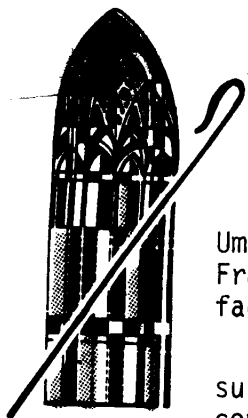


The Franciscan Times



EASTERTIDE, 1990

The Franciscan Times is an irregularly-published newsletter, aimed at helping member of The Third Order of the Society of St. Francis to keep in touch. We welcome newsletters from Fellowships, news stories of Fellowships and individuals, poetry, book reviews, meditations, and what have you. There is no certain deadline, but items are saved up until there's enough to make up an issue (and when time permits). Send your contributions to Joanne Maynard, 312 Clark, Apt. A, Helena, MT 59601. Thank you for your help.



A VISIT TO ASSISI III

John Metcalfe

From the basilica of Santa Maria della Angela, which sits on the broad Umbrian plain, some 2 to 3 miles from Assisi, the great basilica of St. Francis juts out of the side of the mountain like a huge ship, its prow facing the valley.

Assisi, like most cities built in medieval Italy, is built on a hill, surrounded by a great wall, surmounted by a fort, as protection from the constant invasions. Assisi differs from its neighbors in that it is built on the flank of the mountain, with two forts perched atop of the ridge. The wall which once girded its houses has mostly disappeared, but several of the "gates" persist.

Immediately upon entering the curving road leading to the city, you see the parking lot for the Great Basilica, with its rows of horse stalls left over from a gentler age. A long flight of steps leads from the parking area to the Great Church, the size of many Cathedrals. Immediately upon entering, one sees an exhibit of the actual garments worn by St. Francis and his followers so long ago. Most of them seem to have been made of a burlap-type cloth, and are copiously patched.

In the body of the church, the altar, backed by rows of choir stalls, a symphony of walnut, is dimly seen far in the front. The walls of the church are emblazoned with large paintings depicting major scenes in the life of St. Francis. These were painted immediately after the church was built, on the wet plaster walls by the gentle and talented Giotto. When we first visited Assisi in 1968, the frescos, as painting on wet plaster is called, were so dim and faint as to be utterly indistinguishable. On our last visit in 1985, the paintings had been glowingly and brilliantly restored.

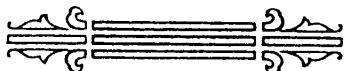
From the upper Great Church we made our way to the spiritual core of Assisi, the chapel below where our Brother Francis is buried in a black stone plinth, the twelve men who were his first followers buried in the same black stone in a curving arc about him.

This is an area of great emotional outlet, usually filled with the pilgrims from all over the world. In later visits, my wife and I witnessed scenes of great stress by people who pleaded for the prayers of the Saints for their many needs and desires -- often imploring his help in various tongues.

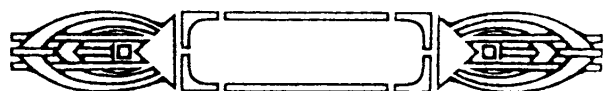
Notable in the chapel is a large oil lamp suspended from the ceiling, which is filled with oil each Francistide, by the mayor of a designated town or "commune" in Italy. Each commune has its turn, and this is the occasion of a monumental turnout of people from the honored commune. Many of the cities and towns of Italy are politically controlled by the communists, but rarely has the mayor of a commune controlled by the communists failed to be present when it is his city's turn to fill the oil lamp at the tomb fo St. Francis. The amount of oil poured into the lamp lasts exactly one year.

As are all the churches in Italy, the Basilica of St. Francis is equipped with its "store" where religious articles of every description are to be had. My wife, who is a happy but cautious shopper, had an opportunity, while I confronted each black-robed friar with, "Capisco Americano?" to be answered usually with shrugged shoulders. Finally one brother answered my query with, "Si, si -- uno momeno." He thereupon reappeared with an English-speaking friar from Malta who answered my curiosity about brown-robed and black-robed Franciscans. He explained that the "brown" friars were the First Order friars and the "black" friars were of the Third Order Regular. This order was evidently formed later, from the members of the Third Order, like ourselves, who desired a more formal religious life. They now are in ministry at the Basilica of St. Francis.

Later we saw many other orders of Franciscans on the streets os Assisi, but someone else will have to explain them, as I can't.



(More to come)



IN CASE YOU DIDN'T SEE the note in the recent Information Sheet, Anne Hocker has discovered a source on inexpensive copper chains, which "look-like they were made to go with our profession crosses." Just \$3.75, plus postage, from Butte Copper Co., P.O. Box 3891, Butte, MT, 59702.



Remember that THE BASICS are available from the secretary, Jacqui R. Belcher, 611 East Bay Street, Savannah, GA 31401:

- The Devotional Companion \$4.00
- The Way of St. Francis 2.50
- The Source Book 2.50
- The Religious Life 2.00

Since Butte is only about 65 miles from where I'm sitting right now, it was a funny feeling to read this, and to wonder how she found this out, and if she was in Montana.

--oo00oo--

Nina Andrews has written, with a question for her fellow Franciscans •

"Please help me and others. On page 79 of the Book of Common Prayer (Morning Prayer II), the prayer of Confession of Sin, the sentence; 'we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves' troubles me.



(Nina's letter, from page 2)

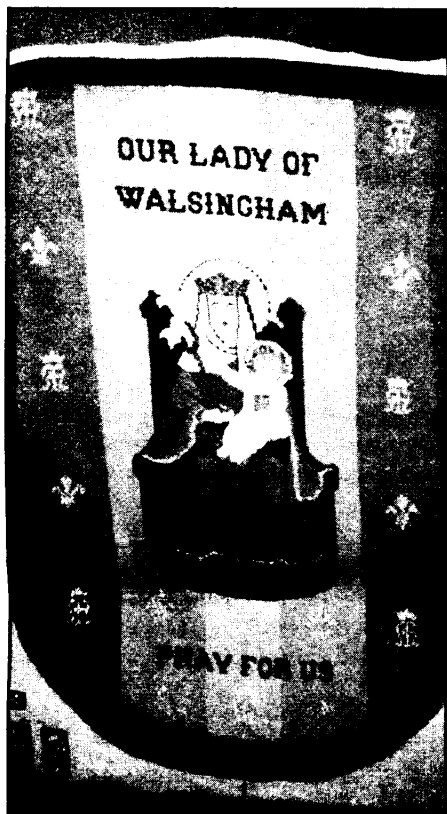
"In my private devotions I pray it like this: 'we have not loved our neighbors -- or ourselves -- as you love them and us.'

"Do you see why I pray it like I do? Is it wrong to pray it so?

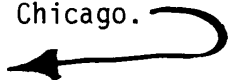
"I know it is presumptuous to think we ever could, but should not that be our goal? To try by God's grace to try to imitate Jesus Christ, who is God's Son.

"Thank you whether or not you can help me to know if it is wrong to pray like that."

Lovingly in Christ,
Nina



This photo appeared in Anglican Advance, the news magazine of the Diocese of Chicago.



THE PORTIUNCULA MESSENGER

BRINGS NEWS OF THE East Tennessee Fellowship. The February issue reports that the fellowship was well represented at the Southeast Convocation at Ignatius House in September. Brs. John Dotson, John Tolbert, Fr. Boulet and Fr. Pickles traveled together to the meeting

and met there Fr. Cliff McWhorter from Millington, TN, who has been able to attend some of their meetings, even though his home is about 450 miles away.

John Dotson has been elected convenor for 1990, and they will host the 1990 Convocation. They're now responsible for having Third Order mailings printed and mailed. That includes The Franciscan Times.

Recent meetings have included programs on the role of hymns in worship, and another on liturgy.

"Evangelism" will be the theme of their Convocation this fall.



SANTA BARBARA FELLOWSHIP

Barbara Kelly has been keeping us up to date on the Santa Barbara Fellowship. Here are some excerpts from her letters:

"The depleted Santa Barbara Fellowship received a tonic when Barbara Baumgarten moved to Santa Paula (about an hour's drive away). Just knowing she was there encouraged more activity here. A high profile for the Third Order was inked in by the Companion-Parish visit of a team of First Order friars and sisters, all of whom shared their spiritual experiences with a group of parishioners.

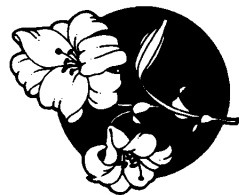
"Our first fellowship meeting took place on the Feast of St. Francis...we had several parishioners at the table with us for a pot-luck meal. Afterwards we read the Evening Office and talked about the life and death of St. Francis...

"Three of us met over a simple meal for the Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. We talked about Elizabeth's short life, so full of kindness, caring acts, suffer-

ing, love and spiritual triumph. We found a great gap between our lives and hers, but we all seemd to want to try to close it as must as possible. Our church a few years ago led the way in this city in care of the homeless; people are still cooking a meal every few weeks and spending the night at scheduled time in Transition House, an outgrowth of parish caring...

"In January a group met at my house for gab, tea and Office... Marylee Prince, postulant, organized the gathering. Jean Eaglesong, an aspirant, and Carrie and Gray Brothers, inquirers, had fun with "music talk" -- all are instrumentalists, though Gray's instrument is his voice... It was the feast of Fabian, martyr and bishop, and we considered (a bit lightly) how easily the Holy Spirit seems to single out someone no one thought of considering...

"In December Gary Commins, Marylee Prince, Jean Eaglesong, and the Rev. S. Mortimer Ward IV and wife Sandi gathered with my husband Frank and me to welcome Br. Robert Hugh, SSF at lunch. Fr. Ward is an Oblate of the Order of the Holy Cross and we heard about the progress of alterations to their monastery 1,000 feet above Santa Barbara..."



BOOK REVIEW:

By Brother John-Charles, SSF

Faith and Sexism: Guidelines for Religious Education

by Marianne Sawicki. pp 93. \$5.95. Published by Seabury. Available from Harper & Row.

Originally commissioned by the United States Catholic Conference, and then rejected by it, this important small book breaks new ground. It is invaluable for all teachers and preachers who want to learn how to avoid not just sexist language, but also sexist concepts. The author is the editor of Liturgy magazine. With the aid of several experts, she has provided guidelines on 85 key topics. Theological discussion, scriptural insights, and, on the basis of these, practical, sensible advice characterise these short notes.

Sawicki's aim is to help us avoid language which is offensive and to disclose to us the dangers of the stereotyping of male and female roles in catechesis. So deeply rooted and hidden are some of these that her exposition will shock many who think themselves already liberated from prejudice. So far there is no other book like this.

The Prologue, with brilliant conciseness, outlines the problem, highlights the importance of a catechesis which is aware of the urgent need to face the problems and overcome them, and demonstrates that this task is rooted in the Gospel.

This book is one of the most sensible approaches to this area of pastoral responsibility which I have so far discovered. I am grateful for it and recommend it highly,



LILLIES OF THE FIELD

We have not heard from them lately, but their December newsletter reports on a fall meeting which began with Evening Prayer and the renewal of vows for Sally Hicks and Alice White. Alice had prepared a meal, after which they studied the Formation Letters on Meditation and Joy.

Betty Wood shared her experiences from the AIDS conference she attended and wrote a brief paper on the experience and her impressions.

I CORINTHIANS 13, PARAPHRASED

If I could speak with tongues of men,
and angel voice also command;
but have not love, my words are vain
as sounding brass and cymbal's clang.

And though I give all I possess
while striving to my love profess,
but do not give from love within,
I nothing gain, I nothing win.

Though I have faith the earth to move,
it is no use without God's love.
To understand this mystery,
it is his love that holds the key.

Love never fails. Love never dies.
All else may pass beyond my eyes.
Now I am blind. I cannot see,
but with my Lord I clear-eyed I'll be.

And now abide faith, hope and love,
the gifts sent down from God above.
The greatest gift among the three:
the love of Christ that set me free.

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Dearlie B. Moline



SOUTH-EAST FLORIDA FELLOWSHIP

On the 18th of November, we had our meeting at Anne Pruet's house at 11:00 a.m. and it was a garden-type setting in an airy, natural type of Florida Keys atmosphere. In attendance were: Dee Dobson (Minister Provincial), Fr. Sam Hale and Jessie, Betty Melpha, Elaine Schofield, Bob Glendenning, Diane Darrah and our charming hostess Anna.

After a social time, we had noonday prayer led by Fr. Hale. At 12:15 we had a lovely luncheon of ham and many tasty items and after the fruit salad, we had our business meeting there on the porch. We discussed how our rule of life has helped our lives and we went over the structure of the Third Order and decided to consider sharing thoughts about books we have read, at future meetings.

Also, because Fr. Hale has moved from the area, we will have Betty as our new convenor, and we are aware that there will be nominations for a new Minister Provincial next spring.

We adjourned our meeting at 3:15, and Dee went home to Miami with a trunk full of cocoanuts fresh from the Darrahs' trees.

-- Joyfully submitted by Diane C. Darrah

From Anglican
Information editors' review



A last word . . . an addendum

Further to the article on the Franciscans which appeared in *Anglican Information* No. 56 (September 1989) the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, the Rt Revd John Dennis, adds the following information to the article. Bishop Dennis is Chaplain to the Third Order Franciscans in their Province of Europe.

'Even in his own day many who could not be Friars or Sisters followed St Francis's spirituality in The Third Order he founded. Today within the Society of St Francis Tertiaries flourish. As a separate Order within the family world-wide they number more than 2,500, consisting of women and men, ordained and lay, single and married, committed to the Franciscan way in their daily lives. Tertiaries commit themselves permanently with a Rule of Life. They meet in groups and support each other when they can. Always they pray for each other. Seen as a handmaid of the Church, the Third Order has a valued and growing place.'

From: Helen Webb

Source: Mary Our Queen Fraternity, S.F.Q., Baltimore, MD

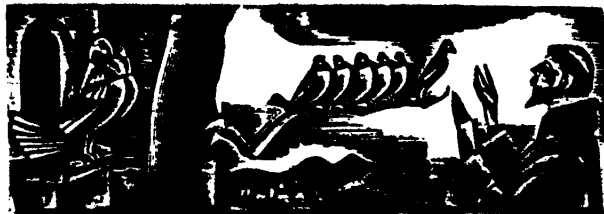
"According to our rule, self-evangelization is accomplished through changing our personal disposition and our lifestyle. Prayer and participation in the sacraments, particularly reconciliation, help bring about our continual conversion from self-centeredness to God-centeredness. We evangelize ourselves through our lifestyle by having simple living, an experience of community and selfless service as qualities of our everyday life. These efforts at self-evangelization prepare us to evangelize others through concrete action in specific ministries and apostolates.

"According to our rule, our primary apostolates for spreading the gospel are in the areas of peace, work, family, ecology and justice. We need to understand how our American way of life is opposed to or supportive of a gospel way of life particularly in these areas. Once understanding has been achieved, we, individually and together in the Fraternity, are obligated to take action. Secular Franciscans will then be leaders in the Church's efforts to make Christ, our Good News, tangible in our society.

1. Are you convinced that the Secular Franciscan way of life and the call to evangelize culture are one and the same?
2. How is the American way of life supportive of or opposed to a gospel-centered way of life in the five areas of our Secular Franciscan apostolate: peace, work, family, ecology and justice?
3. In what ways does the institutional Church support or fail to support lay efforts to evangelize the culture? "

Comment: These ideas should challenge us. How do we make Our Lord known and loved?

Helen Webb



THE GEORGIA FELLOWSHIP has issued the most beautiful publication called "The Singer." The first issue came out in Advent. John La Boone is editor. Jacqui Belcher is advisor. Fellowship convenor is The Rev. Peter Stube. The booklet contains poetry, news, writings and drawings. It is wonderfully made. Plans are to publish three times a year. Back issues and subscriptions are available by writing to The Singer, P.O. Box 2173, Brunswick, GA 31521. They plan to circulate this publication outside the Third Order, creating an "open door."

THE BROTHER JUNIPER FELLOWSHIP

Their March newsletter revealed that they were planning a "Franciscan Friday" on March 30, to feature "Pizza and Puzzle."

Nancy Kangas was professed recently, and Carolyn Metzler is trying her vocation in the Third Order in the Br. Juniper Fellowship. Bob Durland is no longer Area Chaplain. He has moved to Hawaii as administrative assistant at the large church there. The Rev. Henry Bird, TSSF is the new area chaplain.

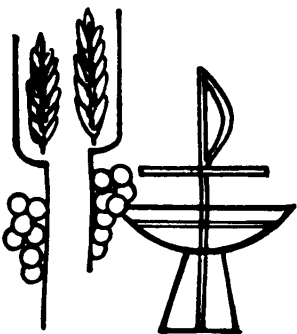


16.2 I am the Good Shepherd
I know mine and mine know me
(John 10:14)

Andrea Albright was noviced at a recent meeting of the DALLAS FELLOWSHIP. We've been receiving a schedule of their meetings, but no news about what is going on there.

THE WESTERN CONVOCATION

is planned for August 10-12 at The Bishop's Ranch, Healdsburg, California. The theme is "Salt in Ourselves -- Peace with One Another."



L.I.F. LINE



The Newsletter of the Long Island Fellowship, Society of St. Francis, Third Order

Br. John-Charles spoke to their group at a meeting last fall. He also celebrated the Eucharist. Ken and Elva Norian celebrated their tenth wedding anniversary at that gathering.

Jeff Holloway, in their news letter, gave a summary of Br. John-Charles's remarks. In part, he wrote: "Lake Francis, our prayer can be incessant praise and thanksgiving: he always sought the Giver, never the gifts; only through devotion can we learn to see the workings of God's grace; it is the glory of the Kingdom that God is 'enthroned upon the praises of His people.'

...And like Francis we can find our poverty in true repentance: the moment our hearts can wish that we could wish' to repent of our most treasured sins, then we have begun to be spiritually poor; 'God does not require instant perfection, but infinite desire for righteousness'; 'my God and my All' are repeated words which occupy the mind so that the soul is free to pray in total praise and thanksgiving. Amen!"

Ken Norian has been presenting a three-part program recently, titled "Cradle, Cross and Cup" -- focusing on the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Eucharist. Jane Ellen Traugott had a house blessing for her new home in January. She will also entertain the Fellowship at her home in May.

THE LAND OF THE SKY FELLOWSHIP....

MET FOR THEIR ANNUAL pree-Christmas feast, and were directed in an impromptu one-act play by David Nard. The play was based on the Cave at Greccio on Christmas Eve, and everyone agreed that it should become an annual tradition. They also "agreed we could use a little practice on our Italian accents..."

In January they met and discussed possible programs and themes. Betty Bell led the group in discussion and self-examination on the role of their Fellowship, the focus of their ministry, and ways in which they might communicate the gospel and manifest their Franciscan vocations in an outward way.

They're putting together a song sheet for their meetings. Everyone wore green to their St. Patrick's Day Bash. They plan a spring retreat in May at Snail's Pace, Saluda, NC.



THE MINNESOTA FELLOWSHIP...

...HELD A QUIET DAY ON DECEMBER 9, with The Rev. David Burgdorf celebrating Mass and giving the meditations. It was held at the beautiful Oratory of St. Mary, where, according to their newsletter, "it was a truly Franciscan occasion with the birds and deer who came to watch and listen..."

At their January meeting, Mary Metcalf brought a book of Vermeer's paintings and shared some of her insights. At their February meeting, Barbara Leonard spoke about dreams and what they can teach us.

The group plans a Fellowship Retreat May 18 - 20.



The Word is Very Near You — A Guide to Praying With Scripture by Martin L. Smith. (Cowley Publishing. Paper \$9.95. Also available in hardback as a selection of The Episcopal Book Club.)

Prayer is not an act we perform, but is rather our response to God's reaching out to us. This book shows how the Bible can guide our prayer response, providing hundreds of scriptural passages, arranged thematically, which serve as a functional reference to help readers direct their responses to God into biblically based prayers.

This book is a practical companion for those who want to make the transition from ordinary conversational prayer to meditative, receptive prayer with Scripture.

The author offers training in three ways of meditation: prayer with stories, prayer with holy readings, and prayer with images.

He writes, "Preachers have the habit of urging us to listen for God's voice, but we seldom get any guidance about what this listening is supposed to consist in... Many people do not expect to 'hear' God in prayer. For them an answer to prayer is a subsequent event... God's side of the conversation of prayer tends to be regarded as a rather laconic affair of yes or no, wait or maybe, conveyed through the sign-language of events and non-events."

The first part of this book could take a lot of the pressure off those of us who feel that we have to find the "right" way to

pray, or to pray with a certain intensity in order to be heard and our hopes granted.

Martin L. Smith is an Episcopal priest and a member of the Society of St. John the Evangelist.

Passionate Women by Elizabeth Dreyer (Paulist Press. \$3.95)

This small book is subtitled "Two Medieval Mystics." You may never have heard of Hildegard of Bingen or Hadewijch of Antwerp, but you will receive an introduction to them here. With the recent renewed interest in Julian of Norwich, other spiritual women are being recognized and their writings being enjoyed by a new generation of readers.

Hildegard's writings are full of color and light. Hadewijch writes of love. Together, they give the reader new thoughts and insights into the relationship of God and his creatures.

*A couple of book reviews
written by Anne Maynard, for
The Evangelist - Diocese of Montana*

"The Mind must not seduce the Spirit"

Larry Hardy led the group in a discussion based on a most interesting essay he has written on "Anti-intellectualism in St Francis". Larry has for some time been interested in the idea of de-mythologising St Francis, and investigated several areas of the franciscan record and the life of Francis himself in this regard. Francis of Assisi and franciscanism, it seems, may be viewed on several different levels. There is the sentimental/romanticised version; there is the Francis of myth and legend; and there are the empirical facts about Francis and his movement. De-mythologising is not the same as debunking. There are many

areas that fall in between these categories, and further, there is much that we simply don't know, in an empirical sense. It is important, in the case of St Francis, to let myth be myth and to let it speak to us at a different, often a deeper and more powerful level, than the plain facts.

St-Francis' personal attitude toward the intellect, scholarship, books and learning, is not a simple formula to follow. Simplicity, by way of irony, seems to be the rule. St Francis forbade his brothers from owning books and was suspicious of libraries and universities, especially when his friars became involved. The issue at stake seems to have been one of attachment to the things of this world, a preoccupation with the intellect and the danger of that variety of scholarly "hubris" that characterised many of the scholastic philosophies during the Middle Ages. Francis contended for the purity of the Gospel, as evidenced by his own literal and spontaneous approach to scripture. Beyond some of his own personal prejudices, his concern seems to have been for the poverty and humility of his brothers and sisters in the Order, that these things should not be "seduced" by the intellect, but that the spirit should rule.

Juxtaposed to this is Francis' attitude toward the theologians of the church and toward the learned. "Honor and venerate the theologians," he said, "for they give us spirit and life." His own love for St Anthony of Padua, a brilliant scholar and friar, is evidence for Francis' high regard for learning. The Franciscan Order has for centuries continued to debate the question of learning and scholarship, from the days of Francis' devoted biographer St Bonaventure to the present. The Franciscan movement seems overall to have been enriched by this debate, for the order has been marked through the years by scholarship, as well as by music and the arts, by literature, and by many heroic acts of simplicity, charity, humility, and disaffection with attachments. Let us pray that these seemingly contradictory elements will continue to breathe life into our order.



BOOK REVIEW by Brother John-Charles, SSF

Contours of a World View by Arthur F. Holmes. Volume 1 in the series "Studies in a Christian World View" (sponsored by the Institute for Advanced Christian Studies, Chicago) Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI \$5.75.

Rumors of War: A Moral and Theological Perspective on the Arms Race. Edited by C.A. Cesaretti and Joseph T. Vitale. Seabury Press \$6.95. Available from Harper & Row.

There is, Holmes argues, a Christian synthesis which stands over against "the positivistic, the Marxist, the liberal humanitarian" point of view. If this is to be made known then "the influence of non-Christian assumptions" has to be "ferreted out" and "distinctively Christian Presuppositions" must be brought to bear in their place.

This volume is an introduction to this task. It looks at the importance and the nature of the non-Christian views and sketches the outline of a Christian view of the world. The author opts for a Christian view which is a living alternative to "naturalistic humanism," and it sketches how such a view "in action" would affect our lives.

This book is an urgent call to make an appropriate response to the problems which face us. The emphasis is on that renewal of persons and relationships which would be a sign and foretaste of the Kingdom of God.

Rumors of War with its introduction by the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, is one attempt to "create a learning environment in which the human tensions that exist within us are explored." (p.1)

This is an admirable resource book designed for use in adult discussion groups. It is most useful only after careful preparation, and guidance is given on how best this may be done.

Each study grows out of biblical considerations and the whole is arranged so as to facilitate the study of the major themes in sequence (peace, security, the idea of a just war, and Christian responsibility and stewardship in this area).

Appendix A contains a catena of impressive personal testimonies and statements. The use of this book could lessen the emotional content of discussions on this issue and assist in the replacement of it with informed objectivity.