



The Bulletin

of the Institute for Reformed Theology

— Dedicated to supporting theological reflection and conversation that enhance the ministry of the church —

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Observations on the Current State of Reformed Theology

By Gerhard Sauter

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Editor's note: This essay is part of Dr. Sauter's forthcoming book with the provisional title of *Theology at the Crossroads: How to Face the Crucial Tasks for Theology in the 21st Century*, to be published next year by Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.

In 1980, I was asked to write a comprehensive article on dogmatics for the *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, the most extensive theological encyclopaedia of our time. In order to get an adequate survey, I called the editor some time later to ask him who would write the article for Reformed theology. He replied: "Who is a really genuine, typical, and representative Reformed theologian in Germany today?" I could not answer the question satisfactorily. So, the editor told me just to include Reformed theology in my article. (Incidentally, some weeks later I called the editor again, this time asking about Roman Catholic dogmatics. His answer was the same: "simply include it in your article." And so, after with consulting with Catholic colleagues, I did.)

There are, of course, biblical scholars and church historians at departments of theology in German universities and seminaries who think of themselves as being Reformed. But in what respect is there a comprehensive and characteristically Reformed theology? Jürgen Moltmann, for example, claims to be linked with Reformed Theology and was sometimes a speaker at meetings of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC). Still—you may ask—what is really "Reformed" in his way of doing theology? Moltmann is devoted to a kind of political theology that seeks to open the future by going beyond past Christian traditions or transforming them into a striving for social change, for peace, and for social justice. Here, the Bible is sometimes understood literally as a blueprint for new social and international structures, e.g., reconciliation conceived as reparation of distorted relationships. Such a radicalized social ethics—with an immediate biblical frame of reference including directly applied images and symbols—has often been ascribed to Calvinistic traditions. In the later sixties, seventies, and eighties, the *Moderamen des Reformierten Bundes* (the association of Reformed parishes in former West Germany) argued for this kind of theology. This has also often been the main thrust of Reformed theology in France. In the Czech Republic, the tradition of Jan Hus, which predates the

(continued on page 3)

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In this issue:

OBSERVATIONS ON THE CURRENT STATE OF REFORMED THEOLOGY By Gerhard Sauter	Page 1
NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR	Page 2
BOOK REVIEWS <i>In Quest of Pentecost: Jodocus van Lodenstein and the Dutch Second Reformation</i> by Carl J. Schroeder <i>John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety</i> edited and translated by Elsie Anne McKee <i>Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama</i> by Michael Horton <i>The Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture</i> edited by Paul Helm and Carl R. Trueman <i>Reconciliation: Restoring Justice</i> by John W. de Gruchy <i>Sex Crimes: From Renaissance to Enlightenment</i> by William Naphy <i>The Marks of God's Children</i> by Jean Taffin	Page 8
IRT PUBLIC LECTURE	Page 13
IRT AFFILIATE NEWS	Page 15

News from the Director

by George B. Telford

Readers of *The Bulletin* will be interested in the various programs of the Institute for Reformed Theology over the past year, and the prospects and plans immediately before us.

RECENT COLLOQUIES

At the heart of our work are the colloquies, year-long theological conversations between scholars and pastors on a subject of importance to those of us in the Reformed tradition. Participants say that these probing seminars, which meet five or six times, make a major impact on their research, teaching, and preaching.

A colloquy on “**The Church: Recent Theological, Sociological, and Practical Perspectives**,” organized under Union-PSCE professors **Dawn DeVries** and **Douglas F. Ottati**, will continue through May 2005. The conversations have been searching ones, discussing both classic Reformed texts and contemporary studies. A list of the texts will be found on our website. A second colloquy on “**Christian Faith and Economic Life**,” organized under professor **Douglas Hicks**, of the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond, and Union-PSCE professor **Mark Valeri**, has just been completed. A list of the texts discussed in this colloquy is also on the website. The colloquy also hosted a public lecture on “The Role of Government in the Market: Should Christians Have a Different View?” by **Rebecca Blank**, Dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, the Henry Carter Adams Collegiate Professor of Public Policy, and Professor of Economics. The Institute anticipates publishing a book of essays by the participants of this colloquy, and will notify all of our readers when it is available.

Mission statement of the Institute for Reformed Theology

Our goal is to support theological reflection and conversation that enhance the ministry of the church. In particular, we hope to serve Union-PSCE, Reformed denominations, and the whole body of Christ by

- ⇒ Engaging in theological conversation that is informed, committed, reasonable, and mutually respectful;
- ⇒ Presenting this model among colloquy members, public audiences, and congregations;
- ⇒ Addressing contemporary issues of faith by reflection on basic theological statements; and
- ⇒ Providing a forum for pastors, theological students and scholars to inform each other's work.

FORTHCOMING COLLOQUIES

In 2005-06, the IRT will host a new colloquy on “Reformed Practices” organized by **Louis Weeks**, Union-PSCE President, and **Elizabeth M. Ayscue**, pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Albemarle, NC. Scholars and pastors will be reading commentaries by Reformed theologians, probing classical texts from scriptures and examining texts on practicing faith, practicing theology, remembering the poor, the practices of prayer, hospitality, and forgiveness.

In January 2006, the Institute will launch an additional year-long colloquy on “The Reformed Tradition and Race,” organized by Union-PSCE professors **Katie Cannon** and **Samuel Roberts**. This colloquy will probe deeply into the Reformed tradition's theological texts as well as its historical and contemporary practices. It will begin simultaneously with the Sprunts Lectures at Union-PSCE, January 23-25, 2006, which will be presented by South African theologians. The colloquy will feature several additional public lectures that will be given by prominent North American scholars focusing on issues of church and race on this continent.

The IRT is also hoping to launch a **colloquy together with The Institute of Jewish and Christian Studies** in Baltimore, MD that will bring together a group of distinguished Jewish and Christian scholars, ministers, and rabbis. The colloquy will attempt to generate a series of scholarly papers that will develop coherent, intelligible, and theologically credible responses to issues that lie at the heart of the faith communities' experience of living in a religiously diverse society. It is also hoped that the work of this colloquy may be translated into resources for congregational use.

Interested readers of *The Bulletin* may be kept informed about the work of this colloquy, as well as the others by sending inquiries to IRT@union-psce.edu.

OTHER INFORMATION

The Institute also is forming an **Advisory Council** to help shape our continuing life and work. Below is a list and biography of the initial member of the Council.

⇒ **Joanna Adams**

Joanna Adams has served as a Presbyterian parish pastor for over twenty-five years. For a number of years, she was a member of the Board of Trustees of Columbia Theological Seminary and chaired the Board from 1996-2001. She currently is pastor at Morningside Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia, a Trustee of The Presbyterian Foundation and a member of the Steering Committee of the Joining Hearts and Hands Mission Initiative. Formerly, she was Trustee of Agnes Scott College, Moderator of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, and member of the Drafting Committee for the Brief Statement of Faith, Presbyterian Church (USA). She is an honors graduate of Columbia Theological Seminary and participated in the inaugural colloquy of the Institute for Reformed Theology, Union Theological Seminary, 1999-2000.

(continued on page 14)

Observations on the Current State of Reformed Theology *(continued from page 1)*

Reformation, advances the social ethical orientation of theology and stresses the involvement of church and theology in critical social engagement. Today, however, many younger Czech theologians recognize that between 1969 and 1989, due to political oppression and the interests of the government, there was little room, either in the church or in theological education, for constructive voices and realistic views.¹

Of course, there is a wide range of perceptions of how Reformed theology can contribute to social ethics and respond to political challenges. Joachim Staedtke, who held the chair of Reformed theology in Erlangen (Bavaria) in the nineteen-sixties, emphasized a wide range of social issues, especially concerning public policy, in order to outline a profile of the task of Reformed theology in a strongly Lutheran oriented faculty. Hans-Joachim Kraus, who succeeded the distinguished Reformed theologian Otto Weber at Göttingen, understood biblical and systematic theology as a constructive enterprise for interpreting the kingdom of God as a historical process which produces peace, justice, and true, meaningful life.² Wallace M. Alston, a Presbyterian minister and the current director of the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, New Jersey, points to his teacher Paul L. Lehmann and states:

Politics is the means by which the mission of the Church is discerned and done in the formal and informal processes of its institutional life. It is the context in which the question of authority is answered in a voluntary association. . . . The politics of the church are those patterns of human association that enable the church to reflect on and to participate in the politics of God, that is, in God's renovating activity in the world.³

Michael Welker emphasizes the heritage of Reformed "covenantal theology" (God's covenants with Noah, Abraham, Israel, David, the New Covenant through Jesus Christ). He concludes that faith

is a communally fashioned and fashioning form of life, a spiritually and culturally creative form of life which results in proclamation, spiritual communication and interpersonal love, which is perceptible both internally and externally in various forms of communal life. It has been precisely Reformed theology, which has concentrated time and again on these realistic and public aspects of faith. In contrast to modern religiosity, which has excluded or at least repressed this dimension of interactive, publicly shaped and publicly shaping faith, Reformed theology should bring these central themes into the current ecumenical discussion as well.⁴

What was and is the impact of Karl Barth on Reformed theology? It would be a complicated and difficult task to seriously differentiate between Barth's theology and the Reformed tradition. When Barth was called to Göttingen to take a professorship founded by American Presbyterians after World War One, he initially studied the writings of Luther rather than of Calvin or Zwingli more intensely. He and his friends were mainly interested in the common substance of Reformation theology because it had been misunderstood and misread in recent theological education. I remember the prominent theologian Friedrich Gogarten, Barth's contemporary and at times one of his theological allies in the twenties. Gogarten told us that as a student at the beginning of the 20th century the only class concerning the Reformation that he could attend during his study of theology focused on the buildings and

the life-style in Wittenberg during the 16th century. When Barth started to teach theology at Göttingen in 1921, he was forced by his rigid Lutheran colleagues to restrict his teaching to Reformed theology. In Münster and Bonn he taught systematic theology. In his *Church Dogmatics* (the first volume of which was published in 1932), he claimed to focus on a biblically grounded theology that could serve the entire membership of the Evangelical Church (*evangelisch*, in the German understanding: faithful to the *euangellion*, the Gospel). In Bonn, he became familiar with a very traditional and rigid Reformed heritage, marked mainly by Hermann Friedrich Kohlbrügge (1803-1875), who had stressed the total sinfulness of all human beings, their inability to face God's glory and their total dependence on the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. Despite some similarities with his own theological enterprise, Barth, I was told,⁵ found himself out of step with this kind of Reformed piety, which was sometimes very conservative in political matters, too.

In the former Prussian territories, during the first half of the 19th century, theological education and research were shaped by the merger of Lutheran and Reformed Churches, to form the

Evangelische Kirche der Union (Evangelical Church of the Union). An important influence of the Reformed heritage is to be found in the presbyterial-synodal constitution of this church. Now, however, the differences within theological education in Europe involve the question of whether the curriculum should be rooted in the biblical canon and the theology of the Reformation or in the Neo-Protestant ("liberal") theology of religious culture.

Especially revealing, it seems to me, is the situation in Hungary with its strong Reformed population, which in former times powerfully opposed the Austrian regime and its links with the Roman Catholic Church. In the convention hall of the famous old seminary in Debrecen, there is a chair in memory of the political revolutionary Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894). Many Reformed Protestants supported the national uprising that Kossuth led. After another uprising in 1956, a so-called "Theology of Service" was developed mainly by Reformed Church officials and theologians.⁶ Its intention was to avoid the mistake of the past: the nationalistic and often politically conservative attitude that had followed the breakdown of the Austrian Empire. Unfortunately, the result was a strange alliance of church officials and the Reformed seminaries with the regime that came into power after World War II. Divine providence was identified with the course of history and understood as an irresistible movement toward perfect socialism.

This kind of theology claimed to serve the needs of society but it often lacked the sound theological judgment and precision that might have provided more clarity in ethical and political matters. Karl Barth sometimes criticized this theology of history for its similarity to the German Christian ideology *(continued on page 4)*

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Observations on the Current State of Reformed Theology (continued from page 3)

condemned in the Barmen Declaration (1934), but his objections are found only in personal letters. After 1948, Barth interfered in some aspects of church politics by strengthening its so-called progressive tendencies. In Hungary, however, critical voices were silenced, and even the representatives of the World Council of Churches who visited Hungary were unable, or at least unwilling, to understand the real situation, in which ministers and parishioners' were estranged from church officials and theologians who approved the "Theology of Service." Friends who were pushed into the background told me they felt neglected and even betrayed by the politics of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and by the many Reformed theologians in the West who were mainly interested in the social impact of Christian faith and hope, but not in forming sound theological judgments concerning the very difficult social, economic, and spiritual issues facing the church.

Today, Reformed theology in Hungary has to rebuild a reliable teaching ministry nearly from scratch. Church and theology must deal with a situation in which the church has enormous opportunity, for example in higher education, but lacks the spiritual and intellectual resources to match its responsibilities. At the same time there is on the one hand a dangerous inclination to develop a merely private religious life, a kind of solitary personal religiosity. On the other hand, Christians today need a very individual (not individualistic!) spiritual life, embedded deeply in the life of the church while being aware of God's acting in public and personal affairs.

Now, how can we exhibit the proper characteristics of Reformed theology in order to clarify and strengthen it not only in Hungary, but throughout central Europe and perhaps also in the United Kingdom, in America, Asia, and Africa, and do so without being merely traditionalist, confessionalist, and anti-ecumenical?

Recently, two instructive collections of essays have been published. The first, entitled *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology*, was edited by David Willis, a retired Reformed scholar of Princeton Theological Seminary, and Michael Welker, the former professor of Reformed theology at Münster, now professor of systematic theology at the University of Heidelberg.⁸ The second collection containing contributions to conferences sponsored by the Center of the Theological Inquiry in Princeton addresses the identity as well as the ecumenicity of Reformed theology.⁹

In their introduction to *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology*, the editors regret that they have been unable to present a fully representative survey of the actual state of Reformed theology throughout the world because many requests for cooperation were turned down. This may be the reason for a kind of one-sidedness: most contributions are from the United States and Germany. Regrettably, a contribution from Korea with its strong impact on Presbyterianism is missing, although the Presbyterian Churches in South Korea constitute the most rapidly growing sector of Presbyterianism in the world today. Furthermore, for many of his fellow countrymen it is questionable whether John W. de Gruchy's "Toward a Theology of Liberation," as representative as it is for a prominent trend, can cover all contemporary Reformed theology in South Africa and its future.¹⁰ It would have been instructive if more recent theologians from Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, and

the Netherlands had analyzed the situation of the church and theological education in their countries more deeply and with greater theological reflection.¹¹ The second volume provides a more diverse and complex overview, but for a comprehensive evaluation I am concentrating on the first.

Toward the Future of Reformed Theology gives a significant impression of a new tendency in Reformed theology around the world: traditions, culture, and the church are criticized on the grounds of reliance on the creative power of the Word of God and the integrative action of the Holy Spirit. The volume shows how biblical theology—understood as a special way of doing theology in general—will lead to a renewal of church doctrines and to transformations of ethical directives. This is a modern type of sanctification, which always has a special meaning in Reformed theology. In comparison with former surveys,¹² however, it becomes evident that the characteristics of Reformed worship, the foundations of the parishes, and the regional church orders that replace an absent common confession¹³ are hardly discussed in *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology*. Moreover, the theological derivation of ethical directives is rarely examined. Yet all these components shape the Reformed church and its life. Everybody who is confronted with the Reformed church recognizes at first glance *these characteristics of Reformed piety* which mark the distinctions between the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Reformed churches.

Let us therefore start *first* with the *structure of the Sunday service*. It should concentrate on the proclamation of the Gospel. According to the order of worship, all hymns and prayers, the call to worship, the confession of sin, the prayer for illumination, the affirmation of faith, the doxology, and the benediction surround the promise of the Gospel and its directives. Reformed preaching has often been very close to mere instruction for Christian life. Mostly preaching and education were intertwined—for example, in the work of John Knox, the Reformer of Scotland. Or think of the institutions of higher education founded by Presbyterians in the British colonies and of the farreaching activity of Presbyterians in the United States and their overseas missions on behalf of education until recent times. I observed impressive examples in Korea. The Gospel was understood as an inexhaustible force illuminating all realms of life and thought.

What an enormously rich and precious tradition!¹⁴ But is it really alive today, not only to social needs and endangered humanity but also to promoting the challenges of liberty, peace, and the conservation of the creation? How can sound spiritual guidance in matters of everyday life be distinguished sharply enough from sheer religious information on the one hand, and from ethical indoctrination on the other? And in a culture that is overwhelmed with semi-information by the mass media, how can a preacher give sufficient attention to preaching that gives real guidance? The preacher needs to rely on an extended spiritual knowledge and a sound training in forming a well-founded viewpoint and an independent judgment.

Reformed worship cannot rely on a rich liturgy and its theological message. In some churches, for instance in Switzerland, it consists only of salutation, a hymn, a prayer before the sermon, another hymn, and the so-called dismissal of the congregation.

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Observations on the Current State of Reformed Theology

How much depends on the ability to listen, to concentrate, and to meditate! Does this service really speak to the whole person, not only to the person's intellect or willpower? Can it be helped that the sanctuary is confused with a lecture room or a room suitable mainly for performances?

Immense treasures for the Reformed service and personal piety are the prayers of the Psalms.¹⁵ They contain the manifold forms of prayer: complaint, request, intercession, thanks, and praise. The person who prays gets in touch with the memories of God's saving

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actions in the history of his people as well with his or her own existence under God's judgment. Well-founded experiences of faith and hope are contained in the Psalms. Anyone who prays them regularly will learn bit by bit what it means to be a person before God. This will shape human self-perception. To discover and benefit from this richness will strengthen Christian anthropology. Another treasure is the doxology: a significant contribution of Reformed worship.¹⁶

The *second* step: I would like to question *the administration of the church*, especially the role of the presbytery and the synod.¹⁷ On the one hand, in Germany, in the thirties, there was the famous example of the gathering (*coetus*) of Reformed preachers in the German Rhineland, which started the theological opposition against the so-called German Christians,

a group of church leaders, theologians, and laity close to the National Socialist movement. The gathering of Reformed pastors led to the Barmen Synod in 1934, where Lutherans, Reformed and United theologians and church representatives agreed to the Barmen Declaration, the groundbreaking and pioneering consensus of obedience to the First Commandment in all realms of life, action, and thought. This was a fine example of independence in reasoning theologically, rooted in well-established and reliable structures of debate, mutual clarification and decision-making. On the other hand, I have often noticed recently in presbyteries and synods the temptation simply to follow political modes of discussion and decision-making. This can be decisive in periods of political oppression, as was the case in Hungary.¹⁸ It becomes urgent whenever there are factions in moral and in political issues—such as social unrest, gender problems and sexual ethics. How can we avoid theological judgments that are shaped by already rigid convictions that are merely decorated with theological motifs? Are there direct, immediate biblical analogies for the social and political issues of our times? What should be the theologically sound procedure for making judgments in Christian ethics?

This leads us to a *third* marker of Reformed theology. We have to take into account the readiness to revise church doctrines by discovering the inexhaustible richness of the biblical witness that is

neither harmonized nor systematized. How can we think and act in a way that is shaped by sincere *biblical theology*, formed by the biblical narrative?¹⁹ Let us discover the constitution of theological arguments by being faithful to the Scripture that is faithful to us! The Reformed tradition directs our attention especially to the Old Testament as a witness to Jesus Christ and as a treasury of God's promises.

Since Calvin, the Reformed study of the Bible has paid particular attention to the connections of biblical texts with one another and with Scripture as a whole. One form of sermon—which was taken over from the early church, and for a long time cultivated by the Reformed church—has contributed to the reading of the Bible. Single biblical texts were not considered in isolation but in their context of meaning and in their literary context.²⁰ The “homily,” the exegesis of larger sections of the Scripture Sunday after Sunday, helps those members of the parish who regularly take part in the service increasingly to understand the connections. This also helps to avoid one-sidedness, which would easily arise if only a few texts of the Bible were known and always repeated. By means of homilies, the congregation is educated to listen to the different voices of the Bible and to be open to a variety of spiritual insights. These enrich the parish and encourage continuous and mutual dialogue among parishioners.

There is, *fourth*, the *rational* nature of Reformed theology²¹—a *rationality* that, for example, comes into play when faithful people speak of having recognized God's acting in history and in social affairs, or of God's providence directing personal life and the fortune of a church or a nation.²² To be sure, this rationality can be in opposition to faithfulness to the Scriptures whenever it misuses biblical texts merely as information about true reality; this information—sometimes almost an indoctrination—may hinder listening to the living Word of God that speaks to us in and through the Scripture. There was even a certain affinity between the rationality of Reformed tradition and the Enlightenment. There was and is also a distinctive Reformed habit of dealing faithfully with its tradition, while at the same time being critical of it and also being open to reshaping it, thus being not only Reformed but always open to the radical reform of church life and reformulation of theology.²³ How can we respect this heritage and at the same time avoid sheer rationalism and religious ideology? The Reformed emphasis on divine illumination may almost lead to identification with critical and self-critical insights, as was sometimes the case under the influence of the Enlightenment.

A *fifth* marker of Reformed theology is the *awareness of God's sovereignty*, expressed especially in the doctrine of predestination and election. This awareness includes two components: the glory of God as the ultimate direction of human life in all its acting and suffering—to sum it up as John Calvin said: *(continued on page 6)*

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Observations on the Current State of Reformed Theology (continued from page 5)

“What is the chief end of human life? To know God”²⁴—and the complete dependence of human destiny on God’s will.

Here let us again look at *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology*. Election has replaced *predestination*, probably under the influence of Karl Barth’s doctrine of election. Thus the theological intention has changed noticeably and profoundly. Calvin’s doctrine of predestination cannot be thought of without his doctrine of damnation: but everything had to be based on God’s judgment and acting. Often this was seen—contrary to Calvin’s intention—as drawing a clear dividing line between the faithful and the unbelievers and therefore marking the boundaries of the church, whereas Barth considered the election grounded in Jesus Christ as a far-reaching event that transcends human divisions. In addition, Calvin’s doctrine was pastorally motivated: people who wondered about their destiny, which God had decided before all time, had to learn to ask for God’s will throughout their entire life. They would not be able to rule out their own damnation all the time. This could culminate in a kind of scrupulous self-examination that frequently provoked a hopeless, fearfully uneasy conscience.

In his novel *In the Beauty of the Lilies*, John Updike describes a Presbyterian minister who had studied at Princeton Theological Seminary with “the two Hodges, and Benjamin Warfield . . . sitting down there in fox-hunting country, surrounded by estates and lettuce farms.”²⁵ Pressed by the incessant questions of a parishioner as to whether he could really die with the assurance of election, the minister himself begins to doubt his own faith. Has he ever had an incontestable experience of the presence of Christ? He cannot claim this, hence pure confidence in the grace of God is no longer sufficient. How can he go on preaching? How can he minister to the dying? This seems impossible to him, and he leaves his profession.

Here a man fails because of “the cruelty of a theology that sets us to ransacking our nervous systems for a pass to Heaven, even a shred of a ticket.”²⁶ Such a misery of the soul that could mold the religious conscience shaped by Reformed theology is, of course, a caricature. But it mirrors a picture of Reformed piety that is prominent in Western European culture and in the United States. It is foreign to Calvin’s theology and would be unthinkable for Karl Barth. However, as far as I can see, one characteristic of American Presbyterianism and its understanding of predestination is prominently reflected in *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology*. There is a strong consciousness of one’s individuality, a confidence in one’s ability that can sometimes certainly include earthly success-seeking and at the same time a high degree of social responsibility. I have seen these impressive traits of character especially in older American Presbyterian lay people as well as in the Korean Bible studies and prayer services.

But in general, Calvin’s pastoral and individual-ethical approach which, at an earlier stage, influenced the Reformed doctrine of predestination is replaced in *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology* by a concept of election that will evoke trust in the creative-dynamic activity of the Holy Spirit and in the Spirit’s many-faceted powers. This confidence also motivates cultural criticism by means of the Word of God: to change creatively a world that is always in danger

of falling prey to human stubbornness and reactionary thinking, urgently demands a constant critical attitude. But we have to keep in mind that God’s election does not allow us to show hostility to other churches and religions but rather makes us sensitive to the particularity of the church.

This leads us to the *sixth* special mark of Reformed theology, an unusually far-reaching *doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, especially of his boundless presence. That differs from classic Roman Catholic pneumatology, which tends to identify the Holy Spirit with the Roman Catholic church and its sphere of influence.²⁷ It differs as well from the traditionally strict and exclusive link of God’s Spirit with God’s Word and the mediation of the revealed Word of God to the present time and situation in the Lutheran tradition.²⁸ John Calvin extended the notion of the work of the Holy Spirit to the world, to society, and to culture.²⁹ And I am convinced that renewed attention to this topic would lead us above all to the insight that the notion of the diverse forms of God’s activity helps us to understand Christ’s presence as the Coming One in the Lord’s Supper.³⁰

Seventh, last but not least, there is the difficult and troublesome relation between *eschatology and history*. The eschatological course of Reformed theology began with Ulrich Zwingli and Heinrich Bullinger in Zurich, rather than with Calvin, and was fully developed by Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669), who taught theology at Bremen (Northern Germany), Franeker and Leiden (Netherlands).³¹ This theology is based on the view that God has established several covenants, starting with the creation, or with God’s initiative after the fall of Adam and Eve, and culminating with the covenant of the grace of God, Father and Son. These covenants divide history, and the biblical witness to them enables us to grasp all history and to understand momentous historical events in relation

to the coming of the Kingdom of God. This conception of progressive salvation-history is a fruit from the tree of Reformed construction of our world in light of divine revelation. It traveled from the Netherlands up the river Rhine to Switzerland. In Zurich, the Reformed minister Johann Jacob Hess (1741-1828) developed a doctrine of the Kingdom of God according to the course of world history.³² It fit nicely with the idealist religious philosophy of world history established especially by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. His philosophy merged—through the mediation of the Reformed minister and professor Christian Krafft (1784-1845)—with the Lutheran theology of salvation history (John Christian Karl von Hofmann, 1810-1877) at Erlangen. It became very influential throughout the 19th century and is similar to American dispensational theology.³³

Failure to understand the clear connection between eschatology and theology of history has been, as I have tried to explain elsewhere,³⁴ one of the deficiencies of theology in recent times. It can also become, if soundly revised, one of the most important contributions of Reformed theology to the ecumenical dialogue.

These few remarks can only be a sketch, mainly of open questions that call all of us to be jointly engaged in drawing a fuller and more adequate picture. As Blaise Pascal said, “The last thing one discovers in composing a work is what has to be put first.”³⁵

“[The awareness of God’s sovereignty] includes two components: the glory of God as the ultimate direction of human life in all its acting and suffering . . . and the complete dependence of human destiny on God’s will.”

Observations on the Current State of Reformed Theology

ENDNOTES

¹ Dr. Jan Stefan, who now teaches systematic theology at the Faculty of Protestant Theology of the Charles University Prague (the former Comenius seminary, which honors the Moravian tradition), calls it the renewal of the old enthusiastic dream of “reforming the deformed church and world”: “Prager Notizen,” *Evangelische Theologie* 55 (1995): 239-43, esp. p. 240

² Hans Joachim Kraus, *Systematische Theologie im Kontext biblischer Geschichte und Eschatologie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1983).

³ Wallace M. Alston Jr., *The Church of the Living God: A Reformed Perspective* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2002), p. 97.

⁴ Michael Welker, “Reformation Theology and the Reformed Profile,” *The Bulletin of the Institute for Reformed Theology* 3/1 (2003): 1, 4-9, 16, quotation is from p. 7.

⁵ My late colleague J.F. Gerhard Goeters, a Reformed church historian at the Faculty of Protestant Theology at Bonn University and editor of the Reformed *Books of Confessions*, gave me this information.

⁶ See the documentation of Zoltán Balog: *Mitarbeiter des Zeitgeistes? Die Auseinandersetzung über die Zeitgemäßheit als Kriterium kirchlichen Handelns und die Kriterien theologischer Entscheidungen in der Reformierten Kirche Ungarns 1967-1992*, ed. G. Sauter (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997).

⁷ My late friend Ervin Vályi-Nagy and his disciples often explained this to me.

⁸ *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology: Tasks, Topics, Traditions*, ed. David Willis and Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999).

⁹ *Reformed Theology: Identity and Ecumenicity*, ed. Wallace M. Alston Jr. and Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003).

¹⁰ See also his book *Liberating Reformed Theology: A South African Contribution to an Ecumenical Debate* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans/Cape Town: David Philip, 1991).

¹¹ For Hungary, see István Szabó, “Einige Informationen zum Verständnis des ungarischen Protestantismus im 20. Jahrhundert,” *Verkündigung und Forschung* 38 (1993): 73-81; idem, “Ungarischer Protestantismus—heute,” *ibid.*, 81-85; Zoltán Balog, “Beobachtungen zur theologischen Neuorientierung in der Reformierten Kirche Ungarns seit 1989,” *Evangelische Theologie* 55 (1995): 217-29. For Romania, Tamás Juhász, “Zur Lage der Reformierten Kirche in Rumänien,” *Evangelische Theologie* 55 (1995): 229-38.

¹² E.g., Ferdinand Kattenbusch, “Protestantismus,” in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 3rd edition ed. Albert Hauck, vol. 16 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1905), pp. 135-82, esp. 165-73.

¹³ A certain exception is *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, which contains a *Book of Confessions* (Louisville: Office of the General Assembly, 1991). This Presbyterian Church is aware, as perhaps never before, that its confessional documents have a history and there is a responsibility for bearing witness to the Gospel not only in continuity with the confessional heritage but also with a critical consciousness of the tasks and issues confronting the church today. This consciousness is documented in the Confession of 1967, which concentrates on theological resources for critical social issues.

¹⁴ As it is explained, e.g., by Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship Reformed According to Scripture*, rev. and expanded ed. (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2002).

¹⁵ Cf. Patrick D. Miller, *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).

¹⁶ Hughes Oliphant Old, *Themes and Variations for a Christian Doxology: Some Thoughts on the Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992), esp. pp. 121-31.

¹⁷ *The Ministry of the Elders in the Reformed Churches*. Papers Presented at a Consultation Held in Geneva in August 1990, ed. Lukas Vischer (Berne, Evangelische Arbeitsstelle Oekumene Schweiz, 1992).

¹⁸ See Bogárdi Szabó István, *Egyházvezetés és teológia a Magyarországi Református egyházban 1948 és 1989 Között* [Church leadership and theology in the Reformed Church in Hungary between 1948 and 1989], *Societas et Ecclesia*, vol. 3, (Debrecen: Ethnica, 1995), with an English summary.

¹⁹ Cf. Michael Welker, “Biblical Theology and the Authority of Scripture,” *Theology in the Service of the Church*. Festschrift Thomas W. Gillespie, ed. Wallace M. Alston Jr. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 232-41.

²⁰ See Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scripture in the Worship of the Christian Church*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, forthcoming).

²¹ See *Rationality in the Calvinian Tradition*, ed. Hendrik Hart, Johan van der Hoeven, and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Lanham, MD/London: University Press of America, 1983).

²² For corrections, see John H. Leith, *The Reformed Imperative: What the Church Has to Say That No One Else Can Say* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), chapter 4: “God’s Providing, Ordering and Caring.”

²³ Cf., e.g., Brian A. Gerrish in his introduction to *Reformed Theology for the Third Christian Millennium* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2003), esp. p. 5, and his article “Tradition in the Modern World: The Reformed Habit of Mind,” reprinted in *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology*, pp. 3-20.

²⁴ Calvin’s Geneva Catechism (1542) in his *Tracts and Treatises*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1958), p. 33.

²⁵ John Updike, *In the Beauty of the Lilies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), pp. 75f.

²⁶ Op. cit., p. 44.

²⁷ E.g. (with helpful corrections in consideration about the Second Vatican Council and its “move toward the world” and openness to other churches and religions): Yves Congar, *Je crois en L’Esprit Saint* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1979-80), ET: *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith (New York: Seabury Press/London: G. Chapman, 1983).

²⁸ See Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, trans. John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1953).

²⁹ Documented in different ways by Werner Krusche, *Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1956); in the theology of the Dutch Arnold Albrecht van Ruler, especially *Calvinistic Trinitarianism and Theocentric Politics: Essays toward a Public Theology*, ed. John Bolt, *Toronto Studies in Theology*, vol. 38 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1989), chapters 1, 2, and 5; and by Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994).

³⁰ Cf. Michael Welker, *What Happens in Holy Communion?* trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000).

³¹ Gottlob Schrenk, *Gottesreich und Bund im älteren Protestantismus, vornehmlich bei Johannes Coccejus: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Pietismus und der heilsgeschichtlichen Theologie* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1923).

³² Johann Jakob Heß, *Kern der Lehre vom Reiche Gottes: Nach Anleitung des biblischen Geschichtsinhalts*, 2nd ed. (Zurich: Orell Füssli & Company, 1826).

³³ Clarence Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism: Its Historical Genesis and Ecclesiastical Implications* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1960); B. C. Norman Kraus, *Dispensationalism in America: Its Rise and Development* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1958).

³⁴ G. Sauter, *What Dare We Hope? Reconsidering Eschatology*, (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999) pp. 9-18, 126-59.

³⁵ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées and Other Writings*, trans. Honor Levi (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 177 (fragment 740).

Book Reviews

In Quest of Pentecost: Jodocus van Lodenstein and the Dutch Second Reformation. By Carl J. Schroeder. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001. xviii + 213 pp. \$39.00 (hardcover). ISBN 0761819983.

A wonderful byproduct of the recent renewed interest in spirituality has been the recovery and growing availability of many historical texts and writers that were previously unknown or at least had become rather neglected. In particular, the valuable series, *Classics of Western Spirituality*, published by Paulist Press, has made readily accessible the worlds of Patristic, Orthodox, Spanish, German, French and English spirituality as well as the medieval mystics, women as well as men. Ignorance of this rich tradition is no longer excusable; church and theology have much to gain by paying it serious attention.

Lacunae remain, however, and this volume under review calls attention to one—the Dutch Second Reformation of the 17th and 18th centuries. This work by Carl Schroeder, focusing on one of the important leaders of the Second Reformation, Jodocus van Lodenstein (1620-77), is an excellent introduction to the movement. The author identifies strongly with the Reformed experiential tradition and the result is a sympathetic though not uncritical portrait. Primarily based on a thorough review of secondary sources rather than original scholarship, the volume does make a contribution to scholars by including some sixty pages of van Lodenstein text, translated into English.

Schroeder begins by placing the Second Reformation and van Lodenstein in the long tradition of Dutch mystical piety (including Calvin, Brethren of the Common Life), provides a useful overview of Dutch national and church history (William of Orange, Synod of Dordt), and then gives us an overview of Van Lodenstein's life, education, ministry, and writing. Van Lodenstein came from a socially and economically privileged class and practiced a piety of stringent self-denial. He never married, was abstemious with respect to food, little given to social niceties, and preached a life of Christian discipleship in which renunciation played a major role. He even lived in a cloistered, monastic-like setting on an estate in Utrecht. The rigor was tied to disciplined spiritual habit in which a profound Jesus mysticism was prominent.

At the same time, Van Lodenstein promoted a vigorous diaconal ministry as well as active mission work. Schroeder also contends that he was not legalistic and that, though drawn to Jean de Labadie's (1610-1674) rigorist piety, he never became a separatist in his ecclesiology as Labadie did. Van Lodenstein's passion was revival and his preaching, teaching and pastoral work aimed at awakening people to the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

Van Lodenstein introduced the use of monthly repentance sermons to the Dutch Reformed Church, a practice he picked up from the Puritans. His monastic and mystical inclinations, combined with disappointments that the Dutch Reformed Church was not reforming the life of Dutch people, led Van Lodenstein beyond the Old Testament parallels between God, Israel and the Netherlands, to pay more attention to the Song of Songs, to the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas a Kempis. He also became

critical of the tendency among Reformed Christians to react only negatively Roman Catholic honoring of Mary, insisting that it is proper for Reformed Christians to appreciate the purity and obedience of our Lord's mother.

Finally, both in the appendices of sermons and in his chapter on Van Lodenstein as "Poet, Hymnist, and Writer" (ch. 5), Schroeder gives us enough material for us to get a good feel of Van Lodenstein the writer. His own summary (p. 122) is worth citing in full:

Van Lodenstein was a unique phenomenon in his day; a Dutch Reformed "secular" monastic, living in the world while stoutly resisting its appeal. He was an orthodox Calvinist in theology, but innovative and often unique in his practices. The strong mystical trends of his later years reinforced his "Christ Against Culture" stance even more, leaving him increasingly solitary even as his health declined.

Schroeder does engage the scholarship of pietism—he makes much use of Stoeffler and regularly argues with Ritschl—but his chief interest is in Van Lodenstein's relevance for the church today. His summary of the conditions for revival are on target but I do have two small quibbles with Schroeder's "application." I am not sure if *simul iustus et peccator* (pp. 78, 99) really defines a Reformed attitude to the world, and wonder about the usefulness of using H. Richard Niebuhr's "Christ transforming culture" and Robert Schuller's "self-esteem" theology as touchstones for a Reformed view of discipleship.

Nonetheless, this is a helpful volume, introducing us to a poorly known but important tradition of Christian spirituality in the Reformed tradition. Thankfully, some of its key texts are now also becoming available in English. The major work of the Second Reformation, William a Brakel's multivolume classic, *The Christian's Reasonable Service* has been published by Soli Deo Gloria Publishers and Baker Book House has inaugurated its *Classics of Reformed Spirituality* series with Jean Taffin's *The Marks of God's Children* and Jacobus Koelman's *The Duties of Parents*. Tolle lege!

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John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety. Edited and translated by Elsie Anne McKee. Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 2001. xxi + 360 pp. \$26.95 (hardcover). ISBN 0809140462.

Calvin's spirituality has attracted few writers. Among the reasons for this inattention on the part of scholars a leading place must be assigned to a widely perceived difficulty in fitting Calvin into traditional or commonplace paradigms of spirituality. Elsie McKee

Book Reviews

recognizes the problem (the Latin *spiritualitas* is alien to Calvin's vocabulary, for example) and overcomes it by fastening on "piety," of which she offers "a kind of descriptive definition":

Calvin's piety is the ethos and action of people who recognize through faith that they have been accepted in Christ and engrafted into His body by the sheer grace of God. By this adoption, this "mystical union", the Lord claims them as belonging solely and wholly to God in life and in death. . . . Acknowledging God's claim carries the obligation to worship God publicly and privately. . . . It also includes recognizing in all human beings the image of Christ, to make God known to them and to give their earthly lives all the help possible (p. 5).

This is, of course, correlated with Calvin's own definition of *pietas* in *Institutes* 1:2:1. The qualification "Pastoral" means that the book deals very largely with piety as inculcated and exemplified by Calvin the pastor-teacher, and only minimally with his own personal piety. However, the first of the five sections into which the work is divided contains the few familiar autobiographical essays by Calvin.

After a second part, similarly brief, providing theological orientation on piety, faith and the church from the *Institutes*, the bulk of the volume is devoted to "Liturgical and Sacramental Practices," "Prayer," and "Piety in the Christian Life, Ethics, and Pastoral Care." The whole is an invaluable addition to English literature on Calvin. Its usefulness will be enhanced for sure when McKee's *The Pastoral Ministry in Calvin's Geneva*, here announced, comes from the press. The present compilation is marked by judicious organization, the helpfulness and *perspicua brevitatis* of the introductions, the accessibility of the translations themselves, which include a good proportion by the author herself, especially from the sermons, and the unobtrusive appearance here and there of her original research, for example, on the timing of baptisms in Geneva. The section on the weekly Day of Prayer will be new to many seasoned Calvin scholars.

The piety Calvin advocated was largely communal, churchly. There is much here about "frequenting the sermons" and sharing in the Lord's supper, but very little about individual devotional reading of the Bible or daily routines of personal prayer, let alone group Bible studies or prayer groups. (How truly open and participatory was the pastors' weekly "congregation" for scriptural exposition remains uncertain.) One consequence of the absence of anything akin to "spiritual exercises" is the difficulty of knowing where to draw the line in delimiting what counts for piety in Calvin's world. One misses here, for example, the dimension of discipline that the current publication of the Consistory minutes is so richly illuminating. A sufficiently high proportion of Geneva's population appeared before the Consistory for confession, admonition, and restoration to seem almost standard experience! I was also left wondering whether some of the other harsher notes in Calvin's pastoral repertoire are not somewhat muted here, such as the chilling counsel he gave to battered wives to stay with their husbands until their very lives were at risk. This required *pietas* of the highest order.

Finally, however, this is a timely publication for reformed churches. If Scotland is typical, the rise of interest in "spirituality,"

especially riding on the back of a romanticized Celtic renaissance, advances *pari passu* with the declension of a Reformed identity and praxis. A rediscovery of the tempered rigour of Calvinian piety is urgent. By this important primer Elsie McKee has served both church and academy with distinction.

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Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama. By Michael Horton. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002. 351 pp. \$29.95 (paperback). ISBN 0664225012.

In this provocative study Michael Horton proposes a new paradigm for integrating theology while still remaining faithful to biblical revelation and the confessions of the Reformation. He is adamant that post-Reformation orthodoxy should also be included in the theological dialogue. Harboring reservations toward the mystical and pietistic heritage of the church, he ruefully observes that evangelicalism is sinking into an "experiential-expressive" model of authority. He wishes to affirm biblical authority without falling into biblicism and sectarianism.

Horton proposes the model of a drama, which includes covenant and consummation. While preferring narrative theology over propositional theology, he by no means denies the critical role of propositions in the articulation of the faith. He also raises questions about the viability of narrative theology – whether it compromises the historical basis of revelation. In his view the Bible is not only "history-like" but is firmly rooted in historical events.

I concur with Horton's critique of both evangelical rationalism and pietism, though he needs to be more cautious in his appraisal of the latter. He rightly contends that the Bible consists not of "eternally true propositions" but of "temporally executed promises." He complains that conservatives have too often conceived of revelation in terms of "static, immutable, and eternal principles." In contrast to neo-orthodox interpretations he sees Protestant scholasticism as contradicting rationalism by acknowledging revealed truth that cannot wholly be contained in human language.

The author tends to downplay the experiential dimension of faith in favor of an expositional delineation of the scriptural text. But can we grasp the meaning of the text apart from the evangelical experience of an awakened heart? He reminds us of our indebtedness to Reformed scholasticism for producing some of the greatest works of biblical commentary and devotion. I urge him to take more seriously the legitimate questions that such theological giants as Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Thomas Torrance, and James Torrance have raised concerning the rationalizing thrust of much scholastic theology, especially in the later period. He is right to be concerned about an uncritical embracing of "the great tradition" by evangelicals today. I share his uneasiness about Stanley (continued on page 10)

Book Reviews

Hauerwas who moves the locus of authority from the text to the community of interpretation.

This book would have been strengthened had it contained a critique of open theism, which is presently shaping the evangelical conversation. The author also needs to say something about biblical inerrancy, which continues to be a burning issue among evangelicals. A discussion of that subject would have been most appropriate, since his book focuses on method and authority. In his future writing I hope that Horton will include an encounter with Thomas Torrance, Clark Pinnock, Gregory Boyd, and Emil Brunner. Finally, consideration of the Barmen Declaration would also be in order, since, in my opinion, this is the most challenging and relevant confession of faith on the modern scene. Horton's book is a welcome contribution to the ongoing theological discussion on method and authority.

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The Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture. Edited by Paul Helm and Carl R. Trueman. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002. 289 pp. \$28.00 (paperback). ISBN 0802849512.

This collection of essays is addressed primarily to those who consider themselves evangelical Christians, whether within or without the Reformed tradition. The collection's primary purpose is "to explore, from biblical, systematic, philosophical, and historical perspectives, the nature and the implications of the trustworthiness of the God portrayed in the Bible and worshipped in the Christian Church." An additional purpose is to "stimulate and encourage interdisciplinary dialogue," that is, dialogue among persons interested in differing specialties in current theological studies. A final purpose is an irenic one, to avoid polemics, dogmatism, and acerbic discussion of contentious issues. (pp. viii-ix).

After a brief introduction by the editors, the collection begins with four essays each on Old Testament and New Testament subjects. Next follow two essays each from church historians, systematic theologians, and philosophical theologians. The book concludes with responses to the collection from Colin Gunton and Francis Watson. The essays are written by and for academic, clerical, and lay persons, which means they are written to be accessible to those outside the writers' areas of specialization. The breadth of the collection is tempered by a certain narrowness of sources; each essayist is male, and all are from North America, the British Isles, or northern Europe.

As might be expected, the strength of individual essays varies significantly. For this reader, the strongest essays are those of Gordon McConville, "Divine Speech and the Book of Jeremiah," and Stephen Williams, "Towards Trust." For readers of this *Bulletin*, perhaps the most interesting essays will be three that deal in

some depth with important theologians from the Reformed tradition: "The God of Unconditional Promises," by Carl Trueman, the essay of Williams just named, and "The Diversity and Sufficiency of Scripture" by Timothy Ward

Trueman (professor of church history and historical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia) draws together passages from Calvin's *Institutes* and a number of the great Reformer's biblical commentaries on the subject of trust in the promises of God. Trueman's principal point seems unassailable, that Calvin saw trust in God's promises as crucial to the faith that justifies. Trueman is less persuasive in his argument that this means Calvin taught that "the sole object of faith" is "the promise of God as given in scripture" (p. 179). The very examples Trueman uses from Calvin raise questions about such a conclusion. These include Calvin's commentary on Sarah's faith in God's promise to her, a promise she did not receive from scripture, and the sacramental promise God gives to an infant in baptism.

In "Towards Trust," Williams (a professor in systematic theology at Union Theological College, Belfast) contrasts the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth on the basis for trust in God. While Williams considers himself a traditional, evangelical believer, he also seeks to distance himself from the conservative label some of the essayists in this collection embrace. His discussion of trust depends on work of both Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, especially the latter, whom he considers the theologian essential for evangelical work in the twenty-first century.

Ward, a curate in East Sussex, relies heavily on Barth's notion of the "polyphony" of scripture. Ward believes that "the canonical texts of scripture ultimately sing in unison about the whole of the divine redemption of humankind in Jesus Christ." They do so, however, "only by virtue of their singing polyphonically, in unsystematic, mutually supplementing ways" (p. 213). Indeed, the curate insists, the diversity of the scriptural texts "must stretch further" (p. 212) than many are willing to imagine or tolerate.

From an overall perspective, the most intriguing feature of this collection of essays is its project of bringing together voices from a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives. No reader will agree with even the chief points in every essay. The challenge they pose—to think through carefully some of the relationships among the various theological disciplines—is worthy of acceptance and, in itself, gives value to the collection.

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Reconciliation: Restoring Justice. By John W. de Gruchy. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002. 255 pp. \$19.00 (paperback). ISBN 0800636007.

Since the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the 1990's, the term "reconciliation" has taken on new political meaning,

Book Reviews

and theological writers have begun to revisit traditional Christian conceptions of reconciliation. With *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*, John W. de Gruchy engages this conversation, his central purpose being “to explore the relationship between the politics of reconciliation and the Christian doctrine of reconciliation. . .” (p. 13). What follows is an exemplary project in practical theology, reexamining theological conceptions of reconciliation and justice in light of contemporary conflict resolution efforts. The six chapters of *Reconciliation* are divided into three parts: “Discourse,” “Agency,” and “Process and Goal.”

In the first two chapters on “Discourse,” de Gruchy does a fine job laying out the complexity of the contemporary conversation, and the mixed history of Christian theologies as they have participated in constructing the developing meaning of reconciliation. In his analysis of the South African case in the very first chapter, de Gruchy’s honest appraisal of the challenges of the TRC and the dilemma of seeking both justice and reconciliation is particularly strong—is justice a product of reconciliation or a precondition for it? This dialectic shapes the most novel dimension of the book, in which de Gruchy responds to a primary critique of reconciliation theology by holding together restorative justice and reconciliation. The highlight of the second chapter’s thoroughgoing survey of the development of reconciliation doctrine emerges out of de Gruchy’s use of Dietrich Ritschl’s description of primary and secondary expressions of the doctrine of reconciliation (pp. 18, 76), by which he sets up a sacramental understanding of practices of reconciliation, which he explores in the second part of the book.

The two chapters on “Agency” take up reconciliation as it is embodied in ecclesial life, and the call and resources of Islam, Judaism and Christianity in seeking reconciliation. In the third chapter, de Gruchy acknowledges the imperfection of the human institution of the Church but holds that “. . . if there is no connection, no visibility or earthing of the message of God’s reconciliation in a community that believes it to be true, reconciliation as Christians understand it would remain a disembodied ideal” (p. 88). In a particularly helpful integration of the worship and public life of Christian communities, de Gruchy affirms that the sacraments (particularly the endangered or lost sacrament of confession and penance) are concrete embodiments of reconciliation. The well-intentioned fourth chapter, on the shared resources and responsibilities of the Abrahamic faiths, is probably the weakest point of de Gruchy’s project, and he acknowledges its limitations in the introduction (p. 3). De Gruchy believes that at least some attention is in order, however, given the religious and political conflicts of the Middle East as well as the cooperation of Jews, Christians and Muslims in South Africa. The chapter raises some important issues for further conversation.

The final chapters of the book, “Process and Goal,” open up creative and constructive possibilities for future developments of reconciliation theology. Chapter five, entitled “The Art of Reconciliation,” considers ways in which we might create a space in which we can meet and hear the “other”—the arts have particular capacity for this creativity. De Gruchy convincingly argues that reconciliation is not the inevitable consequence of all truth-telling—

and further, that space must be created not only for the victims and perpetrators, but also the beneficiaries of injustice to meet face to face. (One critique of the TRC was its inability to deal with the guilt of *bystanders*.) He also takes seriously the rage of victims and the challenge and agential potential of forgiveness. The book concludes with a reformulation of the image of *covenant*, in contrast to the ways in which this image was abused by apartheid theology, “implying a new commitment to one another that transcends simply agreeing to co-exist, with hostility continuing to simmer beneath the surface. . .” (p. 185). When victims offer forgiveness and perpetrators and beneficiaries acknowledge their guilt, *then* we might in hope seek to restore a “covenantal justice,” characterized by right relationships between people and groups who share a commitment to building moral community. A primary concern in restoring covenantal justice is redistribution of land and wealth.

De Gruchy’s work in *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice* is a timely and careful contribution to the growing discourse of theology, human rights and conflict resolution. “Reconciliation” is a prevalent and contested idea in contemporary political and liberation theology, and de Gruchy’s project takes this conversation very seriously and illumines its central questions, challenges and promises in an honest manner. While the book is largely in the theological reflection mode, and its purpose is not to outline particular practices, the responsible Christian of the 21st century will find in its pages much sustenance for the arduous journey toward peace and justice.

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Sex Crimes: From Renaissance to Enlightenment. By William Naphy. Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: Tempus, 2004. 224 pp. \$22.95 (paperback). ISBN 0752429779.

This book might be subtitled: “Constructing Illegal and Perverse Sexuality in the Past.” The subject is the control of illicit sexual acts between 1450 to 1800, and the criminal records of Geneva are its most plentiful primary source. The author believes that premodern societies fared no better than present-day ones in eradicating socially threatening sexual behavior from human nature. The past differed significantly from the present, however, in its recognition of the irrepressible nature of pervasive alternative sexual lifestyles. This was especially true with regard to sexual relations between adult men and adolescents, which is the ax *Sex Crimes From Renaissance to Enlightenment* especially wants to grind. Because socially threatening sexual desires were deemed irradicable in human nature, society had to be vigilant and remorselessly punitive in their restraint. Otherwise, a very great many people would act on such deeply rooted sexual feelings.

Beyond his special interest in premodern society’s tolerance of bisexuality, Naphy covers the full spectrum of *(continued on page 12)*

Book Reviews

criminal sexuality. At the base of premodern laws, he finds a male need to control women, whose alluring sexuality posed a mortal challenge to patriarchy. Keeping women in their place, and sex within marriage, became major goals of church and state, especially in Protestant lands, to which end they allied with and empowered the patriarchal family. The result was a society in which any and all sexual contact had to be carefully scrutinized and regulated.

In the last half of the fifteenth century, premodern courts especially targeted fornication. Largely as a result of the medieval church's recognition of the binding nature of consensual vows without the involvement of parents, church, and state, a plague of contested clandestine marriages afflicted society. Like adultery, such unions threatened family harmony and honor. In both cases, sentences were meted out with scholastic attention to detail, the outcome always "ad hoc and situational." In the matter of adultery, sex between a married man and a single woman was deemed a lesser crime (jail, fines, or banishment) than sex between a married man and a married woman (death). By keeping sex-crazed young men from gang-raping respectable young women, brothels served the public interest. Rape was a capital crime, yet prosecutions were few and convictions fewer still due to the absence of hard evidence. When, however, a case was clear-cut, the result, as in the Genevan cases, was beheading or drowning.

Following Randolph Trumbach, Naphy believes that a "practical bisexuality" among males was recognized in the past and even the norm. Not until the late eighteenth century, it is argued, did premodern societies construe such behavior as abnormal homosexuality in distinction from normal heterosexual behavior. Then,

for the first time, sodomy became sexual relations between men, absent any sexual interest in women. Previously, it had included sex with animals, oral and anal sex between men and women, and masturbation.

Premodern law and theology held minor children blameless for their behavior in child abuse and pederasty, while acquitting, or executing, adolescents strictly on the basis of theirs. Still, the most common adolescent crime, sex with an older male, was not punished in every instance. A major factor in encouraging such tolerance, Naphy believes, was the Renaissance's reintroduction of pagan antiquity's acceptance of youth-love.

Before the eighteenth century, cases of lesbianism were comparatively rare—although Geneva had three trials in the sixteenth, one of which ended in the drowning of a fifteen-year-old servant for abuse of her employer's minor children. Although more familiar to the courts during the Enlightenment, the thought of genital sex between women of social standing was disgusting to the middle and upper classes, who preferred to avert their eyes by treating intimate female relationships as romantic friendships.

Sex Crimes From Renaissance to Enlightenment tells, randomly, only one side of the story of human sexuality in the past. An uninformed reader would not know from its reading that marriage triumphed over the single life in late medieval and early modern Europe, and united, functional, and sentimental families were more the rule than the exception in these centuries. Although Naphy provides no footnotes, he does append a bibliography, from which critical readers may begin to test the truth of his assertions.

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The Marks of God's Children. By Jean Taffin. Trans. Peter Y. DeJong; ed. James A. DeJong. Classics of Reformed Spirituality. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2003. 155 pp. \$14.95 (paper). ISBN 0801026199.

The Dutch Reformed Translation Society performs a valuable service to Reformed Christians and students of Pietism/Puritanism with lively new translations of spiritual classics from the "Further Reformation" in the Netherlands. Since other volumes in the series are from the seventeenth century and some eighteenth-century titles are planned, Jean Taffin's *The Marks of God's Children*—first published in French in 1586—represents the vanguard of the *Nadere Reformatie*. Taffin, indeed, is often thought of as the father of the movement. As the editor's introduction demonstrates, his influence endured for several generations after his death in 1602. Many editions of this devotional gem were printed in French, Dutch, Latin, and English (*Of the Marks of the Children of God, and of Their Comforts in Afflictions; to the Faithful of the Low Countries*) until 1659. The present translation "is based on the Dutch text as it last stood before Taffin's death," on the grounds that it was "truest to his intent" and was the version "most widely circulated and read" as the renewal movement flowered (pp. 19-20).

IRT Public Lecture Features Rebecca M. Blank

Rebecca M. Blank, Dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, the Henry Carter Adams Collegiate Professor of Public Policy, and Professor of Economics, spoke at a public lecture for the Institute for Reformed Theology and Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education.



The lecture, “The Role of Government in the Market: Should Christians Have a Different View?” was given on Thursday, September 16, 2004 in Watts Chapel at Union-PSCE in Richmond, VA.

Dr. Blank also serves as the co-director of the National Poverty Center at the Ford School. Prior to

going to Michigan, she served as a member of the President’s Council of Economic Advisors from 1997-1999. She also was Professor of Economics at Northwestern University and served as the first Director of the Northwestern University/University of Chicago Joint Center for Poverty Research. She is the author of *It Takes a Nation: A New Agenda for Fighting Poverty*, *The New World of Welfare*, and *Is the Market Moral?* She is widely known for her persuasive efforts to bring Christian theological perspectives to bear on economic issues. An influential scholar on public policy, she is guided by Christian convictions in her analyses of the morality of the market system

Book Reviews

Taffin prayed his readers would “increasingly confess and experience the unsearchable grace of God” and receive “full and certain assurance” of their “adoption as God’s children” (p. 23). Linking doctrine (confessing the faith) and piety (experiencing grace) is typical of both the *Nadere Reformatie* and the English Puritanism to which it was related. The language and tone of *The Marks of God’s Children* resonates with Lewis Bayly’s *The Practice of Piety* and works like John Cotton’s *Christ the Fountaine of Life* – and echo much later in Jonathan Edwards’s *Religious Affections*. The spiritual-psychological problem of assurance of salvation typified Calvinist experience with its emphasis on God’s sovereign will. Pastors labored in the pulpit, in devotional gatherings and private counseling, and in their writings to guide the faithful to a grounded spiritual confidence.

Taffin’s gift, to those reading him three centuries ago and to believers today, is his ability to show in vivid prose the way to a life of faithful perseverance. The only “solid basis for our comfort” (p. 42-43) is not virtue, experience, or even faith, but God himself. God’s will is inscrutable but the Holy Spirit “grants us some knowledge,” especially in what God is pleased “to reveal to us in his Word” (p. 26). Referring to the church, Taffin argues that if we abide “in the family of our mother” we need “never doubt that we are heirs of the heavenly Father” (p. 38). In personal experience “the Holy Spirit testifies with our spirits” by producing a variety of “fruits” or “marks” of faith, the chief of these being (as with Edwards) selfless love of God and neighbor. Since God makes the same promises to all his children, even those of us with “small, weak marks” may be “assured that we are children of God” (p. 49).

Perseverance was a pressing issue for Taffin as, following the assassination of William of Orange in 1584, Spanish oppression of non-Catholics again intensified. Taffin, who had served William as chaplain, was a refugee more than once in his life. Temptation to apostasize dogged Reformed believers and not a few fell away under pressure. Illustrations of Dutch Calvinist martyrs included in this edition bring home the book’s original political context. Taffin argues that extreme hardship is no sign of God’s disapproval, indifference, or absence. On the contrary, persecution is predicted in Scripture, an emblem of faithfulness, and the occasion of great courage. “These sufferings have their source in God’s love for us,” for God will more than compensate for earthly losses (pp. 80-81). Furthermore, those who think the reward of faith is “a few earthly, perishable treasures” are “shortchanging themselves” (p. 114). Indeed, until we suffer for our faith “we hardly realize what it is to hope and trust in God without holding anything back” (p. 105). Regarding the obedience that is learned in “the school of affliction,” Taffin concludes: “We need this education” (p. 108).

The book shines as a devotional classic. Perhaps its greatest contemporary relevance is Taffin’s witness to “the fruits of persecution” — to the gospel that strengthens believers in the face of grim oppression (pp. 122-123). In today’s “global church” many believers would read *The Marks of God’s Children* and imagine it was written just for them.

Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe
Dean

Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lombard, IL

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News from the Director *(continued from page 2)*

→ **Thomas L. Are, Jr.**

Rev. Thomas L. Are, Jr. (Tom) is Pastor/Head of Staff of Village Presbyterian Church, Prairie Village, KS. He has previously served the Riverside Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville, FL (1996-2004), the Seven Oaks Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC as Pastor/Head of Staff (1990-1996) and as an Associate Pastor he served the Westminster Church in Charleston, SC from 1986-89. He has served the General Assembly as Vice-Moderator of the Polity Committee for the 214th Assembly and served on the Stated Clerk Review and Nominations Committee for the 215th. Tom served on the Board of Trustees of Presbyterian College. He is presently participates in the colloquy "The Church: Recent Theological, Sociological, and Practical Perspectives."

→ **Anna Case-Winters**

Anna Case-Winters is professor of theology at McCormick Theological Seminary, where she joined the faculty in 1986. A graduate of Agnes Scott College, Columbia Theological Seminary, and Vanderbilt University, she was associate pastor at Central Presbyterian Church in Oklahoma City from 1978-80. Case-Winters is the author of numerous articles and books, including *God's Power: Traditional Understandings and Contemporary Challenges*. She is past president of the American Theological Society, and moderator of the theology committee of the Caribbean and North American Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. She represented the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at the General Council Meeting of the WARC in Ghana this past summer.

→ **Charles Dickinson**

Charles Dickinson graduated from Dartmouth College. After service with the U.S. Marine Corps in the USA, Okinawa and Thailand, he attended Chicago Theological Seminary, the University of Chicago Divinity School, and received his B.D. degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He then studied theology and related subjects in West Berlin, East Germany, at Yale University, Union Theological Seminary (N.Y.), and received his Ph.D. in theology from the University of Pittsburgh. He has taught at the Ecole de Théologie Kimbanguiste (Kinshasa, Zaire), Union-PSCE, the University of Charleston (W.Va.), the American College of Rome. He was a Visiting Scholar at Oxford University and Harvard Divinity School; taught at Hebei Teachers University (P.R. China), and at Andover-Newton Theological School. Among other board memberships and activities he serves as a Board and Curriculum Committee member and teacher for Beacon Hill Seminars.

→ **Jane Dempsey Douglass**

Jane Dempsey Douglass is the Hazel Thompson McCord Professor of Historical Theology, Emeritus, at Princeton Theological Seminary. Her work has been focused in Reformation theology and ecumenical theology. She is the author of numerous books and articles, including *Women, Freedom and Calvin* and *Women, Gender and Christian Community*. She is an elder in PC (USA), past president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, a member of the Editorial Council of *Theology Today*, and a member of the Board of Advisors of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians. She lives in Claremont, California.

→ **John H. Edwards**

John H. Edwards is a member of the Planning and Development Committee of the McCune Foundation, a member of the Dispensing Committee of the John R. McCune Charitable Trust, and an Executive Committee Member of the Works of Jonathan Edwards at Yale University. He also serves on the Board of Director of the Access Care Center in McLean, Virginia; as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Hamden Hall Country Day School in Hamden, Connecticut; and is a member of the fund-raising arm of St. Raphael's Hospital Foundation Board in New Haven, Connecticut. In the past he has been a member of the oversight Board for the Prison Fellowship, New England Division; and a member of the Board of Directors for Project Medsend, Milford, Connecticut. He lives in Woodbridge, Connecticut.

→ **Lewis F. Galloway**

Lewis F. Galloway is a graduate of Davidson College (A.B.) and Union-PSCE (D.Min; Th.M.). He served as pastor of the Calypso and Standford Presbyterian Church in Calypso, North Carolina; the Royster Memorial Presbyterian Church in Norfolk, Virginia; and the Shandon Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina. Currently he serves as the Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis, Indiana. He studied in France at the Protestant Faculty of Theology in Paris and the University of Paul Valery in Montpelier. He serves on the Board of Trustees of Union-PSCE. He has been involved in ecumenical affairs, racial reconciliation work, and hunger and homelessness issues.

→ **David Kelsey**

David Kelsey was born in Egypt where his parents were Presbyterian missionaries. Educated at Haverford College, Yale Divinity School and Yale Graduate School, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Southern New England, where his status now is "honorably retired." He teaches systematic theology at Yale Divinity School, where he is the Luther Weigle Professor of Theology. He participated in the inaugural colloquy of the Institute for Reformed Theology, Union Theological Seminary, 1999-2000.

Readers are invited to share with members of the Advisory Council, as well as with the staff and Board of the Institute, any suggestions or proposals they may have for our future work, as well as indications of possible resources to sustain our efforts.

OUR THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We are deeply grateful for the funds provided for our initial years by the Lilly Endowment, and for recent sustaining funds by The Henry Luce Foundation, Inc. A grant from the Peale Foundation is assisting the Institute in bringing church members with interest and expertise into some of our colloquies, into discussions at public lectures, and into programs presented by our partner institution, the **Reformed Institute of Metropolitan Washington** (www.reformedinstitute.org).

Thank you for your inquires and other expressions of interest. Please do let us know any of your hopes and concerns for our work together.

Institute for Reformed Theology Affiliate News

The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship

The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship offers both rigorous scholarship and practical resources to enrich Christian worship in churches throughout North America.

The Institute is offering a number of seminars and conferences this winter.

January 27-29, 2005: Calvin Symposium on Worship (conference)

The Institute will present the Calvin Symposium on Worship and the Arts at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI. The Symposium aims to bring together worship leaders and planners, pastors, artists, dramatists, and musicians from many church traditions to engage in worship fellowship, learning, and discussion around preaching, drama, organ and piano music, worship planning, visual arts, and congregational song. For more information and to register, go to <http://www.calvin.edu/worship/sympos/index.htm> or call (616) 526-6088.

February 21, 2005: Book Discussion Group on The Four Pages of the Sermon (preaching workshop)

John Rottman, professor of preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary, will lead a one-day book discussion group of Paul Scott Wilson's *The Four Pages of the Sermon* focusing on sermon development and a grammar for talking about sermons. The day will be hosted by Rev. Wilbert Van Dyk and the Center for Excellence in Preaching of Calvin Theological Seminary. This workshop will be held in the Avon Park/Sebring area, Florida. To register, e-mail preaching@calvinseminary.edu.

February 28-March 4, 2005: Theology and Practice of Pastoral Ministry (academic course)

An interactive retreat for pastors and seminarians, this course will reflect on the calling to ordained pastoral ministry. Led by Duane Kelderman, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Kathy Smith, director of continuing education at Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, the central thesis of this course is that strong pastoral identity is the key to sustaining pastoral excellence. This course will be taught in Orlando, Florida. For details and to register, go to http://www.calvin.edu/worship/educate_events/curriculum/theol_practice.htm or call Kathy Smith at (616) 957-6043.

March 4-5, 2005: Song Festival and Worship Conference (conference)

Emily Brink and Norma de Waal Malefyt (Calvin Institute of Christian Worship), Paul Ryan and Kent Hendricks (Worship Apprentice program, Calvin College), will lead a Friday night song festival followed by a conference on Saturday morning focused on worship leadership using *Sing! A New Creation*, a songbook published by Faith Alive, and the newly published *Worship Sourcebook*. Third Christian Reformed Church in Lyden, WA will host the conference. Contact: Carol DeJong, bugle@thirdcrc.com.

March 11-12, 2004: A House of Prayer for All Nations: Building a Multicultural Congregation (seminar)

This seminar is intended to help pastors and congregations grow in their vision of developing a multicultural ministry and gain insight and tools for becoming multicultural churches. Featuring George Yancey, professor of sociology at University of Texas and author of *One Body, One Spirit*, and local pastors of multicultural congregations. This seminar will be held at Oakdale Park Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, MI. For further details and to register online, go to http://www.calvin.edu/worship/educate_events/index.htm.

March 18-19: LOGOS Computer-based Exegesis (workshop)

Carl Bosma and Andrew Beunk of Calvin Theological Seminary will teach pastors how to use LOGOS biblical computer software for sermon preparation at River Rock Church in Folsom, CA. To register, contact Tim Blackmon at TimBlackmon@RiverRockChurch.org.

For more about these and other events check out the Calvin Institute's website: <http://www.calvin.edu/worship>.

The H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies

The H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies is a research center specializing in John Calvin and Calvinism that opened in 1981 and is located at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

March 3, 2005: Dr. Karin Maag, director of the H. Henry Meeter Center and Calvin College history professor, will speak at the Meeter Center's 2005 spring colloquium on the topic "Hero or Villain? Interpretations of John Calvin and His Legacy."

April 6, 2005: The Meeter Center Biennial Lecture will be held on Wednesday, April 6, at 3:30 p.m. at Calvin College. The featured speaker will be Raymond Mentzer, Daniel J. Krumm Professor of Religious Studies, Department of Religious Studies, University of Iowa. Dr. Mentzer is a noted expert on the social history of the French Reformation. His lecture will deal with disputes over seating arrangements, issues of precedence, and interior architecture in the French Reformed Churches.

April 7-9, 2005: The Calvin Studies Society's biennial meeting will be held at Calvin Theological Seminary. The conference theme is "Calvin, Beza, and Later Calvinism." There will be seven plenary lectures, a display of Reformation-era medals, a dramatic reading of Beza's play, *Abraham's Sacrifice*, as well as book displays and opportunities to interact with other Calvin scholars in a relaxed environment. To register, go to their website: <http://www.calvinstudiessociety.org/colloquium.htm>.

For more information about these and other events, call (616) 526-7081 or check their website: www.calvin.edu/meeter.

IRT Affiliate News *(continued from page 15)*

THE REFORMED INSTITUTE OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON

The Reformed Institute of Metropolitan Washington is a consortium of seven Presbyterian churches in the Maryland, Northern Virginia, and Washington, DC area. Their purpose is to promote understanding and appreciation of the Reformed tradition among Presbyterians living in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

The Institute will hold their second annual convocation on Saturday, January 19, 2005, 9:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. at Fairfax Presbyterian Church, 10723 Main Street, Fairfax, VA. The convocation will feature an address by Jane Dempsey Douglass, "Why Calvin Still Matters." For directions visit www.fairfaxpresby.com. More information about Dr. Douglass is on page 14 of this publication.

THE INTERNATIONAL REFORMED THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

The International Reformed Theological Institute for Reformed Theology (IRTI) is a program associated with the Free University of Amsterdam. Its first aim is "to bring scholars together in common research, mutual support and an exchange of ideas and needs, in order to develop a viable theology for the different situation in which they are working." The IRTI is based around a worldwide network of scholars, and organized biennial conferences and publishes a journal, *Studies in Reformed Theology*.

The IRTI has announced that their sixth conference will be held on July 5-10, 2005 in Seoul, South Korea. The theme for the conference will be Christian Identity: what makes a Christian a Christian; what is the position of Christians in society, both within nations and globally; what is specifically Christian in social action of political calling; is there a difference between Christian justice and justice in general—and the way Christians deal with justice; what is our calling as Christians? For more information, they can be contacted at IRTI@th.vu.nl or at this address: The International Reformed Theological Institute, Faculty of Theology, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

"Faith consists in being vitally concerned with that ultimate reality to which I give the symbolical name of God. Whoever reflects earnestly on the meaning of life is on the verge of an act of faith." —Paul Tillich



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