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Editor's Note

This issue of the newsletter comes out later than was scheduled. Recent weeks have proved to be one of those periods when demands exceed the daily allotment of time. Despite the lateness of this issue, I trust you will find its content of interest. I am, from this later vantage point, able to report that we had successful CTS meetings in Quebec City. It was a strong program and some sessions had more than 40 in attendance.

The long-standing conversation between theology and science has been gaining an increased profile over the last few years. Templeton funding can be credited with aiding in generating much discussion and contributing to the higher profile for this dialogue. Long before this recent flurry of activity, theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg was engaging in this dialogue. The two part interview below offers a recent look at Pannenberg's thinking about God and creation. The question of how God relates to the world continues to capture the attention of many in the theological community. This interview with Pannenberg offers considerable grist for the mill to reflect on this problem. Whether one agrees with Pannenberg or not his comments are provocative for current theological reflection.

The death of George Schner has meant a deep personal loss to the those who knew him well. It is likewise a significant loss to Canada's theological community and to CTS. George's energetic style and his passion for the doing of theology served well to engage colleagues and students alike in dialogue on key theological issues. A former student pays tribute to this exceptional man, and with him we lament the loss of a colleague and friend.

John Williams gives his final report on the activities of HSSFC. John has served well as a representative of CTS and other "small societies" and we are grateful for all his good work on our behalf.

Congress 2002 will be held in Toronto - May 26 -28. The overall theme for the meetings is Boundaries: Geography, Gender, and Genre.

It has occurred to me that the newsletter may be read less in its email version than it did in the old fashioned hard copy version. I raised this at the annual meeting and was reassured that the membership does give due attention to the email version. The submissions for "membership news and publications" has fallen off dramatically. I would be pleased to receive your contributions on these matters. It is always of interest to the membership to know what others are up to. You can send me this information by email or regular mail.

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Confessions of a Trinitarian Evolutionist:

**Thomas Jay Oord (Eastern Nazarene College) interviews Wolfhart Pannenberg -
St. Paul, Minnesota, March 9, 2001**

Below is a two-part interview with Wolfhart Pannenberg, best known for his work in philosophy (or theology) of history and philosophy (or theology) of science. These interests are reflected in such works as *Revelation as History* (English: 1968) and *Theology and the Philosophy of Science* (English: 1976). In 1991, the first volume of his three-volume *Systematic Theology* was published in English by Eerdmans.

In the following quote, Pannenberg shows how his philosophy of time, and hence, of history, informs his notion of creation.

"I emphasize that eternity is not only the opposition to time, but it comprises the wholeness of life as possessed in one present that is not going away. Eternity comprises time, but it is distinct from time....Given this view of eternity, it is not difficult to understand that the eternal God also is engaged in the temporal process. God didn't have to create a world. But, after He decided to create a world, He was bound to that decision."

Part One

Thomas Jay Oord: As you enter the latter stages of your career, you've probably reflected some on your contributions as a scholar. What experiences in your childhood or youth do you now see as particularly influential in shaping these contributions?

Wolfhart Pannenberg: As you may know, I was not raised in a Christian family. Although I was baptized as a child, I did not have a Christian education. But in 1945, I had a visionary experience at the occasion of a sunset. Light flooded all around and through myself, and I don't know where I was or how long it lasted. It may have lasted for an eternity. Afterwards, I found myself a humble human being and was just puzzled. I thought I had to come to terms with that event and what it really meant to me. It happened on the sixth of January, 1945. I didn't know at the time that the sixth of January is the feast of Christ's glorification of epiphany. Later on, I thought it was significant that it was on this particular day. I became, so to speak, metaphysically awakened. But I didn't yet know the purpose of this awakening.

I had read from Nietzsche and Kant before I was sixteen -- even before I had read the first line of the Bible. By my reading of Nietzsche, I thought that I was perfectly informed about what I should think about Christianity. But I met some people who didn't fit in that specter of guilt or obsessed parrotism. I met some Christians who seemed to be quite jolly and joyous human beings, and I was puzzled as to how that could be so. This contributed to my decision to find out about Christianity by studying theology. So, I started studying theology in 1945. I was increasingly attracted to the content of the Christian message and the profound nature of Christian doctrine. I soon came to the conclusion that what happened to me on the sixth of January, 1945 was really the light of Christ.

Oord: Much has been made of Karl Barth and Gerhard von Rad's influence upon your theology. On what areas of your thought do you see them as having the greatest influence?

Pannenberg: Karl Barth was a towering figure in theology right after the war. In my early years as a student, I read through all the volumes of his Church Dogmatics. In 1950, I went to Basel to hear his lectures. I got some very good recommendations from one of Barth's former students, so I was received by Karl Barth very personally and invited to his home. I was impressed by his person and by his teaching. But, in the second semester I spent at Basel, there was a small group that would come together in Barth's home to discuss some of his thoughts. We discussed one of his smaller works called, *The Community of Christians and the State*. There he developed some analogical reasoning, including some conclusions for politics from Christology.

One of these conclusions was that there should be no secret diplomacy as a consequence of our belief that Christ is alive. I didn't find this particularly persuasive. I thought that, perhaps, the world of politics would profit from some more secret diplomacy. So, I criticized Karl Barth. Karl Barth just didn't like criticism. And, so, my relationship with Karl Barth got considerably cooler. But, I always remained impressed by his emphasis that God has to come first in theology, and that the same should be said about Jesus Christ. God, as revealed as Jesus Christ, comes first and should not be replaced by anything else. So, to this extent, I am still influenced by Karl Barth.

Now to von Rad. One of the weaknesses of Karl Barth was that Barth didn't have a real appreciation of Biblical exegesis, especially critical exegesis. Of course, he used the scripture quite a bit. But he had a very personal way of interpreting the Bible. I found by involving myself in historical critical exegesis of biblical writings that this wouldn't do. Theology should be based on the scriptures, of course, but it should be based upon a reading of the scriptures through historical interpretation. After all, the scriptures are historical documents, notwithstanding their being the word of God. Even that has to be settled upon their content as historical documents. I was most impressed by Gerhard von Rad's approach, because he interprets the scriptures, not only as a historian, but as a theologian. He was able to speak of the stories of the Old Testament as if they were about real life -- much more real than the secular life that we experience otherwise. The Old Testament has become an experience of reality for me through the teachings of Gerhard von Rad. His thesis, that God is acting with Israel and with all humanity in history and that history is constituted by the acts of God, has influenced me more than any other thing that I learned as a student.

Oord: Early in your career, it was not uncommon for scholars to point out similarities between your thought and the process thought of people such as John Cobb and Schubert Ogden. This practice is much less common today. Were you misunderstood early on, or have your views changed?

Pannenberg: I think this affinity to process thought, which was propelled by some of my American friends, was due to the fact that I emphasized history as the field of God's revelation and even as belonging to God himself. We cannot speak about God's nature by disregarding God's action. God's nature and God's action have to be kept together. We know about God's nature only through God's action in history. My understanding of God as involved in the history

of humanity was considered to have some relationship to process concerns. To this extent, this was true. I also had to concern myself with the philosophy of Whitehead when I came to Chicago in 1963. This was my first experience in the United States as somebody who is expected to teach theology. At Chicago, you couldn't survive intellectually at that time without having read everything of Whitehead. I was greatly impressed by Whitehead, but I was also critical of Whitehead. I never understood how my dear friend, John Cobb, could reconcile Whitehead's philosophy with a Christian doctrine of creation. After all, Whitehead explicitly denies that his philosophical God is the Creator of the world. He sees God and world in correspondence. I believe that everything comes from God in such a way that God could have been God without creating the world. This is not something that Whitehead could have accepted. Thus, I have always had some reservations with regard to Whiteheadian philosophy. Of course, process thought is much broader than Whitehead. I often asked my friend John Cobb why the process thinkers should be so exclusively focused on Whitehead while disregarding, and even not knowing about, Henri Bergson and Samuel Alexander. These are two great process thinkers before Whitehead who also offer alternative views in process thought. There should be some discussion about what one should prefer within the camp of process thought. I also would like to see process thought in the greater horizon of the development of metaphysical issues in modern philosophy - especially the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

Oord: Many scholars were impressed by your early arguments concerning the actual historical resurrection of Jesus. In what ways have your views on that issue changed over the years?

Pannenberg: There was no reason to change my views, actually. I haven't seen alternative explanations with regards to the Christian Easter tradition that would not be less plausible than the biblical accounts themselves. I used to tell my students that you have to study the biblical texts critically, as you study other historical documents. But, please, be also critical of the critics. There are many students who take their teacher's authority, especially when they are so bold and critical with regards to the biblical texts. So, I prefer to be critical of the critics. Sometimes, alternative reconstructions are almost ridiculous. I never understood how, at Jerusalem, the place of Jesus crucifixion, a Christian congregation could be established a few weeks after that event, proclaiming his resurrection, without firmly and truly being assured about the fact that the tomb was empty. Of course, critics have different explanations for that fact. But, with regard to the tomb of Jesus being empty, the Christian proclamation couldn't have persisted one day in Jerusalem. I often wonder why there are so many scholars whose imagination doesn't suggest to them that this would be possible.

Oord: Early in your career, you insisted on the importance of doing theology against the background of the history of religions. How do you reconcile the universal revelation of God in Christ with a world in which India, after 2000 years, remains largely Hindu and likely will remain so for some time.

Pannenberg: Well, the Christian affirmation of the relation between God and Jesus Christ is constituted by anticipation of the final outcome of all history. This is anticipation of what theologians call, "eschatology," i.e., the last future, when God's kingdom will be definitively realized and Christ will come again and all the dead will raise. This was anticipated in the resurrection of Christ, according to the early Christian proclamation. We have a claim to

universal revelation, but this claim to will be finally vindicated only in the future. Until that happens, there is room for different opinions, and some people think otherwise.

Oord: Some contemporary theologians, adopting the label "narrative theologians," emphasize the church as the primary source of and audience for the stories of theology, thereby minimizing theology's place in public endeavor. What role should public theology have today?

Pannenberg: Let me first comment on the concept of "narrative theology." The biblical stories are narrative. But you have many kinds of narration, of narrative types, and some of the biblical narratives make historical claims. To speak of narratives without mentioning that means to bypass these historical claims. It seems awkward to some theologians to raise these truth questions that are connected to the Christian message. This is replaced by taking recourse to the role of the church, the social context of the Christian message, and so on. I think that, if Christianity had not dealt with truth questions, Christianity would never have become a world religion. Christianity developed a universal mission to all human beings, because it raised universal truth claims concerning the God of Israel as Creator of the world and as manifest in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christianity has to continue in defending these universal truth claims that have been essential for Christianity and especially Christian missions from the very beginning.

Oord: One could interpret volume three of your systematic theology as a more Protestant (read "individualistic") view of the church than a Catholic (read "communitarian") view. Would this be a fair reading?

Pannenberg: This might be a Roman Catholic reading. My Protestant critics say otherwise -- that I place far too much importance on the concept of the church. But Christian theology has to keep these two aspects together. The church is indispensable -- not only important -- but indispensable, because the tradition of the faith and the ongoing proclamation of the gospel to new generations takes place only in the church. The church is commissioned with this responsibility. But the individual believer is not completely dependent upon the authority of the church and its ministry. By the service of the church's proclamation, the believer is led into an immediate relationship with the God that is proclaimed in the Christian gospel. That immediate relationship is what we enjoy in faith. The mediating role of the church is indispensable, but, still, each faithful Christian believer should have a relationship of immediacy with God, sharing in Jesus own relationship with the father. I think this is Christian mysticism that we share in the inner Trinitarian communion of the Son with the Father. Paul himself said so in Romans chapter eight. So, this concern for immediacy is very important, but it is not an alternative to the mediation of the gospel through the services and institutions of the church. The individual Christian believer also cannot exist without communion with the other Christians who share the same body of Christ in receiving his sacraments.

Oord: What does it mean to say, "God is love?" And, is God free not to love?

Pannenberg: This central affirmation of the Bible in the Johannine letters is often misunderstood today. It is thought, "We know what love is, and God has to be loving. Otherwise, we wouldn't accept him." This is a great mistake. God, first of all, is the mystery that constitutes

everything, surrounds us from all sides, and surpasses understanding. Especially in experience, we can't understand this God who surpasses our understanding. The Bible is full of sentences that speak of God's wrath and judgment. Why do people tend to overlook that fact? The judgment of God on human injustice is more evident than the love of God. The prophets of the Old Testament have expressed this. The Jewish people had to wrestle with this. This is not a thing of the past, it continues throughout time, through all of history. It was not a matter of fact statement when Jesus proclaims this God to be the loving Father. It was, rather, a paradox. It is the center of Jesus' message that God's true nature, the true nature of this mystery that surrounds our lives, is Fatherly love. This was closely connected with his proclamation of the imminent kingdom of God that opens up to every believer, even now, the presence of God, which means serving for all eternity. This was what was meant when Jesus spoke of God's love. We should learn about love from the Bible. We shouldn't turn the Bible around into what we think is love.

Oord: If the kingdom of God has been universally and definitively established, as you've argued, why does evil still persist as the most embarrassing reality the Christian gospel confronts?

Pannenberg: In Jesus' message, the kingdom was, first of all, future. It is an immanent future, in the sense of urgency, that makes everything else a secondary concern. That was the point of Jesus' message. But the starting point isn't "the kingdom is future." Jesus also said, in a small number of words, that this future becomes already present where God is accepted as King in the heart of the believer. When the message of the kingdom is accepted, God becomes King in the heart of the believer now. But God is not King in the broad reality of the world, of political institutions, of social structures, and so on. This hasn't changed, basically, since the time of Jesus' teaching. Therefore, we still have evil persisting as an embarrassing reality. We expect that, finally, evil will be overcome by the fulfillment of God's kingdom, the fulfillment of human history, the second coming of Christ, and the day of the last judgment.

Oord: How do you correlate divinely initiated and sanctioned violence in the Old Testament with the nonviolence of Jesus in the New Testament? Is God violent?

Pannenberg: Like I said before, God is not that meekly love that many people say He should be. In the Old Testament, God is one who elected Israel, and this did not always include peaceful relationship with other people. We see, at present, what the problems are in that respect. That God elected Israel and that this would entail violence in relation to other nations was not the final aim of all of God's actions. But God had elected Israel to become a witness of God's will to righteousness for all human beings. Violence is not the last word. The last word of God will be the reconciliation and love. Looking at our present world, it is difficult to understand that this is so. This is an experience that should prompt us, again and again, to adore the mystery of God that surpasses our understanding. Following Jesus, we should believe against the experiences that occur. We should believe that, finally, God will be the God of reconciliation and love. It will be finally evident that this is so.

Oord: Given your doctrine of eternity, to what extent is God essentially affected by historical occurrences? Does it just seem to us that God is affected by history? Or is God essentially affected by what occurs?

Pannenberg: I emphasize that eternity is not only the opposition to time, but it comprises the wholeness of life as possessed in one present that is not going away. Eternity comprises time, but it is distinct from time. In the course of temporal events, some are already passed, they are no more, and some are not yet. In eternity, the whole of life is possessed in one present that is not to be passed over by anything else. Given this view of eternity, it is not difficult to understand that the eternal God also is engaged in the temporal process. God didn't have to create a world. But, after He decided to create a world, He was bound to that decision. Given the fact that the created world exists, God's divine nature is bound up with His kingdom over this world. Therefore, the final outcome of the processes of this world is constitutive in our experience for the fact that the God we believe in really is the eternal God and creator of the world. If the final completion of the kingdom of God did not occur, we would have been in error for believing in this God. But from the perspective of the eternal God Himself, that is not a problem! From the perspective of the eternal God, the reality of the world has to be considered as one process which is complete from the end.

Part Two

As Wolfhart Pannenberg points out in this second part of the interview, because "God is the creator of everything and will be the redeemer of everything, theology has to be concerned with everything." And, as a theologian, Pannenberg certainly is interested in everything: from physics, eschatology, and John Polkinghorne to deconstruction, Nietzsche, and Richard Rorty. Also included in the discussion is a neat little observation about human cloning and a wonderful, and almost antiphonal, view of the relation between science and theology.

Part Two: Thomas Jay Oord's interview of Wolfhart Pannenberg St. Paul, Minnesota, March 9, 2001

Oord: You have long sought to bring theology and science into a mutually illuminating conversation. How would you assess the current state of that conversation?

Pannenberg: I was involved in these conversations since the 50's and 60's in Germany. At that time, there was an important center of such a conversation with some of the leading German physicists, like Heisenberg and von Weiszacker, were involved. Since that time, the center of these conversations has moved to this country. America, with centers of dialogue between science and theology at Berkeley, Chicago, Princeton, and also in other places, is now the center of the whole movement that brings science and religion, but especially science and Christian theology, closer together.

Oord: Your eschatological vision of the God of the Future has influenced several leaders in the science and religion dialogue. Does this surprise you? Or is this something that you would expect?

Pannenberg: When you write something, especially if you write something that is not common knowledge and opinion before you publish it, you can never expect that people will believe it! So, to that extent I am rather surprised that I didn't receive rejection only but received some positive response.

Oord: What do you view as the assets and liabilities of John Polkinghorne's theology of science?

Pannenberg: I think John Polkinghorne is a noted physicist and a remarkable person. His turning, as a physicist, to theology, not only in terms of personal interest but becoming a priest of the Anglican church, is remarkable. He is very serious in his determination to bring science and theology together. The problem with Polkinghorne is that he has no philosophical education. He admits that. It is difficult to do theology without philosophy. In all the history of Christian theology, the close cooperation between philosophy and theology -- though there were often tensions between the two -- has been essential. Without that, Christian theology could never have made its universal claims concerning God. Justifying these universal claims should not start with science, as it sometimes does in our day. Justifying universal claims started with philosophy, and it continues with philosophy. The dialogue between science and theology is possible only on the basis of philosophy. Therefore, it is regrettable that John Polkinghorne, for all his commitment to the dialogue between theology and science, has no appropriate philosophical education.

Oord: Your theology has been described as interdisciplinary. Do you find this description accurate?

Pannenberg: Because God is the creator of everything and will be the redeemer of everything, theology has to be concerned with everything. This doesn't make theology interdisciplinary in a superficial sense. It is interdisciplinary because theology is concerned with only one thing, and that is God.

Oord: Do recent developments in biology, especially the prospect of human cloning, pose new challenges to a Christian understanding of the human person as laid out, of example, in your *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*?

Pannenberg: There are serious reasons against allowing the cloning of human beings. Nevertheless, it is a question of limited importance, because the identity of the human person is constituted by the unique life history of each individual person, starting only from his or her birth. This would not change even by the cloning of human beings. We have the example of identical twins who have the same genetic constitution. But even those persons have different life experiences. They are different individuals because of their different life history. This must also apply to individuals that were produced through cloning. Therefore, the significance of cloning is limited concerning the concept of the human person. There would still be a uniqueness of each human person with regard to the life history that constitutes this or another person's identity.

Oord: Is there any analogy between (1) the divine field of relations in Trinity and (2) various physical fields found in natural science, for example, the electromagnetic field?

Pannenberg: There is an analogy, certainly, but no identity. I always emphasize this. There are some anxieties, expressed by physicists as well as theologians, that I would confound physics and theology in applying the field concept to theology by appropriating field theory for the language of theology. But I am not identifying the divine reality as a field concept with the fields

as described by physics. That would amount to idolatry. God as a Creator is working in His creation through His creatures. This doesn't distract from the immediacy of the relationship between the Creator and His creatures. God always used creatures to bring about other things. Think of the function of the earth in the first part of Genesis. The earth is addressed by God to assist in His act of creation. First, the earth is addressed to bring about vegetation. So we may wonder, "How can the earth, an inorganic reality, bring about an organic reality, vegetation, and then bring about the self organization of organisms from inorganic materials?" Yet, this is the Christian creation story. The second address of the earth is even bolder than that! God addresses the earth to bring about animals. And the text means higher animals. Such boldness does not really characterize even Darwin's theory of evolution. Darwin wouldn't have dreamed to have higher animals spring immediately from the earth, from inorganic matter. Darwin is much more moderate than that. In criticizing the doctrine of evolution, our creationist friends among Christian theologians should read their Bibles more closely.

Oord: Would you call yourself a theistic evolutionist?

Pannenberg: I would call myself a Trinitarian evolutionist.

Oord: Toward what direction would you like to see the science and religion dialogue go?

Pannenberg: Ernan McMullin, the philosopher from Notre Dame, whom I highly regard for his contribution to the science and theology dialogue, said that we should look for consonance, not for mutual support, but for consonance. Consonance also means support, because, if there were no consonance with the description of the reality of our world, then our faith in creation would become empty. That would endanger our faith in God. Our faith in God is essentially founded in the notion that He is the creator of everything, and that He has power over everything. God would not have this power if He were not the creator of everything. The consonance between science and theology, in some way, also supports the Christian affirmations -- but not in the sense that theology should be modeled after scientific findings, efforts, and so on. Theology moves on its own level of method. This is what McMullin had in mind, and I am in complete agreement with him here. I would hope that there would be increasing consonance between science and theology. For many scientists, there is already too much consonance because of the Big Bang cosmology of science. Many scientists of a secularist or atheist persuasion have felt that this is too close to theology, and that they should develop alternative theories. If the world had a beginning that was almost like creation, they think that's terrible. But the Big Bang theory is a standard theory of scientific cosmology, and here there is a degree of consonance. As McMullin said, the Big Bang theory doesn't prove the existence of God as a creator. In that sense, it doesn't support theology. But it does describe the universe in such a way that theologians should expect from science if there is a Creator. I think that's a good example. The Creator is always interfering with the process of the world, however, and this has to be clarified to a greater degree than it has been generally. I used to discuss this under the title of the contingency of events as a medium of God's actions in the world. We have to reach more agreement on this in the dialogue between theology and science. And there is the question of the future of the universe, which is considered quite differently in theology than in science. A degree of exception to this difference is found in the cosmology of my friend, Frank Tipler, from New Orleans. Tipler is not readily accepted by most of his scientist colleagues, and his views are not

completely acceptable to the theologian either. But I admire his daring proposition concerning the future of the universe as a beginning of the dialogue between scientists and theologians about the future of the universe. This is a most difficult area, but we can hope that there will be more progress in the future.

Oord: Figuring prominently in your earlier work is the statement that the future possesses an ontological priority, and, in a limited but important sense, God does not yet exist. In your later years, your theology remains concerned with the future, but you seem to express more interest in what it means for God to be present here and now. Would you still say with the same energy what you once said, namely, that there is an ontological priority of the future, and that, in a limited but important sense, God does not yet exist?

Pannenberg: I always affirm that God does exist at present as He did in eternity. If God, in the definitive sense, did not yet exist, then how could He be the eternal God? The ontological priority of the future means two things. First of all, events occur contingently. This is what we have to learn from quantum physics. The basic information of quantum physics is the contingency of all events. This also applies on a macrophysical level and has now become more commonly accepted by the development of chaos theory. All processes in history, which are basically irreversible, are characterized by contingency. Contingency is not opposed to the application of natural law. The sequence of contingent events shows degrees of uniformity. This uniformity is the object of the description of nature by natural laws. So descriptions of natural laws and the basic contingency of natural events are not opposed to each other. The laws themselves - all the laws of mathematical formulas having application in nature -- emerge from the irreversible process of the universe. Sometimes physicists believe the laws of nature to be eternal. This belief is not as prevalent, but some still hold to it. The source of contingency is not the past, that's the very notion of contingency. Contingent events can form an unknown future to encounter. Therefore, the ontological priority of the future means, in the first place, that the future is a source of contingent events. You need this idea if you do not isolate the particular contingent events. If you look at the fact that all new contingent events occur in the perspective of the wholeness of the universe, the future is a source of contingency.

The future is also the source of possible completion of the identity of creatures. This is assisted by the efficacy of natural laws. But natural laws do not exhaust this issue, because reality is basically historical. There is an open future. So the achievement of wholeness -- the final achievement of the identity of creatures -- is dependent on the future. As Plotinus said, it is the wholeness of life that God enjoys in His eternity that is longed for by creatures. They strive for their wholeness, for their identity. I referred to the theological side of this issue when I said that, when God created the world, He took a risk. He could not be the eternal God and Creator without His kingdom being established in this world. Therefore, we say that, in the eschatological future, it will be established that the God in whom we believe really is the King of the universe and the eternal God and Creator of the world. Because God looks at His creation from the point of view of its final fulfillment, this is already settled. But, from the perspective of the world, this is not settled.

Oord: How does the future affect the present determinatively? And, is that future already determined?

Pannenberg: We have to be very careful in discussing this issue. Determinism, as it has been discussed in philosophy and theology in past centuries, is concerned with determination from the past by some past state of affairs or by some past decisions that anticipate the future and determine it. If some past decisions or some past conditions in the development of the universe would completely determine the further process of the universe, we would have a completely deterministic system of nature. The determination or, let's say, the influence of the future in the course of the history is of a different kind. It doesn't make sense to talk about determinism in the way that we talk about determinism of the influence of past influences and conditions that will come later.

Concerning the question whether the future is already determinate, this is certainly true with regard to God's eternity. But it is true with regard to the final future of this world, because the eternal God is the final future of this world. One should not say that the future is already determinate at some point at the beginning of the process of the world, because that would do away with the concept of eternity. Some people envision the Creator standing at the beginning of the world and making plans for the future of the world's history. That is a conception that forgets about the eternity of God. It looks upon God as if He were a human being looking ahead to a future that is different from Himself and making plans for influencing that future. God has no need of doing that, because He is eternal.

Oord: One scholar understands your future God as part of an Hegelian metaphysics, in which all is ultimately enveloped in God. Is this characterization accurate?

Pannenberg: In some areas of discussion, and maybe especially in this country, there is a lot of mythology concerning Hegel. It is almost comparable to the mythology concerning Christianity in a secularized world: the less you know about it, the more your prejudices have free rein. There is no Future God in Hegel. The future was not an important part of Hegel's philosophy, and that is one of the serious limitations of Hegel's thought. When I talk about God as the power of the future, that is certainly not Hegelian influence on my thought!

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Oord: Some claim that your place in history will be greatly affected by whether or not deconstructive postmodernism wins the day. Would you agree? And, how would you characterize your conceptual relationship to deconstructive postmodernism?

Pannenberg: I'm not a particular friend of the deconstructionism. I don't think that is a good way of philosophy. I am confident that people will find out, sooner or later, that deconstructionism has been a fad that has had its time. But that the time will be limited. There are some truths to deconstructionism postmodernism. Reality is not as rational as some of the enlightenment thinkers thought it was. The great philosopher John Locke was not of this persuasion though, because he had a deep respect for the mysterious character of all reality, not only religion but also the world of nature. Reality is always surpassing our knowledge and our understanding of it. If the enlightenment had always followed this concept of reason, postmodernism wouldn't have been necessary. The overestimation of the rationalist argument, especially in science, brought about postmodernism. In this way, postmodernism has its element of truth. But we should not give up on reason. The Pope has published a beautiful encyclical on faith and reason. He

emphasized that the Christian faith should continue to stick to the alliance of faith and reason that has been essential for Christian truth claims and for Christian mission since the first centuries. We should understand reason in the sense of John Locke, not necessarily in the sense of his empiricist philosophy, but in the sense of his basic intuition that reality surpasses our rational concepts. If we do not, progress in science will be impossible. We hope for progress in science in the next century and maybe even in the century after this one. In that sense, I think we should continue to have high regard for reason. It is rational to acknowledge the fact that reality is greater than what we already know of it.

Oord: As you look to the future, what trends in contemporary philosophy do you see as most promising, and what trends do you find to be most threatening?

Pannenberg: Well, some things that are called "philosophy," I see as entertainment. For instance, the philosophy of Richard Rorty. But there is also serious philosophy in this country. Take, for instance, the philosophy of Nicholas Rescher. I only mention these as examples. I hope that philosophy will not be identified exclusively with language analysis, as it has been in past decades in this country. I hope that philosophy will pick up again the great tradition of philosophical thought and the history of metaphysics. I hope that philosophy will develop new approaches to these subjects of philosophical reflection.

Oord: What is your greatest concern for the church as it moves into the next 25 years?

Pannenberg: My greatest concern for the church is that it continue to preach the Gospel and not adapt to secular standards and concerns. Some churches and many church ministers think they have to adapt to the secular concerns of people in order to reach them. I think that the opposite is true. If people were to hear in church only what they also get on television and read in the papers, there would be no need for going to church. The church has to proclaim a different thing: the hope for eternal life. It must proclaim participation with the crucified Christ through baptism by faith. My concern for the church is that it sticks to that message rather than adapting, lowering, or watering it down by adapting it to secular concerns. It requires some strength to oppose the spirit of the culture. My concern for the church, my hope for the church, is that it will receive constantly that strength for opposing the culture by this message.

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Posted by - Stacey E. Ake, Ph.D., Ph.D.

Metanexus: The Online Forum for Religion & Science

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Honorary Members:

It has been a tradition for the Canadian Theological Society, from time to time to recognize members who have long been associated with the society and who have made a significant contribution to CTS and/or the theological community in Canada. This is done by bestowing an honorary membership to CTS. The following is a list of current honorary member, the last three on the list were added at this year's annual meeting

Current Honorary Members:

**Gregory Baum,
Frederick Crowe,**

**E.R. Fairweather,
William Fennell,
Douglas John Hall,
Kenneth Hamilton,
J. C. McLelland
Ellen Leonard,
Joanne McWilliam,
Peter Slater**

**IN MEMORIAM
George P. Schnier, SJ.**

It was about sixteen years ago, as a brand-new MA student in theology at St. Michael's, that I met George Schnier for the first time. Some senior students had recommended this wonderful teacher at Regis for my Intro. and Philosophy of Religion classes. I duly went to his office, and was welcomed by George with his typical 'lets get down to the business of turning you into a theologian' manner, that was at once both confidence-building and challenging. I spent the next three years learning from George the elements of how to think like a theologian and, equally important, how to teach, for George exemplified the virtues of a teacher in ways I have not seen equaled since. By the time George sent me off to his own graduate school to get my Ph.D. we had become friends. In more recent years we'd often share a room at conferences, and I had come to rely upon Sunday Mass, in our room with another friend or two and George officiating, to offset the deleterious effects of the AAR.

George was friend, yes, but of the kind, described by Thomas, who treats you as an equal and prods you in various ways to move further along the way of Jesus Christ towards the Father in the Spirit. He thus remained pastoral (good sense) yet, to my knowledge, he was never clerical (bad sense). His friendly ministry had, so to speak, a light touch, but its intention was profound. Always entertaining and sharp-witted, he would nudge one by the seemingly off-hand remark that would give one pause, then or in later recollection. He did not suffer academic pretentiousness gladly. We theologians talk of important things, yes, but that doesn't mean that we are important; quite the contrary: as anyone who has been introduced to George's puppet friends can attest, he took himself with a large pinch of salt. Perhaps that is why George could not easily be placed within a particular theological or philosophical school. At Yale he studied primarily with Louis Dupré, but at the same time became thoroughly involved in the work of others there, including Hans Frei and George Lindbeck, to whose work he introduced many of his own students, including myself. The broad range of his interests and expertise enabled him to engage with each student or colleague at the place they happened to be, rather than as an advocate of a particular way of thinking.

There have been too few priest-theologians and teacher-friends like George Schnier, whose scholarship and ministry were ad maiorem Dei gloriam. May he rest in peace.

**Nicholas M. Healy, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, Notre Dame Division
St. John's University**

Staten Island NY

Humanities and Social Science Federation of Canada (HSSFC)

Report from the Board of Directors

May 2001

John R. Williams

Member of HSSFC Board of Directors

The Board held its mid-year meeting in Ottawa on March 31 and April 1, 2001. In advance of the meeting HSSFC staff had prepared a very useful binder of information about HSSFC for Board members that can be passed on to newly elected members.

In the President's Report to the Board, Prof. Patricia Clements, presented some statistics about the state of the humanities and social sciences in Canadian Universities;

- In the sixteen largest universities, 40-60% of undergraduates are in the humanities and social sciences; in 40 other universities, the figures are 50-90%.
- Undergraduate enrolment is projected to increase in Ontario, Alberta and BC but will decline elsewhere, especially in Newfoundland.
- A very large percentage of humanities and social sciences professors will retire in the next ten years, there has been very little planning for their replacement.
- Research funding and scholarships in the humanities and social sciences is minuscule compared to that available to other disciplines.

Prof. Clements noted that HSSFC is the only independent lobbying organization for our constituency. Steps are being taken to raise the profile of HSSFC, especially in Quebec (the 2001 Congress at Laval, the designation of a Vice-President Communications from Quebec, and the holding of next years Spring Board meeting in Montreal).

An application for continued funding of the Federation from SSHRC has been submitted, but at the time of the meeting no decision had been made.

The Board discussed at length the HSSFC's efforts to communicate the values of the disciplines it represents as well as the value of the HSSFC itself. A new Director of Public Affairs, Douglas Lauriault, was hired in February and will expand HSSFC's lobbying activities. Members of the Board offered numerous suggestions for potential target audiences for communication and lobbying, both within universities and outside.

Given the precarious state of the humanities and social sciences in Canadian universities and the need for HSSFC to expand its activities to promote these disciplines, the Board discussed, and eventually approved, a recommendation of the Executive Committee to undertake a major

fundraising campaign. Details are to be worked out over the summer and presented to the Board in September.

The Board reviewed arrangements for the 2002 Congress in Toronto and approved the sub-themes Gender Geography and Genres; the overarching theme is Boundaries. A working group on the Congress will study ways in which it can be improved.

On a personal note, my term as a member of the Board ends at the annual general meeting in November. I am one of three representatives of the 40+ associations that make up "small societies" electoral college (the other colleges are the medium and large societies and the universities). I think that the other small associations should have a chance to be represented on the Board and so I will not stand for reelection. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to serve this term.

For further information on HSSFC activities consult its website: www.hssfc.ca

CTS Executive:

President - Cynthia Crysdale

Vice President - Eric Beresford

Past President - Douglas Harink

Secretary - Michael Bourgeois

Treasurer - Cristina Vanin

Newsletter Editor - John Franklin

CCSR Representatives

Don Schweitzer - 2002

Cristina Vanin - 2002

Myroslaw Tataryn -2003

Marguerite Abdul-Masih - 2003

Alyda Faber - 2004

David Zub -2004

Membership News and Information May 2001

Information for CTS Newsletter/Bulletin d'Information de la Communiqué SCT

Name/Nom: _____

e-mail address _____

Recent Publications/Publications recentes:

**Current Research /Papers/
Recherches Poursuivies/Communications a des Congress, etc.**

New Appointments/Nouvelles Positions:

Completion of Graduate Work/dissertations/Achevement des Etudes Superieures:

In addition to the information above we would be glad to receive news about recent or upcoming conferences and other events, local or international, which would be of interest to our membership. Please feel free to send along any information items which you think would be of interest.

Vous etes cordialement invite a vous exprimer en francais. Les reseignements qui nous sont soumis en francais seront publiees en francais.

**Please return this form by September 25, 2001 to:
Veillez remettre avant 25 septembre a: John Franklin
133 Southvale Dr.
Toronto, M4G 1G6
franklin@ultratech.net**