

these and related themes.

Bonhoeffer's philosophical debts and engagements are the subject of several contributions: Floyd's instructive discussion of Bonhoeffer's interactions with the philosophy of Kant and Hegel likely overplays its hand in claiming that despite rarely engaging these figures outside Bonhoeffer's dissertations, they 'become part of the very structure ordering all topics of conversation that do get discussed' (113). So too, I suspect does Würstenberg's strong conclusion that a notion of 'life' drawn from Dilthey provides the 'basic cognitive-theoretical concept' of Bonhoeffer's late work (172). Frick carefully demonstrates the real influence of, and Bonhoeffer's no less real break with, Nietzsche's thought by an impressively close reading; while Plant's study of Bonhoeffer's relation to Heidegger – culminating in the thought that Bonhoeffer's 1933 lectures offer a 'phenomenological christology' (326) – wins assent precisely by virtue of its properly hesitant and suggestive mode.

Tietz's essay on Schleiermacher, Frick's on Bultmann and Tillich, and Pangritz's reflections on Barth's central influence, conspire happily together to illumine Bonhoeffer's commitment to pursuing the distinctive themes thrown up by *modernity* and modern philosophy – e.g., sociality, anthropology, the problem of knowledge, human religion – in a thoroughly *theological* manner marked by a cardinal concern for revelation and a relentless christological concentration; his critical demurrals from other theological positions, it becomes clear, reflect Bonhoeffer's dissatisfaction at a loss of theological nerve at just this point. Young's essay on Niebuhr also confirms this.

Rumscheidt winsomely indicates how even as Bonhoeffer grew away from the vision of theology as university *Wissenschaft* advanced by his own Berlin teachers, he nonetheless remained deeply impressed by the seriousness and fundamental decency of Harnack's humanistic posture in particular throughout his life. And Geoffrey Kelly's account of the profound and direct influence of Kierkegaard's ideas upon *Discipleship* and *Life Together* deserves the attention of all students of these works for the light it casts upon their inspiration and goals, as well as upon the conflicted place of Kierkegaard in the struggles of German theology in the 1930s.

I note with interest the absence of any particular consideration of biblical scholars and exegetical scholarship in this volume. This is no particular criticism, as the collection focuses sensibly upon theological and philosophical figures (for reasons set forth in the introduction, 3-9), and makes no claim to exhaustiveness. Yet, perhaps present sensibilities concerning the distance between biblical and theological scholarship unhelpfully incline contemporary students of Bonhoeffer's theology away from attending to the place of biblical and exegetical matters in his formation and towards privileging the philosophical. That such matters cannot finally be disregarded is already made patent within this volume itself by the fact that the theologians who most profoundly and consistently shaped Bonhoeffer – Barth, Luther, Kierkegaard

– were all, like Bonhoeffer himself, devoted students of Scripture and expert practitioners of the arch-theological art of attending to the Word.

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### *The Family in Christian Social and Political Thought*

Brent Waters

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#### SUMMARY

Brent Waters sets out to recover the notion of family as related to and grounded in natural affinities for a Christian political ethic. His treatment develops a teleological account of the doctrine of creation in order to emphasise the marital good of procreation in defining marriage, and suggests a range of ways in which this strong linkage of family with biological children can circumvent nonsensical accounts of family in contemporary political philosophy and theology.

#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Brent Waters nimmt sich vor, die Vorstellung von der Familie in ihrem Bezug zu und in ihrer Verwurzelung in natürlichen Affinitäten für eine christliche politische Ethik zurückzugewinnen. Seine Behandlung des Themas entwickelt eine teleologische Darstellung der Schöpfungslehre, um das eheliche Gut der Fortpflanzung für die Definition der Ehe zu betonen. Er schlägt eine Reihe von Wegen vor, auf denen diese starke Verbindung zwischen Familie und biologischen Kindern widersinnige Darstellungen der Familie in der gegenwärtigen politischen Philosophie und Theologie unterlaufen kann.

#### RÉSUMÉ

Waters tente d'élaborer une notion de la famille fondée sur les affinités naturelles en vue d'une éthique politique chrétienne. Il a une approche téléologique de la doctrine de la création pour souligner le bien de la procréation dans la définition du mariage et montre de diverses manières comment une notion de la famille fondée sur le lien biologique avec les enfants peut renverser les conceptions absurdes de la famille dans les théologies et les philosophies politiques contemporaines.

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In this work of political theology Brent Waters strides boldly into the contentious conceptual landscape between the terms 'family' and 'politics', asking: 'how should the family be ordered in respect of civil society, political community, and the church? And how in turn should the church, political community and civil society be ordered in respect of the family?' (140). His answer

is worked out as a counter to what he calls the 'fundamental deception and contradiction of late liberal social and political theory'. Modern liberal theorists are so committed to the denial of family as a natural entity and promoting the political concept of autonomy that they are blinded to how their own theories commit them to extensive political constraint and political regulation of parenthood precisely in order to maintain a society committed to the sanctity of individual autonomy. 'Late liberal regimes, then, face a perplexing dilemma: they must simultaneously promote individual liberty, as exemplified in libertine attitudes toward marriage and family formation, while reproducing liberal values in each generation, a vital task that cannot be entrusted to parents' (273).

Waters aims to rehabilitate the idea of the family, proposing as its conceptually definitive form a community of *natural* affinity. He weaves together his case by developing themes found in the work of Oliver O'Donovan, Herman Dooyeweerd and Albert Borgmann. O'Donovan is by far the most influential interlocutor, providing two framing conceptions. The first is that God's work of redemption, most visible in the resurrection of Christ, is not the contradiction, but the vindication of creation. The resurrection teaches us to see creation as it really is, revealing its teleology in the redeemed kingdom. O'Donovan's other main contribution is to provide the basic conceptual scaffolding for Waters' political ethic. Waters regularly and unapologetically draws on O'Donovan's definitions of government, society, community, authority, freedom and law.

He does, however, tie these themes together in ways O'Donovan does not by developing some central ideas of Dooyeweerd, who is used to establish the basic importance for Christian political ethics of the concepts of correlation and differentiation. If our basic definition of the family is not sufficiently *linked* to our political conceptions, then the concept of family evaporates into yet another voluntary association within the liberal conception of society. If on the other hand it is not sufficiently *differentiated* from other communities, it is likewise evacuated of content. Here the main target is those theologians for whom the church *is* a family (E.D. Maurice and Rodney Clapp being offered as examples of this mistake).

Waters' preference is to draw out the ways that societies are made up of affinities that bring social groups into being and sustain them. Given the very materiality of social groups, certain virtues are demanded to sustain them, virtues intrinsically linked to their essence. Here the influence of Borgmann is pervasive if rarely explicit. The way we define a family must be cognizant of certain basic material structures in order to protect the conditions for human beings to be fed, sheltered, and have their emotional needs met. Family is the specific form of life congruent with these structures whose main material characteristic is the presence and need of children. Here the raising of children, and in the conceptually basic instance, biological children, becomes the central

purpose of a household.

This yields the conclusion that in a Christian political ethic family is defined as a locus of witness to God's providential ordering of creation in which biological and social affinities are configured to provide a place of mutual and timely belonging for its members. Conceptually, family is defined as a married couple with children, who are in turn related by blood, marriage and lineage to an extended range of kin that point outward toward its duty to be open and hospitable beyond itself. The aim of the book is to persuade us that family is not a social order that is created by a *project of the will*, but is rather a social ordering that is a *gift* to be cared for, and which protects and stewards the natural (if not immediately visible) substrate of human sociality.

This book sets out a near encyclopaedic account of the fortunes of the concept of family in political philosophy and theology from ancient Rome to the present day. In this densely woven and provocative book Waters is taking a fresh if risky line through these questions by organizing his treatment of family around the marital good of proles, against the current theological fashion in which *fides* or *sacramentum* are emphasized. He takes a tactical risk in choosing to shore up the Christian family by validating the hegemonic language of a 'responsibility to protect and steward' the family in order to extend its benefits to others in society. The tactical risk is tied up with the theological decision to counter strong and revisionist eschatologies with a concept of created teleology based on the resurrection in which the judgment of the cross on the family seems curiously muted. The boldness with which Waters has attacked the sacred cow that 'family is what we make it' is sure to generate debate and the rigour of his treatment promises to raise the standard of the debate.

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*Ethik Band 2/2 Das gute Handeln (Allgemeine  
Materialethik): Sexualethik, Wirtschaftsethik,  
Umweltethik, Kulturethik*

[*Ethics Volume 2/2 The Good Behaviour (General  
Material Ethics): Sexual Ethics, Ethics of  
Economy, Environment and Culture*]

Helmut Burkhardt

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#### SUMMARY

Helmut Burkhardt taught ethics at the Theological Seminary of St. Chrischona. The third volume of his series which comprises four volumes appears five years after the preceding one. Its subject matter carries on with general material ethics including the domains of religious ethics and human ethics, the latter having now been completed by sexual