

Prinsloo (Pretoria), W. G. E. Watson (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), and A. Wolters (Ontario). The editors are committed 'to an approach which takes seriously the historical embeddedness of the message of the Old Testament' and 'to the view that the Old Testament was and is a vehicle of the knowledge of God'. The contributors invited (of whom a list is provided in the book) are Christians from a wide range of denominational affiliation (the author of this commentary is pastor of the Gereformeerde Kerk Culemborg). The challenge given to them is to be up-to-date, but to pay attention to the pre-modern exegetical tradition too, to provide a scholarly exposition with a new translation of the text, but to remain accessible to a wide readership. It is emphasised that 'the authors are expected to pay due attention to the meaning of every historical stage which they discern in the formation of the text, including its final canonical stage. Tradition-historical and redaction-critical analyses should not become ends in themselves, but should be subservient to an understanding of the inner-canonical history of interpretation'. (All quotations are from the editorial preface). In sum, this series is worth watching out for!

Klaas Spronk argues that the book of Nahum is the work of a royal scribe, written under a pseudonym in Jerusalem, ca. 660 BCE. Direct and indirect references to Assyrian treaty texts and royal annals show the influence of Mesopotamian literature on the book of Nahum, but its author was also inspired by Jerusalem cultic texts and the words of Isaiah. Spronk detects three main cantos (1:1-11; 1:12-2:14; 3:1-19) which in turn are subdivided in canticles and strophes. Noteworthy is the break between 1:11 and 1:12 (rather than 1:8 and 1:9) for which Spronk makes a strong case.

The outstanding feature of this commentary is Spronk's painstaking work on the text which readers will best follow with a Hebrew text in front of them. Difficulties of the text are rarely put down to corruptions in the transmission process and are usually credited to the freedom and creativity of the ancient poet. Incidentally, in comparing phrases in Nahum with phrases elsewhere in the Old Testament, Spronk provides a good deal of information for those who want to explore biblical intertextuality. A number of references to an interpretation by, e.g., Tertullian, Jerome, Rashi or Luther fulfill the aim of the editors to provide a commentary that pays explicit attention to the history of interpretation (an index to track down these remarks would have been helpful). Yet more

often than not these remarks look like a collector's item on the shelf. They do not serve as a contribution to the discussion of theological and ethical issues, an area which could have received greater attention from Spronk.

This commentary will be a useful and informative book for those who want to work seriously with the text. Spronk's proposals concerning possible name acrostics (Assur in 1:12; Nineveh in 3:18) and sentence acrostics ('I am Yahweh' in 1:1-3) in Nahum (cf. his article in ZAW 110 (1998): 209-222) are certainly worth further discussion among scholars. Not many ministers, however, would seem to have the stamina and time required to work through the text of Nahum with this very scholarly work which, by the way, could have done with another proof-reading. One wishes that subsequent commentaries in the series combine the same kind of careful analysis with greater synthesis and creative theological thinking. The indications are that a 'historical commentary' has a lot to offer, but a more explicitly Christian approach is required in a commentary that is to be fully adequate for Christian ministers.

Thomas Renz  
London, England

EuroJTh (2000) 9:1, 77-79

0960-2720

***Transforming Fate into Destiny:  
The Theological Ethics of Stanley  
Hauerwas***  
**Samuel Wells**

Paternoster Press, 1998, 210 pp., pb,  
ISBN 0-85364-906-5

**RÉSUMÉ**

*Dans cet excellent ouvrage, Wells présente les grandes lignes de l'éthique théologique sous la forme d'un récit de Hauerwas. Celle-ci se caractérise comme une éthique du caractère, par opposition à une éthique orientée vers l'action et la décision. La ligne de pensée, qui va du caractère au récit, du récit à la communauté, et de la communauté à l'Église est retracée avec clarté et une grande sensibilité aux nuances. Wells cherche à donner de la pensée de Hauerwas une analyse compréhensive, sans peur de modifier, clarifier et faire progresser le projet de ce penseur. Il nous livre un texte essentiel pour tous ceux qu'intéresse la pensée d'Hauerwas, débutants aussi bien que spécialistes.*



## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

*Wells' ausgezeichnete Studie stellt die Konturen von Hauerwas' theologischer Ethik in Form einer Geschichte vor. Der Autor geht dabei zunächst dem Profil der Theologie ausgehend von deren Widerstand zu einer handlungs- bzw. entscheidungsorientierten Ethik bis hin zu einer Charakterethik nach. Die gedankliche Entwicklung von Charakter zu Geschichte, von Geschichte zu Gemeinschaft und von Gemeinschaft zu Kirche wird aufklare und feineren Nuancen Rechnung tragende Weise verfolgt. Wells geht es darum, eine wohlwollende Untersuchung zu Hauerwas vorzulegen, die aber dennoch nicht davor zurückschreckt, dessen Projekt zu modifizieren, präzisieren und voranzutreiben. Das Resultat ist ein Werk, das ein Muss ist für alle, die an Hauerwas interessiert sind, egal ob Anfänger oder 'Experte'.*

Stanley Hauerwas is one of the most significant living Christian theologians and Wells has provided an excellent overview and assessment of his work from 1969 to 1997. The book opens by situating Hauerwas within the story of Christian social ethics in North America and emphasizing his debt to MacIntyre and Yoder. The text then proceeds to display Hauerwas' theological ethic in the form of a story.

Chapter Two ('From Quandary to Character') explains his longstanding resistance to an action/decision based morality which maintains an illusory rational neutrality. In its place we find, from the start, a character ethic within which actions and decisions find their proper place. Chapter Three ('From Character to Story') sets the narrative context within which ethics lives and moves and has its being. Rejecting an 'ethics for everyone' Hauerwas turns to doing ethics for the community shaped by the distinctive narrative of Christian scripture. This narrative contains much tension and diversity within its overall unity and these many voices are an integral part of the tradition. Hauerwas' interactions with post-liberal theology are given some attention in this chapter. But story is merely a route which takes Hauerwas from character to community.

Chapter Four ('From Story to Community') examines the central role of the community which reads and performs scripture. This reading community is that which recognizes the authority of the text and embodies the world it projects. The truth of the story is assessed in its embodiment in the Church (does it produce virtue?). So the community, rather than its scripture, is primary for scripture exists only

for the Church rather than vice versa. Hauerwas has a very pragmatic approach to truth and Wells discusses the accusations of fideism and relativism which have been made against him. His discussion here is both balanced and discerning. Chapter Five takes us 'From Community to Church'. The story of Jesus becomes the paradigm for the non-violent existence of the Church. The politics of the Church is to live as an alternative, non-violent, peace-making community thus bearing witness *against* the politics of the world. He resists the notion that the Church should do politics chiefly by getting Christians into influential political positions—this may merely support the liberal society. Rather, the Church is to help the world by *being the distinctive community of the Church*. Hauerwas maintains that this is not to advocate sectarianism for the Church breaks down all social boundaries. On the contrary, the nation-state is that which is sectarian. Being faithful rather than successful is central to a Hauerwasian Christian social ethic.

Chapter Six ('Performing the Church's Story') considers some of Hauerwas' responses to his critics and a case study in how the Christians in the village of *Le Chambon-sur-Lignon* reflected the character of the God revealed in the Christian story in their resistance to the Nazis between 1940 and 1944. Chapter Seven ('From Space to Time') is an attempt by Wells to help Hauerwas respond more adequately to criticisms by proposing that Hauerwas shift away from his emphasis on spatial metaphors when considering the church-world relationship for this gives the strong impression of sectarianism. The role played by these metaphors can be played far more adequately by temporal metaphors. *The church and the world do not live in different spaces but in different times*. Christ's community lives in the light of the eschaton and this has a radical impact on Christian ethics. To my mind this chapter was the highlight of an excellent book. Wells shows how all the key elements in Hauerwas' theology (character, narrative, memory, virtue, revelation, community etc.) can be seen fruitfully in this temporal way. He thinks that this stronger emphasis on temporality can demonstrate that Hauerwas *does* have a doctrine of creation (eschatologically orientated) in spite of the impression he often gives. I would agree, although I still find the modified version inadequate to do full justice to creation. The final chapter ('From Tragedy to Irony') is another constructive analysis of how Hauerwas wishes to recognize tragedy in life but pushes beyond it to irony. The Church



satirizes the world by doing many of the same things such as having children but doing them for very different reasons.

This book is written with a beautiful clarity and a style which does justice to Hauerwas' own passion. The text shows a sensitivity to developments within Hauerwas' thinking and Hauerwas himself says in the 'Foreword' that Wells understands him better than he understands himself. The organisation of the book is very helpful as the chapter titles may indicate and a useful, complete bibliography of Hauerwas' work from 1969 to 1997 is provided. The greatest strength of this text was that Wells does not simply describe Hauerwas' views but seeks to clarify and critique them when appropriate as well as providing an attempt to push the boat out further in numerous places. An excellent text for those familiar with this thinker and for those who know little about him.

Robin Parry  
Worcester, England

EuroJTh (2000) 9:1, 79-80

0960-2720

***Strategy of the Spirit: J. Philip Hogan and the Growth of the Assemblies of God World-wide, 1960-1990***

**E. A. Wilson**

Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997, xiv + 214 pp, pb, ISBN 1-870345-23-1

**RÉSUMÉ**

*Dans cette biographie de Philip Hogan, qui a été à la tête du département des missions étrangères des Assemblées de Dieu en Amérique, Wilson présente les principes de la missiologie pentecôtiste. Les plus importants sont le caractère central des Églises indigènes, un accent mis sur la contextualisation, et le rôle important de l'Église locale.*

*Hogan a exercé son influence de 1959 à 1990, une période qui a vu la croissance importante des Assemblées de Dieu dans le monde entier, et pendant laquelle la missiologie est généralement entrée en crise.*

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*Indem er eine Biographie über Philip Hogan, den Leiter der Abteilung äußere Mission der Assemblies of God (Amerika) vorlegt, zeigt Wilson zugleich die Prinzipien der pfingstlerischen Missiologie auf, wobei der Schwerpunkt*

*auf der Zentralität der einheimischen Kirche, der Kontextualisierung und der Bedeutung der Ortsgemeinde liegt. Der Einfluss Hogans währte von 1959 bis 1990, eine bedeutende Periode des Wachstums für die weltweit vertretenen Assemblies of God, aber auch eine Zeit, in der die Missiologie in eine Epoche der Krise eintrat.*

Philip Hogan was the head of the Division of Foreign Missions of the Assemblies of God, America from 1959 onwards; during his time the Assemblies of God world-wide grew from hundreds of thousands to an estimated thirty million adherents. The principles that lie behind that growth are worthy of study, particularly since that growth occurred at a time when missiology entered a time of crisis generally.

Hogan is an example of the rugged determination of the early Pentecostal pioneers. Confident and aware of a divine leading, his philosophy of mission was simple, some might say simplistic. He believed that mission was the central *raison d'être* of the Assemblies of God, that mission had to be determined and aggressive, that mission ought to be defined by the extent to which indigenous local churches were planted, however fragile and undeveloped they might seem to the outsider's eye. Simple it may be, there can be no doubt that it was effective. This policy resulted in Hogan leading the Assemblies of God missions department at a time when the local national churches were able to develop their own distinctive cultures that were true to their indigenous cultures. Wilson's book will be useful to students of Pentecostal missiology, since he details the specific elements that combined to characterise it.

Wilson sees Hogan's central achievement as being able to keep the Division of Foreign Missions clearly focused on the core values of the organisation. At times this led to public clashes, for example, over the proposal to start schools rather than churches, and with T. L. Osborn in the 1960s when he was prepared to support missionaries rather than relying on the principle of indigeneity. The more immediately interesting material relates to the activity of Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggert. Both were members of the Assemblies of God, but whereas Bakker is portrayed as being a petty thief, Swaggert's arrogance before his public disgrace was far more potentially damaging to the missions department since Swaggert had raised finance for missions. Wilson's account provides an interesting insight into private machinations behind the public disgraces.