

4. PROCESS THEOLOGY

Carl F. H. Henry, writing in the March 14, 1969 issue of *Christianity Today*, states:

Process-metaphysics is not a new nor even a modern theory, though its recent form has distinctively fresh features. In its post-Christian format, it tries to correlate the evolutionary view of a growing universe with that of a religious reality which, though directly and necessarily involved in time and space, somehow transcends and guides the process of which it is a part. Unlike traditional Christian theism, process-metaphysics does not totally differentiate God from the universe, but neither does it, like pantheism, identify God with the whole of reality. On the basis of evolutionary theory, process-philosophy assimilates God to the universe more immanently than Christian orthodoxy allows; in fact, it repudiates God's absolute transcendence by making creation inevitable if not necessary to his being. Process philosophers emphasize the temporal flow of all reality; time, as they see it, is an ingredient of Being itself....

Late in the nineteenth century, process-philosophy found a prophet in the French philosopher Henri Bergson (*Creative Evolution*, 1911), and early in this century, in England, it gained quasi-naturalistic statement by Samuel Alexander (*Space, Time and Deity*, 1927) and quasi-pantheistic statement by C. Lloyd Morgan (*Emergent Evolution*, 1926).... Both Bergson and Alexander had influenced Alfred North Whitehead before he left Cambridge for Harvard. Whitehead's subsequent *Process and Reality* (1929) attracted such attention that he is now widely credited as the seminal mind and formative influence in the later definitive statements of process-metaphysics....

... American interest in the process-concept of deity was maintained somewhat through the exposition and development of Whitehead's thought by Charles Hartshorne (*Man's Vision of God*, 1941; *The Divine Relativity*, 1948).

... Since then, the significant development in process-metaphysics has been its growing support by a number of American Protestant theologians as the preferred vehicle for expounding Christian theology. Among them are Bernard Meland, *The Realities of Faith* (1962); John Cobb, Jr., *Towards a Christian Natural Theology* (1965); Schubert M. Ogden, *The Reality of God*, (1967); W. Norman Pittenger, *Process Thought and Christian Faith* (1968); and Daniel Day Williams, *The Spirit and the Forms of Love* (1968).

-- Carl F. H. Henry, "The Reality and Identity of God", in *Christianity Today*, March 14, 1969, pp. 3-6.

Norman Pittenger, in an article in *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, asks "But what is process-thought?" He answers:

I shall not attempt to offer you a detailed exegesis of Whitehead or Hartshorne, neither shall I try to do over again the job which to my mind has been done admirably by Schubert Ogden in his book, *The Reality of God*, published just over a year ago. I shall not concern myself here with the