

BOOK REVIEWS

Thomas Kramm

Analyse and Bewaehrung theologischer Modelle zur Begrue ndung der Mission, Aachen : 1979, pp. 264.

The author of this Doctoral dissertation undertakes to examine various modern theories concerning the basis, aims and objectives of evangelization. He has analysed some predominant mission models and approaches in the modern missiology, mainly, those based on a salvation history-ecclesiology bound concept and those based on a historico-eschatological perspective.

After establishing the validity of a methodology based on theological models (14-26), in chapter two the author summarizes a number of mission theologies coming under the purview of the two mission models mentioned above (33-90). Both Catholic and Protestant authors are treated. This part is followed by a very deeply penetrating analysis of the different authors and other sources such as synodal documents summarized in the previous chapter (95-190). In the succeeding chapter a graphic presentation of the main theological concepts and characteristics of the two distinct mission models is made, where he compares and contrasts the key-concepts like world, Church, salvation history etc., so that the basic issues may crystalize. In the next two chapters the author endeavours to define the essentials of the models, pin-points their differences, evaluates their merits and demerits, tests them on the touchstone of a biblical understanding of mission and finally examines the possibility of integrating them under a broader theoretical perspective.

The first model, the salvation history – ecclesiology bound mission concept is based on *Missio Dei* (Mission of God) of which the direct objective is Church. It posits the relation between Mission of God and Church through the affirmation that the Church is the actualization of the Mission of God during the intervening time between the First and Second coming of Christ and that the Church is the continuation of God's offer of salvation historically made available in Jesus Christ. Under this concept *Missio Dei* is restricted to Christ event, because in the historical expression of *Missio Dei* it is limited to the history of Church. Salvation history becomes practically identified with the Church history. Such a view has, according to the author, the consequence that "world" and "general salvation history" get, strictly

speaking, separated from the total complex of Mission of God-Church-Salvation history. Although on the one hand they may be seen as mutually oriented, still, on the other hand they may appear as two competing systems. Again, under this concept God's mission is not seen in its unity and continuation, but as single acts like creation, exodus, covenant and Church. These are the drawbacks of the first model (204).

In the second model, i.e., historico-eschatological concept, the relation between Church and world is different. The second model has for its point of departure the universal significance of the Self-Communication of God. The Christ event makes the world-relatedness of *Missio Dei* explicit. According to the author, this mission concept safeguards the unity of God's salvific act in relation to the world from creation to the final *parousia* (207) with its accent (derived from a historical perspective) on the God who comes: on the eschatological glory of God. The Church is not the all-embracing factor here nor primarily the field of her missionary activity. On the other hand, she together with world moves towards the promised Fulfilment (208). That means, the Church is an instrument of service in the process of *Missio Dei*. She is neither the origin nor the end of Mission (211). The author is of the opinion that this model is more acceptable than the other because it corresponds to contemporary man's understanding, firstly of an open future, of a world in change and continuous progress and development and secondly, of interdependence.

The author has in a very scholarly manner tried to establish the relevance of a mission model and praxis based on the historico-eschatological concept. His methodology, and, his analysis of the different conceptual elements of the two mission models in the light of dogma, scripture, mission praxis etc. shed much light on the issues discussed. However, as one carefully reads the dissertation, one cannot but see an attempt, intentional or not, on the part of the author to show that the mission model based on the salvation history-ecclesiology bound concept is church-centred, less dynamic and less over-reaching. But the author's criticism of the model is in several respects unacceptable. For example, the author says that according to this mission model, a man who has no explicit faith in Christ has no possibility of salvation which is to be found in the Church (210). Who are the theologians of this school whom the author has in mind? Does he mean the Fathers of the Church or some medieval theologians who taught:

Extra ecclesiam nulla salus? Certainly such representatives of this model as G. Vicedom whom the author has studied does not seem to subscribe to such views. Their understanding of mission derived from a *Missio Dei* concept with due emphasis on the incarnational and Christological aspects of the salvation history is sufficiently open to the world and future and contains a necessary degree of cosmic sweep.

The author in his attempt to uphold the mission model based on the historico-eschatological concept has failed to bring out certain of its inherent weaknesses. For example, this approach seems to relegate the uniqueness of God's historical intervention in Christ to a less important position while it highlights God's Self-Communication at creation, the general salvation history and the final *parousia*. . . Of course the author has given some hints of the limitations and dangers of a one-sided historico-eschatological mission concept (207). But in a study which is expected to be scientific and impartial, such hints are very weak and inadequate. Again his position that the two models, insofar as they depend upon irreducible metatheoretical bases, are not capable of integration (225-226), may not be accepted by all.

Lastly, it may be pointed out that the author has not paid enough attention to a possible and important mission model in the context of world religions. True, the author has taken note of this factor (171-185). But instead of giving an adequate consideration of this factor on its own merit, he has preferred to treat it as part of the two mission models. However, even here one finds, to one's surprise, that the author takes into due consideration only the European writers who do not have a direct and living experience with world religions like Hinduism. But in the religiously pluralistic countries like India, enough theological literature on this question has come out which reflects new orientations and methods of evangelization in the context of the living experience with world religions. A study of this situation by the author could have perhaps provided new insights.

But the work as a whole is a significant contribution towards a clearer perception of the foundations of mission. It sheds much light on some confused issues through its most scholarly analysis of the basic concepts. For sheer clarity of perception and the novelty of methodology, the work emerges as an outstanding contribution in the field of missiology.

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Karl Rahner

Theological Investigations. (vol. xvii): Jesus, Man and the Church. transl. Margaret Kohl, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1981, pp. 260, £ 14.50.

This seventeenth volume in the collection of the writings of the world famous theologian Karl Rahner deals with four main topics: the experience of Jesus Christ, supernatural anthropology, certain questions in pastoral theology, and some aspects of the relation between the Church and the churches. All these topics have already been discussed in the other volumes in one way or another. But Rahner has always new insights to present in all these fields—fruits of his ongoing reflection on theological problems.

In the first section, which deals with Jesus, Rahner following up the spirit of the Ignatian spiritual exercises sees Christmas as a supreme instance of the unity of transcendence and freedom. Another paper discusses the meaning and role of faith in the Risen Lord for Christian spirituality, and explores the place of Jesus' resurrection in Salvation-History as the eschatologically irreversible historical appearance of God's promise of himself to the world. Then the limitations of classical christology are detailed and the need and validity of new approaches to the topic are explored. The point Rahner makes is that at the same time as acknowledging the value of classical christology, we should also be open to new methods. Another chapter examines the role and meaning of other religions, whose followers Rahner calls "anonymous Christians." Divine revelation is available to all men in some form and is the basis for the faith in non-Christians as well. But in their act of faith the particular religious traditions, especially the saviour-figures in them, have an important contribution to make. The religious historian has to bring out the implications of this act of faith by the non-Christian.

Coming to supernatural anthropology, Rahner states that man's concern with himself today should not be regarded as un-Christian, and that Christian anthropology should take a wider perspective than ordinary anthropology, focussing on the free relationship of God to man. On the other hand, Christian anthropology is only the radical

form of anthropology, since it states that man is not comprehensible in himself alone, but is inescapably endowed with God's self-communication. Discussing the body in the order of salvation, Rahner starts from the basic facts that the body of dust is created by God, that the body is the medium through which man belongs to the one human race and shares in its original sin, that the Word of God became incarnate by taking flesh, that there is a resurrection of the body and that man is a unity made up of body and soul. Then he examines the fundamental concept of the body, focussing on the fundamental openness of the human reality. In this human context he discusses the place and relevance of mystical experience, the question of the free decisions of a person when he is sick, and the complex problem of the intermediate state after death.

In the section on the ministry and the Spirit we get several specific practical topics like the legitimate as well as the unacceptable oppositions in the Church, analysis of a document regarding Catholic doctrine from the Congregation for Doctrine, the place and role of an episcopal vicar put in charge of an area of a large diocese, and the impact and role of a transformed church in the modern circumstances on the secular society.

The fourth section deals with several ecumenical questions. Today the rank and file of particular churches reject other churches not on principles of faith, but generally for historical, cultural, psychological and institutional reasons. This presents both dangers and opportunities for ecumenism: A union of churches may be attempted without any regard for truth, and the church itself may be secularized. On the other hand, today there is a greater awakening to the fundamental substance of Christianity, and there is easier dialogue between churches unhampered by dogmatic differences. But any union of the churches should be based on oneness of faith and true communion of churches. Posing the radical question whether church union is dogmatically possible, Rahner answers it in the affirmative: the major Christian Churches of today could unite, even institutionally; their sense of faith presents no insuperable obstacle. He even discusses the question of the 'third church' meaning those who in some kind of religio-sociological way stand between the institutionally constituted churches, Protestants and Catholics alike, and confess the triune God and Jesus Christ as sole mediator, without acknowledging any ecclesiastical authority. Though a churchless Christianity is impossible these groups

present a real challenge to existing ecclesiastical structures compelling them to re-examine their own value and authority.

Then Rahner discusses the religious piety both inside the Church—either as the witness of the community of salvation or as the contribution of the institute of salvation—as well as outside the pale of Christian Churches, efficacious all the same, for salvation. The Catholic Christian and theologian should recognize all conscientious honest piety as saving, sustained by grace, and “in this sense already Christian in the anonymous sense” (p. 231). So Christian message is not something brought to the non-Christian from the outside, “but the awakening of something which is really already existent through grace and is already experienced” (*ibid*). But Rahner does not explain why such piety has to be so artificially labelled “Christian”, when it is not necessarily related to the historical reality of Christ. This remains an unresolved question in Rahner especially since according to him “the contemplation of the historical fact of the dead and risen Jesus of Nazareth” gives church piety only tangibility and concreteness to the transcendental experience of God (p. 240).

The volume closes with a chapter in which Rahner explains his own work as a theologian. Though several books have been written about his philosophy, he disclaims the role and title of a philosopher, because “the philosophy of expert, specialized scholarship becomes a philosophy that is existentially empty and ineffective” (p. 244). Even the insistence of scholarship on exact knowledge is irrelevant since by it one becomes “like the man who, so as to achieve exact knowledge specialized more and more until he knew everything about nothing” (p. 246). Even the scholar who sets out with the highest intentions falls short of being scholarly. What can be said with extreme exactitude is trivial even in the sciences. Hence what is possible in theology and what Rahner has attempted to do is “the high-class popularization”, knowing fully well “that one says a great deal which one ought to know more about, and which, moreover, one *can* know more about today, because studies exist which one has not read” (*ibid*).

Thus the volume is more a collection of inspiring ideas about various points of Christian theology which whets one’s appetite to know more, rather than provide clear and distinct ideas or definitive solutions to problems. Apart from this exploring, phenomenological

approach which tries to come to grips with the actual problems of man today, Rahner's theology remains in substance a theology "from above" true to the German idealist tradition, applying transcendental principles to the concrete situations of human life.

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F. F. Bruce

The Spreading Flame (The Rise and Progress of Christianity from its First Beginnings to the Conversion of the English), Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979 (reprint of 1958 edition: The Paternoster Press).

This is a history of Christianity from the beginning to the early middle ages when "England took up the torch" and enlightened continental Europe. Its author, F. F. Bruce, is a scriptural scholar and has written extensively on the origins of Christianity and on the early Christian scriptures. In the present work Bruce is interested in the flame, that is Christian faith. He shows how the light lit by Christ, the obedient servant of God, which shone in the New Testament books and handed on to the Apostles, illuminated the whole world beginning with Jerusalem, and how the torch was carried from generation to generation to the farthest ends and beyond the Roman Empire. The chequered story of the flame unfolds itself, from chapter to chapter: the light was kept shining through the storms of persecution unleashed by the dark powers of the Roman Empire; it survived the dark period of the barbarian onslaught; finally the very barbarians themselves, especially, the English, became the heroic bearers of the torch.

The book has 41 chapters, divided into three parts: 1. The Dawn of Christianity; 2. The growing Day; 3. Light in the West. It begins with a chapter on the "Strangers in Corinth", namely, the "brethren at Corinth" some of whom said, "I am for Paul", others, "I am for Apollos", still others, "I am for Cephas", a few, "I am for Christ" (1 Cor. 1:12). These "strangers" all of whom came from every direction to Corinth, between 50 and 54, were already connected with this movement which was turning the Jewish communities throughout the Roman Empire upside down and was beginning to make its revolutionary impact on the pagan world as well "

After this introduction the author poses a few questions: What was the new movement, and how did it originate? What supplied its driving force? When did it derive its popular appeal? Who was this Jesus with whom it was all bound up? Was He really the promised Messiah of Israel, as these strangers in Corinth maintained, or were they mistaken, as the synagogue authorities for the most part asserted? How did He come to fall foul of the ruling powers and come to such a tragic death? What did they mean by saying that He died for the sins of others? And, above all, what was all this about His returning to life on the third day and appearing alive to so many witnesses?"

To answer these questions Bruce goes a long way back in history. In the first part the story of the formation of the new community around the person of Jesus and around his memory is told the story mainly of Jewish Christianity, the beginning of which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. The second part deals with the next two and a half centuries of the history of the vicissitudes of the "the light that was lit by the obedient servant", two and a half centuries of constant hostility towards the Christian Church on the part of the imperial power, a hostility that at times broke out into savage repression. It was a period in which the "Church of the Spirit" does to a very large degree coincide with the visible institution. It is during these years that the early "Catholic tradition", both doctrinal and practical, emerged, through confrontation with certain extreme movements within such as Montanist prophetism, Marcionist and other "gnosis." In this period Christianity made at least a beginning of its spread towards the East outside the Roman Empire.

There were even during this period, tensions between the "Church of the Spirit" and the visible institution, but on a very limited scale. Not only tensions but even failures occurred here and there, now and then. But the Christians who saw behind the imperial persecutors the prince of darkness himself, putting forth all his might to overthrow them, over-came him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony because "they loved not their lives unto the death." Whatever failures may be marked here and there, they disappear in the light of "the patience and the faith of the saints" (*Rev. 12:11; 13:10*).

After 313 the tension was felt much more keenly; the failures and scandals were too many and too frequent for people to notice a shift of

strategy on the part of the devil against the Church after 313, the result of the strategy being the tendency to identify Christianity with the Roman Empire. Whether this tendency was a devil-inspired movement or not, Christianity was not so tied to the imperial power that it was forced to share the decline of that power. On the contrary, all that was of value in Roman civilization was preserved by Christianity and carried over into the new world that followed the Dark Ages. The barbarian nations of Europe one by one, in quick succession, accepted the Christian gospel; the Gentiles came to the light.

Not only light came to them, but they themselves became the bearers of the light. The last chapters of the third part are devoted to early British and Irish Christianity. The last chapter particularly illustrates how the spirit of the obedient servant was kept vigorously alive by English scholars like Ven. Bede, Alcuin and missionaries like Wilfrid, Willibrod and Boniface.

The book enriched with a wealth of quotations from Jewish classical and English literary sources, combined with Bruce's straight forward, conversational style, is an important contribution to the study of the history of the Church.

A. M. Mundadan
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Chai-Shin Yu

Early Buddhism and Christianity, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981, pp. xv + 241, Orient Books; \$14.50.

A thorough study of the formative religious spirit of the first Buddhist communities would be very welcome. For our cross-cultural age, a study which juxtaposes the emerging spirit of the first Christian communities against such a Buddhist backdrop would be even more desirable. Accenting such perceived similarities as authority, discipline and community-formation, *Early Buddhism and Christianity* undertakes this formidable task. Drawing on Chinese texts as well as Japanese translations of early Buddhist texts in addition to the more traditional Pali texts, Professor Chai-Shin Yu's work searches for the religiosity of the two emerging traditions.

When *Buddha-dharma* is set next to the teachings of Jesus Christ, some interesting insights begin to sharpen. By an attainment of

Enlightenment, Siddhartha Gautama both articulated and became the living personification of *dharma*, that "eternal truth" which was uncovered by the personal experience of the Buddha. Therefore, the "words" of the Buddha, the celebrated "*Buddha-uvaca*", became a unique source of authority and unity for the burgeoning Buddhist communities. Following the Mahaparanibbana or the "Great Decease" of the Buddha, the Samgha frequently recalled and revered these "*Buddha-uvaca*" thus generating an almost paternal relationship between the original Buddha and the emerging communities which sought to recreate the Buddha's experience. Accordingly, the *vinaya* or "rules" of the initial communities strove for a "kingdom of *dharma*." Yet as both Buddha and the *Nikayas* report: "*dharma* alone is our support"; the authority of the Buddha was always defined in relation to the universal principles of *dharma* which he uncovered and then articulated for the sake of others.

For the early Christian communities, the authority of Jesus Christ was perceived as unique in an even more dramatic fashion. Faith in the Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ led the first Christians to identify Jesus Christ as the very personification of the Absolute. As professor Yu summarizes: "while Christ was worshipped as the 'God-man', Buddha was looked upon as the '*dharma*-man'" (p. 207). Both Christ and the Buddha did, indeed, invite their followers to "come, follow me" and to form communities which now appear dedicated to quite similar goals. Yet although "strikingly similar moral teachings, human organizations, discipline, life-styles, and personalities emerged" (p. 219), a radical difference in self-understanding distinguishes the two communities at their very foundations.

Professor Yu's work does help to clarify how the two communities perceived their founders and sought to articulate the perduring presence of Christ and the Buddha beyond their own historical eras. A more expansive appreciation of the two Founders is thus outlined. Yet *Early Buddhism and Christianity* somehow fails to depict very much of the emerging "religiousness," that dynamic religious spirit which created the two communities. Often this work seems too locked-into particular texts to even attempt speculation about the inner spirit dynamizing these very scriptures. At times, the analysis of early Christianity seems but a repetition of traditional formulae and cliches.

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Joseph J. Spae

Buddhist-Christian Empathy, Chicago : The Chicago Institute of Theology and Culture; Tokyo : Oriens Institute for Religious Research, 1980, pp. 269, \$16.00.

When one gazes upward at massive snow-capped Mount Fuji, when one steps through sacred gates of numerous Shinto shrines exquisitely set like jewels within the opulence of nature, when one is moved by the richness of Buddhist shrines and pagodas, a realization quickly dawns that one is in the land of Japan, a land with special sensitivity for the aesthetic dimension of religion. Yet how are these deep religious emotions of Japan expressed? *Buddhist-Christian Empathy* attempts to describe the unique Japanese approach to religion and religiousness, an approach which esteems and cherishes beauty and intuition and compassion.

Impressionistic is the word most descriptive of the work of Joseph Spae. A Belgian Catholic priest with a lifetime of scholarly endeavours in Japan, Father Spae wishes to share his empathetic understanding of Japanese spirituality with a wider audience. Humility, flexibility, sincerity and genuine search characterize this volume. Here one senses genuine *fides* truly in quest of fuller *intellectum*. If Father Spae's objective is to "treat this subject matter in Japanese fashion, i. e., in a circular movement, emotional rather than notional, topical rather than general, inductive rather than deductive" (p. 12), then it is a tribute to his acquired Japaneseness that *Buddhist-Christian Empathy* does create a fascinating and intriguing invitation to encounter the spirit of Japan. Only a connoisseur of beauty and life and art, indeed only a connoisseur of religious beauty could write a book like this.

Some fascinating insights flow from such empathy. "A mild degree of irrationality is considered *de riguer* as a form of reasoning; it is a balancing act between experience and intellect" (p. 92). Yet, faith is the key which unlocks the depth of the loving compassion of Amida Buddha as well as the more profound meaning of ritualistic *Nembutsu*. Indeed while Christian *agapé* and Buddhist *jihī* both challenge the tyranny of Ego, *jihī* seems to demand even more for it challenges to an embrace of evil as well as good. Nor is Buddhist *Nirvāna* completely at odds with what an educated Christian calls Heaven.

Indeed such paradigms as Maitreya, Manjusri, and Avalokiteśvara invite to a virtue that is remarkably similar to the virtue of the Christian saints.

From a more technical perspective, *Buddhist-Christian Empathy* provides an excellent introduction to the thought of D. T. Suzuki, Tomomatsu Entai, Katō Shūichi, Nishitani Keiji, Abe masao, indeed to Japanese scholarship on religion. Spae's footnotes and source-materials are consistently helpful. "A New Era of Encounter," Part III of the work, sketches the major themes and participants in the contemporary religious dialogue of Japan.

If a criticism for this excellent seminal work be demanded, then it must be that the work attempts too much with the result that some topics of lesser importance appear overemphasized while others seem understated. This, however, is but a very minor problem. In the Preface, Spae promises a future volume, "a thematic Buddhist anthropology from a comparative Buddhist-Christian perspective." Based on the compassionate wisdom and joyous insights of *Buddhist-Christian Empathy*, this future volume of Joseph Spae is also a work to be awaited with eager anticipation.

Frank Padgorski

Helga Croner and Leon Klenicki (Eds.)

Issues in the Jewish Christian Dialogue: Jewish Perspectives on Covenant, Mission and Witness, Ramsey (N. J.): Paulist Press 1979, pp. viii + 189, \$7.95.

The excellent policy of certain periodicals, such as the *Journal of Dharma*, to dedicate each issue to a particular theme now has a parallel in the area of Jewish-Christian relations. The editors of Stimulus Books have three volumes of collaborative effort in the Paulist Press series "Studies in Judaism and Christianity."

Among the challenges involved in any discussion among different religions and cultures is the search for a common language. Even though Jews and Christians share a common vocabulary derived from their biblical heritage, each term is used with nuances of meaning particular to the tradition and its subdivisions. Careful background work is essential to the advance of serious dialogue.

Concepts of covenant and peoplehood are central to the Bible and the heirs of the faith and way of life proposed therein. Tensions between Jews and Christians because of their respective self-understanding may remain, but they should not be used as an excuse for further prejudice and persecution.

Mrs. Croner gathered the recent statements of Catholic and Protestant communities in the first volume of the series : *Stepping Stones to Further Jewish-Christian Relations* (Paulist Press 1977). Although these *Jewish Perspectives* seem to be considered as the equivalent from the Jewish side, two points must be noted :

First, these are not official statements of the leadership of Jewish communities, but rather they are the works of individual scholars. Indeed, the most highly respected voice among Orthodox Jews, Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik, is not even mentioned, even though (or because?) he wrote to caution against theological dialogue with Christians.

Second, the majority of scholars are from the Reform Tradition; five essays are by persons associated with this movement, whereas only two Conservatives and one Orthodox member are represented. The editorial hope that "the reader will be able to gain an insight into the subject-matter as treated by Jewish scholars of the various branches of Judaism" (p. viii), may be realized as other volumes present complementary themes. Biographies in future volumes should identify the affiliation of each author.

These observations do not detract from the value of each essay; on the contrary, a strong emphasis on one tradition allows the reader to appreciate the synthesis being developed by its theologians. Official Church statements tend to be very succinct and oriented toward practical issues, whereas the personal reflections of theologians can face important questions with depth and breadth of perception.

Certainly the topics of covenant, mission and witness are appropriate as the foundations of an effort to bridge the gap of understanding between Jews and their neighbours. The three essays on covenant display a common thread by their emphasis on medieval and modern philosophical thinkers. A biblical scholar would have dealt with "historical considerations" differently from what Leonard Kravits does, and this reviewer would appreciate an extended discussion of the

relation between covenant and Torah (the "instruction" of God, sometimes rendered as "the Law"). The contemporary picture sketched by Kravits is completed by Elliot Dorff. He notes the contribution of Mordecai M. Kaplan, founder of the Reconstructionist Movement in American Judaism, and then develops a fine vision of Covenant life from the thought of Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber. Buber, it should be noted, has provided many Christians with their vision of Judaism, but is at odds with the major expressions of Jewish life on several points. The place of Covenant in the dialogue between Jews and Christians is studied by Manfred Vogel. Samuel Terrien's *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* (Harper and Row, 1978) would have provided new insights to the scholars working on the Covenant theme.

Witness and mission are discussed from a twofold perspective; mature Conservative and Orthodox scholars view the themes in continuity with the past; then two young Reform rabbis reflect on witness to God and the mission of Israel in the context of the tragedy of the Nazi period (known in American circles as "the Holocaust," and epitomized by the name of the death camp, Auschwitz).

The popular idea that Judaism makes converts very rarely must be abandoned if an open discussion of witness and mission is to develop among Jews and Christians. The fact that the Conservative and Reform movements have instituted courses for converts, from among those of Christian background as well as the "unaffiliated," is not documented adequately in these essays. However, one need only consult the journals of American Jewish communities over the last decade to gain the needed perspective.

As the theistic communities of the western world face the tragedies of this century and encounter the challenge of secularism, all can benefit from the experience of traditions rooted in the biblical vision of life. *Jewish Perspectives* provides a very promising beginning for the pursuit of the task of mutual understanding among Jews and Christians. This is continued in a work by nine scholars edited by Lawrence Boadt, Helga Croner and Leon Klenicki, *Biblical Studies: Meeting Ground of Jews and Christians* (Paulist Press 1980).

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H.E. Hoefler (ed.)

Debate on Mission, Issues from the Indian Context, xix + 470,
Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, Madras, India.

This book contains 48 essays by different authors on a wide spectrum of issues in Mission with a special focus on the Indian context. The essays centre around the following main themes: Theological Foundations of Evangelization; Mission and Development; Institutional Church and the Unbaptized Believers and, lastly, Church Structures in a Mission Country.

The authors deal with relevant and contemporary issues in Mission theology today. Their views and perspectives on one and the same question are often diverse and at times even diametrically opposed to one another. But the editor observes in the introduction: "Often the companions on the quest will have conflicting convictions on each crucial juncture. Yet, they are profoundly united by their acknowledged need for each other as mutual correctives and supports along the risky road" (p. x).

While most of the essays may be profitably read, the following are especially recommended to the readers: Carl Hellberg's essay, which tries to redefine Mission and Church in terms of a "stream of life" or a "grain of salt" (3-14); Herbert Hoefler's essay (81-108) on the witnessing aspect of the Mission theology of liberalism is very interesting; In a deeply penetrating essay (135-153), Fr. Hirudayam examines the theology of inculturation from a historical perspective and draws very valid conclusions, very relevant for the present. Another study on the same topic by Harry Parkin, "Mission in Cross-Cultural Context" provides an equally rewarding reading. There are some notable essays in the book by the German missiologist, Hans-Werner Gensichen on various facets of Mission and social engagement (206-242). Among the essays on the delicate question of the relation of the unbaptized believers and the Church, the one by J.P. Rajashekar takes up the matter from the historical point of view and imparts to the reader some precious insights into the nature of the problem (323-341). In the last section of the book, L.W. Meinzen proposes in his essay (416-430) certain functional Church structures for a Mission country. He shows the inadequacy of the present Church structures in India modelled on the established Churches of the West, and enunciates

certain new ecclesiological principles on which to base the Church structures in the Missions.

There are, besides these some other valuable studies in this collection of essays but because of limitation of space they cannot be dealt with in detail. This book is warmly recommended to the students of Mission, especially of the Indian Mission.

Anto Karokaran

James J. Bacik

Apologetics and the Eclipse of Mystery, (Mystagogy according to Karl Rahner) Notre Dame, London : Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1980, pp. xvii + 166.

The main contention of the book is that Christian apologists must regain the sense of mystery lost in contemporary Western experience, yet implied in all human experience, in order to reveal the genuine human concerns in discussing and defending Christian doctrines. In this the author follows the lead of Karl Rahner who proposed the notion of mystagogy in theology borrowing the term from classical liturgical writings. Rahner is often accused of proposing a mere revised version of scholastic theology, in order to defend the traditional Church teaching, an idealistic theology in the true German tradition with little concern for real history and the social conditions of the people. Rahner himself protests strongly against the latter accusation in the introduction to the book. But Bacik sees a new dimension in Rahner's theology, providing a comprehensive framework for a perceptive Christian interpretation of common human experience.

The mystery dimension is disclosed by examining closely one's self-experience with several layers of consciousness moving from the vague to the clearly articulated. This shows that religious experience is not confined to one area of human life but is the depth dimension of all experience. To bring this religious dimension to awareness the insights of humanistic sciences and various meditation techniques are indicated.

Drawing deeply on the theological anthropology of Rahner the author presents in the second part of the book two models, the human questioning, and human freedom and love, for rooting a phenomeno-

logy of human experience in universal structures of human existence. In the final chapter the author summarizes both the metaphysical as well as descriptive proofs for the existence of the absolute mystery in our activities as a condition of their possibility. The models show that experience points beyond the area of scientific investigation, and also imply that the mystery is gracious; the infinite horizon of freedom is the absolute good. The source of life can be trusted, and life is meaningful rather than absurd. Bacik explores the function and method of metaphysical transcendence in moving towards the mystery beyond. But the preference is for the indirect method rather than for direct proofs; it involves a type of coherence theory of truth in which the criterion is whether a particular insight or proposition faithfully illumines and accounts for our experience. This indirect approach is also close to the pragmatic theory of truth, whether a particular interpretative scheme does a better job in interpreting experience than another, and provides one with greater freedom and mobility. In the direct approach combining the methods of Kant and Joseph Marechal, it is argued that an actual absolute or infinite must be posited as the condition for all human knowing. That this goal and condition of knowledge is the holy mystery of God, and not merely the "common esse" is concluded only through practical means. The indirect method is to show that the religious claim is able to account for experience in a comprehensive and faithful fashion, and that it provides the ultimate basis for relating oneself to others and effectively deals with the problems of absurdity and scepticism.

The ideas of the book are systematically and scientifically developed. The only complaint may be that the author does not make Rahner, who is himself a difficult author any more intelligible to the ordinary reader.

J. B. Chethimattam

Virginia Fabella (Ed.)

Asian Struggle for Full Humanity. Maryknoll, N.Y. : Orbis Books, 1980, pp. vi + 200. \$ 8.95.

This book is a report of the Asian Theological Conference held at Wennappuwa, Sri Lanka, January 7-20, 1979, comprising the preparatory papers for the conference, report of the live-in experience the

members of the conference had with actual communities, papers studied at the consultation, and the assessments of its final statement by various Asian groups. Hence it is not a book of theology, but as the title clearly states the report of a struggle. One can easily question the representative character of the "Asian" conference and say that it indicates only certain trends of thought among certain Christians in Asia. Sr. Virginia Fabella from the Philippines clearly admits the imperfect and tentative character of the whole consultation.

Tissa Balasuriya speaks about the need to shift the emphasis in theology from the classical, male-dominated, church-centred theoretical approach to a practical, action-centred orientation in which psychology, sociology and politics have some distinct contribution to make. Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe of Sri Lanka pleads for an attitude of Christ-centred reciprocity towards other religions and their adherents. For, "God's prevenient love operates everywhere, at all times, in each person and group, but uniquely in the biblical history centred in Jesus Christ." The reports of the live-in experience as well as the professional analysis by K. Mathew Kurian of the socio-economic and political reality in Asia present significant source material for theological reflection.

A variety of theological approaches are presented in the consultation itself. Aloysius Pieris treats Buddhism as the most typical religion of Asia and shows how it presents the model for a liberation theology for Asia. The Buddhist *samgha* serves the cosmic (*laukika*) level of human existence by directing its attention to the metacosmic (*lokottara*) goal. The ultimate perfection and freedom consists of an absence of acquisitiveness and greed, absence of oppressiveness and hate, and perfect salvific knowledge (p. 81). Lynn de Silva following the Buddhist method of analysis of the human situation, shows the complementarity of Christianity and Buddhism in stressing mutuality, non-egoity and transcendence in the approach to social problems.

Sebastian Kappan, S.J. from India presents a Latin American style Liberation Theology, strongly reminiscent of Marxist ideology. According to him the primary locus of God encounter is not religious faith, worship or other religious symbols, but the concrete realities of "dating and mating, sowing and reaping, producing and consuming, buying and selling, planning and organizing," the world of praxis,

economic, social, political and cultural (p. 109). Liberation from the shackles of the present social situation is the challenge presented by God. "For what is God but the absolute negation of all evil and the absolute affirmation of all that is good, true and beautiful?" (p.110). Theological reflection to be genuine has to be a moment in the response to the challenge in history which is exclusively sociological. With this move towards the kingdom to come focussed on the God of hope, we have the other pole of Christian experience in Asia, the memory of Jesus, who identified himself with the common run of mankind by choosing to be baptized for the remission of sins and went through the towns and villages of Palestine to confrontation with the powers that were and finally to death on the cross (p. 119). Jesus is only a memory for us, and for that he was an ideal revolutionary!

The group did not go along with this Marxist inspired liberation theology. Carlos Abesamis of Philippines reporting a theological consultation in the Philippines emphasizes the biblico-historical faith dimension leading to transforming action along with serious analysis of human society, contemporary life-situation and history as the unanimously accepted components of theological reflection. Henriette Katoppo of Indonesia presents an Asian Women's theology focussing interpersonal relationship, God as love, Mary as the model of a liberated person, all pointing to the true liberation of persons.

The final statement focusses on Asia, suffering under the heels of a forced poverty, its life truncated by centuries of colonialism and a more recent neo-colonialism (p. 152). It also draws attention to the rich inspirations provided by the major religions of Asia: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. Calling for a radical transformation in theology in order to be relevant it declares: "The God encountered in the history of the people is none other than the God who revealed himself in the events of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. We believe that God and Christ continue to be present in the struggles of the people to achieve full humanity as we look forward in hope to the consummation of all things when God will be all in all" (p. 158).

By all accounts, the conference has not evolved a common method for theologizing in Asia. But it showed up the contradictory trends that exist among theologians. The main stream Christian thinking in Asia does not seem to be involved in the reflections of this conference.

In fact some of the extreme positions presented in the conference without adequate response or criticism tend to frighten away the well-meaning Christian believers from the work of theologians.

J. B. Chethimattam