The Use and Abuse of Power
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A Study of Principalities and Powers

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Hypothesis

“—the biblical description of principalities and powers and the sociological nature of massive institutions bear more than analogical relationship to each other and that an understanding of the relationship of prophetic witness to this present world of massive power structures should be informative to those who take seriously God’s charge to man to be responsible for the world.”

Power as a Biblical and Sociological Concept

Power is one of the more significant concepts in theology and sociology. To understand the Christian faith there must be a grasp of the meanings of the power of God, the power of love, the power of evil, the power of death, and the power of nature.

To understand the nature and function of society and its institutions it is necessary to locate the sources of power, how it is generated, and who controls it. The power of social norms, mores, and customs can control and give order to a society. To be socially competent one must know who has the power, its limits, and the goals and intentions of its wielders. Legitimate and illegitimate power must be distinguished.

Life cannot exist without power; it can sustain life or destroy it. Power can bring about needed changes or it can stifle and suppress. Even the voice of prophetic witness can be stilled. Power can destroy by violence or smother by reaction. It can exercise its will through secrecy, gossip, blackmail, threat, and falsehood. It can rob a poor man to enrich the wealthy man. Power can be used to keep whole communities or groups of people powerless, and by their very powerlessness increase the power of those who exploit them.

The subject of this paper is *The Use and Abuse of Power, A Study in Principalities and Powers*.

The purpose is to attempt to discover the nature of the Principalities and Powers described in the New Testament and
their possible relationship with massive institutions in the world. The stated hypothesis is that the biblical description of principalities and powers and the sociological nature of massive institutions bear more than an analogical relationship to each other, and that an understanding of the relationship of prophetic witness to this present world of massive power structures should be informative for those who take seriously God’s charge to man to be responsible for the world.

**Principalities and Powers**

According to John Howard Yoder, recent theologians have given considerable attention to the biblical subject of principalities, powers and elemental spirits, and a growing body of literature in this area has emerged during the past 25 years. In these present times when scholars no longer believe in spooks, poltergeists, and leprechauns, there is some reluctance and embarrassment in treating the subject of “powers” as they are described by Paul. Nineteenth century scholars tended to set aside these embarrassing concepts as out of date, and turned their attention to more scholarly pursuits in the philosophy of history and the theology of culture.¹

In Berkhof’s *Christ and the Powers* the author attempts to discover St. Paul’s meaning of the terminology: *the powers*. He assumes that Paul did not invent the terminology which he used; a vocabulary which may sound obtuse and meaningless to *this* age was very clear and significant to Paul’s readers. The problem that Berkhof attempts to solve is, how did Paul understand the cosmic language, which he employed? When he spoke of powers, what content did he give them, and was it the same content that was current among his readers? Berkhof, having stated the problem, summarizes:

...what was essential to the view of the powers found in the apocalyptic and rabbinic writings. Two things are always true of the powers: (1) they are personal, spiritual beings, and (2) they
influence events on earth, especially events within nature.²

To pursue his investigation of Paul’s understanding of the content of the cosmic language which he employed, Berkhof starts with two familiar texts, Romans 8:38 and 1 Corinthians 3:22:

‘For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor present nor future, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.’³ Obviously. Paul means to name a number of realities, which are part of our earthly existence, and whose role is one of domination ‘Whether Paul, Apollos, or Cephas; whether world, life, or death, whether present or future, all is yours.’

In this second reference the names of the angelic powers are omitted, but Paul tends to group the names of experienced realities that dominated the lives of the Corinthians. The ease with which Paul weaves together in other references the names of angelic powers with a list of such empirical human experiences would indicate that Paul is not emphasizing their personal-spiritual nature, but rather the fact that powers condition earthly life.⁴

Oscar Cullman, in his work on Romans 13:1, insists that whatever views we hold about the invisible powers, “we must conclude...that these powers in the faith of primitive Christianity, did not belong merely to the framework ‘conditioned by the contemporary situation.’ It is these invisible beings who in some way— not, to be sure, as mediators, but rather as executive instruments of the reign of Christ— stand behind what occurs in the world.”⁵

It is well to remember that the principalities and powers are indeed God’s creation, for in Christ “everything in heaven and on earth was created, not only things visible but also the invisible orders of thrones, sovereignties, authorities, and
powers...” (Colossians 1:16). There is no doubt that these powers were good forces, obedient to the will of God, just as human beings; also, however, like human beings they were subject to the fall. These fallen powers now have evil tendencies but they are still used of Christ, for all things “subsist” in Him. The word subsist has the same root as the modern word for system, and it is in Christ that all things are ordered and held together (Colossians 1:16-17). The whole realm of nature, the earth, the universe, society, and culture cannot exist without structures of order and regularity.

The principalities and powers that Paul speaks of were considered as “in between agents” or the functional structures between Christ and the visible world. In other words, creation has its visible “front stage” of human affairs; and the “back stage,” made up of principalities, powers, thrones, dominions, and authorities, provide structures for the order that resists the chaos. Although these powers, like human beings, are rebellious and fallen, yet they are under the Lordship of Christ and are not free from divine sovereignty. They are subject to Christ and are used by Him. These powers are the related structures of unified corporate life; at the same time, they tend to separate men from the love of God.

Borg, Berkhof, Cullman, and Yoder have ventured to name examples of structures that are used of God in modern concrete forms.6 The state, politics, public opinion, social struggle, religious dogma, news media, ecclesiastical forms, commerce, and industry—all institutional and corporate life may be subject to the powers, whether a seminary, a university, or a local school board, a bank, a brewery, or a bakery. From this limited list it is possible to discern two distinct evil results of institutional life: one is the latent evil within the structures and methodologies themselves, and the other is the manifest product. For example, a food producer may be canning and distributing healthful foods; but its labor practices may be exploitive and dehumanizing, and it’s labeling and advertising policies deceptive. A distillery may have commendable working
conditions with adequate compensations, and its financial arrangements with its outlets may be fair and equitable; but its product is contributing to one of America’s most serious mental and physical health and accident problems.

The list of structures is endless, structures through which order is maintained in the world, and life is preserved and enhanced. Institutions of government, religion, education, and production have made great contributions to freedom, ethics, science, technology, and the producing, processing, and distribution of vast quantities of food, medicine, building materials, and means of transportation and communication. The contributions of these institutions to the good life in some parts of the world, such as Japan, Europe and America can hardly be measured. But the powers tend to selfishness and injustice. The same powers that produce food, work the very lives out of field hands, cannery workers, and migrants with little or no concern for their welfare. John Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath*, and especially the more recent play by Tennessee Williams, *The Migrants*, are reasonably accurate portrayals of the suffering of tens of thousands of families who help produce the fresh fruits and vegetables for the American table.

Production lines in American industry have produced an abundance of labor saving devices, and other products for human comfort and fulfillment; but the exorbitant price for these luxuries has been the alienation of two generations of workers by the monotonous and stultifying routine of unfulfilling work.

**Principalities and Powers as “Creatures”**

The Bible consistently speaks of principalities as “creatures.” Christians generally refuse to recognize that massive organizations have a distinct nature of their own, and a style of life that is more or less independent of the human functionaries within the corporate structures. The following quotation from the book *America Inc.* is an example of what St. Paul calls “the wisdom of the world.” The authors write:
There is nothing sacred about the corporation. No process of God or Nature controlled the evolution which produced it. Rather, it developed as a method for accumulating capital and for shielding the user of that capital from individual liability. Thus, it is a mere legal device.\footnote{7}

William Stringfellow disagrees with this oversimplified description of the origins of Powers. He cannot be sure of the specific nature of the creatureliness of institutions, any more than he can know the secret of \textit{human} creature-hood. “The creaturely status of principalities,” Stringfellow writes, “comes not from men but from God.”\footnote{8} John Howard Yoder reinforces this view in these words, “These structures are not and never have been a mere sum total of the individuals composing them. The whole is more than the sum of its parts. And this ‘more’ is an invisible Power, even though we may not be used to speaking of it in personal or angelic terms.”\footnote{9}

\textbf{Nature of Corporate Behavior}

Perhaps a brief description of corporate entities might give insight into the “creatureliness” of institutions and their tendencies to selfishness. In the first place, no one person or group of persons can of their own volition create a corporation. The state, and the state alone can create a corporation; it is, and as long as it exists, it is a creature of the state. Furthermore, it cannot die or go out of existence without the specific action of the state. The assets may have totally disappeared, every scrap of paper or record destroyed, and every member of the corporation may have died, but that corporation \textit{cannot} die until the state wills it.

The corporation has protections, rights, and privileges granted to it by the state that are not granted to individual citizens. \textit{Under special conditions} it cannot be forced to fulfill some financial obligations, but individuals could be legally punished for the same dereliction.
According to research done by the Library of Congress, the legal literature supports the conclusion that a corporate director must use his judgment, influenced only by what is best for the corporation. Many courts have ruled that a director’s loyalty is to be undivided and his allegiance influenced in action by no other consideration than the corporation’s own welfare.

Bernard D. Nossiter has said, ‘there is nothing in the logic or practice of concentrated corporate industries that guides or compels socially responsible decision-making.’ To be even blunter about it, the rule of thumb is that if conscience is operative in a corporation it is because conscientious conduct pays, and if conscience is absent it is because that pays.  

Dr. Milton Friedman of the University of Chicago, warned corporation officials as follows:

Few trends could so thoroughly undermine the very foundations of our free society as the acceptance by corporate officials of a social responsibility other than to make as much money for the stockholders as possible.  

A pharmaceutical house may knowingly produce, advertise, and distribute a drug with dangerous side effects. But by the time the slow and cumbersome machinery of governmental regulation has banned the drug, months or even years have passed, and in the meantime the manufacturer has made a huge profit. At the worst, the company will be fined for its actions, although thousands of innocent victims may have suffered, been disabled, or died as a result of the company’s actions. Successful lawsuits against the offenders seldom are commensurate with the profits which have been reaped.

**Individuals Against the Powers**

The tragedy is that the majority of good people seem to be oblivious to the subtle and overpowering control which corporate creatures exercise over human options, rendering
millions of people nearly powerless. And, unfortunately, prestigious figures such as Billy Graham publicly reinforce the damaging folklore that saving individuals will change the evil nature of institutions.

In an article entitled “What Ten Years Have Taught Me,” Graham writes: “Social sins, after all are merely a large scale projection of individual sins.” This statement reflects a serious lack of understanding of “principalities and powers,” and it fails to take into account that they are not merely sums of men’s sins. The nature of corporate beings may be analyzed from a strictly biblical and theological point of view or studied within a purely secular sociological model, but although the vocabulary may differ, the concrete results are the same. Massive institutions are capable of both good and evil. They are not mere sums of people, they have an existence of their own; they tend to separate men from God (theologically), and they tend to alienate men from their humanity (sociologically).

This point of view is often confronted with the argument, “But if enough saved individuals go into the institutions of industry, business, organized labor, and government, will they not change the nature of these institutions so drastically that they will become just and honorable?” The more pertinent question to face is this: If social, economic, and political institutions were to get a number of Christians in the upper echelons of responsibility where the believers’ survival and promotions are dependent upon loyalty to the institutions, would not the institutions change these individuals so drastically as to render them powerless as Christians? It is more accurate, in general, to say that institutions change individuals, than to say that individuals change institutions.

Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills write:
Institutions not only select persons and eject them; institutions also form them…Thus, institutions imprint their stamps upon the individual, modifying his external conduct as
well as his inner life. For one aspect of learning a role consists of acquiring motives which guarantee its performance.\textsuperscript{13}

**The Ethics of Corporate Power**

Some theorists are interested in finding the means of limiting the power of large-scale bureaucracies, but such a pursuit requires a definition of the phrase, misuse of power. This is hard to come by, as the various beneficiaries of the products of power are prone to get their full share. The stockholders, the managers, the employees, the advertising media, the suppliers, the distributors, and the consumers are only a few of the many interest groups who are intent on getting a part of the increment.

This internal distribution of rewards is but a part of the power problem. Externally, large corporations negotiate or plunder other companies, foreign governments, labor unions, and especially domestic governments for trade-offs of power and advantage, but always with the intent of getting more than they give. As a result of these trade-offs, those with the most power are apt to get more power, while those who are incapable of participating in the power exchanges are those that are hopelessly trapped at the bottom. And the *welfare system* in this country does its bit to keep them there.\textsuperscript{14}

What makes all this seem incredible to the general public is the studied effort of large corporations and governments to keep from the people any knowledge of the organization’s activities. There are strong efforts to avoid unfavorable publicity that might arouse the people, that would in turn motivate the political sector to move against a business enterprise or a branch of government. An oil company advertised, “We want you to know,” but when asked by a Congressional committee what their profit margin was, responded, “We *don’t* want you to know.”

An even more difficult roadblock to the limitation of power on the grounds of misuse of power is the question: who
has the power and who is responsible for its implementation? There is perhaps no better example than the Watergate affair to illustrate the difficulty in pinpointing the misuse of power. Those who have been already convicted of crimes in this scandal and those who are under indictment seem utterly bewildered that they should be charged with any wrongdoing, since what they did seemed to them no different than what both parties, in consort with business and industry, had been doing for years. There were two major differences: First, the enormity of the scheme and second, they got caught!

A number of those who are awaiting trial are professed Christians; one, for example, admits that he was involved in breaking and entering, wiretapping, and burglary, but he insists he is not guilty of any crime!

We must leave to the duly appointed investigation agencies, the judicial and legislative branches of government to decide what illegal use of power may have occurred and who is to be held responsible for it. The public does not have sufficient information to make a judgment. But this we may be sure of: that in massive bureaucracies such as the Federal Government, III, General Motors, or Standard Oil, the pinpointing of firm responsibility in any surreptitious exercise of power is almost impossible. With the massive growth of business and government in recent decades it became necessary for technological reasons and growing complexity to engage in “collective leadership.” This, according to Harlan Cleveland, led to the widest possible diffusion of powers. Cleveland writes:

Corporate decisions of great moment are increasingly hard to pin on any individual: the process by which they are made is deliberately made complex by the erection of collective decision-making systems. 15

Out of the many lessons to be learned from Watergate, for the purpose of this paper two very important insights emerge. First, the ethic of personal piety carries little weight for Christian involvement in the great structures of power,
regardless of religious profession. *Second*, there is a desperate need for the development of a social ethic relevant to corporate, bureaucratic power.

Considering the evasiveness of massive power, and the almost total absence of any ethic except a public image of respectability, the biblical description of “principalities and powers” becomes acutely meaningful to daily lives, and to the future of nations.

Are men but hapless victims of capricious powers or do they have a responsibility for the world, as private citizens and as members of the body of Christ? What ought the Church to be doing?

**The Christian’s Responsibility in the World**

If we are to know God, we must know about His purposes and His acts. How do we know that He is good, or that His creation is “good”? Langdon Gilkey reminds his readers that experience alone might cast doubt on the goodness of creation if men did not have some inside clues. The Christian belief in the meaning of creation comes from the revelation of God’s will in the prophets and Jesus Christ, and the central proclamation is that God is at work restoring and recreating that which was lost in the fall through man’s misuse of freedom. If God’s will is motivated by the same love revealed through the teaching, healing ministry, and the death of Jesus Christ, then the creative will in the beginning must have brought forth a good creation.

Through the God-in-history is seen the love of God at the beginning of time and history. And thus because God is known to be ‘good’ in Christ, the world He made is known to be ‘good’ in Creation.

This Christological stance is essential to any search for man’s responsibility in the world. Plans or strategies cannot be deduced from natural laws or inherent human rights. As Bonhoeffer says, “The only human and natural rights are those which derive from Christ...” Consequently, whatever the
Church has to say to the world is in preparation of His coming. And whenever the Church speaks about or to institutions, what is spoken, whether in religious or secular vocabulary, must be derived from the preaching and teaching ministry of Jesus Christ.

The present question is: how do Christians, as individuals and as members of the body of Christ, respond to the powers? This subject is extremely complex and deserves more treatment than either the length of this paper or the wisdom of this speaker will permit. But to raise the issues of powers and their consequences for the Church and for millions of people outside the pale, demands that at least an effort be made to stimulate Christian minds and hearts to search the scriptures and the wisdom of the Church for deeper insights into man’s responsibilities for the world.

Adam’s Mandate

The first Adam’s responsibility was simple and very clear. He was to reproduce mankind, to have dominion over everything that moves upon the earth, to name the creatures, and to till the soil. His humanity was completed by God’s gift of another human being to be beside him, and they were to become one flesh.

As a result of the fall, man and the earth suffered the curse of brokenness and alienation. The ecological chain was snapped at every link. Man and woman’s relationship was strained by accusation; they now knew shame. Earth’s abundance was now limited by earth’s reluctance, to be overcome only by man’s labor. The whole realm of nature was out of “sync.”

Man had been given the charge to manage and have lordship over the earth, but by disobedience man failed and all creation suffered. However, there is no hint that man was any less responsible for the earth than before his disobedience. The psalmist writes:
Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.

Psalm 8:6 KJV

The writer to the Hebrews, quoting from the Septuagint, and in somewhat different words, repeats God’s mandate to his people.

For it is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, which is our theme. But there is somewhere a solemn assurance which runs:
‘What is man, that thou rememberest him, or the son of man, that thou hast regard to him? Thou didst make him for a short while lower than the angels; thou didst crown him with glory and honor; thou didst put all things in subjection beneath his feet.’

For in subjecting all things to him, he left nothing that is not subject. But in fact we do not yet see all things in subjection to man. In Jesus, however, we do see one who for a short while was made lower than the angels, crowned now with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that, by God’s gracious will, in tasting death, he should stand for us all.

Hebrews 2:5-9 NEB

God, by His gracious will, through Christ’s death provides a “stand in” for all men. Man’s assigned lordship now belongs to Christ, but the redeemed are His brothers. “For a consecrating priest and those whom he consecrates are all of one stock; and that is why the Son does not shrink from calling men his brothers...” Hebrews 2:11 NEB.)

The Message of Reconciliation

There is no implication in the Lordship of Christ that man’s earthly responsibilities have been rescinded. Rather, as a result of man’s failure to fulfill his destiny. Christ is achieving it
through His death. Obedient men are Christ’s brothers (Mark 3:35) and they are co-laborers with God (1 Corinthians 3:9). Dean Traina teaches that Jesus is doing the works of His Father, even at the risk of breaking the codal law. Christ’s brothers and co-workers must focus on the works of God, especially the works done in Christ. And we must do what He is doing.

What God is doing through Christ in the cosmic sense is reconciling to himself all things.

[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, for in Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities— all things were created through Him and for Him.

Colossians 1:15-16 RSV

For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His Cross.

Colossians 1:19-20 RSV

Believers, then, must be His instruments of reconciliation; that is, if they are indeed new creatures in Him, and this is essential to obedience.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 RSV

The second chapter of Colossians speaks of the nature and behavior of the powers and elemental spirits. From verse eight through the remainder of the chapter the writer encourages the saints to resist their bondage, which is
described as “philosophy and empty deceit, according to human
tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe…”

“Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food
and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a
Sabbath.” Anything, in fact that attempts to “squeeze you into
its own mold” should be resisted, but let God renew your
mind—set you free, and keep your primary loyalty to Christ.
Beware of unqualified commitments to a political party; even
loyalties to denominations and to one’s own country must be
secondary, and subject to criticism and rebuke when the powers
become oppressive or dehumanizing.

Beware of institutions, especially religious, where
“authority” and status power is more important than leadership
and community, where control is maintained by secrecy and
where criticism of the powers is forbidden. Beware of
ideologies, isms or absolutes that demand uncritical loyalty.

Making Known God’s Will to the Powers
The church has the responsibility to inform the powers
of the wisdom of God. Paul writes:
To me, though I am the very least of all the
saints, this grace was given, to preach to the
Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and
to make all men see what is the plan of the
mystery hidden for ages in God who created all
things; that through the church the manifold
wisdom of God might now be made known to
the principalities and powers in the heavenly
places.

Ephesians 3:8-10 RSV
Paul declares that it is God’s will that the Church make
known to the powers what is the wisdom of God. This does not
necessarily imply a religious vocabulary or theological jargon,
but whatever the Church has to say to the powers, whatever
the vernacular employed, it must be deduced from the words of
Jesus.
Suggestions for Action

Radical Evangelism That Will Unite Personal and Social Aspects of Christian Obedience

First, there is a need for radical evangelism that will reunite the personal and social aspects of Christian experience. It should emphasize total obedience to Christ in every category of life. This means that the new creature in Christ is not only prepared to proclaim the good news to men and women everywhere, but he is concerned about the powers that limit the life options of people whom Christ loves. The Christian must be prepared to take his stand against racial, ethnic, and sex discrimination, corrupt politics, and immoral and exploitive business practices. He must be willing not only to help make known to the powers the will of God for His world, but to join with others through whom He is speaking and acting.

C. Wright Mills is quoted by Marcus Borg as saying: If you don’t specify and confront real issues, what you do will surely obscure them. If you do not alarm anyone morally, you will yourself remain morally asleep. If you do not embody controversy, what you say will be an acceptance of the drift to the coming human hell!19

The Christian in Conflict

Second, in a world of rapid change, group conflicts are inevitable. It is imperative that responsible Christians be keenly alert to these areas where conflict further oppresses the poor and the powerless, or where government policies defy God’s law. The Christian can be God’s agent of change by placing himself in the areas of public conflict that impinge upon the quality of life in the community.
The Church Renewal and Bearing Witness to the World Even at the Risk of Being Wrong

Third, in spite of the tendency of institutions toward selfishness, the fact remains that God works through organizations. The Christian’s responsibility is not to retreat or to reject them, but rather to be alert to their objectives, behavior, and responsibility. Organizations, particularly religious ones such as churches and seminaries, should have built-in ongoing programs of renewal, analogous to personal renewal.

Oswald Chambers reminds us that:
Organization is an enormous benefit until it is mistaken for the life... When their purpose is finished [God] allows them to be swept aside, and if we are attached to the organization, we shall go with it. Organization is a great necessity, but not an end in itself, and to live for one organization is a spiritual disaster.20

Spiritual responsibility can be agonizing, as there is always the hazard of being wrong. But this is part of the risk of responsibility. The Church cannot refuse to witness as best it can simply because of the possibility of error. Its dependence is not in its own wisdom, but in the leadership of the Holy Spirit and God’s mercy and forgiveness when it fails.
Notes

1 Berkhof, p. 4.


3 See Yoder’s, Trans, note on translations, Berkhof, p. 57, note 1.


5 Cullman, Christ and Time, p. 192.

6 Borg, p. 62; Berkhof, p. 50; Cullman, Christ in Time, p. 193; Yoder, pp. 139-140.

7 Mintz et al., p. 357.

8 Stringfellow, p. 80.

9 Yoder, Politics of Jesus. p. 146.

10 Mintz et al, p. 257.

11 ICUIS – Institute, p. 1.

12 Lockhart, p. 97.

13 Gerth and Mills, p. 173.

14 Ryan, p. 265.

15 Cleveland and Lasswell, p. XXX.

16 Gilkey, p. 218.

17 Ibid., pp. 272-273.

18 Bonheoffer, p. 361.

19 Borg, p. 16.

20 Chambers, pp. 118-119
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ICUIS – *Institute on the Church in Urban Industrial Society.*  (800 Belden Ave., Chicago Illinois)


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World Council of Churches The Division of Studies. *The Lordship of Christ Over the World and the Church.* Geneva, 1957
In honor of Asbury Theological Seminary’s 90th anniversary, First Fruits Press has released several historic works published by the seminary in the past.

For its 40th anniversary in 1963, President Frank Stanger had three books published to celebrate the special event. These included a biography of Asbury Theological Seminary founder Henry Clay Morrison by Percival A. Wesche, a brief history of Asbury Theological Seminary by Howard Fenimore Shipps, and a volume of chapters on special theological emphases written by various faculty members. All three of these out-of-print works will now be released again as part of this special 90th anniversary set.

On the 50th anniversary of Asbury Theological Seminary in 1973, President Stanger celebrated with a series of special lectures and scholarly papers to be given throughout the academic year of 1973-1974. Key faculty were assigned important theological topics and orally presented these papers in Estes Chapel. They have never been published until now in this special 90th anniversary set.

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