

## THE EARLY YEARS OF THE *JOURNAL OF THE EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY*

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The early years of the Society's *Journal* consisted in mimeographed copies of a number of the papers that were presented at the annual meeting of the Society that at that time ran about 40 in attendance. Dr. John Walvoord, from Dallas Theological Seminary, edited most of these non-published volumes, while Wheaton College facilitated the distribution of the papers to all of the members.

In 1958 the *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* was born under the managing editorship of Dr. Neil Winegarden and the literary editorship of Dr. Steven Barabas, both professors at Wheaton College. In those days several other faculty members served as short-term editors, such as Dr. Arthur Holmes and Dr. John Luchies. The *Bulletin* began with only 18 pages and contained no book reviews until 1963. A modest beginning compared with our most recent issue that ran 218 pages including 34 book reviews!

The budget for the whole first year (four issues) was not to exceed \$750. Interestingly, the average *Bulletin* issue ran less than 40 pages for the first six years. Footnotes averaged about 35 per paper but were seldom more than a brief reference or two with little annotation.

You might be interested in a few of the paper titles from 1958 to 1962: Ned Stonehouse, "The Infallibility of Scripture and Evangelical Progress"; Kenneth Kantzer, "The Christology of Karl Barth"; Arthur Holmes, "The Nature of Theistic Apologetics"; Bernard Ramm, "The Apologetic of the Old Testament: The Basis of a Biblical and Christian Apologetic"; and J. Barton Payne, "The Imminent Appearing of Christ."

Professor Luchies, a philosopher, was known as a smart or spiffy dresser. During one of his courses, students secretly appointed one young man to sit in the front row and to write down in detail a description of all the items of clothing he was wearing each class period. They did not observe him wearing the same outfit until three fourths of semester later! When they disclosed this to him, he thanked them for their careful scrutiny and then said, "Class dismissed!" He was also known as an excellent teacher.

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Dr. Steve Barabas was a friendly, amiable, gentle, and wise man of God who frequently would stand up in faculty meetings and quote Scripture as an aid to resolving deadlocked debates, such as faculty salary raises or the school's dancing policy and other weighty issues. He also had one of the largest personal libraries of any faculty member at Wheaton in those days.

Four years later, in 1962, Dr. Samuel Schultz, professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College, stepped into the editor's position and held on for 14 years until 1976 when Dr. Ron Youngblood was roped into the job. During Sam Schultz's oversight the *Bulletin* grew in size to about 80–90 pages. The first six book reviews appeared in the fall of 1963 supervised by competent theologian Dr. Kenneth Kantzer. In 1968 there appeared for the first time in the periodical a "reply" to another member's published paper. Dr. Norman Geisler was afforded an opportunity to respond to Dr. Arthur Holmes's view of whether "inerrancy" was derived from Scripture by inductive, deductive, or as Holmes argued, by adductive logic. In 1969 the *Bulletin's* name was changed to *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, the name that continues to the present.

Sam Schultz was a good friend and colleague—an able Old Testament scholar with a keen mind for detail. He is best known for his long lasting volume, *The Old Testament Speaks*. I well remember one of his Wheaton College chapel addresses some 30 years ago on Jeremiah 9:23–24: "Thus says the Lord: Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom, do not let the mighty boast in their might, do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth; but let those who boast, boast in this, that they understand and know me, that I am the Lord; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the Lord" (NRSV). It was a powerful scriptural exhortation, the remembrance of which has brought great benefit to me through the years.

In conclusion of my small part in the evening's program let me say this. Since I am the only non-editor that is on the panel, I believe I can speak these words for all of us with no self-serving purpose. As I look back over the years of the *Bulletin* and the *Journal*, I am very thankful for the tireless and often unappreciated sacrificial labor that these men, including those who are here on the platform, have given to us in making these selected and excellently edited scholarly papers available to us for our own research and development as well as for the edification of the church worldwide. How rich, indeed, has been this contribution. We stand in deep debt to these dedicated servants of Christ.

Finally, let me quote a portion of a Presidential address that was given on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Society in 1958 by Dr. Warren Young, a founding member of the Society, entitled, "Whither Evangelicalism?" His wise words seemed to me to be as directly applicable to our Society today as it was nearly 50 years ago. This return to the wisdom of the past is, in my opinion, a greatly overlooked value of our publication, and I am thankful for Dr. Köstenberger's efforts to make some of these more easily accessible in the volume just presented.

We are reminded as we gather here on this occasion that this is our tenth year of meeting together. In this year before us we bring to a close the first decade our Society. Perhaps it is fitting for us to consider again the matter of our existence. Why was ETS organized in the first place? What is our function? Are we accomplishing the primary aims that brought this Society into being?

Certainly this aim is not to be achieved by following one another around in the same circle, as Dr. Tozer so well pointed out. Progress is attained only when there are those who are willing to engage in creative explorations. Unfortunately the tendency has been in the past to evaluate sincere scholarly efforts as evidence of heretical, theological deviations. This has not always been true, but it certainly has happened. The result has been to stifle academic endeavor and to place a damper on any novelty in theological expression. Let us hope that that day is slipping into the past in American evangelical endeavor.

This does not mean that we shall not evaluate the work of each other. In fact quite the contrary should be the case. It does mean that ETS will best be fulfilling its function when the sincere efforts of others are evaluated in an atmosphere unclouded by theological witch hunting. At the same time we know that we shall all make mistakes—many of them. No doubt I have made a big one this evening! But let us strive as brethren in Christ to judge the efforts of others in the spirit of love which should motivate all the work of Jesus Christ. If, as we search for truth, we do err; let others be ready to point out the nature of the error and so lead one another back to the center of our evangelical faith. If we shall aid one another in this way we shall make real advances for the cause of Christ and we shall not deviate far, nor long, from the normative center which should always be our goal. On the other hand, if honest and sincere efforts in scholarly advancement are to be viewed in the negative atmosphere of theological suspicion, we shall destroy our own usefulness and with it the very purpose of our existence as a Society.

We believe that no man is omniscient and infallible. We reserve such thoughts for God our Creator. Today we often see through a glass darkly, but one day face to face. Let us strive to know as best we can the Truth that is found in the Christian gospel and to relate it to a constantly changing world. And let us also, as we endeavor to achieve this goal, 'bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.' By so doing it seems to us that the Evangelical Theological Society may best serve in the advance of the Christian faith.<sup>1</sup>

To which I would say, Amen and Amen!

<sup>1</sup> *BETS* 2/1 (1958) 14–15.