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## When the Kings Come Marching In: Isaiah and the New Jerusalem (Book Review)

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with food and energy. Both are largely recapitulations of earlier proposals. Written in 1983, the call to developed countries for increased receptivity to Third World exports already seems sadly dated by the wave of protectionistic rhetoric currently washing over the U.S. Similarly, the warnings of food problems in Africa have already been tragically fulfilled. A final chapter, which focuses on the negotiating process between North and South, contains more hope than reality. The report's principal proposals are summed up in eight pages, and a brief appendix outlines hearings and other actions taken by the commission.

What impact can a report which so bravely and optimistically ignores political realities have? *Common Crisis's* most important functions may be symbolic and educational. Its proposals will serve as a goal toward which wealthy non-superpower Western nations such as

Sweden and the Netherlands will work. The efforts of these nations, as in the past, will serve at least to prick the consciences of the larger Western nations. The book may also be very useful as a primer on international development issues for concerned laypersons. One need not be an expert in economics or international relations to digest either of the Brandt reports, and their price would allow them to be used, for example, by adult church discussion groups. It would also be useful as a supplemental reading in undergraduate courses dealing with economic development, international economics, or even international relations. Some of the proposals may be naive, or even contradictory, but as a whole should spark substantial interest in the issues at hand. In summary, *Common Crisis* is a readable book which may be useful as long as its limitations are kept in mind.

*When The Kings Come Marching In: Isaiah And The New Jerusalem*, by Richard J. Mouw, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983. \$3.95. Reviewed by Rockne McCarthy, Coordinator of the Dordt College Studies Institute.

*When The Kings Come Marching In* makes an important contribution to the discussion begun by H. Richard Niebuhr concerning the relationship between Christ and Culture. The phrase "Christ and Culture" has come to stand for a number of interrelated issues. Of central importance to Mouw's study is the question of "how ought Christians to understand the proper patterns of their cultural involvement?" (p. x).

This question is explored by examining the biblical theme of the Holy City, particularly as it comes to expression in the book of Isaiah. Prepared originally as a series of Bible-study lectures for delivery at a Baptist college, the work often skirts significant philosophical and theological issues as it retains its Bible-study character.

The book is organized around four main features of the Holy City: (1) "the wealth of the nations" is gathered into the city; (2) the "kings of the earth" march into the city; (3) people from many nations are drawn to the city; (4) Jesus is the light that illuminates the city.

At the outset Mouw sets forth the central message of his study: "The Christian life is directed toward a City, a place in which God's redemptive purpose for his creation will be realized" (p. 6). He points out that if we think of the future life as a "disembodied existence in an ethereal realm," then it is difficult "to think of our present cultural affairs as in any sense a positive preparation for heavenly existence. But if we think of the future life in terms of inhabiting a Heavenly City, we have grounds for looking for some patterns of continuity between our present lives and the life to come" (p. 6). In this judgment Mouw correctly points out that a particular eschatological perspective can shape one's view

of the nature and task of the Christian life in society.

From the biblical perspective of Isaiah, the Holy City is the perfection of the earthly city and not its rejection. It is for this reason, according to Mouw, that Isaiah pictures the Holy City as a center of commerce, a place which receives vessels (ships from Tarshish), goods (costly lumber imported from Lebanon), currency (gold and silver), and frankincense. And the presence in the Holy City of the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth leads Mouw to speculate on whether animals have a place in heaven.

Isaiah's Holy City is a transformed city. The prophet sees the items of "pagan culture" as being put to the service of God and his people. In addition, in Isaiah's vision of the Holy City, temporal "corporate structures" and "cultural patterns" are not destroyed, but they too are transformed into proper instruments of service. The political, social, and other aspects of life are brought to perfection in God's new order. The fulfillment that God brings to his creation thus takes historical development into account. The Bible begins with a Garden and ends with a City made up of differentiated institutions and many nations or peoples.

The Lamb of God is the lamp that illuminates the Holy City. The redemptive ministry which Jesus accomplished by his life, death, and resurrection constitutes the crucial transition from the earthly to the heavenly city. It is exactly this truth, Mouw argues, that has been denied in recent years by two different traditions. He puts it this way: "It is one of the sad and puzzling facts about recent understandings of the person and work of Jesus Christ that those who profess a 'high Christology' have seemed to care very little about a

critical perspective on cultural patterns, and that those in the Christian community who have been very concerned about cultural issues have often operated with a 'low Christology' " (p. 61).

Mouw's study is a corrective to these two extremes. To evangelical Christians with a "high Christology" but little concern for social issues, he points out that Jesus died to save sinners - but He is also the Lamb who serves as the lamp in the transformed City. And to liberal Christians with a "low Christology" but a burning compassion for social justice, he stresses the centrality of Jesus' shed blood which has the power to transform the hearts and lives of individuals. Mouw sums up his understanding of the biblical perspective in these words: " 'It is well with my soul' is only a first step, an initial

fruit of God's redeeming activity. We must share in God's restless yearning for the renewal of the cosmos" (p. 65).

It is surprising to this reviewer that, given Mouw's original Baptist audience, he chose to stress an older (some would say timeworn) theme of evangelical-liberal differences rather than attempting to make a fresh contribution to a Reformed-Baptist dialogue. Such a dialogue could have been enhanced if the study had struggled more with what these two evangelical traditions can learn from each other concerning the theme "Christ and Culture." Nevertheless, what Mouw has provided is an insightful analysis of Isaiah's vision of the Holy City and of the relevancy of the prophet's message for contemporary Christian life in society.