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***Between Athens and Berlin: the
theological education debate***

by David H. Kelsey

(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) 229
pp., \$18.99 paperback

No, this is not a hitch-hiker's guide to Europe. It is in fact a very serious book about the nature and purpose of theological education, or, as the author often likes to express it: What is theological about theological education? The author is a professor of theology at Yale Divinity school, New Haven, Connecticut, USA., and perhaps not surprisingly the book he has written is academic and closely argued.

Kelsey sets himself to observe the evolving debate about theological education and what it is that constitutes excellence in theological education. He is concerned not so much with summarizing what each proponent says, but rather with discerning the "movement of their thought", their basic perceptions of what theology is and what education is. This leads Kelsey to propose a typology which he believes will clarify the debate. His dual typology forms the "axis and armature" around which the discussion of the various voices may be organized. Kelsey opts to label the first pole "Athens" because it represents values and perceptions which characterized

ancient Greek education and indeed many centuries of Christian education. It still exerts today a powerful influence on theological education. The "Athens" model had as its central concept "paideia", the formation of character. Then, early in the 19th century, a university was founded in Berlin with, among others, the renowned theologian Schleiermacher on its founding committee. Its perception of excellence was bipolar: rigorous scientific research on the one hand and professional education for ministry on the other. This twin emphasis provides Kelsey with his "Berlin" model. His thesis is that these two models provide a conceptual framework within which the different voices in the debate can be situated and which can bring into focus the issues at stake in the discussion about excellence in theological education.

Kelsey's first chapter clarifies the two models and their associated terminology. Chapters 2 and 3 trace respectively the historical evolution of the two models in 19th century Europe (John Henry Newman's *The Idea of a University*) and in early 20th century America (W.R. Harper, Robert L. Kelly, William Adams Brown, H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams and James M. Gustafuson). Chapter 4 examines authors who have contributed significantly to the ongoing debate in

the 1980s. It is here that a secondary axis, "unity" - "plurality", is added to the first. "Unity" relates to the identity of the "Christian thing" or source subject matter of theology, while "plurality" refers to the diverse world with which theological education must also concern itself. A variety of authors are discussed who promote different permutations of emphases within this expanded model. Some of these such as Edward Farley and the Mud Flower Collective (a group of seven women theological educators) negotiate their position basically from the "Athens" perspective, while others, like Joseph C. Hough Jr., John B. Cobb Jr. and Max Stackhouse argue their various positions from nearer the "Berlin" perspective. Finally, in chapter 6, Charles Wood seems to offer a new synthesis of the two models. In a last chapter, Kelsy seeks to draw "morals of the tale", that is, confusions to be avoided, ambiguities to be clarified, lessons to be learnt.

Without question the book clears the muddied waters of the debate. It will help answer the question, Why is it that one school puts so much emphasis on one aspect of theological education while another places it elsewhere? The author obviously has a clear grasp of the issues. His keen eye exposes distinctions which a less discerning eye would not capture. His discussion of the

different authors seems even-handed and objective although his disquiet about the implications of certain positions frequently surfaces ("worried" and "worrisome" seem to be his favorite words). He concludes that the two models are ultimately irreconcilable, and that theological educators have to settle for an uneasy, negotiated, truce.

The following cautionary comments about the book might, however, be added. The book concentrates on the North American scene; those from other countries would be interested in the details only insofar as they illustrate principles. The book does not make for easy reading; as the author himself concedes: "At first exposure the relations among (The different approaches) are likely to seem hopelessly confused." For this reviewer at least, some of that confusion remained even at the end of the book. Certainly the confusion would be greater if the book had been written by an author less on top of his subject, but this is certainly not light holiday or bedtime reading.

Theological educators in Africa, reading the book, will however be gratified to realise that the problems that they grapple with (overarching purpose of theological education, curriculum content, the balance between theory and practice, the concern to do justice at one and the same time to the

source and also the multiple demands of contemporary pluralistic society) - all these are not peculiar to them but are being wrestled with by their colleagues in other parts of the world.

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***Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia
Origins of the Evangelical Church
Mekane Yesus***
by *Gustav Aren*
(Stockholm and ECMY, Addis Ababa:
EFS Forlaget, 1978) 486 pp., \$5.00

African church history has been enriched by the publication of this book which was a doctoral dissertation submitted to Uppsala University in 1978. Dr. Gustav Aren served in Ethiopia as evangelist, teacher and administrator with the Swedish Evangelical Mission and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus from 1945 - 1972 and from 1972 - 1978 as researcher and writer.

Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia is an excellent detailed account of mission-in-partnership. In the past, mission historiographers were tempted to record only the exploits, experiences, activities and contributions of missionaries from overseas. Archival

and other source documents are readily available in mission sending countries to produce this promotional kind of writing. On the other hand, studies that are largely dependent on oral research and depict only the activities and drama of the indigenous actors somehow miss the ecumenical and international dimension of the church. Dr. Aren objectively and skillfully weaves the stories and contributions of both the Ethiopian and expatriate evangelists to produce an intricate and colourful tapestry that is a definite complement to the historiography of the African church. Aren's objective is, "... to call attention to some of those pioneers, men and women, whose witness, example and leadership gave rise to the Evangelical Church in Eritrea and then to the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus." (p.19).

In 1972 Gustav Aren was commissioned by the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (ECMY) to write the official history of the Evangelical Church Eritrea and that of ECMY, covering the period from 1866-1916. Aren is an indefatigable researcher and leaves no stone unturned to accomplish his purpose. His primary sources included pertinent mission archives in England, Switzerland, Ethiopia and Sweden, where the Swedish Evangelical Mission retains a rich store of Ethiopian material.

Adequate oral research was conducted over a period of several years. Aren's book is quite readable containing a five-page table of contents, maps, pictures, a glossary and an index of proper names.

Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia is more than a church history. It is also significant because of its missiological insights, the following of which are a sampling:

1. The fulfillment of a mission vision. In 1850 CMS missionary Krapf described the Oromo of Ethiopia as the "Germans of Africa". His romantic vision was that if only the Oromos could be reached with the Gospel, all of Africa could be evangelized! This captured the imagination of a young Pietist Lutheran minister, Louis Harms, who was instrumental in opening a missionary training centre at Hermannsburg in 1853. During the next 25 years, there were several unsuccessful attempts by the Hermannsburg Mission to make contact with the Oromo. The Lutheran Church in Sweden had experienced a spiritual awakening in 1840, and one of the positive results of this spiritual renewal was missionary outreach. In 1865 the Swedish Evangelical Mission took up the vision of Krapf and Harms, and after several decades of ministry to enslaved Oromos in the Red Sea port area of Massawa, an expedition of

indigenous Oromo missionaries finally reached the heartland of the Oromo in Jimma and Wollega. So, it was 50 years later that Harms vision was realized when evangelists were located in Jimma (1897) and in Boji, Wollega (1899).

2. The attempt to revitalize and reform the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The evangelical pioneers from Europe had personally experienced the Pietistic tradition in which the reading and studying of the Scriptures for oneself had formed them into 'readers' rather than mere 'listeners' (p.115). Their individual conversion experiences were seen as crucial, because the European evangelists in Ethiopia believed that reformation can occur when the Scriptures are read, studied carefully and obeyed, they encouraged those within the Orthodox Church to read and study the Bible for themselves. They were partially successful as evidenced in 1912 when two prominent reformers, Qeshi Solomon Atsiqu and Zera-Tsion Muse declared, "We were firmly convinced that the Ethiopian Church would gradually be renewed, that errors and deficiencies would be corrected" (p.182). These reformers firmly believed that there would be a real awakening and had no intentions of breaking away from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC). But a sweeping reformation did not occur. Rather, a clash developed between the

charismatics and ecclesiastics, between the political machine and the school of the prophets; consequently the reformers were driven from their own church. It appears that throughout Ethiopian history, rulers have viewed religious conformity as a prerequisite to national unity; therefore reformation proved to be a threat to the status quo. A new possibility began to emerge - that of establishing a separate and distinct evangelical church in Ethiopia. This placed the evangelical pioneers in a dilemma. Were they being schismatic? In 1872 the Swedish Lutheran pioneers performed their first baptism - and that by immersion!

3. *The Scriptures translated into the languages of the people.* Aba Rumi's translation of the Bible into Amharic (1840) did much to promote a keen in Bible study among the clergy of the Orthodox Church. This interest sparked the establishment of a beachhead to the local population in Eritrea through gifted Swedish pioneer missionaries, dr. Karl and Mrs. Elsie Winqvist who were able linguists. With the assistance of skilled Eritrean scholars, they completed a New testament translation into the Tigrinya language in 1909. The entire Tigrinya Bible was finally completed in 1956 and was commended by experts "... for idiomatic accuracy and poetic beauty" (p.337). Then there is the unusual story of the translation of

the Bible into the Orominya nearly one hundred years ago. Onesimus Nesib was liberated from slavery by the Swedish missionaries in Massawa. With the assistance of Aster, a freed Oromo girl, Onesimus translated the entire Bible into Orominya as well as hymns and catechetical material. April 15, 1904 was a proud day for Onesimus when he presented the Oromo Bible to the governor of Wollega together with an official letter of permission to preach and teach, signed and sealed by Minilik, Emperor of Ethiopia.

We await the publication of another volume of more recent history which Gustav Aren is currently writing in Sweden. A younger generation of Ethiopian church historians may view Aren's book as a flagship for Ethiopian church history. I highly commend the book as a valuable contribution to the missiology or African church history section of any theological library. The book may be purchased from Mekane Yesus Seminary, Box 1247, Addis Ababa for the reasonable price of US \$5.00 (excluding mailing charges), or through contact with Uppsala University re: "Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia XXXII."

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A Theology of the New Testament
by George Eldon Ladd
revised by Donald A. Hagner
(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 764
pp., \$34.95

Twenty-five years ago I had my formal introduction to New Testament Theology as an academic discipline. The lectures may have been less than compelling, but the reading interested me greatly. Our primary textbook, *A Theology of the New Testament*, by George Eldon Ladd, had just rolled off the press (1974) and stimulated all sorts of new areas of theological reflection for me. The book served as an excellent initiation to the field, and I have since had the joy of introducing my own students to NT Theology through Ladd's *magnum opus*.

And now, twenty years later, a revised edition of this compendium has been made available to a new generation of students. Unfortunately, Ladd's death came before he himself could carry out the revision, though he had already indicated some of the areas he wished to work on. The actual task of revising was eventually entrusted to Donald Hagner, a former student of Ladd and later his colleague on the faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary.

The revised edition of Ladd's *A Theology of the New Testament* has

been published in paperback form, presumably to keep its price as low as possible. Yet at \$34.95, one wonders how many students or pastors will be able to afford a personal copy of this important work. Certainly every seminary and graduate school library should obtain a copy, and most post-graduate level institutions would do well to consider buying an entire classroom set for student use.

Aimed at theological students in post-graduate level programs, the textbook is not intended for light reading, and some students may find its style rather dense at times. Yet its overall readability is good. A knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is not a necessity for understanding the text but may prove helpful. Many terms from these two languages (and occasionally Aramaic) are included in transliterated form. Technical German terms are also employed with translations for the non-German reader.

Each chapter in Ladd is preceded by a bibliography of relevant and significant literature (all in English), and sometimes additional bibliographies introduce sub-sections in the chapter. The footnotes throughout the book are copious but not extraneous. A wealth of material is to be found therein, allowing the reader to verify or amplify various ideas.

After an introductory chapter outlining the major movements in the history of NT Theology as a discipline, Ladd examines the theological highlights of the various sections of the NT: the Synoptic Gospels, John, the book of Acts, the Pauline corpus, the Catholic Epistles, and the Apocalypse. Within each of these major divisions are individual chapters, each treating a different theme contained in the given material. For example, the section on the Fourth Gospel has a chapter dealing with John's eschatology. In the case of the General Epistles, the chapters are devoted to individual books, with 2 Peter and Jude combined into a single chapter.

Finally, the book has three indexes: Authors, Biblical and Other Ancient Writings, and Subjects. The latter is a most welcome addition to the revised edition. Hunting through the older edition for scattered pieces of information was time-consuming and sometimes frustrating. No longer does the Authors Index list every author's name or every occurrence of a name. The references to the bibliographies and to some footnotes have been eliminated. The reason for this change is probably a practical one of space, but the result is somewhat less than satisfying. Perhaps the Subject Index is intended to act as a supplementary tracking device for bibliography.

Besides the addition of the Subject Index, four other distinct areas of improvement can be noted in the revised edition of *A Theology of the NT*. To begin with, in keeping with the current practice in North America, the language has been made more inclusive. Thus, "Jesus viewed all men and women as sinful" (p. 53) replaces the former "Jesus viewed all men as sinful". This aspect has, however, been treated somewhat unevenly, as for example on p. 390 where only men are identified as prophets in the early church.

A second updated area is the bibliographic entries. NT Theology has produced a large amount of research over the past twenty years, and Hagner has helpfully added several recent scholarly publications to the bibliographies. For instance, fully half of the books and articles cited in relation to the parables were published after 1974, with revised editions of earlier works being noted where appropriate. Some of Hagner's omissions are, however, surprising. One such is the lack of a reference to the Fortress Press series *Pauline Theology* in the chapters on Paul.

The third significant change to Ladd is the inclusion of two further chapters that help to balance the book. Since the author himself did not live long enough to pen these chapters he envisioned adding, Hagner has used material by

two other well-known evangelicals: R.T. France ("Matthew, Mark, and Luke") and David Wenham ("Unity and Diversity in the NT"). The former chapter, which has long appeared in the French translation of Ladd's *Theology*, provides insight into the theology of the individual Synoptic writers. Wenham's essay, which appears as an appendix, rounds out the work and allows the reader to see the NT as a whole rather than as a mere collage of unrelated theological statements.

A fourth and equally useful update is to be found in the initial chapter, where Hagner has a brief section (six pages) covering the developments in NT Theology during the past twenty years.

As to the text as a whole, the reviser decided against making (substantial) changes to the text and has instead contented himself with occasional footnotes to elucidate or update the text. For example, on page 78 a footnote explains, with appropriate bibliography, the current view of Judaism among NT scholars (covenant nomism) as opposed to the system-of-merit view maintained by Ladd. These footnotes are appropriately marked as originating with Hagner rather than being Ladd's contribution.

The discipline of NT Theology can be approached in a variety of manners, as a brief survey of the literature indicates. Thus the indefinite article in

the title of Ladd's book is significant: *A Theology of the NT*. Apart from the presuppositional differences among NT theologians, one must also consider the methodological stance taken by the author. Among recent offerings by evangelicals, that of Leon Morris (*NT Theology*) follows a somewhat loose chronological development of NT Theology by starting with the Pauline corpus and progressing toward the later writings. On the other hand, Donald Guthrie (*NT Theology*) proceeds topically, surveying the whole NT for each subject introduced. As for Ladd, he follows the history of the church: the ministry of Jesus (the Synoptics and John), the founding of the church (Acts), the building up of the churches (the epistles), and the church at the end of the first century (Revelation). Within each era and for each author he then examines several theological aspects.

Each of the above approaches has its strengths and weaknesses. What I appreciate about Ladd's methodology is that the reader comes away with a solid sense of an individual author's theology. Thus the theology of Paul becomes clear in its own right. (In the original version this particularity was not highlighted for the Synoptic writers, a problem that has been corrected in the revised edition). The danger that exists in Ladd's approach is that the reader will see the NT as fragmented and will

miss out on the necessary theological synthesis. The new material by Wenham helps to demonstrate that the theology of one NT author is not to be set over against that of another but that the two (or more) work together into a coherent whole.

One of the other strengths of Ladd's book is his effort to ground NT Theology solidly in its OT background. This aspect is particularly in evidence in the chapters dealing with the Synoptics, but it is not forgotten in the other major sections of the book. It is important that students realize that the theology of the NT is not divorced from but continuous with that of the OT and represents its consummation.

It would be gratuitous to criticize a book because it cannot be all things to all readers. Such is doubly true when the author himself is not the one responsible for the revisions made to his text. Nevertheless, I would like to mention some areas where the text needs to be supplemented by the professor (directly or through assignments). Certain topics did not appear to be important considerations in the early 1970's in United States and so were not covered by Ladd's text in any depth. Two that fall in this area are the role of women (in the teachings of Jesus and the writings of Paul) and Pauline pneumatology. In addition, I would like to see something done to address the

question of Paul's theology of mission. Concerning topics specifically relevant to our African context, some can be handled through student term papers or projects. Others, however, such as Paul's theology of the spirit world could well have been discussed more thoroughly in the text itself. This gap may need to be filled either by assigned readings or through another pedagogical approach.

In several areas, NT scholarship has made advances that appear only in the new bibliographies in Ladd. It would have been helpful, for example, if Hagner had included a footnote on p. 91, outlining how Blomberg's more recent theories can supplement what Ladd has to say about the canons of interpretation for the parables. In some cases, significant points seem to have been completely overlooked by the reviser. In the sections covering the Person and Work of Christ, the great christological hymn of Phil. 2:5-11 takes a central position. Yet not even in a footnote is the so-called "kenosis theory" mentioned nor are Hawthorne's interesting perspectives on the passage mentioned. Obviously a single textbook cannot cover everything, but these two areas would not have required a great intrusion on the part of the reviser.

For the overall impact of Ladd's *A Theology of the NT*, however, I have nothing but praise. The level of

scholarship is commendable, as can be verified by the fact that even non-evangelical theologians feel compelled to interact with this work as a serious entry in the field. As to Ladd's own evangelical commitment, that is beyond question, though his particular persuasions on various points may not necessarily correspond with those of the reader.

The updated version of this potential classic ensures that yet another generation of students will benefit from Ladd's theological insights and ability to communicate clearly and engagingly. This important tool for NT scholarship deserves to be widely disseminated. Keeping in mind the above caveats, the book makes an ideal base text for a NT Theology course. I plan to continue using Ladd's *A Theology of the NT* in my own courses (hoping for a quick release of a revised French version!) and heartily recommend it to others as well.

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