

# Book Reviews

**STUDENTS, CHURCHES AND HIGHER EDUCATION**, by R. T. Gribbon. Judson Press, Valley Forge 1981. 126 pp. \$6.95. Reviewed by Hank Greer, Associate in the Division of Youth and Campus Ministries, North Carolina Baptist Convention.

"How can the local church minister with its college students?" Author R. T. Gribbon has set out to address that question and also to consider possibilities for other forms of "higher education ministry" in the local church. His phrase, "higher education ministry" includes ministry to eighteen to twenty-two year olds in four year colleges, older adults attending four year schools, graduate students, students in community colleges and persons involved in specialized seminars and "on the job" training programs.

Chapter 1 is "Congregational Ministry in a Learning Society." Just as higher education has changed drastically in the 1900's, so has the church's strategy for ministry. A broader segment of society is involved in higher education (at any given time 15 percent of adult Americans are engaged in some formal program of education) so a larger part of the church is involved.

Congregations **are** in ministry but seem to be frustrated by two factors: they have not changed their image of what college ministry is, and they fail to understand and appreciate the unique gifts of students. Gribbon feels that the church's ministry to students is judged by these four standards: openness, concern, excellence and conviction.

"Understanding Young College Students" is the title of the second chapter. A first concern of most congregations in higher education ministry is with college students between seventeen and twenty-two years of age. They are in that period which Dr. Daniel Levinson calls "The Early Adult Transition," a period of being "in" but not "of" the adult world.

Some of the changes these young adults face as they develop from childhood to adulthood are: developing independence, preparing for a career, clarifying values, establishing new relationships, and dealing with sexuality. They are

in transition from a "conformist" to a "conscientious" way of relating to the world. During this period they also go through a shift in spiritual development described by John Westerhoff as being from "Affiliative Faith to Searching Faith to Owned Faith."

Chapter 3 is "Understanding Older Adults." In 1970, students over twenty-five years old accounted for 20 percent of those enrolled in colleges and universities. The figure was 33 percent in 1975 and is estimated at 40 percent in 1980.

Older "adult" learners have some characteristics which set them apart from younger "adult" students. They do better academically; they are highly motivated; they are clear about what they want to learn and why; and they can usually identify a specific event (often a crisis) which triggered their return to school. The learning style of older students tends to be pragmatic and non-traditional, they have less time for study and research, and they are more likely to be members of a church than their younger counterparts.

In Chapter 4, "College Students and the Home Church," Gribbon indicates that the foundation for the home congregation's ministry is laid before the college years. A church may help prepare the high school seniors for college by planning programs to help them think about their transitions, having the pastor visit them personally, having other adults in the church make contact with them, planning to ritualize the departure of seniors, helping families recognize and ritualize the changes in relationship that graduation brings, and recognizing and celebrating the changes in their congregation. College students may be "integrated" into church by treating them as full adults, making it possible for them to participate with their gifts, changing congregational patterns to be more inclusive, promoting interaction between students and other church members, addressing their life issues, and helping them to know they will be taken seriously.

Types of churches and differing styles of ministry are explored in the next chapter dealing with churches located near a college campus. The author looks at "college churches" in which a large part, perhaps a majority, of the congregation is affiliated with the college, then he examines churches located near church-related colleges. Churches located near downtown campuses of major universities, called "urban mission con-

gregations" are mentioned as well as "contact congregations" which are assigned to "do" campus ministry by their sponsoring denomination.

Chapter 6 focuses on "Community Colleges and Local Churches." Gribbon uses the title "post-secondary educational service agency" to describe the multi-faceted institution we call the community college. Since it is a local institution, members of the congregation are probably already involved in the life of the college as teachers, administrators, board members and students. The church can assist them to "do" ministry in and through their profession. The community college and churches can work together on many joint community projects.

Chapter 7, "College and Congregation in Mission," deals with several churches which are ministering to students and tells in detail some of their strategies. In the final chapter "Partnership With Campus Ministry," Gribbon examines the factors that cause congregations and campus ministries to feel alienated and suggests ways to form new partnerships of shared ministry.

The book is addressed to the people—both lay and ordained ministers of local congregations and can be used by individuals or a committee within the congregation to gain an understanding of ministry to students. I believe it could also be of benefit to campus ministers in their program planning and their exploration of the broader aspects of campus ministry.

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**SO THERE'S A COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN YOUR TOWN**, edited by W. E. Hallman. New York, NY: UMHE Communications Office 1978. 102 pp. n.p. Reviewed by Fred Lane, formerly Campus Minister at Michigan State University and Lansing Community College.

This UMHE publication is a compilation of essays on the church and the community college plus a handbook originally published in 1972. The book, written for local churches and community college leaders, attempts to explore the working relationship between the church and the community college by highlighting the "common concerns, goals and interests" (p. 1) of both institutions. The basic material in the book is worthwhile, but the approach to ministry advocated would

meet with resistance in the Southern Baptist program of campus ministry.

The basic materials spoken of are the concepts of the New Student, the "new" role of the community college, and the reinterpretation of the role of the local church. The New Student, as compared to the traditional 4-year university student, is a phenomenon of our changing society. This "hypothetical" person is a commuter, but also can be a career person, a retiree, a person seeking vocational and/or specialized training or a member of an ethnic minority. Generally speaking, this is a person who does not fit into the mold of the traditional student.

The identification of this New Student goes hand-in-hand with the new role of the community college as a community service institution. The community college has become a consumer oriented service as opposed to the university, which has been a selective institution for the intellectually and financially well-off. By tailoring programs, policies and services to the surrounding community, the community college is doing what its name implies.

As one who has had intimate contact with a community college, I can vouch for the truth of the above statement. Although maintaining a strong core curriculum of the "3 R's," Lansing Community College is diversifying as rapidly as possible, largely through an aggressive adult education department. An individual, enrolling and registering by phone, might attend night class in a grade school building or a church and never have to enter the campus. This person also might register for anything from auto repair to home finances to flower arranging, all of which might be selected from a supplement in the local newspaper. As this book indicates, the community is a new challenge to student ministers.

The last element of the basic material—the reinterpretation of the role of the local church—is an idea about which I have reservations, and I believe it would not be accepted by many churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. Briefly, this book views community service as the necessary concern of the church. The church exists to aid all persons in their struggle to achieve a fuller humanity in the face of opposing social pressures. In this way the church and the community college have the same or similar goals and should "team up."

I hope I have oversimplified, but I feel this view of the church is extremely out of balance. Granted that the church must respond positively to the need for each individual to explore his or her human potential; nevertheless, the church has a fundamental call to help people alleviate their spiritual need—Christ. The church is the only institution which can completely meet this need. Therefore, the goals of the community college and those of the church, though not divergent, are nonetheless different. A more inclusive and balanced definition of the church would help the book greatly in its application.

By far the greatest problem I see in this book in its applicability to Southern Baptist campus ministries is the approach to ministry which is advocated. Traditionally, the focus of student ministry in the Southern Baptist Convention has been the Baptist Student Union consisting of a student council, a weekly program of student activities on the campus, and the services of a director employed by a state convention. In other words, BSU is a "student-led movement" supervised from the state level. The form of ministry recommended by the book is a dyad composed of the local church and the community college with the extension of community services at its heart. The need for a state organization and a professional student worker are dismissed in favor of a local church effort that claims to be more sensitive to community needs. Obviously, these two forms of ministry are hardly compatible.

There is a strong word of advice contained in this bold approach to ministry—the times are changing and so are community colleges. BSU directors (campus ministers) connected to community colleges must realize that the traditional method of student ministry is catering to a rapidly dwindling group. A relevant ministry must take into account the changing context of community college ministry. Although the book does not offer the answer for Southern Baptist student ministry, it does pinpoint an area of growing concern. I do recommend this book for state student directors and local campus ministers to stimulate their thinking about a more inclusive ministry.

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**THREE THOUSAND FUTURES: THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.** The Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education. San Fran-

cisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1980. 155 pp. n.p. Reviewed by Ircel Harrison, Campus Minister, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tennessee.

The fears of many in higher education circles are addressed at the very beginning of this study: "During the next 20 years, enrollments may fall even as the total population continues to rise; real resources available to and used by colleges and universities also may decline, even as the total GNP keeps increasing" (p. 1). As one might expect, this situation creates a great deal of uncertainty among those who are responsible for the future of colleges and universities in this country. Just as there are three thousand institutions of higher learning in the United States, there are three thousand possible futures, dependent upon the actions and responses of each.

If we as campus ministers are truly committed to ministry in higher education, we must take note of these fears. In so doing, we can adapt our endeavors to the changing situation and also provide support for those administrators, faculty, and students affected by these changes.

This final report of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education is the result of a six year study by a "blue ribbon" committee. Although it addresses the trends realistically, the study emphasizes the opportunities and challenges inherent in this changing situation. The writers present both "best case" and "worst case" scenarios, then place the responsibility for the future on institutional leadership (including regents and trustees), governmental planners (both state and federal), and those who provide private funds to colleges and universities (alumni, corporations, and foundations).

Campus ministers will especially be interested in this study for it addresses demographic concerns (enrollment), issues arising from greater equality of access (by minorities, women, adults), innovations in "doing" higher education, and the prospect of greater governmental impact (in control and funding).

The study confirms what many of us already recognize—a fundamental, almost radical change in higher education is upon us. For example, "the number [of students] living on

campus has dropped from about 60 percent of all students in 1960 to about 20 percent in 1979" (p. 19). Change has also been stimulated by the emergence of the Third Sector in postsecondary education. The First Sector is made up of nonprofit colleges; the Second of profit-making institutions. The Third Sector is made up of those "institutions that give postsecondary instruction as an adjunct to non-instructional activities: instruction by a corporation, a research agency, a museum, a trade union, the armed forces" (p. 22). These three segments tend to overlap as new programs develop, blurring traditional distinctives in higher education.

Further major changes are projected, however, especially in student enrollment. Consider this comparison of actual 1960 figures on various undergraduate student characteristics as percentages of the total student universe and projected 2000 figures (p.53):

	<b>1960</b>	<b>2000</b>
Women	37%	52%
Minorities	4%	25%
Part-time	30%	45%
Two-year	16%	41%
Commuters	60%	85%
Over 22 age group	30%	50%

This dramatic shift in the student population provides both hope and opportunity to those responsible for charting the course of higher education in the remaining years of this century.

What does this mean for those of us involved in Southern Baptist campus ministry? First, it will affect the nature of institutions: "Some institutions in the South and West that are now in the second rank academically will make it into the first rank by the end of the century" (p. 66). This challenges us to a quality, highly competent ministry in those institutions.

Second, "supporting personnel—recruiters, admissions officers, student financial aid officers, student counselors, for example—are becoming more important" (p. 27). These staff members are key contacts for many of us. Since "the road to survival now leads through the [students] market

place," these individuals will come under increasing pressure, perhaps opening additional opportunities for personal ministry to and with them.

Third, due to limited resources and competition for what is available, internal tensions and power struggles will increase (p. 27). Persons—both students and faculty members—will be affected by these forces and need support and healing.

Fourth, "a more<sup>1</sup> global perspective" on higher education (p. 136) will increase our opportunities to communicate with non-Christian international students and broaden our concepts of the world.

These are just four of many opportunities the study suggests to this reviewer. It will stimulate your thinking about a number of others.

Don't buy this book! I suggest that you borrow a copy from a friend or contact person in your college or university. As you read it, note those things which seem to impact directly on your institution, then sit down and discuss these with your friend. This will be an educational experience for you and further open lines of communication. It will show that your interest in the institution and the people in it is not limited to the immediate demands of your program of activities but is broad enough to encompass the pressures and uncertainties with which he or she must deal.

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**THE TRANSFORMING MOMENT: UNDERSTANDING CONVICTIONAL EXPERIENCES**, by James E. Loder. New York: Harper and Row, 1981, \$12.95. Reviewed by Stephen Holloway, Campus Minister, Birmingham-Southern College and U.A.B. Graduate Schools, Birmingham, Alabama.

James Loder is a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary who teaches Christian education from a Kierkegaardian perspective. His basic assumption in his courses is that faith cannot be taught; whatever is learned by socialization is **ipso facto** not faith. In his marvelously personal lectures, Loder demonstrates that Christian faith is "learned" in those experiences in which we discover that there is more



to reality than we previously thought. Faith comes when we experience the Presence of Christ on the deepest personal level in crisis, in ecstasy, and in insight.

Loder begins this book with an account of a serious accident through which he experiences that Presence. I wish that more of the book were autobiographical and narrative, but this is a serious and scholarly volume. Even though Loder's philosophical vocabulary makes the book too difficult for many laypersons, his ideas have the power to transform the way we think about the world, our knowledge of it, and our ministry. Some of Loder's models became a part of the deep structure of my theology during seminary. During the time I have been working through this volume his categories have affected the way I have understood my faith, my work, and even an electrical accident I experienced. On two occasions I have found myself urgently communicating and translating his ideas to student groups.

Loder speaks to two issues which concern campus ministers. The first issue—the one addressed in the title—is the question of how we understand “convictional experiences,” a term which includes not only conversion experiences but also those experiences in which persons are changed by new insight about themselves accompanied by a new sense of God's Presence. As ministers we deal with students who have had such “transforming moments” or seek them; surely one of the goals of our ministry is to lead students to such moments. Loder takes an analytical look at these experiences but never hides the fact that he values them and would like to elicit them.

The second pertinent issue is the question of how we **know** things. Many of the challenges to faith students face are problems in epistemology: Do we know Christ the same way we know atoms or blueprints or music or Mother? In the Danforth study on campus ministries (1969), Parker Palmer focused his research on the problem of conflicting epistemologies. Evangelicals, led by Francis Schaeffer, have attacked this issue by claiming a “unified field of knowledge.” This argument that we **do** know all things in the same way becomes an argument for 18th century rationalism. We know God by Reason, these evangelicals imply, and we interpret

the Bible by the scientific method. Loder's approach to this question is radically different, but ultimately more supportive of faith.

Loder calls this "rational" view of truth into question by arguing that even in the "scientific method" of induction the truth is really established only by an imaginative leap. "Objectivity is not only impossible but also prevents us from knowing" (here you see the Kierkegaard showing). Loder proposes a new theory of error: "Nothing can be known without an imaginative leap and the bolder the leap the more significant the knowledge is apt to be." Further, "any assertion of truth that does not recognize and accept its primary dependence on some leap of the imagination, some insight, intuition, or vision, is guilty of intellectual dissimulation" (p. 20). Loder gives examples of scientific theories which have come as visions and not as rational deductions: the benzene chain, the theory of relativity, the theory of light as electromagnetic radiation.

John Dewey spelled out five steps to thinking (scientific or everyday problem-solving): (1) the sense of the problem, (2) rational formulation, (3) exploration of hypotheses, (4) selection of most likely hypothesis, (5) testing of hypothesis. Loder argues that thinking in general and even scientific discovery in particular do not work this way. He proposes another five-step structure (or "grammar") for "transformational logic": (1) conflict, (2) interlude for scanning, (3) constructive act of the imagination or intuition (also referred to as "bisociation"), (4) release of tension and opening of the knower (self-transcendence), (5) interpretation (working for congruence and correspondence). Loder demonstrates how this process works in scientific knowing, in esthetic knowing (such as poetry), and in therapeutic knowing (such as psychoanalysis).

Obviously this is useful as a defense of religious knowing or faith against the arrogance of rationalists, but it can also help us to understand what we are doing as we try to lead students into faith. We need not be afraid of conflict or tension since it is the beginning of knowledge. Indeed, we may be called to create such conflict in the lives of students so that they may begin the process which will lead to

conviction. Loder suggests that we can also enter the process at the point of insight or the point of interpretation and work backwards to identify the inner conflict. Loder's use of biblical models of convictional experiences—Paul on the Damascus road and the disciples going to Emmaus—may help us to describe this process to students in such a way that they can interpret their own experiences.

The paradigm in this book which has been most useful to me on a personal level is Loder's model of the four dimensions of reality. The model requires more than a brief sketch, but the outline might be enough to interest campus ministers. The first dimension of reality is the "lived world," while the second is the self, aware of itself as a distinct entity over against the world and others. The third dimension of reality is "the void," the sense of emptiness, meaninglessness, mortality, and aloneness which underlines our awareness of the first two dimensions. When we face the third dimension we become aware of the fourth dimension, the Presence of God which transforms the self and its relation to the world. We need to lead students through the void and not repress their awareness of it if we want them to find God.

While for some readers this will fall into the "vain philosophies" category, Loder's work is genuinely Christian and useful. He stresses that we come to know the Presence of God in Christ. He gives theological guidelines for understanding convictional experiences which are strictly Christocentric. The goal of the transformation is not a feeling but love which manifests itself in action and in community. This is a book which requires some work, but its insights are worth the effort.

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**HOLY TERROR: THE FUNDAMENTALIST WAR ON AMERICA'S FREEDOMS IN RELIGION, POLITICS AND OUR PRIVATE LIVES**, by Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1982. 402 pp. \$17.95. Reviewed by Keith Herron, Baptist Student Union Director, Alvin Community College and Brazosport College, Angleton, Texas.

In the same vein of their previous book of 1978, **Snapping: America's Epidemic of Sudden Personality Change**, Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman continue their assessment of the spiritual climate of America. **Snapping** is a descriptive analysis of current religious groups that employ mind-control techniques in their recruitment of new converts. **Holy Terror** was written in response to the anger generated by the coalition of fundamentalist activist groups represented by the Moral Majority and other right-wing religious organizations. The open attack by these groups against liberal political foes brought new meaning to the traditional concept of separation of church and state.

The authors bring a strong indictment against these new right wing groups and the maneuverings by which they go about affecting political change. The book's strength lies in its ability to expose the vindictive manner in which certain politicians were singled out and reprimanded for their voting record on key issues outlined by the report card known as the "morality index" of 1980.

At the core of the fundamentalist attack against such politicians is the use of fear and intimidation to not only affect votes on these issues but to demonstrably influence the freedom of speech on those issues. Conway and Siegelman are brutally candid about the terrorist campaign to enact legislation favorable to the fundamentalist's agenda. The issue at stake, according to the authors, is not their right to influence voting records but the vindictive manner in which these politicians are forced to knuckle under and vote against their consciences. In the authors' own words, "It is religion run amok."

The authors give a largely accurate assessment of the political activity of the new right wing power groups. However, Conway and Siegelman demonstrate an obvious unfamiliarity with the larger body of conservative evangelical groups. The authors are able to identify gross misuse of power by the Falwells, Robertsons and LaHayes of the right, but Conway and Siegelman are confused by the terminology used by others of the conservative cause. To imply that Campus Crusade and the Navigators are involved in a sinister plot to bend the will of the American public to adopt a right wing political agenda such as that demonstrated by the Moral Majority is to confuse

the intents and purposes of those groups. It is obvious that the authors are outsiders looking in and not members of the family of conservative evangelicals.

The initial impact of **Holy Terror** in its attempt to expose the religious right's communications war against its enemies eventually loses much of its punch due to this confusion about conservative evangelicalism. Not all evangelicals are politically minded and zealous to see their point of view enacted into legislation and forced upon those who have different beliefs.

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**CONCENTRIC CIRCLES OF CONCERN**, by W. Oscar Thompson, Jr., Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981. 168 pp., \$5.95. Reviewed by Wil McCall, Campus Minister, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg.

Campus ministers, in recent years, have been literally smothered by a mountain of "how-to-do-ministry" books. At every turn, publishers present **the** definitive approach to doing ministry. This overabundance of answer books seems to lead to a confusion among readers, laymen and ministers alike, since they often fail to raise even the most basic questions but provide simplistic concepts and answers. At first glance, **Concentric Circles of Concern**—with its simple diagram and survey sheet—appears to be one more of the "concept and method" approach. Thompson does present a concept for evangelism but it is very much more. Indeed, the author contends that his presentation is not to teach concepts but rather to teach lifestyle.

Lifestyle and relationship are two key words for Thompson. "The Most Important Word," Thompson's first chapter, is **Relationship**—horizontal and vertical. In one anecdote rather than describing his work as "professor of evangelism," he explains that he is a teacher of relationship. Proper relationships with God and with neighbor are his keys to evangelism and Christian living.

Thompson's plan for evangelism and the Christian lifestyle is based on his awareness of the importance of relationship in the New Testament. "The gospel always moved on lines of relationship—Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth—in seemingly outward moving waves . . . Lifestyle evangelism in the New Testament did not begin with

Person X. It worked through relationships that had already been established" (p.20). His strategy calls for a consistent Christian lifestyle of reconciling relationships, not ruptured ones. The survey is a simple tool for indentifying individuals, assessing their needs, and developing relationships with them. It helps to organize thoughts and pay attention to detail.

The book may be helpful to campus ministers in several areas—program, professional, and personal. It provides a good perspective on and parallel to the **Spiritual Journey Notebook**. Also, it will aid any discipleship/evangelism/lifestyle Bible study or discussion group. For those ministers whose chief objective in seminary classes was to collect sermon material, Thompson supplies a wealth of anecdotes, passage studies, and topical insights. The devotional possibilities are endless!

The author's emphasis upon proper relationships between husband and wife and in family life provides much for personal reflection and action. His awareness of the various levels and types of intimacy within marriage—the barriers to them—provides rich insight. The complexity of family life is not dismissed but seen as a challenge.

Chapters on intercessory prayer, love as "meeting needs," overcoming barriers, building bridges, and others are familiar topics handled in distinctive fashion. The book, compiled by his wife after Thompson's death in 1980, is a very warm, personal writing style which speaks directly to the reader. In a time when action and "doing" seem to be a means to an end for many discipleship/evangelism books, Thompson highlights grace, not law, which **results** in action. He "encourages a wholesome love of self which frees one in turn to love others and the God who made them like they are" (p.7).

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**GOD AND THE RHETORIC OF SEXUALITY**, Phyllis Tribble, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1978, 202 pp., \$6.50. Reviewed by John Tadlock, Campus Minister, Clemson University, S.C.

This book is a part of a series, "Overtures to Biblical Theology," begun in 1973 by Fortress Press. It is the second printing of a book published first in 1978. The author is professor of Old Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York, her alma mater. She formerly taught at Wake Forest University.

The word, "peregrinations," was used in the last sentence of the first paragraph of Chapter One, "Clues in a Text." I had to look it up. It means "traveling from one place to another." It soon became clear that Dr. Tribble had chosen the key to her understanding of biblical hermeneutics. Her "clues" meet as the Bible wanders through history to merge past and present on its way to the future.

Dr. Tribble establishes the Hebrew root word, "rhm" ("to show mercy") as a partial, but major metaphor for biblical faith. From wombs (rehem) of women to the companion (rahamim) of God. She traces this theme through other passages throughout the Old Testament with "rhetorical-critical" methodology in the light of a feminist critique of patriarchal theology. This, she insists, is the clue to a neglected dimension of biblical faith. Centuries of misogynous reading has resulted in the true biblical message being ground into our collective ecclesiastical consciences. That, in turn, is responsible for centuries of cultural biases holding sacrosanct a thoroughgoing patriarchal view of biblical theology/history/culture.

With this frame of reference, the author beams attention upon the female metaphors for God and looks to scripture to interpret scripture for new occasions. She then follows this hermeneutical process through the traditions that embody male and female within the context of the "goodness of creation," particularly in Gen. 2-3.

In this "love story gone awry," life, harmony, unity, and fulfillment gave way to death, hostility, fragmentation, and dispersion. **All** of creation is adversely affected, not just 'adam, Adam, ("earth-creature," a term borrowed from Dr. Preston Williams of Austin Theological Seminary). The very "image of God" has voluntarily participated in the tragedy of disobedience. Thus, the man and the woman ('adam), estranged from each other, are banished from the garden.

But, says Dr. Tribble, that is not the end of it all. The "ecstasy" of redemption is possible and available. Somewhere between the tragedy of disobedience and the ecstasy of redemption lies the struggles intrinsic to the dailiness of life, as depicted in the book of Ruth, "a human comedy."

Ruth suggests a theological interpretation of feminism, says Dr. Tribble. And it is women "working out their salvation

with fear and trembling," for God is at work in them. Ruth and the women of Bethlehem are paradigms for radicality. Seen together they run the gamut of women in culture, against culture, **transforming** culture. What they reflect, they challenge. And the challenge becomes a legacy of faith for all who **take seriously YHWH's** continuing work with 'adam.

The author concludes that not much can be done with the permanent patriarchal stamp on scripture. But clearly, the interpretation of its content is dynamic rather than static. The scripture itself has moved across cultures and history melting the frozen constructions molded by centuries of a thoroughgoing patriarchal system. Therefore, Dr. Tribble joins others (Jewett, the Staggs, Mollenkott, Stendahl, **et. al**) in setting a fresh, if not new, hermeneutic regarding the feminine image of God in bold relief. She has painstakingly uncovered neglected traditions to reveal countervoices within a patriarchal document. At the same time, she admits that her work will not eliminate the male-dominated character of scripture. Admittedly, this would be both impossible and dishonest. And yet, to limit biblical revelation to the patriarchal stance is to be dishonest there also; for the Bible is its own best witness against that kind of reductionism.

**Evaluation:** Dr. Tribble's contribution to this urgent issue is a significant one. The study goes beyond the legitimate concerns of women in ministry and the church to deal with the problem of sexist presuppositions about God. While a great deal of attention has been given to the problem, little substantive work has been offered.

The author's treatment draws strength from the way she is able to hold together and in tension a variety of agendas. Her study concerns the problem of language. She feels that language is language's best teacher. But she obviously understands that language is not merely concerned with just word changes.

The book is an exercise in hermeneutics which demonstrates the author's familiarity with newer literary criticism and the use of metaphor in interpretation of scripture. Her eclectic use of other interests and disciplines (e.g., Freudian psychoanalysis, existentialism, structuralism, etc.) provides the method which represents a break with the epistemological link with sexism.



Most Southern Baptists and other evangelicals will be uncomfortable with her hermenutical method; indeed, some will argue that she started from a pre-conceived theological position and sought to "fit" the themes to these positions. Others will suggest that her work is "much ado about nothing." However, these conclusions miss an important point: it is not simply an exercise in method, nor does she plead her case out of the need to support the feminist cause. This, obviously, is a concern she has, but it is secondary to her main concern; i.e., to offer a serious substantive theology that requires rethinking of some of the most central themes of biblical faith. To conclude that it is a theological "molehill made into a mountain," is to prove her point; that is, that evangelical theology has largely avoided the challenge to most familiar assumptions about biblical texts. Indeed, her well-documented work alerts us to textual resources that have appeared marginal, at best, and safely neglected. It addresses a problem of scripture on its own terms with inescapable implications for our situation of faith and life. Indeed, "And God created humankind in His image; In the image of God created He him; Male and Female created he them." (Gen. 1:27)