

von Rad's in particular, were given more attention. Von Rad's understanding of the historical-critical method and the influence of the dialectical tradition both shed some light on his apparently contradictory statements about history and *Heilsgeschichte*. In addition, the philosophy of W. Dilthey can illuminate how von Rad understands *Heilsgeschichte* in other places and even the ideas of R. Otto are helpful for grasping what von Rad is doing.

At one point Spriggs cites evidence which he feels suggests that von Rad does not himself know what he means by *Heilsgeschichte* (p. 36). One wonders if this criticism is actually valid. In view of the flexible way von Rad uses the word *Heilsgeschichte*, one wishes that Spriggs had, at greater length, analyzed all the statements about *Heilsgeschichte* independently and more in context instead of mainly cataloging these ideas for comparison. Furthermore, it would be helpful to analyze how von Rad conceives of the *Heilsgeschichte's* being initiated and brought to a halt where such an idea is mentioned. Von Rad's statements relative to *Heilsgeschichte* in Ecclesiasticus do seem perplexing; but von Rad uses *Heilsgeschichte* with multiple meanings. Like the word *democracy* in different contexts it means different things, and our task is to grasp what he means in each case, even where contradictions appear and we become confused.

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*Uniting in Hope, Accra 1974*. Faith and Order Paper No. 72. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1975. vii + 144 pp. \$6.15.

*One Baptism, One Eucharist, and a Mutually Recognized Ministry*. Faith and Order Paper No. 73. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1975. 61 pp. \$5.90.

In the summer of 1974 the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches gathered for two weeks at the University of Ghana, Legon. Two main themes were on the agenda: (1) "Giving account of the hope that is within us," and (2) the issues directly related to the unity of the Church. *Uniting in Hope* is a collection of 13 documents, addresses, and reports reflecting the discussions and findings of the meeting.

Three documents are more particularly significant: (1) Lukas Vischer's "Report of the Secretariat to the Commission" (pp. 21-23). This is a retrospective appraisal of the Commission's activities in recent years, and an attempt to analyze the "discernible tendency towards a certain mistrust of the ecumenical movement," along with the suggestion that "a new approach and new methods" are required to do the ecumenical thing. (2) The report on the Commission's study on "Giving account of the hope that is within us" (pp. 25-80). The decision to initiate such a study was made three years earlier at the FOC meeting in Louvain, Belgium. From the beginning, the emphasis was not on formulating an agreed-upon statement of faith, but on attempting to reflect together on the meaning of the

Gospel in the contemporary world. There has been a wide response on the part of the Churches, and, as this report indicates, the Accra meeting provided for a confrontation between vastly differing approaches to the expression of the Christian faith. Obviously, the study is not yet completed, and it will remain a major concern of Faith and Order for several years. (3) A document providing four approaches to the question, "How can the unity of the Church be achieved?" (pp. 95-137). This document testifies to the fact that the patient work towards theological agreement continues to go on.

During the last three years a good deal of energy has gone into the production of documents dealing with baptism, the Eucharist, and the ministry. They represent the results of an extensive study process, and have been published as separate pieces in *One Baptism, One Eucharist, and a Mutually Recognized Ministry*. The first two were presented to the Commission in Accra, and have been revised in the light of the comments received then. Both have been sent to all Churches for consideration. The document on the ordained ministry is essentially a new text. It leaves many questions unanswered, and there was a widespread feeling in Accra that this was not the last word on the subject. It says nothing, for instance, about the magisterium in the Church. Still, how will Faith and Order present to the Churches the consensus already achieved with some confidence that they will respond? Will it be able to clear the way for the first stage of a mutual recognition and carry forward a debate that is essential for the future of the ecumenical movement?

These two publications under review do not contain all the documents from the Accra meeting. Those interested in the detailed proceedings should consult a third volume containing, in addition to the minutes, several important addresses and documents, *Minutes of the Faith and Order Commission, Accra 1974* (Faith and Order Paper No. 71. Geneva: WCC, 1974).

The theme of unity was, of course, very much present at Accra. In the case of Vischer's "Report," however, it was more than that. It was the very substance of the document. In its introductory remarks, the document affirms that Christian unity is at the origin of the Faith and Order movement, and that the Commission's aim remains the same: "to render visible, ever afresh, the unity which, according to the Creed, belongs to the very essence of the Church" (p. 12). This goal, assigned to the Commission by its Director, corresponds only in part to the one indicated by the new "Draft By-Laws for the Faith and Order Commission" approved in Ghana. These by-laws state that the aim of the Commission "is to proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ and to call the Churches to the goal of visible unity." This seems to be more than a minor difference. It was not without effort that the Eastern Orthodox representatives in particular, with the backing of Catholic participants, obtained this new formulation, i.e. to proclaim that there is only one Church, and that this Church is one, a oneness expressed "in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship." In this case the Commission's objective is plain: the visible unity, although marred, exists, and must be restored. It is not simply a matter of rendering it visible, "ever afresh."

Does Vischer consider his formulation a genuine expression of the aim and function of the Faith and Order Commission? If so, how will he reconcile it with the Orthodox and Catholic teaching regarding Christian unity? In the reviewer's opinion, Vischer's interpretation is no accident. It expresses a dichotomy which appears in several of the Accra documents and which needs to be dealt with.

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Wilson, Jerry B. *Death by Decision: The Medical, Moral, and Legal Dilemmas of Euthanasia*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975. 208 pp. \$7.50.

The problem of euthanasia has become acute since medical technology is now able to prolong life indefinitely, and it is complex because it involves medical ethics, law, religion, and economics.

The author begins his discussion with a historical survey of the practice of euthanasia from the time of ancient Greece to the present. He then sets the stage for his further discussion by presenting four levels of moral discourse, based on the expressive-evocative, the moral, the ethical, and the post-ethical. The first is the unreflective spontaneous emotional reaction. The second deals with practical problems of conduct based on moral rules and regulations. The third evaluates and challenges the moral rules and regulations, especially when two rules conflict or when the application of these rules causes great inconvenience or suffering. These evaluations are based on ethical principles rather than rules. The post-ethical level deals with the validity of the ethical principles which have a metaphysical or theological basis. Obviously the problem of euthanasia should not be approached from the first level. In general practice it is dealt with on the second level. The author urges the discussion to go on to the ethical and post-ethical levels. He shows that because of conflicting standards, necessity forces us to deal with it on the ethical level. Here the conflicting positions are based on what one feels demands the priority—the value of life *per se* or the dignity of life: "Advocates of euthanasia emphasize the quality of life over its quantity and insist that the value of life is destroyed when it is accompanied by severe restrictions or suffering. Opponents of euthanasia emphasize the sanctity of life *per se* and claim that life always has value, regardless of its quality" (p. 52).

After dealing at length with conflicting religious views, medical dilemmas, and legal problems, Wilson presents what he considers should be the new requirements of care for the dying. What in practice goes on, that is, a furtive practice of euthanasia, is, he feels, unacceptable. While the courts tend to be lenient in cases involving mercy killing or euthanasia, there is no assurance that such will be the case. In practice both medically and legally there is tacit agreement that the patient not only has a right to live but also the right to die. Building on what he calls theocentric faith, Wilson urges a patient-centered (not life-oriented) and responsible medical care. He sees death not as the enemy of life but as one of the processes of life