triune—a self-positing that is in accordance with an eternal decision—is a self-positing that is indeed identical with a particular history. There is not an independent being of the second person of the trinity. Avoidance of nature language, then, in favor of the language of history is Barth’s way of safeguarding and securing the identity of the Logos asarkos with the Logos incarnandus (262).

Readers of Barth once again owe McCormack an enormous debt of gratitude. McCormack inhabits the nineteenth-century literature in an unparalleled manner so as to help one appreciate more and more the extent to which Barth undoes from within the Kantian paradigm by describing the ontological implications of God’s determination to be God for us in Jesus Christ. For that I am grateful. For far too long it has been easy and all too fashionable for theology to embrace a false apophatasis. McCormack reminds us, by way of a rich and probing reading of Barth—especially CD II/2—that God is as God does, that what God is in pretemporal eternity God becomes in time. Only such an emphasis wherein the center of gravity lies in “‘God’s being is in coming’” has the theological resources to resist and rebuff the pitfalls of an exemplarist Christology and the doctrine of God that funds it; a doctrine that divorces God’s act from God’s being. (259)

—Christopher R. J. Holmes


A recent article in the Boston Globe (“Theological Schools Pursue Economies of Consolidation,” May 29, 2009) chronicles the effects of the current fiscal crisis as played out in several of New England’s more historically significant seminaries and graduate schools of theological education. Not for the first time in its long history Andover Newton Theological School, originally established in 1809 as America’s first theological seminary, is looking to consolidate with a likeminded institution. Negotiations are currently ongoing with Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School of Rochester New York, with the goal in mind being a full merger of faculty and administration as a single, centrally located institution. This is perhaps merely the most prominent example of a scenario that is being repeated all across the country among institutions of all denominational affiliations. Clearly, theological education in America finds itself in a state of flux, the direct result of a constellation of factors of which the above-mentioned fiscal crisis is but one.

In his exhaustive study on the subject, Glenn Miller’s Piety and Profession: American Protestant Theological Education, 1870–1970 shows that flux and transition is perhaps the most apt description of theological education in America. Indeed, Miller suggests that beginning in the decades following America’s Civil War such factors as the increasingly specialized nature of
the university, the emerging biological and physical sciences, the historical critical approach to the Bible, and the dynamic growth of the industrial capitalist society (xi), created a context in which the seminary would not be allowed to stand still. How the seminary reacted to these conditions is just the story Miller’s book seeks to tell and, it should be said, does so in a largely engaging and instructive way.

Following in the format of his previous work, *Piety and Intellect: The Aims and Purposes of Ante-bellum Theological Education* and picking up where that volume left off, Miller divides his book into three parts. First, the chapters in A New Understanding Forms focus on the social, scientific, and institutional forces that shaped a half-century of change in the American seminary from 1870 to approximately 1920. Second, Embodying a Dream concentrates on the tumultuous decades during and just after the First World War in which religious and denominational conflict along with the emergence of the social sciences combined to lessen the impact of the seminary in the larger culture and bring about what Baptist historian Robert Handy called a “second disestablishment” as Protestant power receded (619). Third, Questions in the Midst of Triumph chronicles the surprising reemergence of conservative Protestant presence in theological education, a once again relevant public voice most notably in Reinhold Niebuhr’s theological realism and the transitional decades after the Second World War. It was at this time that universities began adding departments of religion and the social upheaval of the 1960s presented Protestant seminaries and graduate schools of theology with some substantial challenges and cause for serious reassessment. In short, Protestant theological education in America, whether due to outside forces or internal conflict, has been in a persistent state of adapt and survive almost since its inception in the early nineteenth century. If Miller’s assessment is correct, this situation is not likely to end anytime soon.

More than just a rendering of the relatively narrow subject of Protestant theological education, Miller’s encyclopedic work provides a penetrating account of the relationship between Protestantism and American culture during some of its most formative periods. While some may find the scope of his subject matter frustratingly broad, Miller’s decision to provide a fuller backdrop of the cultural, scientific, and theological contexts within which the American Protestant seminary has always existed allows for a comprehensive look at the figures and events that came to shape not just theological education but America itself. Prime examples of this are the increasingly visible role of women in all aspects of society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the evolution of African-American theological education after the Civil War. While women were formerly relegated to missions as the sole avenue for their involvement in ministry, it was in the field of missions that women first developed the skills that would eventually help shape an emerging practical emphasis in theological education. The willingness and indeed desire of women to take on the roles unfulfilled by male volunteers
would be rewarded with the establishment of such institutions as the Woman’s Missionary Union Training School at Louisville and the women’s training school, Scarritt. While neither institution survived into the twenty-first century (WMU later became the Carver School of Missions and was closed during the fundamentalist takeover of the SBC during the early 1990s while Scarritt ceased formal training programs and is now known as the Scarritt-Bennett Retreat Center) their presence was instrumental in adding a social conscience to rather one-sided academic modes of training. Similarly, Miller’s research of the development of theological education in the African-American community and the simultaneous struggle to establish theological institutions of higher learning during the period of reconstruction is important to a larger understanding of the civil rights movement in America.

In two particularly interesting chapters in which he chronicles the role of conservative Protestantism (dispensationalism and evangelicalism) in the development of theological education, Miller suggests an alternative narrative to the somewhat accepted orthodoxy of Mark Noll and George Marsden in their popular critiques of the evangelical mind (The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind and The Soul of the University, respectively). Long considered the harbinger of anti-intellectualism in America, the heydays of dispensationalism actually saw the spread of a deep desire for learning and the establishment of more than a few institutions of theological education. While certainly less willing to embrace the newer approaches to biblical study than their more liberal counterparts, they shared a just-as-emphatic interest in history, and their more can-do type of thinking nearly demanded vehicles of training (193). Similarly, Miller wonders aloud whether Noll’s famous turn of phrase, “the scandal of the evangelical mind was that there was not much of an evangelical mind,” might have more polemical than substantive value given the impressive number of evangelicals with degrees from some of America’s best graduate theological programs, the vast personal libraries of many evangelical scholars, and the outsized influence of such evangelical theologians as E. J. Carnell and Carl F. H. Henry (634, 635). With more than a decade of hindsight in his favor, Miller’s questioning suggests that the critiques by Noll and Marsden were perhaps painted with too wide a brush and with only one color. The diversity that exists within evangelicalism today and that has to some degree always marked the movement might simply not allow for so monochromatic a portrait.

The spine of this book is nearly two inches thick, which might initially discourage a potential reader; that would be an unfortunate reaction. Miller’s encyclopedic account of a very important period in American theological education has much to teach and is well worth the read. The author has indicated that plans are in the works for a third volume covering the period from the seventies to our current time. Judging by his accomplishments here that volume will be eagerly awaited.

—Jeffrey A. Wilcox

Garth Rosell tells the story of Harold Ockenga and Billy Graham’s friendship, the rebirth of the evangelical movement in the 1940s and 1950s following the fundamentalist modernist controversy, and the mid-twentieth-century revival that swept across much of the United States. Although Ockenga and Graham are at the center of this story, Rosell emphasizes not what they achieved, but, as they emphasized, what God did through them and their associates. The story Rosell tells is a story about a “surprising work of God.”

Rosell lists several factors that contributed to the rebirth of the evangelical movement during the 1940s and 1950s. Historians will recognize and agree with Rosell’s list. Rosell, however, adds one factor to the common list. According to Rosell, Ockenga and Graham’s friendship was another factor in reversing the effects of the fundamentalist retrenchment following the fundamentalist-modernist controversy.

Ockenga and Graham’s relationship was extraordinary. The two men were very different. Ockenga was from the North; Graham was from the South. Ockenga grew up in an urban environment; Graham grew up on a dairy farm. Ockenga was an intellectual; Graham was an average student, though a lifelong learner. Ockenga was a settled pastor; Graham was an itinerant evangelist. Nevertheless, in spite of their differences, Ockenga and Graham developed a friendship that continued for decades and was used of God to shape a movement.

Ockenga and Graham met early in Graham’s career as an evangelist when he came to Boston to speak at a series of public meetings that served as a catalyst for a revival that would spread throughout New England and, eventually, the United States. Graham and Ockenga were at the forefront of this “surprising work of God,” though, as Rosell reports, they were supported by a number of other persons, including Merv Rosell, the author’s father.

Although Ockenga and Graham were two very different people, they shared a desire to unify Protestants from all denominations in the proclamation of the gospel throughout the United States and around the world. They consciously crossed the lines of separation their fundamentalist brethren drew in the sand to proclaim the good news to all people, even though it provoked criticism and prompted some friends to abandon them. Their shared passion for evangelism drew them together. Repeatedly throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the two men found themselves working together on projects that would further the proclamation of the gospel throughout the United States and around the world.

Rosell’s superbly written story is grounded in thorough research, including the Harold John Ockenga Papers and the Merv Rosell Papers. Rosell