

they need. He cites demographic trends which assure that within a generation our shrinking workforce will be unable to pay taxes sufficient to support the growing proportion of elderly in our population. Opening the country to more immigrants, Longman argues, cannot stimulate our deficit-burdened economy enough to compensate for this difference.

Further, the condition of our domestic economy is obviously influenced by trends in the world economy. Longman points out that the rapid rate at which Third World countries are adopting modern technology indicates that in the future the United States will not find it so easy to dominate world markets. This more intense competition means that it will be harder for the U.S. to sustain social programs while it simultaneously staggers under a record national debt and an even greater consumer debt that has been generated by the philosophy of buy now, pay later.

Longman ends by appealing for a revival of the traditional value of thrift, a greater investment in quality education and better healthcare for the young, and, above all, a fairer balance between the

generations. The author's first book, *Born to Pay* is an important one—raising issues that should receive serious attention in the coming presidential election. I heartily recommend its perusal to every thoughtful citizen, including those in my own age bracket (I am 84).

Harold E. Fey.

Setting Limits: Medical Goals in an Aging Society.

By Daniel Callahan. Simon & Schuster, 256 pp., \$18.95.

Should a 76-year-old man who suffers kidney failure after struggling for several years with chronic pulmonary disease be put on kidney dialysis or consider a transplant? Not necessarily, argues Daniel Callahan, a prominent medical ethicist and director of the Hastings Center, an institute that studies such ethical dilemmas. A patient's age, he says, might be one of the primary considerations prompting one to decide against providing further treatment.

Rising medical costs, increased life expectancy, a graying population and ever-

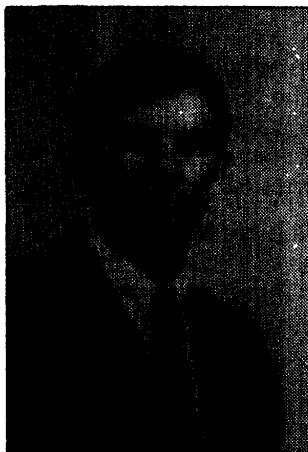
new life-extending technologies have presented us with an acute crisis in allocating healthcare for the elderly. What obligations do the young—or society at large—have to provide for the welfare of the aging? What do the elderly owe the young? How can we divide resources between groups and generations equitably? Beyond these questions lie deeper issues. What is the meaning and purpose of aging and dying? What are the ends of medicine in light of the unlimited possibilities of treatment?

Callahan adamantly contends that the time has come to recognize limits. Our present course—with our "relentless optimism," determined to elude death and conquer illness, and our "unlimited quest for individualistic pleasure"—will no longer work. Rather than extend the life of the aged, medicine should turn its attention "to the relief of their suffering and an improvement in their physical and mental quality of life." The old, for their part, must curtail their consumption of resources and make the needs of generations-to-come their primary concern. Neither should the government provide for extended intensive care, organ transplants or long-term support on respirators beyond the limit of a "natural life span" of about 70 to 80 years. Indeed, we must seriously challenge the popular view of old age as a time of continuing youthful vitality with more freedom and less responsibility. Conceit and rampant individualism tempt us to believe that "we can have anything we want if we put our minds to it and are willing to pay for it." We must recognize that life has natural limits and death must come to all, and we must find "better ways in the future to spend our money than on indefinitely extending the life of the elderly."

Taken out of context these conclusions sound harsh. Yet a strong desire to honor the aged and to grapple with deeper issues permeates Callahan's discussion of the ideals of aging, the goals of medicine and the practical implications of these issues. In some ways, Callahan has written a deeply religious book, even if not in language that many would immediately recognize as such. Without talking about "sin," he criticizes our insatiable lust for always a little bit "more life, and a little more after that, and so on indefinitely." Relief of suffering must ultimately rest upon "meaning and transcendence," however it is defined. He takes on the Protestant struggle to find "a better fit" between the virtue of self-sacrifice and

PEACEMAKING VIII WORKSHOP

APRIL 22 AND 23, 1988
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
50TH AND ST PAUL
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA



FEATURING

TEX SAMPLE

PROFESSOR OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY
ST PAUL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
KANSAS CITY, MO

"WORKING FOR PEACE WITH
THE CULTURAL RIGHT"

FREE PUBLIC ADDRESS 7:15 P.M., FRIDAY,
APRIL 22 AND 8:45 A.M. SATURDAY, APRIL 23
SIX WORKSHOPS AT 9:30 A.M. SATURDAY

Sponsored by 45 churches and peace-related organizations in Nebraska

the value and necessity of self-love. He calls for a retrieval of the ideal of wise stewardship. He complains that we have banished these questions to "the closed confines of church or synagogue" and demands that our secular society, which proclaims "no generally binding moral traditions," consider a public or collective moral philosophy. Unfortunately, Callahan too readily turns religion into something private and subjective. He fails even to consider the significant voice of public religions and communities or of theological reflection and traditions.

Callahan himself stands on the outer edge of midlife, looking down the slope of a "fitting span of life" facing the question of whether he would willingly live by his own criteria. No matter what stage in life we are in, Callahan's description of the dilemmas and his answers cannot but provoke a deep emotional response and a heated debate. That is precisely what he had in mind.

Bonnie Miller-McLemore.

The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures.

By Jurgen Habermas. Translated by Frederick Lawrence. MIT Press, 430 pp., \$27.50.

Those of us who read German philosophers in English first encountered Jurgen Habermas in *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1971). There he sought to enlarge the sphere of rational discourse beyond the limits set by positivists who separate knowledge proper from human interests and values. He did so not by seeking principles within the thinking subject (a strategy that has marked modern thinkers since Descartes) but by looking exactly at the human interests at work in intersubjective scientific, legal-moral and artistic pursuits.

To some critics of modernity and the Enlightenment, even this approach has seemed objectionably "transcendental." The idea of "interests" being at the base of knowledge has taken hold with a vengeance. Habermas finds an "entry into post-modernity" with Friedrich Nietzsche who unmasked a will to power in all acts of knowledge (and so embraced it). The physical and social sciences represent something more than a legitimate human interest in objectifying nature for the sake of reproducing the species and its social life; these sciences are also in the service of money and politics which "colonize the life world."

Most of the 12 lectures in this book examine the findings of postmoderns who have dealt with "modernity's loss of self-assurance" or its "carceral" effects. Hegel, Horkheimer and Adorno, Heidegger, Derrida, Bataille and Foucault (two chapters) are all treated in remarkable detail. All are found, in spite of their trenchant postmodern criticisms, to revert to "gestures of profundity" or to have nothing very constructive to say, or both. As is customary when philosophers treat other philosophers, these lectures

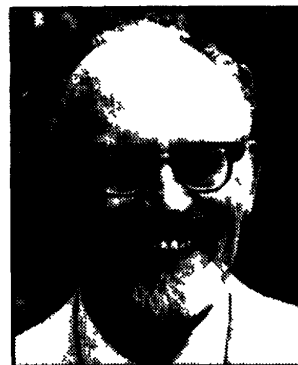
serve most of all to distinguish and sharpen the position of the author.

Habermas's position, which is distinct from recent theories of justice based on the structure of personal action or on a view of fairness from behind a veil, points to "communicative rationality" within actual societal situations. Such communication includes propositional statements and factual evidence, to be sure, but also legal and moral proposals concerning social relationships, as well as disclosures about personal feelings and

**FORTRESS PRESS
BOOKS BY**

BERNHARD W. ANDERSON

Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Theology
Princeton Theological Seminary and
Adjunct Professor of Old Testament,
The School of Theology, Boston University



CREATION VERSUS CHAOS The Reinterpretation of Mythical Symbolism in the Bible

* a significantly original argument a popular articulation of the best scholarship of its time and a remarkably lucid pedagogical vehicle —WALTER BRUEGGEMANN
\$7.95 paper

Editor of CREATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Valuable not only for study in biblical theology but for exploration of creation themes in the total life of the Church and contemporary society."

— *Religious Studies Review*
\$7.95 paper

A classic!

THE UNFOLDING DRAMA OF THE BIBLE

Eight Studies Introducing
the Bible as a Whole

In this third edition of a well established guide for Bible study Anderson views the Bible as one continuous story one unfolding drama from Genesis through Revelation. He illumines our understanding of the Bible as a dramatic encounter between God and human beings
\$4.95 paper

THE EIGHTH CENTURY PROPHETS

Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah

Appropriate for pastors laypeople students—anyone who wants a well written synthetic presentation of the early classical prophetic message
— *Religious Studies Review*
\$5.95 paper

At bookstores or from
FORTRESS PRESS
2900 Queen Lane
Philadelphia, PA 19129
DIAL 1-800-FORTRESS
or **1-800-327-FCSS**