

BOOK REVIEWS

Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding, An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Erdmans, 1991, pp. xiii + 302, \$18.95

The book is an effort to bring various current methods of theology into a kind of synthesis. Daniel L. Migliore, son of a Presbyterian pastor, brought up in a poor Italian community in Pittsburgh, is theology professor in a mainline American Protestant Church. So he combines the Christocentric approach of Karl Barth with the correlation method of Tillich and the Liberationist approach of Gutierrez. But his main principle is that theology can come only from a particular community of faith, and the present surge of religious fundamentalism in various churches and religions is a sign of the continuing strong influence of religious commitment. So the traditional Barthian method of criticizing the Church, its institutions and activities with the word of God, definitively revealed in Christ, is the main line followed by the book. The organization of material in the book follows the order of the classical loci of theology: Revelation, Scripture, and the dogmas of Trinity, creation, sin, Incarnation, Grace, Church and the rest. The structure and content is Trinitarian.

But the nature of theology as critical reflection on the community of faith and its practice is stressed and an effort is made towards the development of a comprehensive theological vision. The author takes note of the fact that the traditional individualist approach to faith is bankrupt today, and makes a call to rethink salvation along rational and communitarian lines.

The novel part of the book consists of three appendices presenting three imagined dialogues on natural theology, resurrection of Christ and political theology in which Karl Barth, and Paul Tillich represent the traditional Protestant side, and Karl Rahner and an Ecumenist, the Catholic challenge. Bultmann and Niebuhr, and other theological trends Pannenbergian, Moltmannian, Feminist and Liberationist are all represented. No effort is made to make an easy synthesis of the

divergent opinions. But the ecumenist, who tries to show the inter-relatedness of these different opinions, makes these prominent theologians and schools relevant for the present times. The book is a good ecumenical synthesis that can serve as a good introduction for more detailed studies.

Freedom, Transcendence and Identity, Essays in memory of Kalidas Bhattacharya, (ed.) Pradip Kumar Sengupta, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1988, pp. viii+222. Rs. 135.

This is a fitting tribute to the philosophy of Kalidas Bhattacharya (1911-1984) by his friends and disciples. P.K. Sengupta, the editor, was a colleague of Bhattacharya at Viswabharati and is senior Fellow of Indian Council of Philosophical Research. Several prominent Indian Philosophers like Debabrata Sinha, Rajendra Prasad, Ramakant Sinari, B.K. Matilal who was Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions at Oxford, and good many others have contributed articles to this commemoration volume.

The different articles bring out the special contribution of Kalidas Bhattacharya to Indian philosophy. Like his father K.C. Bhattacharya, who tried to make a synthesis of Eastern idea of the Absolute and Kantian philosophy, Kalidas Bhattacharya also tried to bring in the opinions of Hegel, Berkeley, Bradley and other Western scholars into dialogue with Vedanta, Buddhism and Jainism. One can easily discern in Bhattacharya the ecumenical approach of Jainism, to see the different philosophical opinions, not as contradictory schools, but as alternate view points. Shefali Moitra explains Bhattacharya's alternative standpoints in philosophy. Mrinial Kanti Bhadra shows how Kalidas developed in his later works the idea of authentic man as freedom "borrowing profusely, though not without considerable modification" from Kant, post-Kantians, Hegelians, Phenomenologists and Existentialists and where necessary even Karl Marx. To this he adds the Indian idea of detachment. Cognition, emotion and conation run together as alternates on the way to the absolute. Wherever one perceives an alternation among these, it is perception from a higher level. The cosmic rhythm for Bhattacharya is the deeper dimension of the realm of ultimate truths.

G. C. Nayak's article on "Man and Religion in Tagore's Philosophy" Sengupta's report about Bhattacharya's exposition of Tagore's aesthetic

vision, Amiya Kumar Mazumdar's discussion of Debendranath Tagore's philosophy, and Manoranjan Basu's contribution on Aurobindo's Integral Consciousness, go well with the ecumenical thrust of the book. There are also some significant articles on connected topics like B.K. Matilal's article on "Nyaya Critique of the Buddhist Doctrine of Non-Soul and Sinari's discussion of "An Emergence from Nothing". The book contains also a list of the publications of Bhattacharya, which will be very useful for students of East-West dialogue in philosophy.

Helmut Thielicke, *Modern Faith & Thought*, trs. Geoffrey W. Bromley. Grand Rapids, Mich. : Wm B. Eerdmans, 1990, pp.xix+ 582, \$35.

After completing all the academic work he had planned, Helmut Thielicke found time to add an historical supplement: *Glauben und Denken in der Neuzeit*, published in 1983. Geoffrey Bromley has given us a translation of the book. It is a post-script to a whole era that passed with the World Wars. It is a comprehensive survey of the German theology of the 19th century covering such well-known thinkers like Reimarus, Lessing, J.S. Semler, Schleiermacher, Kant, Hegel, Strauss, Kierkegaard and even Feuerbach and Karl Marx. The main concern is the relation between revelation and reason, between God's commands and human conscience, historical criticism and study of the Bible. Most of the issues that preoccupied the thinkers of the past century are now obsolete. From that Thielicke tries to show that theology is always a very human work.

To understand the main thrust of the book one has to read first the preparatory conceptions of Descartes and the Enlightenment which brought in a new era of theological thinking, and the Epilogue covering the dialectical theology of Karl Barth, who with a deep skepticism of history began a new era. The one to conclude the era was Troeltsch, who tried to explain Christianity along with other religions in terms of the dominating culture and individualism. He ended up relativizing Christianity. According to the intention of the author the book looks as an epitaph for German Liberal Protestantism. It is a comprehensive summary of the positive contributions and failures of German theologians of the last century. But Thielicke does not take fully into account the emerging positive role of history in understanding the unique message of Christianity. Gospel, after all, is not metaphysics or abstract value system, but "news", something which happened in history.

Fr. John B. Chethimattam CMI

David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission : Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll : Orbis Books, 1991 (American Society of Missiology Series No. 16), pp. xx + 587.

There is no doubt that to be missionary is an essential characteristic of the Church and each Christian. Jesus Christ Himself is the missionary *par excellence*. And it is He, in turn, who has sent the disciples as apostles with a mission. Ever since then the Church has been dutifully carrying on this entrusted task of mission and commission faithfully. The modality of this Christian duty has, of course, gone through different forms, depending on the various understanding and perspectives of the mission.

D. J. Bosch has made a remarkable attempt "to demonstrate the extent to which the understanding and practice of mission have changed during the almost twenty centuries of Christian missionary history" (xv). He puts it in the frame-work of T. Kuhn's ingenious theory of "paradigm shifts". According to the author at the moment we find ourselves in the midst of one of the most important shifts in this regard.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the N.T. models of Mission (chs. 1-4). After presenting the N T as a whole as a missionary document, the author proceeds to explain the Matthean view of mission as "Disciple-making"; the Lukan understanding of mission as practising forgiveness and solidarity with the poor; and the Pauline vision as invitation to join the eschatological community. The whole section is an enlightening biblical study that deserves attention. It serves as a solid foundation for any serious discussion on missiology.

The second part is historical. The author discusses in this section the paradigm changes in Missiology (in general); the missionary paradigm of the Eastern Church; the medieval Roman Catholic missionary paradigm; the missionary paradigm of the Protestant Reformation; and Mission in the wake of Enlightenment (chs. 5 - 9). It is interesting and revealing to follow the author as he unravels to us the clues to rightly understand each of those paradigms and the corresponding impacts on mission and missiology. We have here a scholarly historical analysis that highlights each paradigm and paradigm change.

In the third part the author pleads for a relevant missiology for today (chs. 10 – 13). The old models are not suitable now in the same forms. The themes of this section consist of chapters on: the Emergence of a Postmodern Paradigm; Mission in a time of testing; Elements of an emerging ecumenical missionary paradigm (the most extensive and important chapter of the whole book) and Mission in many models. The author brings in many valid points for discussion and points out the contemporary need and relevance of the mission as the Church-with-others, mission as Mission Dei, as contextualization, Liberation and Inculturation, as witness to people of other living faiths etc.

The book contains a very useful and elaborate bibliography, indices of scriptural references, subjects, authors and personal names.

As salvation is wide-ranged, so too is mission. And this is very well reflected in the extensive range of issues dealt with in the book by Bosch. He has included almost all the current issues except eco-theology. As the title of the book suggests, it is all about a mission that undergoes transformation as well as that which transforms the Church and the world. The work is definitely a classic in the area of missiology.

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