

allowed, thanks to the miracles of technology, to admit everyone to his paradise. The "subscriber" to his journal simply receives a monthly or quarterly listing of manuscripts received. He checks off the ones he would like to receive, and returns the list. Our editor-clerk then runs the desired articles through his basement duplicator, and sends them off to the "subscriber," who need pay only for the articles he requests. It is the American dream. All ill feelings, all contention have been eliminated. It is the Forest Lawn of scholarly writing. And I for one shall not subscribe. I would rather take my chances, even with that editor in Kentucky with the stubby blue pencil. Writers and editors are as necessary to each other as a husband and wife are to a marriage. And a well-written and well-edited journal lies at the very center of the community of scholars, when and where scholars achieve community.

— ALBERT WILLIAM SADLER

### HORIZONS AND BIBLICAL STUDIES

The College Theology Society has begun *Horizons* because of a need for a journal that will do what others have not done. It promises to present substantive articles in a form that is intelligible to non-specialists.

Many journals have begun with this purpose in mind, but few have been successful. It is not easy to walk the thin line between what is solid material and what is simply popular or to connect "scholarly" with "for the non-specialist." But the members of the Society are to be credited for their willingness to try, and hopefully the editors will be faithful to the charge.

It is especially important that this venture succeed. The reason is that the non-specialists are not persons outside our membership and discipline; rather, they are any colleague with a specialty other than one's own. Theology is not what it used to be; it has broadened and reached out to include many specialties. In fact it has broadened so much that many departments prefer the more expansive title of "religious studies," and many outsiders question whether it is still a discipline.

There is no group who will welcome this attempt more than those who make the Bible their study. They have experienced a growing sense of loneliness and isolation as theologians moved toward (and into) the social sciences, philosophy and the Far East. Certainly, Bible courses are still included in the college curriculum,

but there is not the same effort to integrate scripture into other areas as had been witnessed in the early and mid-sixties. A glance at course syllabi or the papers delivered before learned societies will confirm this impression.

This type of fragmentation within our discipline benefits no one and harms us all. It is true that some blame must be shouldered by the biblical specialists themselves for failing to present their findings in a completely useable form. The complaint that scholarship and readable form are incompatible is a luxury we can no longer afford. On the other hand, there is also some truth in the allegation that people concentrating in other areas of religious studies and theology fail to see the relevancy of the Bible and prefer to seek non-biblical formulations for their teachings. But rather than trying to settle this endless dispute, it will be more profitable to attempt a solution that can be accepted by all sides. The very existence of our discipline may depend upon it; certainly, the success of this journal does.

Because of the situation, a current trend within biblical studies is especially interesting. Its goal is very much like that of *Horizons*. In deference to the few who have been trying for years to take biblical studies in this direction, it must be noted that it is not something completely new, but rather is an emerging trend. A few may fail to see anything new at all and will protest that they have been doing this all along. For them, time will be the best judge.

The trend does not have a name (it was not nurtured in Germany), nor is it associated with a particular "school" (it is not the work of one scholar), but it can be described. Biblical specialists have for long recognized the limits of form and literary and other types of criticism, but they have not been successful in taking us beyond those limits. Instead they were content to present their data and let someone else draw the conclusions and make the applications. There was good biblical theology and good other kinds of theology being written, but there was generally a chasm between the biblical and the others caused by an inability to integrate the two. Today the separation is no longer necessary because students of the Bible are asking questions which go farther than literature and form. They insist that they are dealing with a living people who lived within the complexities of early society. This forces them to evaluate the similarities and differences between Israel, the early Christians and their contemporaries. The biblical specialists are not satisfied with what form a statement took or what a document said. They ask what role these played in the life of the community and in turn what place the community held in the larger context of its society, even what effect it had on that society. In short, they are asking the same questions as are being raised in religious studies which deal with the

modern period.

To do this, the student is forced to be more critical of the faith communities than in the past. He has to recognize that not everything within the scriptures is constructive of community and that some institutions were even destructive. Strangely, the prophets and Jesus of Nazareth seemed more willing to admit this than some modern believers. It calls for an evaluation of the various models which the ancient societies used as patterns for their own structure and the frank admission that some of them should be rejected as models for today as well. There is a danger here, it is true, that of creating a canon within the canon, but the record shows that biblical scholars are not afraid of a few risks, and they usually are capable of meeting the challenge.

The consequences of this trend—asking questions of the early communities that are being asked about modern society—can only be constructive for all fields of study. It will provide us with models and an evaluation of them that comes from the scriptures themselves. Perhaps they will not replace the ones taken from the social sciences and readily offered by theologians as Christian ideals for the modern world, but at least they should provide a healthy standard of comparison. As a result, teachers may pause to reflect and to ask if the Bible is relevant to their courses. I believe that it is and hope that *Horizons* can help demonstrate it. If it does, we will have a stronger discipline than before.

— JAMES W. FLANAGAN

## THEOLOGICAL PLURALISM AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The launching of a scholarly journal, like the appearance of all forms of new life, is auspicious for many reasons. It gives us occasion to reflect on all that has happened to make this possible, and all that might come of it which would make it worthwhile. As one of *Horizons'* associate editors with responsibilities in the area of religion and culture, I am hopeful that many people will use these pages to engage in a provocative discussion of the many topics which might be included under this rather elastic but important rubric.

It has occurred to this writer that the area of religion and culture has a singular importance for the times in which we live, precisely because of the rapid cultural changes that we are currently experiencing with their theological repercussions. McLuhan's "global village" has made us both neighbors and strangers at the same time.

Ever since theologians began to think and write with an