

THE PAPERS OF ARTHUR C. COCHRANE (1909-2002)

Prologue

The Special Collections Section of the Charles C. Myers Library contains the Papers of Arthur C. Cochrane (1909-2002). Included are lecture notes, original manuscripts, and personal letters of Cochrane and Karl Barth. Cochrane was among the earliest Barth interpreters in America and knew Barth personally. Special Collections also includes many of Barth's original works, a presentation copy to Cochrane from Barth, and many volumes of Barth's Church Dogmatics (in German and English), heavily underlined and annotated by Cochrane.

Biography

Born in Orillia, Ontario, Cochrane received the B.A. at University of Toronto in 1932; the divinity degree from Knox Theological College of the University of Toronto in 1935; and the Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland in 1937. In 1963, he received an honorary D.D. degree from Knox College. He pastored St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Tillsonburg, Ontario (1938-1942) and at Port Credit, Ontario (1942-1948) before coming to University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (UDTS) in 1948, where he was Professor of Systematic Theology until 1971. During this time, Cochrane spent one year as Visiting Professor of Theology at Yale University (1963/1964). While at UDTS, Cochrane was Dean of Post-graduate Studies (1967-1971) and Acting Dean (1970/71). Cochrane then taught at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (1971-1975). He became professor emeritus at UDTS in 1976, and was also appointed as Visiting Professor of Ecumenical Theology at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque.

Cochrane spent two years in Germany (1935-1937), studying the Reformation Confessions, and became acquainted with the underground Church during the Nazi regime. His study and experience during these years would prove to be pivotal to his theological work. He is the author of The Church and the War (1940) and translated Otto Weber, Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics (1953). He also wrote The Existentialists and God, published separately by University of Dubuque Press (1956) and Westminster Press (1956). A grant from the American Association of Theological Schools in 1957 enabled Cochrane to return to Germany to continue his research on the Barmen Declaration. He wrote The Church's Confession Under Hitler (1962). He also edited Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century (1966). He also worked on the Presbyterian Confession of 1967 and Confession of 1982. In addition to the later works entitled Eating and Drinking With Jesus (1974) and The Mystery of Peace (1986), he has written numerous journal articles, particularly on John Calvin and Karl Barth.

The 1950s and 1960s were an international period of the "Cold War." In 1960, Cochrane drafted "A Statement on Mass Extermination As a Means Of Waging War," which was then known as the "Dubuque Statement," having been signed by seven members of the Faculty of UDTS. It is a confession that proclaims the divine purpose of government, biblical limits on the state's authority, and the responsibility of the church in time of war. America's use of mass extermination weapons is censured because their use defeats the very purpose for which war may be waged (See below, Healey, p. 471).

Cochrane was ahead of his time in the ecumenical movement. He was at Vatican II as one of the first Protestants to be invited to a Vatican Council. He participated in interdenominational dialogue with pastors and scholars, addressing the issues of war, pacifism, church-state relationships, and church unity.

He belonged to many theological associations, including the Theological Committee of the North American Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches; the Reformed-Roman Catholic Consultation; and Lutheran-Reformed Consultation in USA.

Papers

These documents highlight the political and ecclesiastical conditions of Germany during Hitler's rise to power. Issues of war, the church's involvement in politics, and doctrinal statements from this time period are among the issues addressed in these papers. Documented is the development of the Barmen Declaration as well the later adoption of Presbyterian confessions. Cochrane's focus is the universal church as he draws comparisons between issues surrounding Barmen and the contemporary ecumenical, political, social, and moral issues. The papers are organized in manuscript boxes in Special Collections as follows:

Box 1: Cochrane's doctoral dissertation, "The Relation of Karl Barth to the Historic Creeds and Standards of the Church," Edinburgh University (1937).

Box 2: Lecture notes from courses Cochrane taught and theological lectures as well as original hand-written notes for some of the books he wrote later. Several pictures of Barth and Cochrane when Barth visited UDOTS in 1962 are included with many of Cochrane's personal notes, comments, and correspondence.

Box 3: Information on the development of the Barmen Declaration, subsequent Presbyterian Confessions, and the Kairos Document, a theological comment on the political crisis in South Africa based on the Barmen Declaration. There are notes, booklets, and articles on the Reformed tradition.

Box 4: Twenty articles written by Arthur C. Cochrane.

Box 5: Memoirs by Charles C. Cochrane, brother of Arthur C. Cochrane and a Presbyterian minister in Canada, in which Charles makes a number of references to his brother.

Box 6: Typed and hand-written materials by Karl Barth; a folder of items related to Barth research; and articles, booklets, letters, and papers by various authors concerning Barth.

Box 7: Manuscript (445 pages) by Markus Barth, "Das Mahl des Herrn: Gemeinschaft mit Israel, mit Christus und unter den Gasten," and several of his notes and articles.

Postscript

These papers refer to global concerns that affect social, moral, political, and theological studies, including the relationship between church and state and Christian responsibility in times of war. Of particular interest for future research is the development of various denominational confessions and Presbyterian and Reformed developments in the twentieth century from the time of World War II to 1980s. Persons interested in doing research in these papers are advised to read Robert Healey, "Arthur C. Cochrane and the Church Confessing," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 49 (1996): 466-481, which traces the development of Cochrane's theology in relation to the church in war and in peace, the church and its confessions, and ecumenism.