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Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization, and Mission in Theological Education

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The orthodox Christian community can be grateful that this work is once again available for study. The illuminating exposition of the place of philosophy may yet serve to awaken a generation of evangelical slumberers.

John L. Easterwood
Richfield Evangelical Free Church, Richfield, MN

Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization, and Mission in Theological Education.
By Max L. Stackhouse. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988, 237 pp., \$14.95 paper.

Stackhouse pulls together the results of recent discussion and debate about the shape of theological education on a global scale. Special emphasis falls on the contributions of third-world theologians. Among them are N. Boonprasat-Lewis (Thailand), J. G. F. Collison (India) and L. Sanneh (Gambia).

Amid the welter of ethnopolitical theologies and theologians, Stackhouse pursues the search for criteria. He is seeking ground rules that might give shape to theology in this era. It is his conviction that theological studies are poised on a precipice. He believes that disaster will ensue unless a framework is found within which both research and communication of the Christian message can occur (8).

In his introductory sections Stackhouse outlines various contexts that have given guidance to theological thought in the recent past. Among these are classical liberalism, modernism, neo-orthodoxy, ecumenism and Biblical theology (16-26).

Stackhouse's aim is to "de-provincialize" theology. To do this he seeks an *apologia*, a general systems theory capable of global use (21-22).

The first line of approach is the introduction of contemporary concepts. The late O. Costas' view of the gospel in proclamation is set alongside the incarnational view of Boonprasat-Lewis. Collison's concept of a theology shaped by the life of the Church leads to the translation of the Christian message held firm by reference to certain "faith affirmations" (45).

In the first major section, then, Stackhouse gives rein to the divergent views of thinkers from broad perspectives. A second section broadens the boundaries of the discussion to include nontheological fields.

Four main questions determine this discussion: (1) What is the proper relationship of Christianity to other religions? (2) What is the relationship between the particular and the general in theological formulation, and is generalization possible? (3) How does one resolve the tension between the inclusive and the distinctive? (4) What is the role of religion in shaping civilization?

In the continuing search for a criterion, Stackhouse then moves to a discussion of *praxis*, *poesis* and *theoria*, all of which serves to lay the groundwork for his final section entitled "Proposal." Here he moves to establish irreducible criteria that might serve as the basis for globalization, contextualization and mission in terms of educating the clergy of the future.

Four doctrines comprise the basis of this universal theological system: sin and salvation, Biblical revelation, the Trinity, and Christology (170-182).

Moving from doctrine to practice, Stackhouse sets out four basic elements of Christian practice: the imperatives of piety, polity, policy and program.

To complete his trilogy of criteria, Stackhouse speaks of the imperatives of justice, and here he notes three elements: ethology, teleology, and deontology. There is no doubt in my mind that Stackhouse has here entered into a debate that will dominate the fields of both theological education and missiology over the

coming decade. He has furthermore outlined the issues that must be settled and that override the doctrinal provincialities of our day.

In the frontispiece L. Newbigin summarizes the import of this book: "This is by any standard a very important book for all concerned with theological education and for all concerned with the articulation of the Gospel for our time. It is a powerful plea for a normative, as distinct from merely descriptive, approach to theological teaching."

From T. Ward to R. Lynn (of the Lilly Foundation) there has come a call for theological education responsive to our times. Stackhouse contributes an enormous amount of raw material for this important discussion.

Wayne A. Detzler
Calvary Baptist Church, Meriden, CT

Psychotherapy and the Spiritual Quest. By David G. Benner. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988, 173 pp., \$13.95.

If one is looking for a new book on the integration of psychology and theology, this one will be a pleasant surprise. Its pleasantness springs from the author's professional treatment of a complex issue. The surprise is the rich bonus of a review of spirituality from a fresh, modern viewpoint.

Benner wastes little of the reader's time reviewing the traditional points of tension between psychology and theology and establishing his premise of the unity of human nature. But his review touches base with Plato, Socrates, ancient Israel, Jesus, the desert fathers, the Celtic church, and the Reformation. His review then centers on the displacement of "soul care" by the "cure of minds." The tension between Benner's thesis of the unity of the human personality and psychospiritual dualism is clearly delineated.

The author begins his special contribution to the discussion of soul/mind care: his "broadened view of spirituality." After a more than adequate review of the supposed dualism of psychology and spirituality, including Jung, Kunkel, Kierkegaard, May and McNamara, Benner's chapter on Christian spirituality opens new insights into the history of Christianity. This special chapter makes the whole discussion come alive. The average reader will greatly benefit from this concise yet thorough look at various models of spirituality. These delightful twenty-nine pages enlighten the reader while preparing him for Benner's central thesis that man is a psychospiritual unit.

What then is the "quest"? It is nothing else than the psychospiritual quest for identity, happiness, success, perfection, truth, justice, beauty, stimulation, mystery. In the fragmented jungle of contemporary soul care there are few adequate models of integrated approaches to psychospiritual ministry. Benner can only suggest B. Tyrrell's Christotherapy as an example. But nonetheless the point is well taken: We need to rethink our outlook on mind/soul care.

Bob Andrews
Dayton, TN

Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament. By Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987, 219 pp., \$17.95.

"How should the Christian church in the midst of the modern world understand and appropriate the significance of the Old Testament?" This is the leading