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*Church as Parable: Whatever Happened to Ethics?* By Harry Huebner and David Schroeder. Winnipeg, Man.: CMBC Publications, 1993. Pp. xiii + 240. ISBN 0-920718-46-9.

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This book is part of a trend of narrative theologies which accentuate the church as social and moral agent. Echoing the insights of Stanley Hauerwas, Alasdair MacIntyre, and John H. Yoder, Huebner and Schroeder argue that Christian character formation represents a viable alternative to the "Christ of culture" model of Constantinianism and the individualistic tendencies of modern secular society.

Huebner and Schroeder draw upon their Anabaptist heritage to articulate what it means for the church to "be" rather than "have" a social ethic. Schroeder's emphasis on "the binding and loosing nature" (Matt. 16) of the Christian community is reminiscent of the second article of the Schleithem Confession (1527), in which the ban of excommunication is considered to be an integral part of a believer's life and worship.

Huebner's emphasis on the pacifist nature of the church and voluntary self-limitation of God is reflective of the sixth article of the Confession, in which the sword is regarded as "an ordering of God outside the perfection of Christ." Stated positively, the church serves as a non-coercive witness to the good rather than as a moral support for any "just means" that involves violence. Jesus's response of non-retaliation to his enemies along with the "defenceless superior power of God" (Hendrik Berkhof) confirm the priority of love, forgiveness, and mercy.

Schroeder's call for Christians to be pro-life and Huebner's participation in a 1990 Christian peace-making visit to Iraq illustrates the "seamless garment" of life that is an integral part of Mennonite ethics. Unlike many evangelicals who campaigned for the pro-life movement while supporting the Gulf War, Schroeder and Huebner argue for the sacredness of life from cradle to grave. The universal church transcends the narrow pursuits of nation states as well as the individualistic rights language associated with the abortion debate.

The authors' critique of the subjective and wilful nature of modern society, and their argument for an alternative model of discipleship and ecclesiological formation, represent the strongest assets of the book. Huebner reflects experientially upon how personality profiles, value judgments, and self-critical appraisals have become indispensable criteria for pastoral leadership; how marriage ceremonies have focused on the love that the couple have for each other; and how funeral eulogies have become preoccupied with the "good deeds" of the deceased person.

Contrary to this emphasis upon individuals and their actions, one could say that all Christians are shaped by the authority of the Bible, the doctrines of the church, and social and moral convictions of fellow believers. It is thus possible to envision a time when the spiritual and social disciplines of the church once again take precedence over the lasting contributions of individuals. The cumulative reality of the body of Christ overshadows the obsessively goal-oriented tendencies of contemporary believers.

The reader is thus presented with a type of objective Catholic moral order adapted to the needs of a radical Protestantism in which "good" is defined in terms

of sacrificial love, and "order" is circumscribed within the bounds of the gathered body of Christians. Huebner and Schroeder avoid the Catholic emphasis on natural law by highlighting the biblical vision of community and grace. Moreover, they insist, in the face of traditional Protestant protests against "works righteousness," that ethics and theology cannot be divorced.

A question that could be asked is whether modernity is as individualistic and wilful as the authors make it out to be. Instead of using Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to illustrate the subjective and nihilistic aspects of society, as Huebner does in the first chapter, one could utilize Freud's insights into the id and super-ego, and Durkheim's exploration of the collective unconscious, to argue for the existence of a social morality that holds sway in modern life.

A social conscience is evident when Americans hold congressional hearings to investigate personal and business improprieties of their leaders. Canadians display a similar sentiment when tobacco and alcohol consumers are asked to pay a higher tax for products that are harmful to their health. Social mores are even more apparent when one realizes that there are more prisoners per capita in the United States and Canada than anywhere else in the world. The "law and order" legislation against drugs along with the high incidence of violent crimes have forced Canadians and Americans to spend more and more money on penitentiaries and put more and more criminals in jail.

The authors' repeated references to an ecclesiological moral order is thus similar to the concerns of general society. Both church and society have discovered that an increase in freedom (e.g., the right to bear arms) can result in further entanglement in the social web (the court and penitentiary systems). Both groups have realized, too, that a *laissez-faire* attitude to social arrangements (e.g., marriage) raises complicated questions about the legal status of one's partner, longevity of commitment, child support, etc.

Distinctions between church and world, coercion and persuasion, freedom and submission, are thus not as easily made as the authors assume. Both church and society are involved in the socialization process of Christians. The moral order the authors envision can thus be compared favourably to Augustine's *City of God*, in which the divine light transcends the boundaries of the church and illuminates the entire world.

Donald B. Stoesz

McGill University

*Christian Perspectives on Religious Knowledge.* Ed. C. S. Evans and Merold Westphal. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993. ISBN 0-8028-0679-1. Pp. 221.

*Reasoned Faith.* Ed. Eleanore Stump. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993. ISBN 0-8014-9796-5. Pp. 357.

*Word and Spirit: A Kierkegaardian Critique of the Modern Age.* By R. L. Hall. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1993. ISBN 0-253-32752-0. Pp. x+206.

The past decade has been a very productive period for Christian philosophy and philosophical theology, a fecundity to which these three books contribute. The