting forth comes out of the experience of myself and my wife during the last two years of her sickness, it was through reading Bright's work that the Old Testament really began to speak in Christ to my situation.

But this is just the biblical word needed to shatter the grip by which the past through memory and the future through expectation close in and strangle my present. By becoming sin for me Christ has taken my guilt upon himself and freed my present from the haunting guilt of my past. The past now is the locale of my deliverance and not of slavery. It is now the scene of release for in Christ God has acted in it on my behalf.

But what of the future? What haunting uncertainties yet lie there! What crashing dispensations yet will thrust themselves into life's ordered ways and leave them a jumbled disarray? And yet it is the same Christ who in love incarnate reached down and delivered me from my past who *is* my future. "I will be with you" he said "even unto the end of the world." This one speaking is he who also said "Greater love has no man than this: to lay down his life," and then laid down his life. Trite, hackneyed, and worn out though it be, the old gospel song is nonetheless true—I know not what the future holds, but I know who holds the future—'Tis he who redeemed the past and restores the present. There is a pattern in God's dealings with men: deliverance from the past with openness to the future is his way with his people. Amen.

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