

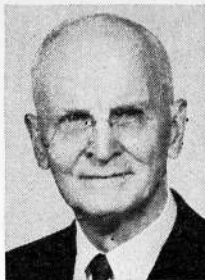
# Christendom's Key Issue: 25 Scholars' Views



**BARTH**  
"atom warfare"



**BERKOUWER**  
"new attention"



**BLACKWOOD**  
"God in the forefront"



**BRUCE**  
"to be real Christians"

What is the most vital issue facing contemporary Christianity?

Twenty-five leading scholars responded to this query posed by CHRISTIANITY TODAY.

Some noted scholars, among them Professor REINHOLD NIEBUHR of Union Theological Seminary, New York, and Professor PAUL TILICH of Harvard Divinity School, confessed their inability to narrow the issues to a single primary concern.

"I don't know how to choose one vital issue among the many issues that face the Christian Church," said Niebuhr.

Tilich said: "I feel it is impossible to reduce to one most vital issue the problems facing contemporary Christianity."

KARL BARTH, professor, University of Basel: "How do you explain the fact that the large Christian bodies cannot pronounce a definite yes or no on the matter of atom warfare? What significance has this fact: (a) in regard to the Church's own message; (b) in regard to the world around her (the Church)?"

G. C. BERKOUWER, professor, Free University of Amsterdam, Netherlands:



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"I see the 'most vital issue' herein: That amid all kinds of evidences of secularization and antagonism toward the Christian faith, we nevertheless discover once again in the Church a new sense of the importance of the Gospel and a realization that God's Word is manifesting itself with power and is calling for renewed attention (II Timothy 2:9, 'the word of God is not bound'). That gives us courage for the future, when men through the overpowering influence of the Gospel meet each other in new perspective, full of comfort and mission in this disturbed world. In one word—new attention to the Bible."

ANDREW W. BLACKWOOD, professor emeritus, Princeton Theological Seminary: "How to put God in the forefront of Christianity today, and then keep him foremost. Call the current tendency secularism, externalism, humanism, or what not; really it is pride and selfishness. In hymns and prayers, sermons and religious books, we exalt 'Man'—ourselves—rather

than the Triune God. We need a new Christ-centered Reformation."

F. F. BRUCE, professor, Manchester University: "Most vital is the urgent necessity for all who profess and call themselves Christians, in West and East alike, to be real Christians, wholeheartedly committed to the cause of Christ in the world and ready to embrace the conditions which he laid down for those who wished to be his disciples."

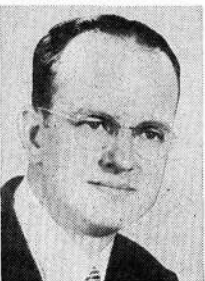
EMILE CAILLIET, professor, Princeton Theological Seminary: "The most vital issue is that we have lost a sense of cosmic purpose secured over the ages, thanks mostly to the Gospel. We are accordingly overwhelmed by a mood of futility to the point of reverting to the very forms of doom which characterized the pagan past."

EDWARD JOHN CARNELL, professor, Fuller Theological Seminary: "The most vital issue is the communion of the saints. Jesus prayed that his disciples would be so knit by cords of love, that when the

**CAILLIET**  
"overwhelmed by a mood"



**CARNELL**  
"communion of the saints"



**CLARK**  
"neglect and repudiation"



**GAEBELEIN**  
"fuller realization"

