

The

# Ellul Studies

Forum

A Forum for Scholarship on Theology in a Technological Civilization

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## In This Issue: Eller and Ellul on Christian Anarchy

### From the Editor

by Darrell J. Fasching

Welcome to issue number three of the *Ellul Studies Forum*. This issue completes our first subscription year and I hope that you think this effort worthy enough to renew your subscriptions for issues four and five. Please note that there is a subscription renewal form enclosed. Also note a slight increase in subscription price, from four dollars per year to six (eight on foreign subscriptions). I started out with the lowest possible subscription price I thought (hoped) we could manage on. However, after a year of experience its clear that this modest increase will be needed to keep us in the black.

You should find this issue especially interesting. Our Forum essay "*Be Reconciled*" is by Jacques Ellul himself. He graciously sent us this article as he promised when we began the *Ellul Studies Forum*. You will also find Ellul's rather stinging reply to Michael Bauman's review of his book *Jesus and Marx* (Issue #2, Nov. 88) in this issue's Forum Response column. Ellul outlines in detail why Michael Bauman's review is seriously misrepresentative. Nevertheless, I feel compelled to say a few words about this review myself. First, I must offer a word of apology to our readers and especially to Jacques Ellul for publishing this rather irresponsible review. I must confess that at the time, my pressing schedule had not yet permitted me the time to read *Jesus and Marx*. Mr. Bauman was asked to write a review of this book by our book review editor and I received it shortly before publication time. I recognized it to be a rather harsh and uncharitable review. Still, I decided to run it because I felt it was important to establish that critical reviews are welcome and an important part of scholarship, no matter how well established the author under review.

What I was not in a position to judge at the time was that the review was seriously misleading. Having since read *Jesus and Marx* it is now clear to me that Mr. Bauman seriously misrepresented the subject matter of the book. He professes to be a "theologian of culture." He might have learned something from the master of that discipline, Paul Tillich. Tillich said that what struck him most about scholarship in this country when he came here from Germany was that one's opponents always attempted to refute the strongest possible interpretation of your work whereas his European colleagues were in the habit of choosing the weakest possible interpretation and often ended up destroying a "straw man." I am afraid that is what Mr. Bauman did in the last issue - if not worse. While claiming that the first obligation of an author is "to understand his subject" he proceeds to interpret the positions Ellul is criticizing as positions Ellul himself holds. This is an inexcusable error, if it is an error. One has to wonder if it is not deliberate misrepresentation. From Mr. Bauman's review one gets the impression that Ellul is championing communism and socialism and condemning capitalism. One could scarcely conclude from Mr. Bauman's article that Ellul's book is a stinging critique of socialism and communism which argues that Christian faith can never be compatible with either. And yet that is exactly Ellul's thesis. One would never guess, from Mr. Bauman's review, that such sentences as the following could be found in *Jesus and Marx*: If you care for the poor, Ellul argues, "You will have to break quickly with Communism, since its practice has produced many more radically poor people than capitalism ever did. Communism has never defended the truly poor: only those who were useful to the revolution" (p. 131). It makes one wonder if he bothered to read anything beyond the first chapter.

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# Forum

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## Be Reconciled

by Jacques Ellul

Translated by Joyce Hanks

God's reconciliation with humanity is secured through Jesus Christ. But this should lead to reconciliation on our part with God, and to reconciliation among us. In what follows, I would like to suggest just an outline of the second point. It seems to me to entail two aspects: religious and theological quarrels and divisions, on the one hand, and position-taking in the World, on the other.

As I have thought about it over the last several years, the tragedy of the separation of our various Churches springs from the fact that the reasons for their separation no longer matter very much. Two hundred or a thousand years ago, these reasons often justified separation. In the case of the theological battle over *filioque*, for instance, do theologians and clergy today really attach great importance to this formulation of the faith?

Or consider certain facets of that great schism, the Reformation: transubstantiation, for instance. A French Catholic theologian said to me a few months ago that "no one" on the Catholic side believes any more that the wine is materially transformed into blood, and the bread into flesh (I think he meant theologians, since the situation certainly differs among simple believers!). He said "we believe in Jesus' real presence (but in the sense of his words: 'I am in your midst'). The bread and wine are Symbols of that presence." This inevitably reminded me of Calvin's phrase: "we believe in Jesus' real (meaning 'true!') presence in the Lord's Supper, but not in his material presence. The dispute sprang from a certain philosophy of substances, no longer accepted in our day. On the contrary, we can come together rather easily on the basis of an existentialist philosophy.

The huge debate concerning salvation by faith or by works was similar. The terrible thing in this case was that both sides agreed salvation came by grace, in any case. But one group believed a person's initial act was believing in that grace, whereas the other group believed one first put grace into practice through works. Astonishingly, advocates of salvation by faith accomplished the most works in the nineteenth century (works of the Church and of charity). To think the Church was torn asunder, and thousands of Christians died, killing each other, because of such terrible misunderstandings (to which we could of course add others, such as the Virgin and the Saints).

At times breaches have occurred quite differently: a small group of Christians would realize the official Church was forgetting an important aspect of Revelation. For example, it is quite true that in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Protestantism, the Holy Spirit and eschatology were neglected. So these groups of Christians would decide to try to "return the Holy Spirit to his proper place," or "rediscover the importance of eschatology in theology and the spiritual life of the Christian." Their error consisted of making this truth the only important truth: a truth that constituted, by itself, a subject *Stantis aut cadentis Ecclesiae*. They considered everything else secondary.

The official Churches committed a much more serious error: they failed to recognize what was right in such movements. Since the groups comprised only a minority, they were obliged to separate from the Church, becoming the Pentecostal Movement, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, etc. The "much more serious" error involved failing to apply a rule I find extraordinary: *Major aut Sanior pars*. It existed in the Church from the tenth to the thirteenth century, only to disappear in the fourteenth. When a decision was to be made in a Church Council,

for example, a vote took place, but the majority was not always right! The ideal was to arrive at unanimity. Failing that, the group had to consider whether the minority represented a *sanior pars*: a wiser point of view. This process provoked delays, but resulted in a more just solution. People doubted that truth could be decided by a majority of votes! In reality, the Church should have examined whether these minorities were calling it back to essential truths. Instead, after their exclusion, such groups hardened their position, and ended up in the absurdities and extremism we know so well.

But can all this still be valid today? The Presbyterian Church, for example (the Calvinist church, or the Reformed Church of France), has now recognized again the importance of eschatology and the centrality of the Holy Spirit. Each time someone proposes a reconciliation of these churches, however, or wants to examine what divides us, stern refusals follow. Whose? The authorities'--all of them. What I have to say will meet with very poor acceptance, but the thing separating Churches is no longer theological, religious, or doctrinal questions. It is institutions, organizations, and authorities. The heads of these Churches do not want to lose their power. They see no way to unite their separate and different institutions. People prefer having the body of Christ torn to pieces rather than challenging our authorities, powers, and institutions.<sup>1</sup> Considering that the Churches yield to such feeble motivations, it is not surprising they lose their influence in this world!

The second aspect of reconciliation among us involves taking political positions, often within a single Church.<sup>2</sup> After 1940 we rediscovered in Protestantism (at least in France) that the Church could not isolate itself from problems in society. For instance, we found ourselves confronted with communism in 1944. What attitude should we adopt? Many French pastors and theologians who had been completely indifferent, before the war, suddenly found themselves with communist friends in the Resistance. As a result of such friendships, they assented to communist doctrine. Moreover, this process highlights an important characteristic of French Protestantism: relationships based on friendship or charity often lead our Protestant intellectuals to join an organization, in order to show they sympathize with the doctrine or philosophy of people to whom they want to be closely related. We find this again in the case of Islam.

Naturally, the "great" French theologians of that era (such as Pierre Maury, Marc Boegner, and Jean Bosc) did not allow themselves to be influenced at all by this trend, but a great number followed the (moderate) example of Karl Barth, who said, rather simplistically: "Since the Soviet Union saved us from Hitlerism, we must reconsider our negative attitude." Thus Barth drew close to communism (he was, of course, ignorant of both Marxist doctrine and the reality of the Soviet regime).<sup>3</sup>

Beginning at that point, we have a split in the Reformed Church of France. On the one hand we find those who considered the only calling to be evangelism: making the Gospel known and enabling people to share in salvation in Jesus Christ. On the other, those who considered a Christian could now witness to his faith only through political action, which ought to establish a just society. In such a society, the poor would be given first place. This faction denied the Gospel could be received without social action, resulting in "the good news announced to the poor." The poor with no money, the

proletariat, and only they were worthy of hearing the good news. Remarkably, this group managed to prevail, through utterly insidious means. Today, we can no longer declare that we want to make the Gospel known by means of the Word.

Next we saw political positions taken at the time of the war in Algeria. The same intellectuals and theologians who had sided with the poor now acted on behalf of the Algerian Freedom Fighters, against France. The motive was the same: since the Arabs were poor and oppressed, one had to be on their side, against the rich French oppressors. This tendency continued as the group sided with the Palestinians (because they were the Poor, whereas the Israelis represented the United States, and thus the rich!). The trend continues today with respect to the immigrant workers (all Arabs), and the Palestinians. This Christian political movement has, of course, adopted Liberation Theology. But, more than that, it quickly subscribed to Marxist thought, and now favors Islam, emphasizing the "monotheism" of the two religions!

Of course, this trend that dominates the Protestant intelligentsia judges very harshly the Christians who confine themselves to the Gospel. These are considered reactionary, and unfaithful to God's will, since they do not put themselves on the side of the Poor. The adopting of political positions has gone beyond earlier theological differences.

My greatest reproach of all these Christians who adopt a political stance is essentially that they are ignorant. That is what grieves me most: between 1940 and 1956, they knew nothing about Marxism. They did not try to find out what was really happening in the Soviet Union. I maintain that when a Christian takes a political stance he should reflect on everything: the means used and the future risks, as well as the doctrine that inspires the movement. If you are for the Palestinians, you must study the PLO's charter and evaluate the Israelis' chances for survival if the Palestinians should win. If you favor Islam, you must begin by studying the Koran thoroughly.

I believe that these Christians are acting in good faith, and that they are sensitive to poverty, but they are utterly lacking in perception, clear thinking, and competence. An honest Christian with these deficiencies says nothing. Above all, he does not take himself (like those I am attacking here!) for the equivalent of the Old Testament prophets! The prophets not only listened faithfully to the Word of God, but also were well acquainted with political conditions in their time!

The experience of the last forty years should have given our false prophets a warning about their errors. But, since they take themselves for prophets, they see none of the damage done by the regimes they have supported. They continue to drag well-meaning Christians into other errors, and widen the splits they have produced in the Reformed Church of France!

### Notes

1. At this point I return to the theme of a series of articles I wrote in 1952: "On the Cultural and Social Factors Influencing Church Division," *Ecumenical Review*, vol. 4 (April 1952), pp. 269-275, reprinted as "The Cultural and Social Factors Influencing Church Division," in C. H. Dodd, G. R. Cragg, and Jacques Ellul, *Social and Cultural Factors in Church Divisions* (New York: World Council of Churches, 1952), pp. 19-25.

2. The point I take up here particularly concerns French Protestantism, but I am convinced a similar problem exists in many countries. Furthermore, in this article I especially attack Christians who have taken a Leftist position. I have made (and could make here) the same criticism of Christians of the "Right." See my *False Presence of the Kingdom*, tr. C. Edward Hopkin (New York: Seabury, 1972) and *Jesus and Marx: From Gospel to Ideology*, tr. Joyce Main Hanks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988).

3. Barth had been heavily influenced by his friend Fritz Lieb, who wrote a book in 1945 in which he "proved" that the Soviet Union had completely changed, that it had become completely free, and that there was no oppression there!

## Update on Ellul Publications

by Gary Lee

Eerdmans Publishing Co.

About a year ago, in the first issue of *The Ellul Studies Forum*, I reported on our forthcoming translations of several Ellul titles. Here is a brief progress report.

We have just published *What I Believe* (223 pages, cloth, \$19.95), Geoffrey Bromiley's translation of *Ce que je crois*. Here Ellul treats several key general concepts (chapters include "Life Has Meaning," "The Word," "Lifelong Love") as well as some crucial theological ideas ("The Seventh Day," "Universal Salvation," "Recapitulation") and an overview of history. Thus this work serves as a good introduction to Ellul's thought.

Joyce Hanks has recently submitted her translation of *La raison d'être: Méditation sur l'Écclésiaste* (English title uncertain). This is another of Ellul's provocative and insightful biblical expositions; here he finally treats the biblical book that one might associate most closely with him. Publication is scheduled for 1990.

We will indeed publish the translation of *Le bluff technologique*, Ellul's third massive volume on the role of technique in our world. As the title indicates, Ellul examines the technological bluff, that is, the illusions by which technique has fascinated and seduced us. Geoffrey Bromiley expects to finish the translation before the end of this year, and we should publish it either late in 1990 or early in 1991.

We are still in the process of finalizing the contract for *Un chrétien pour Israël*, which is another demonstration of Ellul's ability to blend theological, sociological, and historical analysis. Ellul has recently submitted a postscript to take into account the events in Israel that have transpired since he wrote the book (1986). We hope to publish it in 1991.

Ellul's *Anarchie et Christianisme* is our most recent acquisition. Here Ellul looks at the relation between anarchy and Christianity from sociological and historical perspectives, and then examines a number of Biblical texts that provide the basis for the anarchic option. This book is similar to, though briefer than, Vernard Eller's *Christian Anarchy* [Eerdmans, 1987], to which Ellul refers. Look for publication in 1991 or 1992.

Finally, one other book, though not written by Ellul, reflects his influence at a number of points: Marva Dawn *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*. Marva combines solid Biblical exposition, insight from Jewish traditions, and practical reflections to guide the reader into a fuller appreciation of the meaning of the Sabbath. Available in July (232 pages, \$10.95).

## The Presence of the Kingdom - Back in Print

Helmets and Howard Publishers, (P.O. Box 7407, Colorado Springs, CO 80933) has just brought Jacques Ellul's *The Presence of the Kingdom* back into print. This edition has a new Preface by Ellul explaining what prompted him to write this book and an introduction by Dan Clendenin. Written early in his career, *The Presence of the Kingdom* is a remarkable *blueprint*, foreshadowing the massive scholarship that was to follow in over forty books. Virtually all the important themes of Ellul's work are contained here in a "nutshell." If you do not have this classic on your book shelf, now is the time to order it. The price is \$10.95, with professional discounts (20%) and examination copy discounts (50%) available. Call 719-520-1559 for more information.

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# Forum Response

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## A Response to Michael Bauman's Review of *Jesus and Marx* by Jacques Ellul

Translated by Michel Machado

My work has been so often criticized without being understood that I believed nothing could shock me. However, I must confess that Mr. Bauman's article [Issue #2, Nov. 88] first provoked irritation, then stupefaction, and finally I thought it to be a joke! Indeed, I found it (and I use Mr. Bauman's terms), "monstruous", "grotesque." I never read such accumulated stupidity and lack of comprehension. It is evident that Mr. Bauman knows nothing of my work. He does not know that I was for forty years professor of history of institutions and economics and that I am aware of the works of Hayek, Schumpeter and others. Mr. Bauman knows nothing of Marx's theory and of the prominent Marxist theoreticians. Setting aside his ignorance, I am equally disturbed that an obtuse theology professor can so violently judge a book that he has clearly misunderstood and I doubt even seriously, read.

Mr. Bauman's atrocious misconceptions include the following:

1. He accused me of saying that Christians ought to have a feeling of culpability because of what socialism revealed. But, I never said that! I said, in fact, "Many have had a bad conscience"... I report a fact, nowhere have I said that Christians must have a bad conscience.

2. I never wrote that justice was equality. I have often written to the contrary. Mr. Bauman should begin to apply to himself the rule that he set in the first line of the article - "The first task of an academic author is to understand his subject."

3. He accuses me of saying that Communists are on the side of the poor. Here again, he missed it. I don't justify the Communists, I do not say that they help the poor. I say that wherever the poor revolt, Communists are there. If Mr. Bauman had known the Leninist *praxis*, if he had read Lenin's work, he would have known that that is their tactic. Clearly, I do not entertain the simplistic idea that Communists help the poor; they use them in order to come to power. Only for appearance and public opinion sake do Communists care for the poor.

4. His inability to understand is further revealed when he believes that I could have said that our unjust society is the result of twenty centuries of Christianity. I wrote clearly that this is the accusation hurled at Christianity by Communists and that if many ceased to be Christians it is because this argument was accepted.

5. Concerning my statement that the Communist tactics exactly correspond to Communism's objective, Mr. Bauman, again understood nothing since he doesn't know the clever tactics and grand strategy of Lenin. In a stupid fashion, he transforms it: "the Communist discourse is contrary to what Communists practice." But discourse is not the same thing as tactics!

6. Mr. Bauman attacks me because I said that Belo's choice is respectable. For myself, *a priori*, I respect the choices of all, but I didn't say that I accepted them. If Mr. Bauman knew something about the matter, he would have known that I wrote one of my books in order to prove that Belo's position is wrong, not in conformity to the Gospel. Moreover Belo clearly is ignorant of Marxist doctrine.

7. Mr. Bauman makes numerous misinterpretations like this one: He attacks me violently because I wrote that "Caesar is the creator of money". From his learned ignorance, he said that money existed before the State (I wrote twenty pages on the origins of money in my six volumes! *History of the Institutions*). But I never wrote what Mr. Bauman thinks to have read! I wrote that Caesar makes [i.e. coins] money (*fait les pièces de monnaie*). Mr. Bauman ignores the difference between create [i.e., originate] and make [i.e., coin]. Besides, very early,

as soon as metal ingots were used as money they were indeed marked and usually it was the political power who did it.

8. I could go on enumerating the stupidities and confusions of this article, but I will insist only upon two very important questions. First, it is "evident" for Mr. Bauman that Christianity is a religion. I was thinking that since Kierkegaard and Karl Barth, the distinction and even the opposition between religion (which is a fabrication of man in order to satisfy his religious need) and the Revelation of the God of Abraham and Jesus (which doesn't not correspond to the religious desire of man), was clear and well accepted (at least by 90% of European theologians). Evidently, our theology professor knows nothing of Kierkegaard or Barth! From a sociological standpoint, he assimilates Revelation to religion!

My second point concerns my definition of ideology. The "excellent" Mr. Bauman finds it scandalous and unjustifiable. This entails three remarks. First, he seems to ignore that there exist at least fifty definitions of the ideology. Every author has his own and the one of Adorno is not Belo's or Aron's, or Lukak's, etc.. I proposed a definition after having said that there were many others. My definition corresponds to the one accepted by most French political scholars. I counsel Mr. Bauman to read, for example, the different articles of the *Encyclopaedia Universalis* concerning ideologies, where he will learn that the matter is not so simplistic as he thinks. What is apparent from his article is his inability to distinguish among Theory, Doctrine and Ideology! For example, he argues that I am mistaken in saying that often an ideology arose to defend a previous *praxis* devoid of ideology. (He doesn't know, for instance, that Capitalism was constituted since the XVI century, without the help of any ideology). I am supposed to be mistaken in saying that the liberal ideology appeared to defend Capitalism against the Socialist ideology. What an error he is uttering! Of course, Smith's *The Wealth of the Nations* was published long before Marx's *Das Kapital* - Bauman's response is absurd because, here, we speak about doctrine. Liberal doctrine appeared before Socialist theory. Socialist ideology, however, appeared since 1815 in order to attack Capitalist structure. This was before any Liberal ideology existed.

9. He accused me of not having cited, in this debate Hayek, Schumpeter, Herme, Say, Bastiat, etc... But I don't understand why I should mention these in a debate about Marxism and Christianity in which they are not relevant. I have not quoted the prominent Marxist classics, either. I wanted to focus on current debate and I quoted only current authors, (with the exception of Proudhon and Bakunin).

10. Finally I maintain:

a) that although it raised the level of life of populations and produced much more from an economic standpoint, liberal capitalism created a much poorer proletariat than before;

b) that our affluent nations create an increasing poverty in the third world;

c) that nineteenth century Christianity played the role of an ideology of justification for the wrongs of Capitalism;

d) But that Marxism will not resolve any of these problems and that Christians must not ally themselves with the Communists.

This was evident in my book. In short, Mr. Bauman understood nothing I had to say. I pity his theology students if he misunderstands the Biblical text in the same fashion. His misunderstanding reflects a theology of the last century, the preconceived ideas of the Constantinian heresy, and a desiccated social conservatism.

# Anarchism and Christianity

## The Paradox of Anarchism and Christianity

by Jacques Ellul

We express our thanks to Gary Lee and Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. for permission to reprint a brief selection from Jacques Ellul, *Jesus and Marx*, (Eerdmans, 1988). The following are excerpts from the concluding chapter.

Perhaps it seems odd to attempt a reconciliation of anarchism and Christianity, since the idea that they are utterly irreconcilable enemies is so well established. Doesn't anarchism repeatedly cry "no God and no Master"? ... Looking at the question from the opposite angle, we see that Christianity clearly not only respects authority, but presupposes that authorities exist. Everyone believes Christianity to be a doctrine of order.... From both sides, then, the reconciliation of anarchism and Christianity seems excluded.... Without a doubt the official Church, transformed into a power, taught the opposite of biblical teaching.... Essentially ... both the Old and New Testaments take exception to all political power. No power can claim to be legitimate in itself. Political power and organization are necessities in society but only necessities. They attempt repeatedly to take God's place, since magistrates and kings invariably consider themselves the incarnation of authority. We must continually challenge, deny and object to this power. It becomes acceptable only when it remains on a humble level, when it is weak, serves the good ... and genuinely transforms itself into a servant....

Usually, however, this principle is stated the other way: the state is legitimate except when it becomes tyrannical, unjust, violent, etc. In reality, since the state is illegitimate, it should be destroyed, except when it acts as servant of all..., effectively protecting the good....

The only Christian political position consistent with revelation is the negation of power: the radical, total refusal of its existence, a fundamental questioning of it, no matter what form it may take. I repeat this statement not so Christians will turn toward some sort of spiritualism, political ignorance, or apolitical position - certainly not! On the contrary, as Christians we must participate in the political world and the world of action, but in order to deny them, to oppose them by our conscious, well-founded refusal. Only this refusal can challenge and occasionally impede the unlimited growth of power. Thus Christians can take their place only beside anarchists; they can never join the Marxists, for whom the state is unacceptable only to the extent that it is bourgeois.

Do Christians contribute anything specific or special to anarchism? ... Anarchists live in an illusion, believing that it is possible actually to abolish power and all its sources. ... Today we can no longer believe in one of the absolute tenets of anarchist faith: the inevitability of progress.... We must not become discouraged, then, if our anarchist declaration fails to lead to an anarchist society.... [However] when we shake the edifice, we produce a crack, a gap in the structure, in which a human being can briefly find his freedom, which is always threatened.... I can hear the disillusioned anarchist: "Is that all we are doing?" Yes: *all that*; through our refusal, we keep the trap from closing all the way, for today. We can still breathe out in the open. The Christian must enable the anarchist to make the transition from a contemptuous "Is that all?" to an "All that," filled with hope....

I believe this two-edge Christian contribution of realism and hope to be essential for anarchism. Anarchism's need for Christianity shows the possibility of a practical harmony, which could accompany the clear agreement of the two on the theoretical level. This possibility contrasts with the fundamental contradiction of Christianity and Marxism, and the extraordinary uselessness of cooperation between them. I must clarify, however, that in this essay I am not trying to find a new concordism. I do not mean to imply that anarchist thought expresses the Christian political orientation, nor that Christians should adopt an anarchist orientation. In other words, we must not fall into the same error with anarchism that has been made with respect to Marxism!

I have tried to show, contrary to what is usually believed, (1) that no radical contradiction exists between anarchism and the concrete consequences of Christian faith in the sociopolitical area, whereas there is a contradiction between Marxism and the implications of the faith; (2) that anarchism does not imply as Marxism does, the elimination of Christian specificity; (3) finally, that within the context of modern society and our concrete historical situation, the determining and decisive problem is that of the universal power of the state.... Communism has shown itself incapable of responding to this challenge. On the contrary, each time it comes to power, it merely reinforces the state. Refusing a synthesis of Christianity and Marxism does not amount to "preaching submission"... On the contrary it means entering a *different* revolutionary way, another way of questioning that is infinitely more radical and profound.

## Eller's Crowning Achievement

by Hu Elz

Within the past year or so ... the Federation of French Anarchists commissioned Ellul to write for them a book, *Anarchie et Christianisme* .... The book was purposed particularly for partisans of political anarchy, who would not have much knowledge as to how Christianity relates -- although it could be just as useful for Christians who have almost no knowledge as to how anarchy might relate to their faith. Ellul is probably the only person ever, who has been equipped to do as full justice to one side of the equation as the other. He is a top authority either way.

....  
In the book Ellul opens by recounting his personal history regarding the two traditions. His faith as a Christian believer has always been his primal commitment; yet, in his political interests, anarchy has long had a fascination for him .... The difficulty is that he has never found a way of getting the two together -- natural enemies as the two seem to be.

Traditionally, Christianity and anarchism have shown deep animosity toward each other, with what surely is good reason. Anarchy starts from the premise that all of society's effort to structure itself and regiment the citizenry to an established order -- all this works to the detriment rather than the enhancement of true humanity. The anarchical goal, then, is to break up these "orders," that, in the ensuing "disorder," individuals might find the freedom to live as truly human humans.

In response, Christianity has not been particularly keen on the idea, seeing anarchy's "disorder" as nothing but a threat to "the ordering of God" and "the godly ordering of the world" to which it is committed. The antagonism has been as much as absolute. Most

anarchists have been atheists. After all, the idea of a "Lord" (The Great Orderer in the Sky) is quite antithetical to what they have in mind. Further, they have seen (correctly enough) that the institutional church has always been on the side of tighter and tighter ordering rather than looser and looser. Ellul set himself some problem in trying to make those two speak with a common voice.

Ellul's book testifies as to how long he has been worrying the matter. As the years went by, he found more and more evidence of an anarchical strain within Scripture, but he still didn't see how this could contribute to getting the two traditions together. The breakthrough came then, he says [p. 7], in reading Vernard Eller's book, *Christian Anarchy* (Eerdmans, 1987).

Vernard, of course, is happy to have been of help -- though the situation is very much a weird one. The truth is that anything and everything Vernard may know of Christian Anarchy he learned in the first place from none other than Jacques Ellul. The first chapter of Vernard's book (in which he defines the concept and establishes its categories) is based directly upon the thought of Ellul -- and particularly upon one of his earlier essays regarding Christianity and anarchism. All Vernard was doing was quoting Ellul back to himself.

Actually, this is a phenomenon that probably happens time and again. When I hear my own thoughts read back to me by another person (in this situation in which I am *hearing* rather than *speaking*), I can often hear things I was not fully aware of having spoken. But if Vernard never did anything except echo Ellul's crucial words back to himself, that is more than enough to constitute a crowning achievement.

Probably there was a bit more involved. Vernard came at the problem from a new angle. Rather than trying simply to combine apparent incompatibles, he came up with a new category -- a third category that combined at least something of the earlier two and yet was not identical with anything of either of them. In the new two-word term "Christian Anarchy" neither of the words means quite what it meant when standing alone. Each word modifies the other in the process of being paired.

"Anarchy" ... assumed that, once set free, people would freely discover for themselves the minimal, instinctive ordering that would truly serve their humanity. But .... "Human regimentation" never manages to limit itself -- always gets out of hand and goes demonic.

So "Christian Anarchy" ... [uses] that disorder's freeing us to give ourselves wholly over to the Ordering of God.... This new regime would not be heavy-handedly *impositional* (as all human regimes have to be). God's regime of love and light, is one that never uses force but uses patience and mercy in winning people into that one Order that is right for them.

....  
So Christians need have no fear of anarchy -- if it's Christian Anarchy. And anarchists need have no fear of Christianity -- if it's Anarchical Christianity. Ellul can combine his two interests -- if it is done by going to a new, third category rather than by trying to meld two old incompatibles.

Vernard's crowning achievement proceeds from that point. Ellul, in his book (pp. 12-13), confesses that, in tracing the strain of Christian Anarchy through church history, he had thought simply of renegade individuals such as Tertullian, Francis of Assisi, and a few others. But here again, Vernard's book taught him something he undoubtedly knew for himself -- if he had been thinking.

It's hard to say how accurate an understanding of the 16th century Anabaptists ... Ellul has had up to this point; these people still do not get a very good press on the Continent. But Ellul is explicit in saying that Vernard is right, that the Anabaptists were not "a-political Christian secessionists" ... they were true Christian anarchists.

It's hard to know, too, how much Ellul has heard of the Blumhardts, the 19th-century German father-and-son pastoral team that

was so influential with the young Karl Barth. But here again Ellul is explicit in seconding Vernard's motion that the Blumhardts "formulated a strictly anarchistic Christianity."

There is no difficulty at all in determining that Ellul has been up on Kierkegaard ... since goodness knows when. ... But apparently Ellul had never thought of SK in connection with anarchy. However, a nudge from Vernard's book was enough to get Kierkegaard in.

Finally, it is no secret that Ellul, for a long time, has been strongly influenced by the work of Karl Barth. However, there were aspects of Barth's thought that had Ellul convinced that Barth could not be a Christian Anarchist. Yet, regarding Vernard's long chapter on Barth, Ellul now testifies that that demonstration has convinced him: Barth will be of that number when the anarchistic saints come marching in.

## Christian Anarchy

by Vernard Eller

University of La Verne, La Verne, California

Recently, while I was teaching a graduate seminar on the subject, a student came up with the terminology that enables me to express the gist of Christian Anarchy in fairly short order. She made a distinction between God's "Plan A" and God's "Plan B." Crucial, then, to any understanding of Christian Anarchy is, first, the seeing of the distinction and then the maintaining of it through every step of ethical reflection.

The ... point is made with ... relevancy in the story of Israel's demand for a monarchical government (1 Samuel 8ff).... The overarching question is: "Are the governing authorities ... *of God*?" The answer which, from the biblical standpoint, simply will not do -- this is the answer we most often get: namely, "The good moral regimes which we find attractive are *of God* but bad, immoral regimes are *of the devil*."

Rather, to our question, the first and decisive answer must be: "Well, the evidence is clear that none of them is recognized, or plays any part, in God's "Plan A." When Israel chose to go for a human ruler, God made it clear that this was nothing other than a rejection of his "Plan A" and indeed of his very self. His "Plan A" prescribes that he retain all (all) the reins of human government (and, indeed, cosmic government) in his own hands -- that he perform the necessary governing of creation on his own, with surrogate orderers being entirely superfluous. "Plan A" intends that the government of all things rest with the one true and competent governor. That God be everything to everyone, as 1 Cor. 15:28 so aptly puts it.

Thus, rightly, the last thing any human government can claim for itself is that it is *of God* -- when, obviously, what it actually represents is the rejection of God. This is an absolute judgment that recognizes absolutely no distinction between one claimant and another -- whether it be good, bad, or indifferent. No, to the extent it claims the authority to govern, to that extent it represents a rejection of God's own governance and a defiance of his "Plan A" (which does not call for any power-sharing on his part).

...  
It is ... only under "Plan B" that governing authorities come into the picture as being willed *of God*. In effect, God says that, if we have rejected his perfect governing authority of "Plan A," it is downright essential that we have governing authorities of some sort. We will just plain have to make do and put up with the imperfect and sinful authorities of human devising. However, no one ought to think that these belong to God's "Plan A"; they are only the poor, poor substitute demanded by "Plan B."



Accordingly, in our biblical account, God helps Israel choose Saul as the most promising "Plan B" king for them ... Yet, under "Plan B," while trying to use human governing authorities for as much good as he can get out of them, God also is the one who takes the initiative in unseating Saul and trying David in his place. The entire history of Israel's monarchy is that of governing authorities who aren't good for much but who, I guess, do fulfill God's Plan-B intention of keeping things from going completely to smash.

....  
Now Christians, along with their ethics, are going to have the most ethically difficult time imaginable -- living, as they do, suspended between "Plan A" and "Plan B." For themselves ... Christians are totally committed to "Plan A." They try to make God so completely Lord of their lives that, for them, no other lords or authorities even exist. It takes all of their time to praise, love, and obey their Jesus. And when human-sinful governing authorities try to intrude themselves into the Christian's value-structure, they can be seen and treated as nothing other than competitors with and thus enemies of God.

Yet Christian ethics can't be left at this single focus on "Plan A." God himself demands that we go dialectical by reminding us that he, also, is the author of "Plan B"; it too is part of his will for humanity. It is true that those governing authorities are enemies of God; yet, just as truly, they represent the government God's wayward children simply must have if they are to survive long enough for him to get them back into salvation. These do, in a strange sense, represent the government of God.

So, if Christians love this wayward world as God loves it, they will have to be willing to involve themselves even in the makeshift ungodlinesses of "Plan B."

....  
In Christ, Christians have been given the freedom to participate helpfully in "Plan B." However, we have blown that opportunity completely when we join "Plan B," treat the governing authorities as though they were now agents of God's saving work, play it as though "Plan A" has been superseded by "Plan B."

What we call "Christian Anarchy," then, is simply this very tricky business of retaining our Plan-A opinion of the governing authorities as rebellious enemies of God -- retaining this opinion (as God himself does) even while using these same authorities (as God himself does) for the Plan-B survival of the race.

## Translators Needed

Occasionally the *Forum* will be publishing articles submitted in foreign languages. We need volunteers who are capable and willing to provide translations. Usually the articles will be four or five double spaced typed pages. The maximum size is ten double spaced pages. If you are willing to contribute your services in this way it will help to keep the cost of subscriptions down and will be greatly appreciated by your colleagues. We are especially grateful to Joyce Hanks, of Scranton University, and Michel Machado, of the University of South Florida, for their translations of Ellul's essays for this issue. If you can help us out please contact the Editor.

### What I Believe

by Jacques Ellul

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What is equally disturbing about Mr. Bauman's review is the arrogant tone with which he puts forth his own views as unquestionably true, leaving the impression that anyone who disagrees with him is simply out of touch with reality. Mr. Bauman seems painfully unaware of his own vulnerability. If he did not bear the title Associate Professor, I would have assumed him to be a "green" Ph.D., fresh out of graduate school. In the future, I promise to exercise tighter editorial control, not to exclude disagreement and/or criticism of the work of Jacques Ellul (I myself engage in these tasks) but to exclude irresponsible scholarship, not worthy of the name.

In the book review section you will find a new review of *Jesus and Marx* done by Dan Clendenin, our book review editor, which I think will give you a better understanding of the book's contents. You will also find an essay review by Katharine Temple of Ellul's *Anarchie et Christianisme* and Vernard Eller's *Christian Anarchy*.

Indeed, a major section of this issue is devoted to the theme of Christianity and Anarchy. We are pleased to have three essays on this topic. One is derived from the last chapter of *Jesus and Marx*. The other two were graciously sent to me by Vernard Eller. One is by Eller on his interpretation of "Christian Anarchy" and the second is by a mysterious Hu Elz on "Eller's Crowning Achievement" - namely his influence on Ellul's development of the theme of anarchy. Who is Hu Elz? I am afraid I don't know. No identification was given with the essay. But a skillful literary-critical analysis might suggest that he must be a "close disciple" who has absorbed much of Eller's casual style.

Finally, we have a Bibliographic essay from Carl Mitcham on movements and newsletters in England relating Christianity and technology, which should be of considerable interest. And we have a review of upcoming Ellul publications by Gary Lee of Eerdmans Publishing Company.

The next issue (November) will be devoted to the theme of Judaism and Christianity in a Technological Civilization. I am off to Bordeaux and the Society for the Philosophy of Technology's conference on "Democracy and Technology" at the end of this month. While I am there I plan to interview Ellul about his book *Un chrétien pour Israël*. Ellul's view of the cooperative vocation of Jews and Christians in a technological civilization is a fascinating aspect of his work which has received little attention. If anyone has a contribution they would like to make on this or any other topic please feel free to send me your manuscripts.

## Advisory Board Appointed

As the *Ellul Studies Forum* enters its second year of publication, we are pleased to announce the formation of an Editorial Advisory Board. The editor shall depend on them for advice as to themes and topics for the *Forum* and for occasional editorial comment. The members of the advisory board are as follows:

Dan Clendenin, *William Tyndale College*  
Cliff Christians, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*  
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by Jacques Ellul

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# Book Reviews

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Jacques Ellul, *Anarchie et Christianisme* Atelier de Creation Libertaire, Lyon, France, 1988, 123 pp. Vernard Eller, *Christian Anarchy*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI. USA, 1987, 267 pp.

Reviewed by Katharine Temple

Anarchism, that underrated and submerged critique of modern society, has been a longstanding, if not always overt theme in the writings of Jacques Ellul. It goes back at least as far as his time with Emmanuel Mounier and *Esprit* in the 1930s, and his most explicit formulation came in *Autopsy of Revolution*, a classic of anarchist thought. Put succinctly, that school (which is a critique of both Capitalism and Marxism from within Socialism) points to the increasing power of the state as the focal point for social analysis.

Theologically, M. Ellul's anarchism points to the same power of the state as a false god or a locus for the incarnation of the principalities and powers -- a motif in his *Apocalypse*. How he brings together his two types of writing has long been a question, and he has always insisted that they stand in a dialectical rather than a systematic relationship. On the subject of anarchism, he has shown what he means, biographically, in *In Season, Out of Season* and, analytically, in the last chapter of *Jesus and Marx* and now in *Anarchie et Christianisme*.

Although nothing substantially new appears in this slim volume (apart from reflections on 1 Peter), various strands from previous works are pulled together and that alone makes it worthwhile. Here and there some irritants surface, such as some comments about liberation theology or Islam without the more complete arguments he has given elsewhere, or certain statements about the prevalence of socialism that is not self-evident in English-speaking countries. These, however, are relatively few and far between (albeit on-going) points. Overall, it is a treat to encounter his grasp of the anarchist tradition, his fluency with the Bible and Church history, and his emphasis on Christian realism.

In *Anarchie et Christianisme*, M. Ellul commends Vernard Eller's book, and also I had read some articles on his own [Eller's] and M. Ellul's theological roots, which are as little known and as much shunted aside as anarchism is in social thought. As a result, I was looking forward to *Christian Anarchy*, especially as Mr. Eller writes from this country where, to put it mildly, anarchism has never really "taken." In any case, maybe I looked forward too much and expected too much.

Let me say, first of all, that I was not disappointed in the story of his theological sources -- the radical Reformation, Kierkegaard, the Blumhardts, Karl Barth, Jacques Ellul -- although his explanations seem marred by the tone that hints broadly that really nobody else has had such thoughts as his. How could he not mention William Stringfellow who did so much to make Karl Barth and Jacques Ellul known here, or Dorothy Day who introduced anarchism through the pages of *The Catholic Worker*? Nor do I disagree about the need for hard questions to be put to the Christian left or peace movements, although, again, other voices have also spoken. Why, for instance, no account of Stanley Hauerwas or John Howard Yoder? And, finally, the matter of whether he is a-political or not (a charge he seems to relish) seems, by and large, beside the point.

My disappointments lie elsewhere. Unfortunately, throughout the book, Mr. Eller falls into generalizations and simplifications that start to sound like a parody of some of the complaints made about M. Ellul.

This imprecision is most marked in the title theme of anarchism, which does have a coherent meaning, content and history, no matter how un-systematic these may be. Mr. Eller makes a point of saying (p. 4) that he knows nothing about anarchist writers, nor does he know much about Marxist analysis apart from impressions (p. 60) either. And so the stage is set to waver between "re-inventing the wheel" or a Humpty-Dumpty sense that "a word means exactly what I say it does, neither more nor less." In either mode, the result is not conducive to realism about what is going on, to which we are called to respond. Furthermore, his historical references are, at best, uneven.\* The history of biblical exegesis and theological understanding is long and complex; it does no service to dismiss whole traditions, century after century, with a patronizing wave of the hand. Indeed, we need iconoclasts to expose errors and shibboleths, but such a vocation requires more, not less insight and detailed knowledge than has prevailed.

Beyond these points, my major disappointment lies in his picture of responses being made by Christians today. My criticism may sound harsh, particularly as "the movement" can often drive me to distraction almost as much as it seems to annoy Mr. Eller. Still, I think we must avoid the temptation to judge anything anybody is doing with broad, unnuanced strokes and at its worst. The critique is necessary, but how is it to be made? We must remember that caricature is not constructive, fraternal criticism, while sarcasm means "a tearing away at the flesh." In the interests of clarity and charity, we are not allowed to indulge in such approaches.

Take but one example, tax resistance is one of his main targets. In these sections, I found myself wondering "Whom is he talking about?" There are not all that many tax resisters around, but some do exist and they have seriousness and an awareness about the bonds among taxes, war and materialism -- a recognition and thoughtfulness that come close to M. Ellul's discussion but that could not be guessed at from Mr. Eller. He does not bother to address the diverse philosophical biases and approaches among those who do so choose. Some are anarchist, most are not; some are believers, many are not; almost all focus on war taxes. None of these distinctions enters the book, and he completely ignores the form of tax resistance most consistent with anarchism, voluntary poverty (in keeping with Peter Maurin's -- the co-founder of *The Catholic Worker* -- dictum: "The less you have of Caesar's, the less you have to tender unto him"). Such failures from an author who wishes to shed light on the topic only further the division and shallowness, only give scandal rather than edify.

In the end, it comes down to the requirement of realism. The lacks in social analysis and dialectics (the very thinking that lies at the heart of M. Ellul's account of anarchism) combine to undo the contributions Vernard Eller could have made in *Christian Anarchy*.

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\*Examples of this unevenness come in his search for Biblical interpretations. On the one hand, his discussion of Philemon, for example, is enlightening, while his treatment of the Temple and synagogue in Jewish tradition, as another example, should have been edited out as an affront.



**Jesus and Marx: From Gospel to Ideology.** by Jacques Ellul. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988, 187 pp., 12.95.

by Daniel B. Clendenin

William Tyndale College, Farmington Hills, MI

At age eighteen Ellul borrowed a copy of Marx's *Das Kapital* from the library and, upon reading it, experienced a conversion to a global interpretation of the world. About the same time he also underwent what he describes as a "brutal conversion" to Jesus Christ. Unable to eliminate either totalitarian truth, and unable to merge them into a synthesis, for the past sixty years Ellul has sought to hold them in "radical contradiction" (p. 63), by which he means a critical and mutual dialectical tension such as characterizes all of his thought. In *Jesus and Marx* he offers a withering critique of the fashionable tendency which merges the two and declares that the only authentic Christian *praxis* is that which commits itself to Marxism. Understanding Ellul, though, demands an effort to enter into his dialectical mode of thinking which holds the two in critical tension. Readers must beware of making two errors.

First, despite this scathing critique, Ellul does not throw out the baby with the bath water. Marxist thought has challenged Christianity in a number of positive ways (pp.5-10). It focuses attention on the need for social justice (which is not to say it brings justice!). It recognizes the role of the poor in the historical process and enters their world (even if not for good). Marxists attain a "coherence between thought and action, theory and *praxis*," which shames the church's disparity between word and deed. By focusing on the material factors of history, Marxists challenge the evangelical tendency toward a disembodied spiritualization of Christianity which is little more than a privatized experience. Finally, the zeal and militant spirit of Marxists challenge the church to become what we should be. Indeed, they take seriously the last of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*: the goal is not to interpret the world but to change it.

But readers must avoid the opposite mistake of reading Ellul as soft on Marxist Christians. His critique is at two levels. First, there is Marx himself. Marx could never answer existential questions of life, love and death; his view of people as merely economic beings (*homo economicus*) is reductionistic; and his belief in the inevitable progress of history is naive. Thus, Marx is not scientific but passionate (and that is why Ellul likes him). Most of *Jesus and Marx*, though, occurs at a second level and is directed to those Christians who claim to follow Marx. According to Ellul, their words and deeds show they are neither Marxist nor Christian. In chapters 2-6 Ellul levels an excoriating attack on such people, with special attention paid to Fernando Belo's *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark* (Orbis, 1981) and G. Casalis's *Correct Ideas Don't Fall from the Skies: Elements for an Inductive Theology* (Orbis, 1984). We can summarize five salient points made by Ellul.

First, Marxist Christians display an alarming degree of conformity to sociological trends. Thinking to be "progressive" in their positions, they are really just the opposite: eager-beaver Johnny-come-latelies who "conform culturally and intellectually to the rest of society" (p. 21). This guts Christianity of all content. Thus we witness an incredible sociological phenomenon: Christians who have every reason to oppose Communists and almost no reason to join them continue, like moths to a flame, to find it an irresistible attraction (p. 34).

Second, liberation theologians must ask the question: liberation for whose benefit? The so-called wars of liberation from capitalism and imperialism have resulted in worse dictators, more outrageous oppression and shameless brutality, more prisons, greater economic disparity,

than any ever perpetuated by the West (p. 58). Given the fact that Communism "has never incarnated itself in anything but dictatorships," a Christian "would have to be crazy" to join them (p. 137). Third, where is the *praxis* of most of these theologians? Except for a small minority, most of these liberationists are bourgeois professors whose only *praxis* "consists of giving lectures, writing articles, traveling to congresses or colloquia, attending demonstrations, signing petitions and manifestos, and organizing seminars" (p. 128).

Fourth, when Marxist Christians accuse others of a blind reading of the Biblical text and claim to offer the first truly objective and "scientific" exegesis, they reveal their own pre-understandings. They fail to apply the myth of hermeneutical objectivity to themselves. In fact, this theology which claims to be inductive and based on the priority of *praxis* is in reality just another deductive theology with its own uncritically accepted assumptions. Finally, Ellul takes to task "service theology" which contends that meeting human need alone on the horizontal level is all that counts. Considering Matthew 9:2-13 as a case study, he shows how just the opposite is true: the vertical relationship of confession and worship must come first.

*Jesus and Marx* is ultimately rooted in a broader Ellul theme: that the Gospel revelation is fundamentally iconoclastic and inimicable to all power, and especially political power (which is the worst kind). Thus, the book ends with a chapter on anarchy, "the only acceptable stance in the modern world" (p. 156n). By anarchy Ellul does not mean social chaos. "All my position means is that the present center of conflict is the state, so that we must adopt a radical position with respect to this unfeeling monster" (ibid.).

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# BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTES ON THEOLOGY AND TECHNOLOGY

## Bibliographic Report on Some Recent British Discussions Regarding Christianity and Technology

by Carl Mitcham

In early November 1988 I had occasion to visit in Chalfont-St-Giles, England, with Peter Davies and his family and to be introduced to a number of discussions among Christian engineers regarding the problems of technology. Davies, after working for seven years as an engineer with Jaguar Ltd., took a leave to earn an M.Sc. in Industrial Robotics and Manufacturing Automation, with the intention of returning to industry. But in the process he became concerned about the use of technology in society and now, as a Ph.D. candidate in management at Brunel University is writing a dissertation on the philosophy of technology.

### Science and Faith Newsletter

When asked whether there was any group of persons like himself, technical professionals concerned about the relation between engineering and ethics, Davies first introduced me to the *Research Scientists Christian Fellowship*, the aim of which is "to influence the whole climate of thought about science and Christian faith so that it becomes generally known that there is no conflict but that rather the two can work in harmony" (from a descriptive pamphlet). Interestingly enough, however, a significant number of the contributions to the RSCF newsletter, *Science and Faith* (published once or twice a year), in effect point up the existence of real conflicts.

For instance, in Newsletter No. 5 (1985), reporting on the 1985 American Scientific Affiliation/RSCF conference at Oxford, Donald MacKay notes how different speakers identified challenges to Christians in the new sciences of the person (biomedicine, psychopathology, etc.), artificial intelligence, tensions between serving and manipulating, and the need for numerous conceptual clarifications (pp. 10 ff).

In Newsletter No. 6 (June 1986) D. Gareth Jones conducts "An Odyssey through the New Reproductive Technologies" (*in vitro* fertilization, artificial insemination, and surrogate motherhood) and again finds numerous conflicts with Christian ethical principles (pp. 24-49).

Newsletter No. 7 (December 1986) contains a critique of the animal rights movement by David Williams (pp. 11-31) arguing that although animals do not have rights human beings (particularly Christians) have duties and responsibilities toward animals. There is also a report on an RSCF conference on "The Ethics of Animal Use" (pp. 3-10).

By contrast, Newsletter No. 8 (August 1987) is devoted primarily to Donald MacKay's enthusiastic outline of "Christian Priorities in Science" (pp. 10-26). For MacKay, science grows out of Christian belief in an ordered creation and love for humanity, and when true to itself in both theory and practice is essentially Christian. MacKay even criticizes "such a champion of biblical Christianity as C.S. Lewis, who justified his anti-technological bias by identifying human dominion over nature with hubris," for being too much influenced by Greco-medieval and Stoic ideals of "conforming the soul to reality" (p. 16), and defends as Christian the technological goal of "fashioning the future" (pp. 18 ff).

Newsletter No. 9 (May 1988) announces that RSCF is changing its name to *Christians in Science* and that the *Science and Faith* Newsletter will be joined with *Faith and Thought* (of The Victoria Institute) to form a new and more ambitious journal called *Science and Christian Belief*.

### Engineers Group Newsletter

A second newsletter, more immediately devoted to technology, is that of what is called the *Engineers Group*. Here the consideration of tensions with Christian thought and practice are much more pronounced.

For example, the Winter 1984 contents includes: John Davis' "Engineering for God or Mammon?" (pp. 2-6), Kathy Carter's "God and the Computer" (pp. 7-8), John Phillips' "Computers in Practice" (pp. 9-14), and a letter from Tom Hutt on "Engineering and the Task of Developing the Christian Mind" (pp. 17-19). As the editor notes in a forward, "each comes to a similar conclusion" that "we must . . . avoid setting up Hi-Tech as our idol" (p. 1). But each article also in effect points out that this is exactly what technology tends to do.

The Summer 1985 *Engineers Group* Newsletter contains an article by Alan Jiggins (until recently principal lecturer in Applied Nuclear Physics at the Polytechnic of the South Bank, London) pointing out the ways in which technology destroys community. "Power corrupts," he writes, "and computer power has a peculiar corruptibility" (p. 7). "We live in a progressively artificial world and to an increasing degree our expectations are being moulded by technological values" (p. 9). By contrast, Martin Wood defends the connection of "Computers and Christianity." In the same issue Nigel Rooms comments on Davis' article from Winter 1984 and Richard Franceys writes on problems of "Engineering for Development" while Michael Duckenfield calls for the formation of a Christian working party to apply a Christian ethics to technology.

The Winter 1985-1986 Newsletter contains Paul Marshall's "Is Technology Out of Control?" (pp. 6-12, arguing that although it can be perverted by sin, technology is necessary for the exercise of Christian stewardship), Gary Colwell's "Technology and False Hope: A Christian Look at the False Assumptions Behind Technology's Optimism" (pp. 13-22), an address to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada in 1984. Indicative of the close association of the Engineers Group and the RSCF, this issue includes Gordon Clarke's "The Machine Starts," a counterpoint to E.M. Forster's "The Machine Stops," which also appears in *Science and Faith* (December 1986).

The major piece in the Autumn 1986 issue is David W. Aycock's "Christian Objections to High Technology: Analyzing the Resistances" (pp. 30-54). According to Aycock of the University Counseling Center at Taylor University in Indiana, USA, Christians must work to overcome psychological factors that are sources of negativity and keep them from contributing more effectively to the rational assessment of technology in the light of scriptural principles.

The *Engineers Group* Newsletter for Autumn 1987 contains a statement of the "Aims and Objects of the Engineers Group" as part of the *Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship* (UCCF). These are:

"To develop a creative Christian perspective upon engineering and technology

"To help one another maintain a consistently Christian stance throughout our work as engineers

"To foster a constructive Christian influence in engineering

..., [and]

"To provide support and encouragement for missionary engineers and students . . ." (p. 4).

This issue also reprints MacKay's "Christian Priorities in Science" from *Science and Faith* (1987) and includes Mark Williams' "Education for Balanced Attitudes towards Computer Technology" (pp. 35-41).

In the Summer 1988 Newsletter Michael J. Duckenfield asks "Is Maximum Efficiency Always Best?" (pp. 7-10) while John T. Houghton, FRS, Director General of the Meteorological Office, reviews Christian attitudes toward technological progress. According to Houghton, the Christian should lobby government to direct technical change toward worthwhile ends, make sure all facts are considered when making decisions, send "technical missionaries" to developing countries, make better use of new communications technologies to spread the Gospel, make better use of leisure, and "in emphasizing the importance of spiritual as opposed to material values, . . . demonstrate a positive approach to technological progress and material advances, rather than a withdrawal from their possibilities" (p. 19).

### Tensions

On balance both these publications -- both of which regularly contain letters and short reviews -- exhibit a persistent tension between seeing science and technology as realms of Christian fulfillment and sources of Christian struggle. All but a few of the most positive articles identify problems; and most of those that stress problems also admit to some truly Christian achievements and promises. Jacques Ellul, for instance, is probably equally praised (as insightful and prophetic) and blamed (as pessimistic and lacking in faith or real understanding of science and technology) for his criticisms of technology.

What is most evident in these publications is a consistent attempt by practicing Christians who are also scientists and engineers to relate their faith and their work. Standing back a bit from the particular difficulties discussed, one cannot help but sense that the persistence of difficulties in itself may be a sign of the times.

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Readers are invited to contribute to this ongoing bibliographic column. Please send books or articles to be noted, or notes themselves, to:

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## Guidelines for Submissions to *The Ellul Studies Forum*

*The Ellul Studies Forum* is intended to foster a communications network among scholars in the area of religion and technology. If you would like to submit a book review or conference review, announce a symposium or conference, write a letter to the editor or write an editorial piece for the *Forum* or a response to the *Forum*, submit bibliographical information or an article of relevance to *Forum* readers, there are several ways to do so.

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**The Deadline for the Next Issue is October 1, 1989. A major theme for the next issue will be Judaism & Christianity in a Technological Civilization.**

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