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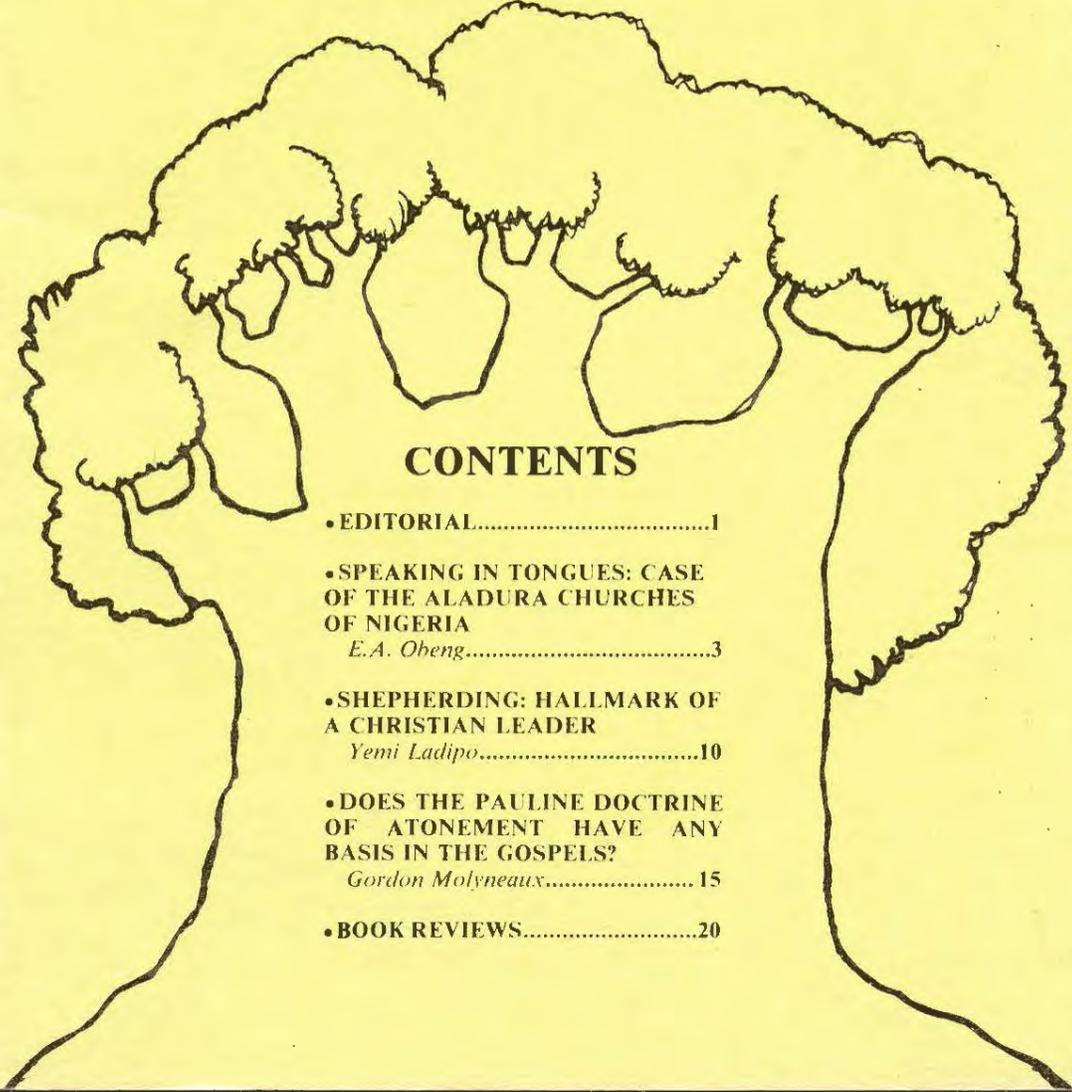
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THE EAST AFRICA JOURNAL OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

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The Boobab tree is the EAJET symbol for the gospel in Africa. The good news of Christ, like the boobab tree, is ageless, enduring and firmly rooted in African soil.

EDITORIAL: THE HOLY SPIRIT IN AFRICA

It was the African Theologian, E. Fashole-Luke, who observed that the distinctive emphasis of African Christian Theology- from the second century when Tertullian pioneered the discipline to the twentieth when black prophets have mobilized millions with their powerful words and deeds- has been the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Today all over the continent waves of charismatic renewal are surging. These waves of the Spirit often crash upon the shores of the church accompanied by the phenomena of tongues. Glossolalia is the technical term for this ecstatic utterance and the official coldness of the word stands in sharp contrast to the heated and controversial passions the experience itself generates among the christian community.

The greatest distress is often found among our youth who agonize over the question whether the gift of tongues is necessary for salvation. They have not invented the question. Foreign voices often strident in their insistence have pressed the necessity of the tongues experience on their spiritually sensitive audiences clustered in camps or Christian Unions eager to know the way of the Spirit. The result of several decades of extreme teaching on this issue has led to the current confusion among so many of our youth about even the simplest operations of the Holy Spirit in our lives. If Africa has always been marked as a continent fascinated by the Holy Spirit then twentieth century fascination has turned into a torturous confusion. **EAJET** continues with this great theme of African Christian theology by offering Nigerian professor's E. A. Obeng's personal and biblical reflections on this crucial question. Read it pastorally as wise counsel to the many puzzled believers that fill our continent.

The Spirit's work of equipping Christ's church with various charismata and generous portions of charis are the themes of the two additional articles that accompany professor Obeng's. The Reverend Yemi Ladipo reflects on the Spirit's intention in giving pastors to the church. What does the gift and task of shepherding God's flock involve? In our final article, Gordon Molyneaux guides us to think more clearly regarding a key work involving the Spirit of God as he examines the meaning of the Atonement. Hebrews reminds us that it was through the eternal Spirit that Christ offered himself up as a perfect sacrifice. In our fascination with the Spirit's gifts of charismata we must avoid slipping into indifference over His greater gift of charis in Christ. If a distinctive of the African Church has been its hunger for the Spirit may these articles both feed and whet that greatest of appetites.

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SPEAKING IN TONGUES

The Case of the Aladura Churches of Nigeria

Dr. E.A. Obeng

One of the most dramatic features of the story of twentieth century global Christianity has been the rise and expansion of the Pentecostal movement. Wherever the movement is found the subject of speaking in tongues comes to the fore. Pentecostals all over the world consider genuine speaking in tongues¹ as "languages unknown and unlearned by the speaker and for the most part not understood by the hearers either."² Pentecostals differ, however, as to what role speaking in tongues play in worship. Two positions can be identified on this. First, Sundkler writes "Pentecostal churches whether they are lead by Europeans or Africans are definite on the gift of speaking with tongues. The baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is indicated by the initial physical sign of speaking with tongues, as the Spirit of God gives them utterance."³ Horton supports this when he also writes "it is inconceivable that a supernatural experience like the baptism should exist without a distinctive supernatural evidence. Tongues is that necessary evidence."⁴ These statements clearly support the idea that tongues must accompany baptism in the Spirit.

Although this position on speaking in tongues is the most representative opinion of Pentecostals, others take a less rigorous attitude. T.B. Barratt, for example, would allow the possibility of baptism in the Spirit without glossolalia⁵. Larry Christianson, a Lutheran pastor, stressed strongly the significance of speaking with tongues for personal prayer life and found in it a source of spiritual refreshment but he refused to accept that speaking in tongues is the only sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.⁶ But which of these two opinions is most in harmony with New Testament evidence? Does the New Testament show that reception of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by speaking in tongues?

To answer these questions we will examine the the positions found amongst the Aladura Churches of Nigeria. "Aladura" is a term used to describe the indigenous African churches in Nigeria-- so called because of their belief in the power of prayer. Many separate churches such as the Redeemed Church of God and the Cherubim and Seraphim are clustered under this title. Though the Aladura are indigenous they too have been affected by the winds of the Spirit and hold among themselves the two positions that characterise the world Pentecostal community. After briefly surveying the theology and practise of glossolalia among several of the prominent independent churches of West Africa we shall conclude with an examination of the New Testament evidence on the phenomenon. As one who looks at the phenomenon from outside these churches, I shall have to rely upon statements made by acknowledged representative opinion from within these churches.

Speaking in Tongues in the Aladura Churches

A common feature of the worship of the Aladura Churches is speaking in tongues and is considered of some considerable importance by these churches. The Apostolic Faith, the Cherubim And Seraphim⁷, the Redeemed Church of God consider the phenomenon as the only proof of one's reception of the Holy Spirit. This is seen clearly from the fact that all reported incidents of the phenomenon on these churches are associated with the reception of the Holy Spirit. From the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Kaduna has come a report of a Gwari native woman who when possessed by the Spirit would speak unalloyed Yoruba although when 'normal' she could not say a word in that language. I.A. Omoyajowo also reports of a Hausa prophet in the same church who had received no formal education but would give his message in correct English whenever he was possessed by the Spirit.⁸ From the Redeemed Christian Church of God also have come reports of members speaking in tongues on receiving the Holy Spirit. Pastor F.O. Bamisaiye of this church reports of an illiterate Yoruba woman at Ile-Ife, a Madam Ruth, who received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. She spoke in English although she knew no word of English. Rev. Shoyinka of the Apostolic Faith in Lagos considers the phenomenon as the proof to the church that an individual has received the Spirit of God.

The second position that speaking in tongues is not the only proof of one's reception of the Holy Spirit is represented by the Christ Apostolic Church and the Celestial Church. Mr. Shasanmi reports from the Christ Apostolic Church in Itire, Lagos that the church considers the phenomenon as a gift of God and he gives them to individuals as he wishes. This is testified to by some informants. Dr. Ogunsina of the University of Ilorin reported that on the 12th February, 1984 he and his friend, Dr. Akinsoyinn went with some people to clear the site for a new branch of the church at Ibadan. After the clearing they all assembled to pray and there he and his friend received the Holy Spirit but they did not speak in other tongues. Although he claims to have spoken in tongues later, what is clear is that their reception of the Holy Spirit was not accompanied by an immediate speaking in tongues and even now he claims that he has never heard his friend speak in tongues but his friend (Dr. Akinsoyinn) instead has interpreted Dr. Ogunsina ecstatic utterances on several occasions. This shows that though one received the gift of tongues and the other received the gift of interpretation in neither case was it regarded as essential to the reception of the Spirit.⁹

Mr. Owodunni Olunaike of the Anthony Celestial Church in Lagos expressed that speaking in tongues is possible for any individual within the church who can pray with full concentration and is open to this gift of the Holy Spirit. It is notable that the church believes that God will not communicate with them in a language they do not understand. Speaking in tongues is not a sign of one's reception of the Holy Spirit; it means to the church and the individual that they are close to God. It is the vehicle through which God communicates with the church and its

members.

It is clear from the above that the two positions on the phenomenon are found amongst some of the Aladura Churches of Nigeria. Each church holds strongly to its belief. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, for example would never compromise on its position that speaking in tongues is the only sign of the reception of the Holy Spirit, neither would the Christ Apostolic Church consider the phenomenon as none other than one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Speaking in Tongues in the Book of Acts

Which of these positions is tenable in view of NT evidence? Turning to the New Testament, it is noticed that the canonical Gospels do not refer to speaking in tongues. Jesus never spoke of it nor did he promise it to his followers. There is, some would quickly point out, a passage at the end of Mark's Gospel which seems to suggest that Jesus spoke of speaking in tongues:

And these signs will accompany those who believe:
in my name they will cast our demons; they will
speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents,
and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not
hurt them (16:17,18)

Is this an authentic saying of Jesus? Or does it owe its origin to the theology of some within the early church and who later transposed it to the time of Jesus? There is the possibility that this passage was composed and added to some manuscript of the Gospel of Mark sometime in the second century. This would mean that the passage is a probable reflection on the belief of the question of glossolalia in the second century. Moreover, the passage is not found in any Greek manuscript earlier than the fifth century. Furthermore, it was not mentioned by any writer before Eusebius, the fourth century bishop and church historian.¹⁰ We are forced to conclude with with most contemporary evangelical scholars that this long ending of Mark is probably not authentic and one must be wary of basing any Biblical teaching upon so shaky a base. Thus from the Gospel evidence, Jesus did not say anything on the phenomenon. Do we take this as a pointer to the irrelevance of the phenomenon? No. It is possible that the phenomenon was not mentioned in the Gospels for the simple reason that it had not arisen. The act of speaking in tongues under the influence of the Holy Spirit, had not been deemed appropriate to the Christians at that time.

Evidence for this is that in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, speaking in tongues comes into prominence. On three occasions, the phenomenon is mentioned as a manifestation of the presence of the Spirit. These occasions are:

- (1) The Pentecost Story (Acts 2)
- (2) The Conversion of Cornelius and his household
- (3) At Ephesus, when Paul met a group of twelve who had had

John's baptism (Acts 19:1-7)

At the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the sign of the disciples' reception of the Holy Spirit was the fact that they spoke in tongues. Luke's treatment of the incident indicates that he wanted it understood as a miracle of Xenoglossia¹¹ a miracle of speech whereby the disciples spoke languages of which they had no previous knowledge.

They spoke in a foreign tongue, not known and studied by them but intelligible to those with knowledge of the language. Davies¹² and Gundry¹³ argue differently, however. They insist that what occurred in Jerusalem is speaking in **used** foreign languages. But no matter what Luke intended the passage to mean, one thing is certain, the phenomenon was the important sign of the individual's reception of the Holy Spirit. At Cornelius' house, the sign to Peter and his followers that the host and his household had received the Holy Spirit was that they spoke in tongues. (10:48) There is no indication of the language used, but it can be presumed that it was foreign to the speaker. There could have been Jews in Cornelius' household; the listeners were Peter and "believers from the circumcised" i.e. Jews. So what language (foreign?) could they have spoken, to be understood by Peter and his entourage (Jews as well)? Or was evidence of speaking in tongues here, unlike Pentecost, based only on ecstatic behaviour? At Ephesus, Paul met some disciples who had been baptised with John's baptism but had not received the Holy Spirit. He baptised them in the name of the Holy Spirit and laid hands on them at which time they received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues.

In these three instances, speaking in tongues was the external manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Here then is evidence to support the stand that glossolalia is the sign of an individual's reception of the Holy Spirit. To conclude thus would be wrong, for the evidence so far is limited to the Acts of the Apostles. It is necessary to examine the phenomenon in other New Testament writings.

Tongues in the Teaching of the Apostle Paul

Apart from these occurrences in Acts, the only section of the New Testament where glossolalia is discussed, and here in detail, is I Corinthians 12-14. The lack of reference to the phenomenon in the New Testament could suggest that tongue speaking played a relatively minor role in the primitive/early church and that Paul possibly dealt with the phenomenon here (in I Cor 12-14) not because he considered it important in its own right but because it was a problem in the Corinthian church. Evidence of this is that in the two listings of spiritual gifts given in I Cor 12, tongues and its interpretation were mentioned last. In Ephesians 4:11-12 and Romans 12:6-8 there also appear two lists of spiritual gifts and offices; speaking in tongues is not mentioned at all. If "speaking in tongues" was considered an outstanding endowment of the Spirit, it ought to have been specified here.¹⁴

On careful reading of the Corinthian passages, it appears that Paul in his exposition on the concept of glossolalia, gave both a

negative and a positive assessment of it. What was his negative assessment? With the analogy of a "body with many members," Paul advised the Corinthian church that they must not all desire the gift of tongues, since the church will not be a very useful body if every member of it performed exactly the same function. All members of the body of Christ are necessary. This rules out the supposition that the ability to speak with tongues sets a person off from other believers as one who has received a fullness of the Spirit which others have not received. Glossolalia, without interpretation, is to be strongly discouraged in the assembly (14:5-14:19). He observed that there was something childish about this fascination with tongues and urged them: "Do not be children in your thinking, be babes in evil but in thinking be mature(14:20)." Paul also insisted on the rights of the mind (14:14-15). Paul will certainly not agree with any suggestion that an intelligible speech, prayer, and song were in any way less spiritual or give any less evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit within us than the unintelligible utterances of tongues in which the mind of the speaker is not engaged; he will rather speak five words with his mind in the assembly than ten thousand words in a tongue. Paul's criticism of glossolalia here seems to have been against the phenomenon and its use within the assembly.

One can deduce from I Corinthians 14 something of the confusion and disorder in the Corinthian church. Members of the church intentionally work themselves up into a state of spiritual ecstasy striving to become vehicles of inspired utterance. From this negative assessment, it would be absurd to think that Paul would consider the phenomenon as the only sign of the reception of the Holy Spirit-- a very important aspect of the christian's life.

Paul, however, also gave a positive word about the phenomenon. He wrote that he spoke in tongues a great deal more than all the Corinthians (14:18) and was willing for the Corinthians to experience this charisma (14:5). He valued glossolalia because he considered it a charisma, an inspired utterance; the spirit speaking through him. He also considered it a kind of prayer (I Cor 14:2) and he thought of it also as a speaking the language of heaven.¹⁵ However, despite these good points on speaking in tongues, Paul did not consider it as the only sign of an individual's reception of the Holy Spirit. From this estimation, speaking in tongues was in no way more important than the other gifts of the Holy Spirit like prophecy, teaching, healing, etc; speaking in tongues does not put an individual any higher spiritually than others who possess other gifts of the Holy Spirit. The church would not be a properly functioning body if all members were to possess one particular spiritual gift.

Conclusion

After the Acts episodes, we do not read of any individual or group of worshippers whose reception of the Holy Spirit was evidenced by their speaking in tongues. This could not mean that the Spirit ceased to indwell Christians. Here we will draw attention to Paul's own case. In Acts 9:17-18 it is not

categorically stated that he spoke with other tongues when he received the Holy Spirit. Thus, there is evidence even in the early chapters of Acts that speaking in tongues was not the exclusive sign of the reception of the Holy Spirit. It would seem, therefore, that the Aladura Churches which teach it is possible to receive the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues are more in step with the Spirit of the New Testament. The message for the Church in Africa as a whole is clear-- let us not grieve the Spirit by exalting tongues as the mandatory sign of the Spirit's indwelling.

- 1 Speaking in tongues refers to a language mostly unintelligible, non-cognitive utterance which may vary in sound from inarticulate to articulate. Occasionally, some words which are recognisable may interrupt the flow of incoherence. There may be exceptional cases where intelligible utterances may have all the stress and intonational features associated with glossolalia. To the speakers it is a real language with religious significance.
- 2 C.G. Williams **Tongues of the Spirit**, (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1981) 78.
- 3 B.G.M. Sundkler **Bantu Prophets in South Africa** (OUP, 1976) 247f. See also Williams, 76.
- 4 H. Horton **What is the Good of Speaking in Tongues?**(Assemblies of God Publication House n.d.) 8.
- 5 See Williams, 76.
- 6 W.J. Hollenwager, **The Pentecostals** (1972) 10.
- 7 The Cherubim and Seraphim Church is divided on this issue of speaking in tongues. Some allow it while others don't.
- 8 J.A. Omoyajowo **Cherubim and Seraphim: The History of An African Independent Church** (NOK Publishers: Lagos, 1982) 137.
- 9 Information given here was collected by Miss Beatrice Asere, a final year student of the University of Ilorin (1983/84).
- 10 E. Schweizer **The Good News According to Mark** (London, SPCK, 1979) 374.
- 11 Williams, 25. See also D. Walker, **The Gift of Tongues and Other Essays** (Edinburgh, 1906) 3.
- 12 J.G. Davies, "Pentecost and Glossolalia," **Journal of Theological Studies** 5 1952, 228-31.
- 13 R.H. Gundry, "Ecstatic Utterance," **Journal of Theological Studies** 17, 1966, 228-31.

14 An objection has been raised against this position by Prof. G.N. Stanton who pointed out that this must not necessarily be if both lists in Romans and Ephesians are concerned with service gifts. But the question is -- can speaking in tongues not be regarded as a service gift? With interpretation, it can be used for edification of the church.

15 See J.D.G. Dunn **Jesus and the Spirit** (1975) 243f. where he discusses the question; did Paul think of glossolalia as a language? His conclusion is here stated.

Shepherding: The Hallmark of a Christian Leader

Rev. Yemi Ladipo

I begin with a confession. The word "shepherding" which I have chosen not only for this essay's title but also as its key concept makes me slightly uneasy. Why am I uneasy about such a seemingly innocent term? First, I am very concerned that Christian shepherding should not be allowed to take away the glory from the "Good Shepherd" (John 10). In the true sense shepherding of the flock of Christ is the responsibility of the Shepherd who laid down His life to procure their salvation and has sent His Holy Spirit to indwell and empower them. Christian leaders are therefore no more than "under-shepherds". Second, I am afraid the word "shepherding" in the past few years has acquired a bad connotation due to Christian leaders who are regarded as "Super-Christians" and wield tremendous authority over other less mature Christians - checking what they do every minute of the day, what they wear, who they associate with and retaining the final say in whom they are allowed to marry. A community of these questionable shepherds live in London-- "shepherding" other simple minded Christians who were content for others to do their thinking for them. The results of this master/slave relationship are often unpleasant.

I decided to retain the word "shepherding" because the alternative (my personal preference) "under-shepherding" like the word "under-done" can suggest something of "inferior kind". The shepherding I have in mind is of the same quality as that of the Good Shepherd because His Holy Spirit controls a Christian leader's life. Christian shepherding can therefore be defined as the caring, loving, accepting attitude of a Christian leader in his relationship with those entrusted to his or her charge - i.e. those who directly or indirectly report to him. Shepherding is the hallmark of responsible Christian leadership because people will be motivated to follow their leader if they feel loved, accepted and appreciated by him or her. It was said of our Lord "he loved his own to the end". No wonder his followers like C.T. Studd could say: "If Christ loves me so much as to die for me, no sacrifice is too great for me to make for him."

We in Africa who have been called to this crucial task should never tire of fresh reminders of the Biblical basis of, the contemporary diversions from and the central obstacles to this calling. We examine each of these facets in turn.

The Scriptural Basis for Shepherding

The New Testament writers following the example of the Lord Jesus knew that the welfare and well-being of the people of God should be the major concern of Christian leaders. Our Lord said: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:21). Paul's epistles conveyed the shepherd's heart-- a caring loving attitude towards those who looked up to him as their spiritual leader (Philippians 1:3-11).

Writing to the Thessalonian Christians Paul observed: "But we were gentle among you, like a nurse, taking care of her children. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but our own selves because you had become very dear to us" (1 Thess. 2:7-8). That's what shepherding is all about. Writing to Timothy, Paul said: "As I remember your tears, I long night and day to see you that I may be filled with joy" (2 Tim. 1:4). Paul's shepherding was not restricted to spiritual things for he reminded Timothy: "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your frequent ailments"(1 Tim. 5:23). For Paul, the care of the believers was always very dear to his heart (2 Cor. 11:28).

Peter was told by the risen Lord that as a leader in the early church shepherding of the flock was to be a top priority. He was told by Christ to "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15), "Take care of my sheep" (John 21:16), and "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17). Peter's original call was to be an evangelist - "a fisher of men". In this passage his call was modified because as the leader of the early church he needed a new quality of life altogether. He needed to be a shepherd to be able to:

a. Supply the need of the young flock of Jesus. He must learn to feed Christ's "lambs" (v.15). In feeding the lambs Peter will have the consolation of discovering that the lambs are ready to accept the assistance offered to them. This is true of newly converted people.

b. He will have to exercise general guidance over the flock of Christ (v.16): "Tend my sheep". Giving leadership to the mature members of the church is included in this.

c. The feeding of the mature members of the church in the church is the hardest task of all. Maybe that is why our Lord put it last (v. 17). This is because it is a lot more difficult to discern the real needs of the mature Christians. Also mature Christians can easily disguise their real needs by pretending to be what they are not.

Additionally, Peter was called to be not only a shepherd but to have a shepherd's heart - to love with "agape" love. For Peter knew (from his recollection of the three-fold denial of Christ) that he had to depend on the Lord by saying "yes Lord, you know I am your friend" (v. 15). Peter recognised that his response to Jesus' "agape" love (v. 15a) was the inferior "phileo" love-- a human love tainted with lust, possessiveness and self-will. Christian leaders must recognise the human limitation of their love for their followers and trust God for His supernatural unconditional, sacrificial love. The enormous responsibility of shepherding was not lost on Peter, for in his first epistle he declared: "You were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25). The task of shepherding, clearly mirrored in the writings of Paul and Peter was not a temporary ministry but rather one whose Biblical mandate continues today.

Contemporary Diversions to Shepherding

In Africa the indigenisation of the church is being accomplished in some instances at the expense of shepherding of the flock of Christ. A number of African leaders seem to be too easily satisfied with wielding ecclesiastical authority without accepting the corresponding responsibility of making time to take care of the flock committed to their charge. They seem always to be either on the road or in the air, at this or that committee meeting, flying from one country to the other attending Christian conferences or raising funds to maintain some "white elephants" they had inherited from missionaries. It seems that the success of international church conferences are now being measured in terms of the percentage of Black faces attending or the total number from the Third World countries. To the outsider it will appear as if the higher you get on the "ecclesiastical ladder" the more your flock are supposed to get used to your being absent. To make a bishop or church secretary pay attention to you, one almost has to cause some trouble in one's local church so that the leader must come to "put out the fire". Because the African church has put insufficient emphasis on the need for shepherding the flock of Christ, the church in many ways remains undernourished, uncared for and lacking in energy for a real and lasting impact upon their communities. Traditionally African chiefs were accessible to the ordinary man in the village because they stayed long in one place - not so with many African church leaders.

Obstacles to Shepherding

Why has the concept of church leadership so typical in our African church frequently replaced shepherding with committee meetings, conference hopping and administrative wrangling? There are many undoubtedly complex reasons for this decline in pastoral vision. Let me present what I regard as the more glaring problems.

One obstacle is a lack of understanding of what is involved in shepherding. Shepherding is an essential aspect of making "disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). It involves spending sufficient time with those entrusted to the care of a Christian leader in order that he may get to know them, help them, encourage them and learn from them. It involves being available as a Christian leader to listen to what those who report to him have on their minds. In the African context, it means a leader should organise his programme in such a way that he has time to make spontaneous (and unexpected) visits to those in his spiritual care not to discuss business but to spend time with them as a friend and a brother in Christ. Care should be taken that these visits are not at inconvenient times nor should they be carried out perfunctorily-- by constantly looking at your wrist-watch. The Christian workers need to feel that they have the full attention of their leader and that he cares enough for them to listen to the little things around which their lives revolve. Leaders need to be trained in the principles of

discipleship to be able to provide effective shepherding for those who report to them.

Secondly, shepherding is often considered to be too time-consuming. In order to save time and energy it is very tempting for a Christian leader to assume that his followers will come to him when they need his help and advise. Not so. A leader needs to gain the confidence of his followers, not by compromising Biblical principles, but by demonstrating that he cares for them. A leader's life must constantly convey this message: "people matter more than things". Time spent in cultivating good relationships with your flock is an investment with good dividends in the future. When a leader pushes aside the paper work on his desk to attend to the personal need of one of his staff or congregation, he conveys an important message: he cares and is concerned about the welfare and spiritual well-being of his followers. Christian leaders should pray to be delivered from "the tyranny of the urgent" so that they can concentrate on what is really important.

A third obstacle can be an inferiority complex. A pastor may feel inferior to an influential member of his church and concludes that he is not able to minister to him spiritually. Paul's advice to young Timothy is relevant here: "Let no one despise your youth, but set believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. . . . Do not neglect the gift you have . . . for God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, love and self control (1 Tim. 4:12-13, 2 Tim. 1:7)." People suffer from inferiority complex because they fail to realise that human nature is the same no matter what the colour of the skin, and that God's grace is always sufficient no matter in what circumstances a Christian finds himself. My personal observation is that many African leaders underrate the spiritual conflict and cultural tensions that most expatriate missionaries experience on the field. It is a wrong assumption to think that because a person is a missionary he or she ought to know how to cope with his tensions. To allow missionaries to work on the mission field without proper shepherding is almost like abandoning them to a "firing squad." I can understand the frustrations of many missionaries serving in Africa today. Not only do they feel used as a cheap labour force but they are often not "serviced" by their national leaders. My concern is for the "new missionaries" serving in Africa (professionally qualified people who are ashamed of the patronising attitude of former missionaries and the imposition of cultural baggage on their African brothers). These "new missionaries" desire to be led by competent African leaders who can serve as spiritual shepherds to them. Too often they are disappointed in this expectation. African Christian leaders must realise that it is not enough to see to the material well-being of missionaries in their various locations; they also must learn to minister to their spiritual and cultural needs as well to enable them to become fulfilled on the field.

Finally, shepherding has sometimes suffered because of a pre-occupation with finances and personal ambition. Christian leaders need to meditate often on 1 Timothy 6:6-10: "There is a great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing

into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world, world, but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation For the love of money is the root of all evils" In Africa, the desire to be rich is a great handicap for many Christian leaders especially leaders of para-church organizations. They move from one para-church organization to another in search of greater financial security. Pre-occupation with personal gain and too much dependence on foreign funds hinder shepherding of Christian workers. How can a man bite the hand that feeds him? Shepherding is sacrificed on the altar of ambition.

The story is told of an African politician whose supporters were involved in a car crash on their way to his campaign meeting. The politician agreed to pay for the treatment of ten badly injured people at a private hospital. When the time came for him to pay for their treatment he refused to pay for the one that died in the hospital-- and with good reason. Dead men don't vote. I sometimes feel that Christian leaders use the Christian workers that serve under them to advance their personal ambition rather than the kingdom of God. Their treatment of Christian workers under their authority (nationals and expatriates) is often based less on who they are in their various callings than on what they achieve. What results is a leader who seeks to be served rather than to serve.

Conclusion

In Southern Sudan a number of years ago arrangements were made to conduct one of the early confirmation services. There was however, one major problem to be overcome - a man eating lion was known to be around the path leading to the church and members of the local congregations were afraid to make the journey to attend the service. On the day of the confirmation service the vicar of the church rose early in the morning (no doubt after much prayer) to confront the lion. He was attacked by the lion and somehow he managed to kill the beast without sustaining any injury. When the people discovered that the lion had been killed they were full of praise for their pastor. The vicar modestly replied that he had only done his duty - to take care of his flock. Are you called to be a shepherd in your congregation, in your classroom, in your home or in your office? Then give over your time. Give over your ambitions. Give over your life. Feed his sheep.

Does the Pauline Doctrine of the Atonement Have Any Basis in the Gospels?

Gordon Molyneaux

It would seem at first that there is a glaring discrepancy between what Paul on the one hand and the Gospels on the other have to say about the death of Christ. The Evangelists (especially the synoptic authors) describe factually the events which took Jesus ultimately to his execution at the hands of his opponents outside the walls of Jerusalem. Paul, for his part, represents the atonement as a rich, well-developed doctrine with far-reaching, even cosmic, implications. The contrast has led many to stress the differences even to the point of asserting that the two positions are incompatible, accusing Paul of distorting the simplicity of the Gospel tradition to serve his own theological ends.¹

One possible explanation of the contrast is that Paul was an erudite theologian, steeped in philosophy and religious training, while the gospel writers were simple straightforward men from common walks of life. It is very understandable therefore that there should be two different ways of looking at the subject. The explanation is attractive but it will not do. For many years it has been acknowledged that the Gospels are theological works.² Each author selected and used his material with a view to convincing his readers of certain theological truths. John and Luke say so in almost as many words (Luke 1:1-4, John 20:35) and Mark makes it clear with his opening statement that he has a theological position to convey.

Another, perhaps more valid, explanation comes from acknowledging the difference between description and analysis, that is, between narration (Gospel authors) and reflection (Paul). The Synoptics were recording **what happened**. Paul was expounding **what was going on**. In this way, Luke, for instance, would write: "When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified him" (23:33). Paul, however, would declare "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood" (Rom 3:25). This distinction between description of the fact and significance of the fact would explain to some extent the difference between the Gospel and Paul.

The conclusions of form criticism would make the task before us more complex, situating the problem not between Paul and the Synoptics, but between the early Christian community on one hand (represented by Paul **and** the synoptic authors) and Jesus' understanding of himself and of his death on the other. Formgeschichte sets itself the job of attempting to distinguish in the Gospels between what Jesus actually said and thought about his identity and ministry, and what the Church came to understand later.

It is impossible in an article of this length to explore and fully refute this position. The widely divergent conclusions arrived at by different form critics should put us on our guard

against accepting too readily the findings of this type of criticism. Rudolph Bultmann, one of the most eminent of the form critics, certainly seems to go beyond the bounds of the historical neutrality and objectivity which form criticism is supposed to demand when it insists that Jesus never understood himself to be the the unique plenipotentiary of God and that we owe that idea to the Early Church.³ According to Bultmann (and it seems he owes his conclusion more to certain presuppositions than to textual evidence) the synoptics reflect the attitude of the Christian community rather than the self-understanding of Jesus himself. For textual and critical reasons (rather than merely apologetical reasons) the position of such theologians as Cullmann, Morris, Guthrie, and others⁴ seems more convincing, namely, that the Christology of the Gospels does not start with the early church, but goes back to Jesus himself.

We come back then to the problem expressed in the title: from an examination of the material in the Gospels, was Paul justified in his understanding of the death of Christ? What is striking in a careful analysis of the two is not the discrepancies, but the resemblances. Let us consider just three of these.

The Centrality of the Death of Christ

The first arresting fact is the sheer importance of the death of Christ in both Paul and the Gospels. For Paul the cross is, with the resurrection, the focal point of his experience and his preaching. It is this that explains his transformed life and his reversed ambitions (Gal 2:20). His sole boast is in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal 6:14). It constituted the major theme of his apostolic preaching however unpalatable it may have been to the Jews and Greeks (1 Cor 1:22,2:2). It is the basis of his Christian ethics (Romans 6:1-11, Col 2:20 ff).

In the Gospels no less importance is attached to Christ's crucifixion. It is normal in biographical works for the death of the person in question to occupy only a few lines at the end of the book. The decease is to the person's life what a full stop is to a sentence, it adds nothing to the meaning of what has preceded but merely serves to indicate its conclusion. Not so the death of Christ in all the Gospels. For them the death of Christ is the climax towards which all that precedes moves, and without which all that came before has little meaning. M. Kahler describes the Gospels as "passion narratives with long introductions."⁵ Nowhere is this clearer than in the second Gospel; it is as if the cross throws its shadow over the entire public ministry of Jesus. Hardly has he commenced his work of healing and preaching when there is a sinister opposition to his work and words (Mark 2:6-7,16,24), and soon after we read that "the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus" (3:6). The Epistles of Paul agree with the Gospels that the death of Christ (and his resurrection) is the single most important event in history.

Christ's Death Divinely Ordained

Next, let us notice that both Paul and the Gospel writers see the death of Jesus not as a tragic accident of history, but as the fulfillment of the plan of God. The Apostle insists that it was an absolute necessity, without which there is no solution for the sinner, no matter what his social or religious privileges might be. It is **God** who destined Jesus to be a sacrificial victim for sin (Romans 3:25). It is **God** who made him to be sin who knew no sin, in order that we in him might be clothed with the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21). The crucifixion of Christ is the tangible proof of the measure of God's love for sinners (Rom 5:8). It is the expression 'par excellence' of the extraordinary wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24). It is 'according to the Scriptures' (and not according to the whims of Pilate and the Jews) that Jesus died (1 Cor 15:3).

The Gospels, too, (and we would want to insist thereby that Jesus himself) understood the passion to be in accordance with the will of God, and not simply the incidental end-result of the conflict with the religious system of the day. Even less was it due to the treachery of his disciple Judas or the weakness of the Roman governor. His death is the fulfillment of the Scriptures, -- he **had** to suffer (Luke 24:25-27,46).

This necessity, expressed in Greek by the participle 'dei' rings again and again as Jesus foretells his approaching death. Fully realizing what awaited him in Jerusalem, Jesus sets his face to go there (Luke 9:51), and when one of his disciples tries to dissuade him from going the way of the cross, Jesus replies with exceptionally strong language (Mark 8:33) (Who in the community where Peter was so highly respected, would ever have invented such an incident?). Jesus seems almost pre-occupied in the Gospels with the necessity of his death (Mark 8:31,9:31, 10:33). The fourth Gospel is entirely in agreement "No-one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father" (John 10:18). He had come to do the will of his Father, and in the garden of Gethsemane he deliberately aligns himself with that will, namely to drink the cup (of suffering and death) which the Father had prepared. Indeed it was for this very reason that he had come to this hour.

Christ's Death as a Substitute for Sinful Man

We have seen that the Pauline writings are in full agreement with the Gospels upon the central importance of the death of Christ, and that it was by divine decree. But what of the significance of that death? For after all, it is at this point that most of the accusations of distortion are aimed. So monumental is the death of Jesus Christ that it should not surprise us if it can be considered from a variety of angles. However, it would be true to say that Paul understands it primarily as being a sacrifice for sins, -- **the** sacrifice for sins. Jesus the righteous dies in the place of the sinner. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a

curse for us (Gal 3:13). The Sinless One is made sin for the sinful ones (2 Cor 5:21). Christ died for the ungodly (Rom 5:6). It is in him, because his blood was shed, that we have the remission of our sins (Eph 1:17). As in the Old Testament the God-ordained death of a blameless animal atoned for the sins of a guilty man, so under the new covenant, Christ our Passover Lamb is sacrificed for us (1 Cor 5:7).

Is this understanding of the meaning of Christ's death to be found in all the Gospels? We may not find there the same reasoned, systematic exposition of the cross that Paul gives us, but there is ample evidence to show that Jesus himself understood his ministry in terms of the Suffering Servant of whom Isaiah spoke-- the one who would bear the iniquities of his people and suffer in their place (Is 42:1-4, 49:1-7, 50:4-11, 52:13-53:12). Jesus is recorded in Luke as saying: "It is written: And he was numbered with the transgressors (Is 53:12), and I tell you this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment" (Luke 22:37). Manson comments: "Jesus finds the true meaning of his career in the poem of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah . . . Events are moving inevitably in one direction for Jesus. There can only be one end to his ministry; and that is the end foreshadowed in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah."

It is true that this passage in Luke is the only time that Isaiah 53 is quoted directly. Nevertheless, there are many passages where the Suffering Servant theme is unmistakably alluded to. The words of institution at the Last Supper with their emphasis on "for many" reminds us of the substitutionary language of Isaiah 53. Cullmann, reflecting on the terminology of the Last Supper concludes that in the majority of the "logia" (sayings) where Jesus speaks in a general way about the necessity of his death, Isaiah 53 is in the back of his mind.⁷ Jeremias concludes in a similar way, declaring that "without Isaiah 53 the eucharistic words remain incomprehensible."⁸ Perhaps the best known example of Jesus' use of the expression "for many" is in Mark 10:45, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." By this declaration Jesus shows that he understood the meaning of his favourite name (Son of Man) in terms of the "ebed Yahweh", the Servant of the Lord, who would lay down his life in the stead of sinful man and for his redemption. Jesus had considered the question of the necessity of his death and had found the answer to this question in Scripture, primarily in Isaiah 53, the chapter about the Suffering Servant. When the Apostle Paul uses the language of substitutionary atonement to explore the meaning of the death of Christ he is certainly not in glaring contradiction with the Gospel writers; both he and they faithfully reflect Jesus' own understanding of his destiny.

We may conclude then that for the Gospel writers and for Paul the atoning death of Christ is, so to speak, the center of gravity. This convergence of their opinion is to be explained by the fact that Jesus himself was aware of his role as the substitutionary sacrifice ordained by the Father, foreshadowed by the pascal atonement of the Old Covenant, and foretold by Isaiah. For the Gospel writers the death of Jesus and his resurrection

are seen as the climax of their accounts. For Paul, it is the inaugural event, which has cosmic implications. It is as if the Gospel writers draw a circle whose center is the death of Jesus of Nazareth. Paul draws a circle much bigger than theirs -- it encircles the entire universe. But the two circles are concentric.

¹ For an historical survey of the "Jesus vs Paul" issue during the 20th Century, cf H. Ridderbos **Paul and Jesus** 1958 3-20.

² cf H. Conzelmann, **The Theology of St. Luke**, London, Faber, 1960 and G. Bornkamm, **Nouveau Testament, Problemes d'Introduction**, Geneve, Editions Labor et Fides, 1973, 72-79.

³ R. Bultmann, **Jesus: Mythologie et Demythologisation**, Paris, Seuil, 1958, 38.

⁴ O. Cullmann, **The Christology of the New Testament** London, SCM, 1963.

⁵ Quoted by G. Bornkamm, **Jesus of Nazareth**, London, 1960, 17.

⁶ T.W. Manson, **The Sayings of Jesus** London, SCM Press, 1964.

⁷ O. Cullmann, **Christology** 59.

⁸ J. Jeremias, **New Testament Theology** London, SCM Press, 1971, 291.

Woman in the Bible

by Mary Evans

(Paternoster Press: Exeter, 1983)

133 pages, £ 4.95

There is no doubt as to the contemporary importance of women's role, both in the church and in secular society. 1985 marks the end of the United Nations Decade for Women, with the closing conference held in Nairobi, Kenya. Over recent years, many books have been published on the subject and evangelical Christians are becoming increasingly aware of the need to come to grips with the issue from a firm biblical basis. Most of the Christian books on the topic, although referring to the biblical evidence, are of the lightweight variety, designed to appeal to a wide lay leadership. They are generally written from a western cultural viewpoint (a very middle-class western cultural viewpoint at that) and therefore have little relevance for other cultures. What would the average rural African make of one writer's assertion that a woman's place is in the home because "it is every child's inalienable right to come home to the smell of fresh-baked cookies"?

It is refreshing, therefore, to read Mary Evans' book **Woman in the Bible** with its detailed exegetical approach. Her intention is to examine what the Bible says about women and their role, and in particular how the New Testament church viewed its female half. She starts by surveying the Old Testament doctrine and practice, then moves on to a section on contemporary cultural and religious influences on the New Testament. She then has three sections on the New Testament: the gospels; doctrinal teaching in the Acts and the Epistles; and community practice in the Acts and the Epistles. Mary Evans teaches at London Bible College, England, and her M.Phil. thesis provides the backbone of the book. It is a tightly argued work and requires careful reading.

The widely held view that from creation woman is receptive, passive and a follower, whereas man is the active initiator and leader is convincingly argued to have little biblical foundation. Most Christians holding a traditional view of women's role in the church use verses from I Cor 11 and 14 and I Timothy 2 as proof texts to limit women's participation and function in the church. Mary Evans looks at all these passages in great detail, but with her wider biblical approach comes to a more egalitarian conclusion. She looks closely at the concepts of authority, headship and submission, and concludes that the evidence does not necessarily lead one to a traditionalist position.

The usual interpretations of I Cor 14:34-35 have two main problems: (a) the command for women to remain silent contradicts I Cor 11 where Paul permits women to pray and prophesy; (b) it is difficult to understand the appeal to the Law. Paul normally uses the word to refer to the Old Testament law, but the Old Testament nowhere forbids women to speak in the assembly (and even if it did, it is most unlike Paul to require his gentile converts to obey the Old Testament law. On the contrary his

normal stance is to emphasize the Christian's freedom from the law). Mary Evans, following J.A. Anderson and J. Harper, posits an interesting interpretation, namely that I Cor 14:34-35 are a quote from the Corinthians' letter to Paul, which he goes on to refute. Although speculative, this certainly poses fewer problems than the standard interpretations.

Of the I Timothy 2 passage, Mary Evans maintains that the prohibition against women teaching was never intended to be universal or permanent, especially in view of Paul's acceptance of Priscilla as a teacher, and his exhortations elsewhere (e.g. Col 3:16, Romans 15:14) for believers to teach one another. This view is gaining credence among evangelicals although many would hold that the kind of teaching open to women is unofficial, whilst only men are allowed to teach in an official capacity. Mary Evans does not believe that such a distinction can be sustained from the New Testament. Some commentators understand the reference to the Fall in I Timothy 2:14 to mean that women are easily deceived and that this is one reason why Paul does not permit them to teach. However, as is pointed out in the book, Paul uses the same illustration in 2 Corinthians 11:3 to speak of the possibility of both men and women being deceived. [In this context it is interesting to note Richard and Catherine Clark Kroeger's view of I Timothy 2:13-14: they refer to gnostic teaching that special revelation was given to Eve, for she was the first to eat of the tree of knowledge (gnosis) and had also enjoyed a prior existence. If this heresy was indeed current at Ephesus, it gives extra weight to Paul's insistence that Adam was created first, and Eve deceived (not enlightened) when she ate the fruit. As John Stott points out in his **Issues Facing Christians Today**, this view is at best speculative, but it does serve to show that the matter is not as black and white as some would lead us to believe.]

Mary Evans brings convincing evidence to show that headship in the New Testament does not necessarily imply authority. She suggests that in I Corinthians 11, "head" is more appropriately linked with "source", and in Ephesians 5 with self-sacrificing service. It would have been helpful to have had this, and other themes (such as the husband being prior in the marriage relationship) further developed and applied to contemporary situations. However, Mary Evans cannot be criticised for this, since she states in her introduction that her aim is to study the biblical data, and not to decide how it should affect us today (although she fully recognizes the importance of the application of biblical teaching). In fact this could be seen as one of the strengths of the book since it makes it relevant for Christians of differing cultural backgrounds. Africans will find the material helpful as they seek to do their own contextualization.

Not everyone will agree with the book's conclusions. Nevertheless, **Woman in the Bible** is an important work for anyone who wishes to take seriously the biblical teaching on this subject. Mary Evans has covered the basic groundwork. It is now up to others to see how this can be applied to the contemporary situation. It is to be hoped that African evangelicals will be amongst those to take up the challenge.

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Unreached People of Kenya: Summary Report

Ken Shingledecker, editor
(Daystar Communication: Nairobi, 1982)
120 pages, Ksh 20/=

According to published statistics, Kenya is one of the most Christian countries in Africa. Some 70% of Kenya's 16 million people are now considered to be Christians. Yet within Kenya there are a number of smaller people groups which are still unreached with the Gospel, or where there is not yet a viable church.

Daystar Communications, on behalf of the Committee on Unreached Peoples, has conducted an extensive survey throughout Kenya to determine which of Kenya's more than 60 people groups are still without a viable church. The research has centered on 26 people groups which together make up less than 11% of the population of Kenya.

The report has revealed that there are some people groups in Kenya with no Christian church at all. The 380,000 Somali who live in Kenya's Northeastern Province are one of these unreached groups. To date there are less than 5 known Somali Christians living in Northeastern and only 2 or 3 ministries actively trying to reach these Somali for Christ. The Somali, like many of the unreached of Kenya, are nomadic, strongly Muslim, and live in one of the more remote parts of Kenya. Hostile relationships between Somali clans make ministry even more difficult, as a ministry to one clan excludes one from any relationship with other clans. Other unreached people groups include the Korokoro, Malakote, Digo, Swahili, Bajun, Boni and Orma (all Muslim peoples).

Other people groups in Kenya have been found to have some Christian witness and the nucleus of a church, but one which is small and weak. The Samburu, Rendille, Gabbra and Boran of north Kenya would fall into this category. Among these peoples there are pockets of other people (Sakuye, Daasenech, El Molo, etc) who are still unreached.

There are other people groups which research has revealed have a large church with widespread influence throughout the people. The Massai, with their more than 395 congregations, 43 trained pastors, and 220 evangelists scattered throughout the Massai area, are one of these groups in which God has now solidly planted his church. Other groups where there was found to be a strong Christian presence include the Pokot, Girriama and Turkana.

The study reveals that there are Christians working with nearly every people group in Kenya, but in many cases there is not yet a viable church that has its own pastors, evangelists and lay leaders and which is carrying on evangelism of its own. Among these people groups there is still a need for missionaries to assist in the establishing of the Christian church.

This volume, while only a summary of the major findings of a

comprehensive study of Kenya's Unreached Peoples points the reader to the availability from Daystar of 13 detailed reports covering each of the 26 people groups studied. These volumes filled with facts, statistics and recommendations are of extreme importance to anyone concerned with Kenya's Unreached Peoples.

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Paul Tillich

by John P. Newport
(Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1984),
232 pages, \$12.95

Paul Tillich is believed by many to be the most significant North American theologian of this century. John Newport backs this up with the results of a survey published in 1977 by the Council of the Study of Religion (p.16). The study showed that among 554 theologians surveyed, Tillich ranked first as the major influence among American theologians. In addition, Tillich's **Systematic Theology** is the most widely used text among North American theologians. So a book of this nature, which introduces such an influential thinker, is a welcome addition.

Paul Tillich is part of a series called **Makers of the Modern Theological Mind**, which is edited by Bob E. Patterson. The purpose of the series is to provide a reliable introduction and guide to the ideas of the men who have shaped Christian theology in this century.

The purpose of this particular book is to "set forth in clear, intelligible form the basic purpose, idea, method and key concepts of Paul Tillich's theological writings" (p.15). Along with this, Newport seeks to point out the various influences which have shaped both Tillich and his ideas. John Newport appears to be highly qualified to write such a book. Not only has he done limited study under Tillich, but is presently a director of the North American Paul Tillich Society.

Unfortunately, this reviewer feels that Newport was only partially successful in accomplishing his purpose. Therefore, it might be helpful to comment on both the strengths and weaknesses of the book.

In terms of strengths, first the book is extremely well organized and laid out for the author's purposes. It is divided into four parts. Part one deals primarily with an introduction to the life, background, purpose and influences of Tillich. The reader will find this part very helpful, especially the sections on his basic purpose (apologist to intellectuals) and basic idea (Ontology: essence, existence and essentialization). Part two deals briefly with Tillich's method and then more extensively with his main ideas and the outworking of his system. The brief chapter on his method is important since some feel Tillich's greatest contribution to theology is not dogmatics but methodology. Part three introduces the relationship and

importance of Judaism and other world religions in Tillich's system. Part four concludes the book with an evaluation both of Tillich's life and work. This, too, the readers will find helpful because Newport cites the weaknesses and strengths as perceived by other theologians. Overall, the organization of the book provides a good structure from which to introduce Tillich.

A second strength is the unbiased nature of the book. Usually in writing a book of this nature an author is so much for or against the subject of the book that a fair, unbiased account is not written. However Newport provides a very fair representation of Tillich and his ideas. He assesses both strengths and criticisms from others at various points in the book. So one sees Tillich as Tillich.

A third strength is the wealth of biographical material in the book. The book is well footnoted so the student can easily refer to the primary sources for further study. In addition, Newport shows familiarity with all of Tillich's major writings.

The weaknesses of the book can be summed up in Newport's failure to make Tillich truly intelligible to people who are not academicians trained in western, especially existential, philosophy. Frequently statements are made without any supportive explanation. So it almost seems that a basic familiarity with Tillich and his ideas is already assumed.

Along with the above, there are sections of the book in which key concepts and major ideas of thought are not sufficiently defined and explained. Tillich's ideas are usually expressed in very technical, philosophical terms that are not part of every-day vocabulary. Consequently the reader will struggle with some parts. It would have been more helpful if Newport would have taken Tillichian ideas and communicated them in more common language. Since he has not done this, this will probably be a difficult book to understand for most African students and pastors.

However, the book is not without value. While it is not an adequate substitute for Tillich's own writings, it would be a helpful guide and resource along with a first hand study of Tillich. This book is recommended for any student as a resource if one is studying all or part of Tillich's writings.

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Jesus Christ: The Witness of History
by Sir Norman Anderson
(Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1985)
176pp.

This book is a revision by the author of **Christianity: The Witness of History** (1969). The work is intended primarily as a defense of the factual and historical basis of Christianity, with a focus on the plethora of reliable sources that authenticate the New Testament accounts of the person and teachings of Jesus Christ as well as His crucifixion and resurrection. The author's

major concern is to demonstrate that "the Christian faith did not emerge from some popular legend . . . nor yet from any process of metaphysical speculation" (pp.7-8).

It is only at infrequent intervals that a book appears that is both overtly sympathetic to Christianity and also highly convincing in its own right. Anderson's book is of this calibre. Besides being well organized and masterfully written, with every word properly fitted like a gemstone in an intricately designed bracelet, the book takes the reader from point to point with arguments that savour of integrity rather than manipulation. The author's breadth of knowledge of Greek, Roman and Hebrew culture and history gives this book a rare feature that many so-called Christian college texts lack: resonance. The tone of the book is scholarly, but not pedantic; it is vibrant and dynamic, but not brash or colloquial.

No college or seminary that stresses the reliability of Scripture should be without this book. Steering a straight course between the Charybdis of theological liberalism which challenges the authority of Scripture as a whole and the Scylla of neo-orthodoxy with its shifting eclecticism, Anderson makes a strong case for both the historical basis for Christian belief as well as its existential integrity. To have a "firm" belief not based on actual historical events is merely subjectivism, and is ultimately incapable of rational defense; yet to be intellectually convinced of the reliability of the New Testament account of the life of Christ without personal commitment also falls short of the faith the apostles were willing to die for. The author thus implicitly invites the honest inquirer to sift the evidence -- but this evidence may very well lead to Christian commitment.

Jesus Christ: The Witness of History is then, the kind of book that any thinking person would enjoy reading. The young Christian will be impressed by the wealth of learning that permeates the firm faith of the author, while the mature Christian will appreciate the rich perspectives and insights that unfold page after page. Any open-minded sceptic or agnostic will be amazed at the author's intimate familiarity with the secularly oriented mind and all of the common objections raised against Christianity.

The book deserves a careful reading in the western world, where it is fashionable among so-called intellectuals to reject Christianity as passe without giving it the honest consideration they would give to anything else they might encounter, however bizarre or perverse; it is needed in the African community, where there is increasing pressure to mold and reshape Christianity into some of the traditional or tribal patterns of belief. Anderson earns himself a hearing by freely admitting that "the other world religions include much that is true and helpful . . . all that is true ultimately comes from God" (p 18). Yet, he clearly recognizes the unique and indispensable claims of Christ and Christianity and then carefully proceeds to demonstrate the strength and integrity of these claims. **Jesus Christ: The Witness of History**, without a trace of fanfare, implicitly urges the objective inquirer to move beyond syncretism towards the clearer light of a "mere" Christianity based on facts not myths.

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**The World In Between:
Christian Healing and the Struggle
for Spiritual Survival**

by E. Milingo

(C. Hurst and Company: London and Orbis Books: Maryknoll,
New York, 1984)
138 pages £ 3.75

Emmanuel Milingo became the Archbishop of Lusaka, Zambia, in 1969 at the age of 39. In 1973 he discovered he had a gift of healing and this became a major part of his ministry. Three years later he came into contact with the Catholic charismatic movement which came to be an important source of encouragement for him. But his fellow clergy in Zambia, especially the Europeans, were not happy with the healing aspect of his ministry, and in 1982 he was summoned to Rome to explain his pastoral methods. He subsequently resigned as Archbishop and is now a Special Delegate to the Pontifical Commission on Migration, Refugees and Tourism. He continues his healing ministry in Rome.

This book is made up of extracts from Archbishop Milingo's writings from 1976 - 1982, which have been re-edited with his permission by Mona Macmillan, an English Roman Catholic writer. It is not a systematic presentation of Milingo's thought but a personal explanation and defense of his ministry. He writes of himself as being at one and the same time a Roman Catholic, a pastor-healer and an African, and the book can be considered under these three themes.

As a Roman Catholic, Milingo is a child of his church. His healing ministry which so offended his fellow clergy, was nevertheless conducted within the framework of Catholic liturgy and practice, including for example, reliance on the prayers of saints and angels.

Because of his basic attitude of loyalty and obedience to his church he was astonished and deeply hurt by the response of the church to his ministry and the trials he has received as a consequence. At the same time in the chapter 'Living in Christ' his description of his experience of Christ and prayer is strongly 'evangelical'. He expresses very clearly his dependence on Christ, his work on the cross and his all-conquering resurrection.

As a pastor-healer, Milingo insists that the church must face the facts of where people are as it ministers to them. A minister of the church who evades people's needs for the sake of his own comfort denies his ministry. Christians in Africa -- as elsewhere -- are troubled by illness and death, poverty, family and work problems. But because the church has not given them

help that makes sense, Christians are looking for help from 'alien and dangerous sources.' They are Christians with two religions; he quotes a Kenyan nun, 'We leave (God) in the church on Sunday and we ask our ancestral gods to accompany us for the rest of the week' (p.77).

Milingo's particular concern is for those troubles by **mashwe**, a form of spirit possession. This possession he attributes to demons (bad angels) or to the spirits of the ancestors who have been angered or who seek revenge; these evil spirits are parasites on the person possessed. The task of the church is to exorcise such spirits, so that the person may be healed. To engage in exorcism is no light thing; serious precautions must be taken. Milingo is very clear on the power, destructiveness and deceit of the devil. He warns against pride, impatience and professionalism when ministering. He stresses total dependence on Jesus Christ and total confidence in the power of the Blood of Jesus. 'Jesus has done it for us . . . He has full authority over Satan and all his powers' (pp. 70-71).

No Christian in Africa would dispute the importance of the spirit world, 'the world-in-between' as Milingo calls it. The church in Africa needs teaching on 'the evil spirits and how to fight them' to quote one of the chapter headings. But there are some difficult distinctions that need to be made about the spirit world and I'm not sure that Milingo always gets them right. Is it speaking biblically to speak about possession by benign guardian spirits which do not require exorcism? Is it possible for spirits of ancestors who have been angered to return to trouble relatives? (Milingo speaks of them as needing permission from God to return to earth, but he doesn't elaborate on this). How can we distinguish between the spirit of an ancestor with an evil intent and a demon? Milingo admits that the demons are great liars, able to take the name of a relative. I would like to see these sort of questions given more biblical thought and evaluation.

But it is in the chapter, 'African Spirituality' that I found Milingo most thought-provoking. For him African Traditional Religion (ATR) is a providential preparation for the Gospel. He uses the teaching of the book of Hebrews to suggest that it has a place in relation to the Gospel equivalent to the place of Old Testament religion. 'Just as Paul (sic) showed the Jews the superiority of Jesus over Moses, Melchisedek and the Jewish sacrifice of the blood of bulls and goats, so should the Africans be reasoned with too. . . , on the basis of their respect for their ancestors (p.85). Christianity is a conqueror but not a destroyer of what exists. 'Make an African a Christian **with** his beliefs in ancestral spirits'. This is 'a necessary step on the way to their full conversion.' So Jesus is the Ancestor of ancestors and the Mediator of mediators; 'the living-dead ancestors . . . will give away when Jesus comes in' (p.87).

Once again I fully agree with Milingo's desire to express the Gospel in terms that make sense to the African. God does walk with his people. He does live with them and he may be consulted by them every time a need arises. In that sense he is God in the traditional African pattern. The distant God 'who remains in the church as preached by 'Western Christianity' is a

caricature of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But is it right to put ATR on the same level as OT religion as a preparation for the Gospel? Doesn't OT religion have a unique place in God's revelation? The Gospel may not destroy what already exists but it does **supersede** it. Milingo argues 'Paul did not say to the Jews that the blood of bulls and goats was ineffective. He only pointed out that the Blood of Christ has much greater efficacy,' (p.82) implying that ATR is similarly not effective. But isn't this exactly what the writer to the Hebrews does say, that the blood of bulls and goats **was** ineffective; it could not do what needed to be done between man and God, it could only give him a superficial cleansing. So should we not query the true effectiveness of ATR between man and God? (Especially when what Milingo sees as its key aspect, 'we can speak with the dead,' is specifically forbidden in OT religion, as well as being forbidden to the Christian).

Inevitably in a compilation like this there is a certain 'bittiness' of presentation, but Milingo's writing is always interesting and at times properly disturbing. One omission, I think, is a bibliography for further reading: the brief bibliographical note on Vatican documents is not enough.

Ultimately this is a book about Christian ministry in Africa, and therefore it is very relevant to those who exercise pastoral care in Africa, and to those who are training to do so. The moral of the book so far as the Catholic church is concerned is: "You can't be an Archbishop and a healer at the same time . . . at least not if you are an African." That surely is a sad conclusion. The moral so far as this reviewer is concerned is: let us listen to the African -- let us listen to our own hearts if we are African. Let us not close our eyes and ears to the real needs and experiences of people, and let us minister with compassion in the all-powerful Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Ethics: Approaching Moral Decision

by Arthur F. Holmes

(Downers Grove, Ill: Intervarsity Press, 1984)

132 pp. Ksh. 73/50

Metaphysics: Constructing a World View

by William Hasker

(Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1983)

132 pp. Ksh. 73/50

Ethics: Approaching Moral Decisions is designed as a basic introduction to the philosophical perspective on ethics. Holmes divides the book into four major sections. The first section (Chapter one) briefly examines the interrelationship between

Christianity and ethics. The second (Chapter two through five) explains four views that are opposed to Christian ethics. The third (chapters six through eight) is used to propose a general Christian ethic in which Holmes puts forth three proposals for the development of ethical theory:

Our proposals have included (1) a structure for Christian ethics that distinguishes cases, area rules, the overall principals of justice and love, and their logical basis, (2) an approach to moral knowledge via biblical and natural indicators of God's purposes for us in His creation, and (3) the basis of obligation in the divine nature and will (p.78).

The fourth (Chapters nine through twelve) attempts to apply this ethic to four moral issues faced today (including criminal punishment, laws that regulate morality, sex and marriage, and the ethics of virtue).

Ethics follows the general format of this series, which is designed to introduce students to different fields of philosophy. The student who hopes to see detailed expositions of texts will be disappointed, since the stress is on the philosophical considerations rather than the exegetical options. In addition, the nature of the series prevents any really detailed discussion of the topics at hand. **Ethics** is designed to introduce, not expound.

As an introduction, **Ethics** serves its purpose well. Holmes avoids lengthy discourse, but does not avoid discussion on different issues. The overall approach is balanced and gives the reader the chance to consider differing perspectives. The average reader will find it heavy on the philosophy and needs to be ready to take some time with the book. As expected, the illustrations and case studies are primarily American, making some hard to follow. The four moral issues he discusses are in process of becoming more relevant here, and the book might help by being a preventative for the Christian community.

Three major weaknesses include (1) some of the major issues faced here in Africa are completely ignored (e.g. polygamy), (2) Holmes seems to leave open doors on certain issues that the reader may rather see closed (e.g. abortion and the question of whether or not morality should be legislated), and (3) the far heavier reliance on a philosophical/theological framework than a purely biblical one. The first and third are understandable in light of the nature (introductory) and expected audience (American University students) of the book. The second is a reflection of the greater reliance on philosophical foundations than on purely biblical ones in developing ethical concepts, and is the greatest weakness in the book as seen by this reviewer.

In spite of these two weaknesses and the difficulty of reading the book, as a basic introduction to the philosophy of ethics it is well worth taking the time necessary to become familiar with its contents.

In **Metaphysics: Constructing a Worldview**, Hasker presents the same type of overview of metaphysics as Holmes did on ethics. In the first chapter Hasker introduces the topic by asking three questions which metaphysics seeks to answer: (1) What is real (2)

What is ultimately real? (3) What is man's place in what is real? Recognizing that these are not the only questions asked in metaphysics, he builds a basic methodology for answering them by setting out two guiding principles which enables him to proceed in his analysis. First, he says, "We must take as premises for metaphysical argument anything we know or have good reason to believe is true" (p.19). The second rule is, "No belief no matter how firmly held or apparently well supported, is beyond the possibility of challenge or question," (p.20). The second of course may give us trouble as believers, but Hasker perceives it as necessary as we really desire to understand metaphysics. The only foundation left for evaluating metaphysical answers is to do so on the basis of their factual adequacy, logical consistency and explanatory power.

Given these bases of evaluation and his guiding principles, Hasker sets out to deal with selected metaphysical questions. Chapter two explores the concept of free will: does it really exist, or is everything already determined? Chapter three discusses the nature of the relationship of the mind and body: are we nothing more than physical creatures, or is there something in us that goes beyond our bodies? (His answer is an interesting one that will certainly provoke the reader's thought.) Chapter four attempts to examine the nature of our world and the resulting consequences for science and scientific thought. Chapter five introduces the concept of God, and shows various philosophies of His nature and interaction with the world. The epilogue seeks, on the basis of previous discussion, to build a Christian outlook. Hasker tries to show that there are three foundations upon which the Christian metaphysic must be built: God, creation, and man as the image of God.

The presentation as a whole, like that of Holmes, is well-argued though it will not be easy reading for the beginner. Be ready to take the time to read it carefully and put it down occasionally in order to think. As an introduction the purpose is clearly achieved, though sometimes with the loss of a more detailed explanation of various views.

Metaphysics, like **Ethics** is not concerned with Scriptural exposition as much as philosophical understanding. They were not designed to give a biblical introduction, and they hold to their designed scope. Thus, the reader may be frustrated with a lack of Scriptural backing which would shed light on the complex issues that are presented.

Again, as with **Ethics** the weaknesses are outweighed by the overall strengths this book has as a basic introduction to the topic of metaphysics. Do not, however, expect it to go beyond the stated intention in the introduction.

There were some weaknesses that should be pointed out. First, the term "metaphysics" itself is never clearly defined. Second, many illustrations will give difficulty to a non-American, non-science student. Third, he does not adequately seek to integrate the philosophical systems with their corresponding theological ones, which would be of great use to the Christian audience for which it was written. Fourth, his presentation on constructing a Christian worldview lacked depth. Finally the nature of the questions asked was heavily western and

not necessarily relevant to the African scene.

My overall recommendation is that both books are worth a careful reading, but I would at the same time suggest that these would be more suited for school libraries than the student's personal collection. This is mainly because the cost does not justify the material unless the student plans on philosophical study in the future.

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Christian Theology

Vol. I

by Millard J. Erickson
(Baker: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1983)
pp. 477., N.P.

Erickson's three-volume **Christian Theology** is planned to correlate with the three readings in Christian theology (**The Living God, Man's Need and God's Gift, The New Life**) which he edited and which are already published by Baker. Erickson's projected audience is the seminary student who is already familiar with the contents of the O.T. and N.T., with the history of Christianity, and who also possesses a rudimentary knowledge of N.T. Greek. His perspective is unashamedly evangelical but he does take great pains to interact with important theologians of other persuasions.

The book consists of four sections. The first explores the nature of theology, its relationship with philosophy, and the correct way of doing theology, especially in the light of the developments in form criticism and redaction criticism. Although the primary datum for theological study must be divine revelation, philosophy, we are told, "can evaluate the cogency of the evidence advanced [by theology], the logical validity of its arguments, and the meaningfulness or ambiguity of the concepts" (p.28). The first section also includes a chapter on contemporizing the Christian message, in which the author offers guidelines for distinguishing between culturally relative and universally applicable doctrines, and a chapter on theological language in which the charge of Logical Positivists that religious language is meaningless is rebutted.

Section two deals with revelation. Against Barth, the importance of general revelation is affirmed. It is also insisted that special revelation is both personal and propositional (**pace** Kierkegaard and Neo-Orthodoxy). While rejecting the dictation theory of Biblical inspiration, Erickson nevertheless maintains that the very words of Scripture were given by God: "Since God has access to the very thought processes of the human author and, in the case of the believer, indwells the individual in the person of the Holy Spirit, this is no difficult matter, particularly when the individual is praying for enlightenment and displaying receptivity. The process is not greatly unlike telepathy . . ." (p.218).

After a detailed evaluation of the inerrancy debate, the author accepts the word defined thus: "The Bible, when correctly interpreted, in the light of the level to which culture and the means of communication had developed at the time it was written, and in view of the purposes for which it was given, is fully truthful in all that it affirms" (pp. 233 f). A final chapter deals with the question of Biblical authority. The position taken is that we know Scripture is authoritative not because the church tells us, nor because rational evidence like fulfilled prophecy compels such belief, but rather because the Holy Spirit convinces us of its divine origin while enlightening us to its meaning.

The third section is concerned with the nature of God. Erickson refuses the abstract categories inherited from Scholasticism and prefers, for example, to speak of God's 'constancy' rather than his 'immutability'; God is stable but not static. He also experiences time but ". . . is not restricted by the dimension of time" (p.274). After exploring what he calls the 'Attributes of Greatness', Erickson discusses first God's moral qualities and then there follows a detailed treatment of God's 'Nearness and Distance' (Immanence and Transcendence). The third section ends with a chapter on 'God's Three-In-Oneness' in which the author admits that whereas formerly he accepted a modal view, he now realizes the necessity of affirming equally both the oneness and the threeness. As an analogy we are offered the familiar wave/particle paradox.

The fourth and final part is entitled, 'What God Does' and deals with such issues as Creation, Providence, Theodicy and Angels. While preferring the word 'plan' to 'decrees', Erickson holds a strong view of divine sovereignty while maintaining that this does not negate human freedom. In light of both the scientific and biblical evidence, he feels progressive creationism is the most tenable hypothesis. His Theodicy follows orthodox lines: the free-will defense plus natural evils explained in terms of the regularity of the universe, the role of pain as a warning signal etc. His treatment of angels, good and evil, is carefully balanced, for example he writes, "The Christian should be alert to the possibility of demon possession occurring today. At the same time one should not too quickly attribute aberrant physical and psychical phenomena to demon possession" (p. 450).

This brief survey of the book's contents cannot do justice to the thoroughness and penetration of Erickson's treatment of the issues he addresses. On the whole he manages to make well-worn doctrines interesting and potentially baffling themes like Heidegger's notion of Nothingness (p.370) both intelligible and fascinating. He has succeeded in writing an up-to-date theology which, while being uncompromisingly biblical, is also prepared to build upon such recent techniques as redaction criticism and upon the work of important contemporary theologians like Pannenberg under whom, in fact, he studied for a time. The book is not only contemporary in its scholarship but also topical in its illustrations.

The structure of the book is clear and helpful. When relevant, some historical theology is provided, and a survey

given of the various opinions current today. The author then expounds his own view with biblical support and, again when relevant, with rational argument. One then discovers a particularly valuable aspect of the volume: Erickson outlines the practical relevance of the topics discussed. He writes as a pastor as well as a scholar. We are told (p.14) that he was impressed by Clark Pinnock's advice that a work of theology should ". . . sing like a hymn, not read like a telephone book." Erickson has commendably succeeded in taking this advice to heart. Again his pastoral illustrations are often memorable and trenchant; I particularly enjoyed the words of a minister that he records when discussing the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures: "If you have the Bible without the Spirit you will dry up. If you have the Spirit without the Bible, you will blow up. But if you have both the Bible and the Spirit together, you will grow up" (p.252).

Because the book is orthodox and written in relatively simple language, it will prove invaluable as a textbook all over the world. African students will find chapter 5, 'Contemporizing the Christian Message' especially useful, with its helpful advice on how to separate the essence of God's revelation from culturally relative expressions of it. With the vexed question of the fate of unevangelized ancestors in mind they will also be interested in chapter 7, 'God's Universal Revelation'. On this issue, Erickson holds out some pale hope: "Now if the God known in nature is the same as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (as Paul seems to assert in Acts 17:23), then it would seem that a person who comes to a belief in a single powerful God, who despairs of any works-righteousness to please this holy God, and who throws himself upon the mercy of this good God, would be accepted as were the Old Testament believers" (p.172).

In the estimation of the reviewer, the volume is not without some flaws, however. We are correctly informed on p. 234 that inerrant Scripture contains false information at times, that is when it infallibly records the words of ungodly men. Therefore, of course, it is important to examine each text in its context. It is a pity then, that Erickson, for example, cites Job 34:12 as a proof text for the doctrine of God's absolute goodness, for this verse records a statement of Elihu.

The author maintains that not everything the apostles wrote and said was inspired (p.212). He also contends that although the apostles show no evident consciousness of writing under inspiration in epistles such as Philemon, we must nevertheless assume that these epistles were inspired (p.188). But the reader may well ask 'why?' Is it just a matter of the Spirit's witness that Philemon is Scripture? This alone would seem a perilously subjective criterion. Or is it more of a historical matter, which opens the question of the development of the canon? It seems to me clear that a work of the breadth of **Christian Theology** should have dealt with the issue of canon criticism but it is completely omitted. Surely sound and detailed theological work on this matter is as foundational for Evangelicalism as is work on the doctrine of inerrancy.

Occasionally an important aspect of a topic is left unmentioned. For instance, it would seem to me that a

significant component of Theodicy is the insight that without first order evils there could never be second order goods like courage and compassion. Erickson's discussion leaves this important point unmentioned.

Although usually a model of clarity, there are one or two lapses in the book. The explanation of structural criticism (p.84) is opaque. And when we read, "God is the one who brought space (and time) into being. He was before there was space" (p.273) are we to infer that God created time before He created space?!

But all these criticisms are small and even carping. However, there is one substantial weakness in the opinion of the reviewer, and that is in Erickson's handling of divine providence and human freedom. After a survey of what he considers to be the key Biblical passages, he unequivocally asserts that God has predetermined every event in history. Now, of course, this is an orthodox point of view, but Erickson really should have discussed alternative evangelical interpretations, for example someone of the stature of Prof. I.H. Marshall can write "The Bible does not suggest that everything that happens is a divine action or a divinely caused action. On the contrary, it presents God as often responding to human actions, and nothing suggests that the response is other than real or genuine. . . . We should think of divine action in history as being interventionist. . . ." ('Some Aspects of the Biblical View of History' in **Faith and Thought**, Jan 1984 pp.63-64). The biblical data is more complex and ambiguous than Erickson allows. For instance, Prov. 16:33 ("The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly from the Lord") is cited by him as one of the clear texts showing that God determines even what we consider the most random events (pp. 349, 396) but as Kidner comments on this verse, "The Old Testament use of the word 'lot' shows that this proverb . . . is not about God's control of all random occurrences, but about His settling of matters properly referred to Him" (**Tyndale Commentary**).

The author is well aware that this strong view of divine providence (basically the Calvinist view) threatens the free-will defense in Theodicy for it seems to entail that God causes all human choices, but Erickson believes that he can still affirm human freedom and responsibility. However, his procedure is less than clear.

At times it seems he is presenting a libertarian view of man (e.g. ". . . decisions are in large measure influenced by certain characteristics of mine . . ." [p.357], not, notice, completely determined by my nature), but overall he seems to prefer a soft-determinist model, defining freedom as merely freedom from constraint, i.e. I am free when my action results from my choice. "The plan of God does not force men to act in particular ways, but renders it certain that they will **freely** act in those ways" (p.353). God "renders it certain" by determining my heredity and environment, from the combination of which my choices inevitably flow. I freely choose evil and therefore am responsible for it, yet God is the providential power behind all events.

Now there are two things wrong with this approach. One has been pointed out by A. Flew who shares Erickson's definition of

freedom as Erickson himself informs us (footnote p. 357). Flew correctly observes that given this definition, there is no contradiction in positing a universe where God created people who always freely chose the right (see Flew's 'Divine Omnipotence and Human Freedom' in **New Essays in Philosophical Theology**, ed. A. Flew & A. MacIntyre, SCM, 1955). That He did not is God's responsibility. Flew is again correct when he argues that anyone who espouses this view of freedom cannot employ the free-will defense, for it is God who becomes ultimately responsible for the evil in the universe. It is significant that Flew himself is unable to accept theism. Yet Erickson still vainly attempts to employ the free-will defense.

Secondly, not only does God become logically responsible for evil given soft-determinism, but man becomes completely absolved of all responsibility. On the soft-determinist model an action can no longer be said to stem **from** my will, even though it may be mediated **through** it, therefore the action is not really **mine**. I can be held no more responsible than a man who murders someone as the direct result of post-hypnotic suggestion.

Erickson mistakenly describes this alternative, libertarian view as understanding freedom in terms of "total spontaneity, random choice" (p.359). It is true that random choice equally deprives man of responsibility but, in fact, libertarianism teaches that freewill is a bridge between determinism and indeterminism (the random). It involves two strange notions: that a free being is self-moved and that he is the uncaused cause of his free choices. There are those like Jonathan Edwards, who have found such a notion totally incoherent, but evidently Erickson does not, for he seems to maintain that God is free in just this sense: ". . . although God's decisions and actions are quite consistent with his nature, they are not constrained by his nature" (p.352). (Nor, of course, are they constrained by anything outside His nature).

Erickson does attack libertarianists on another ground, however. He argues that "In their view, divine foreknowledge is just as incompatible with human freedom as is divine ordination" (p.360) since both foreordination and foreknowledge entail an uncertain future. But, in fact, libertarianism **can** accommodate a certain future, for whether it is predestined or not, the future is surely as certain as the past since it is as analytically true that what will be will be, as what has been has been. On either the determinist or the libertarian model it is an error to assume that the past is closed and the future is open. In fact they are both as open and closed as each other. No, the Arminian can consistently entertain a **certain** future but what he cannot accept, unlike the Calvinist, is a wholly **predictable, predetermined** future. In fact the libertarian can consistently incorporate divine foreknowledge into his theology either by insisting that God is eternal (beyond time) so that strictly speaking, God knows rather than foreknows our future (and of course, knowledge of another's choice by no means necessarily entails a causal relation to that choice) or by postulating an everlasting God who simply precognizes the future (i.e. the future causes God's knowledge rather than vice versa).

I conclude that in spite of his subtle argumentation

Erickson has failed to produce a viable Theodicy or an acceptable view of human dignity and responsibility since he has opted for a strong notion of divine providence. In fact, given that notion there seem to be only two alternative routes: (i) adopt a theology which ignores the canons of rationality and insist that both divine determinism and human libertarianism are true, or (ii) define divine goodness in an equivocal way so that God remains good by definition, even when he acts in a manner that to us seems manifestly evil. Erickson rightly rejects both these alternatives but he fails to find a better one. Perhaps the only way out of the dilemma is to accept something like I.H. Marshall's view of providence.

Having stated my major misgiving at length, I would like to reiterate my overall appreciation of **Christian Theology**. It is indeed a major contribution to evangelical scholarship. In fact, the complete trilogy can be warmly recommended to every serious student of theology.

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