

BOOK REVIEW

Wilfred Cantwell Smith

Towards a World Theology, Philadelphia : Westminster Press, 1981, PP. 206.

Towards a World Theology sketches a visionary map by which Wilfred Cantwell Smith, the esteemed Harvard Professor of Comparative History of Religions, challenges us to open ourselves to God, the Absolute, or Transcendence acting through "new forms, continuous with the old, as human beings across the globe enter a strange new age" (p. 196). Four signposts, all firmly rooted in the past yet radically expanding towards the future, are offered as beacons for this bold new route : faith, history, theology, and critical self-consciousness.

Faith is "one's existential *engagement* with what one knows to be true or good, obligatory. It is the committing of oneself to act in terms of what one recognizes as cosmically valid" (p. 119). Accordingly, faith must always be personal, particular, historical and at least in part communal; "it must always be viewed as the relation of the concrete person to universal truth-reality; the finite finitely apprehending the infinite or vice versa" (p. 181). Hence a faith which heals or saves can never be limited by any label be it Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist or even secular humanist.

As faith is intrinsically the locus and indeed the witness of both the mundane and the transcendent, unbifurcated, so also must "truth always be apprehended historically" (p. 151). Therein, according to Smith the historian, "the unity of humankind's religious history becomes obvious" (p. 6). The implications of this insight are incredibly expansive and enriching: all are heirs of the entire religious history of humankind. Enticing us by an intriguing although admittedly peripheral *tour-de-force*, Smith points to the affinities of events such as the "Tolstoy conversion-experience" with not only St. Paul, Josaphat and Siddartha Gautama but even with the treasures of Baghdad, Mt. Athos, Kiev, Sogdiana and much more. Similarly he links the common rosary-experience of the Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic and Christian communities as well as the penchant for scholasticism developed by the Buddhist, Christian and Muslim Communities. Were our century blessed with a genius like Aquinas, it would be inconceivable that his system would not be enriched by the wisdom of Chu Hsi, Śāṅkara, al Ghazzali or

Nagarjuna. Smith's sensitivity to the multiple expressions of Transcendence in actual past history thus seeks to uncover a more profound respect for history while simultaneously pointing to a more complete apprehension of the Sacred.

It is thus almost startling to recall that *Towards a World Theology* appears as the title of this book. How does this answer the classic Eastern protest that theology is but a peculiarly Western way of assessing religious experience? Can there actually be a Christian theology of "other religions" if today's *kairos* calls upon us to penetrate, share, and enrich and be enriched by the transcendental experiences of the entire religious history of humankind? Smith answers by removing the adjective Christian and by replacing the more traditional functions of theology with more expansive directives for thinking and reflecting cosmically, metaphysically and even in Buddhist terms, *dharmically*. To probe the human is to explore even beyond the simply empirical or natural; it is to study the human at its most intimate, most profound and most transcendent depth. Indeed this proposed enterprise of such global theologizing does serve as a stimulating and provocative and yet helpful signpost for the searching Westerner but one wonders with what enthusiasm a Chinese, a Tibetan, a Buddhist, or a Muslim as well as the more traditional Christian can embrace and actually participate in such a quest for a "World Theology."

Precisely because of such parochialism, Smith proclaims it imperative that a "new trans-cultural critical self-consciousness" emerge quickly. Eschewing both the empty reductionism of reified objectivism as well as the flight of total subjectivism, a creative new mode of "human wisdom", disciplined corporate critical self-consciousness, is both heralding and contributing to this emerging global sensitivity. Indeed, the quantum leap into a more expansive mode of self-critical universal epistemological sophistication is more than merely a promising academic exercise; this very awakening is itself a religious act which invites, reveals and impresses the realization that the truth of each of us is generative of an intimate partnership of mutual understanding and enrichment. Our solidarity precedes our particularity and yet is still very much a dimension of self-transcendence.

Since, then, "all revelation is potentially fuller than experienced" (p. 175), Smith tests a typical Western paradigm of a cross-cultural panel discussion to hypothesize how this proposed corporate critical

trans-cultural self-consciousness might possibly begin to emerge. This discussion is especially helpful for inviting outsiders into the richness of the Islamic religious experience, Smith's own area of specialization. Three clear conclusions flow from these stammering initial words of conversation. First, the very vocabulary and words of trans-cultural religious communication must immediately be crafted and expanded : faith, theology, belief, salvation, liberation, shalom, dharma, identity, Tao, philosophy and certainly God cry out for more profound understandings and more expansive reflection. Secondly, the search for multiple layers of truth must parallel, correspond, and be rooted in the effort of trying to understand how Transcendence has actually communicated to all. Thirdly, history, when fathomed, promises keen insights into the emergence of corporate critical trans-cultural self-consciousness : it should help us to understand how the human endeavour, simultaneously both historical and transcendental, can be enhanced by the mosaic of various apprehensions of Transcendence. As Professor Smith puts it, a theologian who in our day does not wrestle with the insights of an Aurobindo or a Wang-Yang-Ming or a Ramanuja or an Iqbal in addition to his own tradition would "hardly be critical and hardly likely to approximate the truth very closely in his new formulations" (p. 191). Conversely, one who engages in such an enterprise cannot help but enhance and be enhanced in his religious reflections. Thus by sketching the signposts of this new map and this new direction, *Towards a World Theology* begins to articulate how a comparative study of the entire religious legacy may indeed become "implicative" (Italian *Imparare* : to learn), an expansive process by which the inheritors of varied religious legacies may truly begin to be enriched by the entire religious story of humankind.

Dr. Frank Podgorski

John Ross Carter (ed.)

Religiousness in Sri Lanka, Colombo: Marga Institute, 1979, pp. 300 + xviii, \$5.50.

Religiousness in Sri Lanka is a series of fourteen essays compiled and edited by Professor John Ross Carter of Colgate University, a scholar whose excellent work on Buddhist *dharma* in Sri Lanka is already well-known. Here he seeks to collect "some general information" about the four major religious traditions of Sri Lanka in the

hope of stimulating conversation and dialogue. His concentration is on a quest for the "religiousness" which now dominates Sri Lanka.

The strength of the work lies in its studies of Buddhism. W. S. Karunatilake's article on "Belief and Practice" describes an Ordination rite in detail which thus helps us to understand more fully the clergy/laity distinction, a theme also probed with empathy by L. Pereira. "The Religious Journey into Buddhist Pilgrimage" by S.L. Kekulawala is rich in devotional flavour and tone as it describes the popular understanding of "pilgrimage." G. Wijayawardhana's contribution is unique as he offers in it an excellent survey of the actual use of Buddhist literature in popular religious practice. In summary, all the articles on Buddhism lay stress on "praxis" as they strive to give us a glimpse of contemporary religious practices and the principles underlying them.

The articles on Hinduism share this same practical thrust. S. Pathmanathan presents a good overview of the Sri Lankan Hindu community while S. Suscendirajah concentrates on the religious practices of a particular Saivite village. Abdul Mackeen and M.A. Hussain emphasize these same complementary dimensions of theory and practice while describing the inner dimensions of the Islamic community in Sri Lanka. While Don Peter and Lynn de Silva also link theory and practice, theology and actions, in their explanations of the Christian presence, both fail to search for the creative and new insights that the indigenous spirit of Sri Lanka might possibly offer to Christianity.

Religiousness in Sri Lanka then, is a study of contemporary "religiousness" in Sri Lanka. In his Preface, Professor Carter notes that this is the first time that representatives of the four major religious traditions in Sri Lanka "have written about themselves and their religious community in a self-conscious way." It is to be hoped that this introduction will lead to further dialogue and conversation.

Dr. Frank Podgorski

Gerald O'Collins, S.J.

Fundamental Theology, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1981, pp. 283, £ 5.95.

O'Collins, Professor of Theology at the Gregorian University in Rome, had published: *Revelation and Theology; Foundations of Theo-*

logy; *The case Against Dogma (Has the Dogma a Future?)* in 1968, 1971, 1975 respectively. The book under review is not a rehash of those works; it is a systematic presentation of the matter worked out in them. Of the ten chapters, the first two are of an introductory character, but provide the perspective in which the three basic themes of fundamental theology—revelation, tradition and inspiration—are developed.

In chapter one, "From Theology to Fundamental Theology", first theology and doing theology are explained and described, using five pairs of factors which are held in tension and characterize the work of theology: "spiritual practice and critical theory", "the one and the many", "old and new", "dialogue and identity", "mystery and intelligibility". Then the presuppositions of fundamental theology, and differences (and similarities) of the same with apologetics are elucidated. Fundamental theology should not begin with some artificial doubting game but with a critical realism—just as has been argued for theology in general. To be genuinely "scientific", fundamental theology does not have to set aside basic beliefs and principles. But it does need to be self-consciously aware of its presuppositions and to elaborate critically its positions. This means being alert to three kinds of presuppositions: the reality of faith, the nature of human experience and the role of reason. The task of apologetics is to present, defend and justify rationally the Christian faith for unbelievers. Its presuppositions and themes can vary enormously from place to place and from decade to decade. The chapter concludes with *excursus* on "Philosophy and Theology".

The Central theme of the book is the experience of the divine self-communication recorded and transmitted through tradition and Scripture. The word experience makes one reflect: Does Christian experience, for instance, differ from the mystical experience of Buddhists and other types of religious experience? Does all human experience enjoy a religious dimension? Or do only some (privileged?) experiences deserve to be called "religion"? The whole of chapter two is an examination of these questions. This chapter is so fundamental to the book that the author admits that his approach to fundamental theology "largely stands or falls with the validity of the analysis of *experience*" given in it.

There follow chapters which analyse the meaning of revelation (chs. 3–6), tradition (chs. 7 & 8), inspiration (chs. 8 & 9) as a unique

experience of a Christian. Two key perspectives (besides the central one of experience) which emerge from this analysis are : (1) the break between "the period of foundational revelation" and "the period of dependent revelation"; (2) the link between practice and theory. In the foundational period which climaxed with the apostolic age there was "something distinctive and different about the divine self-communication which established the status of Israel, the contrast between the special and general histories of revelation and salvation, the unique identity of Jesus as true God and true man, the unrepeatable role of the apostles (as resurrection witnesses and founders of the Church), the Scriptures as witnessing prophetically (the Old Testament) and apostolically (the New Testament) to Christ, and the cessation of biblical inspiration with the coming-into-being of the Church." This implies that God's active presence enjoys different degrees of engagement; it implies a distinctive status of Israel, the existence of a special history of revelation and salvation, the (partially) nontransferable role of the apostles, the temporal limits to the occurrence of biblical inspiration, ultimately, the unique identity of Jesus Christ.

A link between practice and theory is essential for any theologizing; there is a proper union between critical, scientific understanding and committed, spiritual practice as the right way into fundamental theology.

The book professedly is not a comprehensive fundamental theology. The treatment given to such issues as verification and credibility regarding the absolute climax of the divine self-communication in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the identification of the Christian-Catholic community as the people especially guided by the Holy Spirit, is inadequate. Inadequate too is, theologically, the treatment of tradition. The treatment given to the non-Christian Scriptures is far from satisfactory.

Dr. A. M. Mundadan

Christopher Butler

The Theology of Vatican II, London : Darton, Longman & Todd, 1981, pp. x + 230, £ 6.95.

This is a revised and enlarged edition of a book by the same author with the same title published in 1967. C. Butler, one-time Abbot of

Downside and at present Auxiliary Bishop in Westminster, is one who, through a number of books and articles, has established his name among Catholic theological writers.

Chapters one to seven (Renewal and Adaptation, Revelation and Inspiration, The Church a Mystery, The Church's Ministry, Ecumenism, Eschatology and History, Objective and Subjective) have only marginally been revised. Chapter eight (reflections on Vatican II texts on: Liturgy and Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World mainly, and to a lesser degree the Missionary Activities of the Church and Mass Communication Media) and chapter nine (Retrospect and Prospect) contain almost entirely new material.

The introduction, a comprehensive and revealing survey of the papacy from Pius IX onwards, covering in this edition also Popes Paul VI, John Paul I and II, shows how the papal policy which led the Church during the last 130 years, oscillated between development and reaction. It serves as a good background to the theological vision of Vatican II and to the post-Vatican developments. Chapter eight proposes to deal with the documents which did not get sufficient attention in the first edition.

The document on media of social communication had on the whole a poor reception from professionals in this field. It is the slightest of all Vatican texts and was inadequately worked out. Perhaps it served to turn academic attention to this field which is a good sign. Regarding the document on Liturgy Butler makes two comments: 1) how the two meanings of communion/*koinonia* (participation in the eucharistic mysteries or 'Holy Communion' and the fellowship in a Church) are interrelated - Holy Communion is the effective sign of the fellowship in the Church; 2) how the local Church, corporately celebrating the Eucharist is an actualization of the Church of Christ.

While commenting upon the decree on Evangelization the author refers to the "famous and regrettable dictum", 'the faith is Europe and Europe is the faith.' He comes back to this identification of Europe/European culture and faith in his discussion on the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. The attitude implied in that identification produced an arrogance which led to the fact that "political colonialism has been followed not only by economic colonialism but by a kind of cultural colonialism also; and since the task

of educating the non-Europeans was often left by governments largely in the hands of the missionaries, this cultural colonialism was actually promoted by them." Quite a few pages (187-190) are devoted to the analysis of culture and its implications in the constitution, Marriage and conjugal love get ample attention.

In the last chapter, 'Retrospect and Prospect', after a brief discussion on the emergence of the two groups in the Church, the 'conservation' group and the 'furtherance' group, and on the renewal attempts quite evident in the third world, the author takes up the question of repercussions that were produced by the encyclical, *Humanae Vitae* of Paul VI. "One of the positive results," says Butler, "of the crisis was that many Catholics, aided by theologians, were driven to make a sharp distinction between the 'infallible' and 'non-infallible' pronouncements of Church authority, including the authority of the Pope himself." This was in contrast to "a largely unreflective tendency among Catholics to accept every doctrinal or disciplinary dictum of the papacy as virtually enjoying the authority of an infallible pronouncement. This authority tended to be accorded not only to the immediate teaching of the Pope himself but to every pronouncement of the Curia and its fringe (e.g. the Biblical Commission). There were of course, theologians who knew better; but they had relatively little influence on the mass of the faithful, and not much even on the ordinary clergy. The Pope in practice had come to be looked up on as the oracle of God."

Continuity and discontinuity—herein lies the real spirit of Vatican II. It is comparable to the spirit of the 'first council' (the Jerusalem Council) and of the primitive Christian community, represented by Paul. They held that all that is of permanent worth in Judaism finds its perfection in the Christian system. "It is precisely against this background of a reaffirmation of the traditional faith of the People of God, that the decision to accept Gentiles into the Church without circumcision and without obligation to observe the ritual prescription of Judaism stands out as a prodigious novelty." The real content of Tradition is Christ himself, transcending all human attempts to 'put him into works' or express him in rites, ceremonies, poetry and art. Tradition thus understood lives not so much in the so-called 'monuments of tradition' as in the heart and mind of the Church, and its life is connected with the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church as its, so to speak, animating principle.

One serious criticism against the Council could be that it has very little to say about personal prayer. But the chapter on 'The Call to Holiness' in the dogmatic Constitution on the Church can be considered as basis for personal prayer. Butler sees the current Charismatic Movement as an indication of the revival of interest in personal prayer.

Dr. A. M. Mundadan

Dale Moody

The Word of Truth (A Summary of Christian Doctrine based on Biblical Revelation), Grand Rapids (Michigan) : William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981, pp.xii + 628.

Dale Moody, a senior Professor of Christian Theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A., designed and wrote this book to serve as "a clarion call to reformation and revival of theology on the basis of the historical exegesis which is so prominent a feature of recent biblical scholarship." He claims it to be a conscious effort to bring together the insights of several disciplines (biblical theology, modern science, various types of biblical criticism, historical theology, and history of doctrine) "in a constructive harmony which is both biblical and systematic".

The introductory chapter discusses the sources of a Christian theology (Scripture, and the tributaries of tradition—ancient creeds and modern confessions), its historical functions, main modern currents and current trends of theology. The historic roots of theology, as Emil Brunner has stated, are three : the polemical, the exegetical and the catechetical. Irenaeus's *Against Heresies*, Origen's *On the First Principles* and *On Instructing the Unlearned* of Deogratias of Carthage (4th century) are fine examples.

The three branches of theology are : the Eastern Orthodox, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant. Each has its "theological cathedrals". The one begun by John of Damascus in Eastern Orthodoxy (*Fountain of Wisdom*) was perfected by and blossomed in the Hesychasm of Mt. Athos in the 14th century whose greatest representative is Gregory Palamas. The *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas (13th century) is the greatest Roman Catholic theological cathedral. The first great theological cathedral of Protestantism is the *Institutes of Christian Religion* by John Calvin (16th century).

In the survey of modern currents and current trends in the first chapter, the author mentions only the Protestant movements such as philosophical liberalism, Protestant fundamentalism, radical theology recent theological reorientations; he enumerates only some major Protestant theological monuments among which rank very high. *The Christian Faith* of Schleiermacher, and *Church Dogmatics* of Karl Barth.

The conspicuous absence of Catholic theological contribution in the survey of contemporary trends is amply compensated by description of and citations from and contemporary Catholic tradition, in the body of the book. For each topic—God, Creation, Man, Sin, Salvation, Christ, the Church, the Consummation—not only Christian writers belonging to Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant tradition but recent magisterial documents are discussed at length. Yet Moody remains true to his Baptist confession all through the book.

I found the final chapter, "The Consummation", one of the most interesting discussions of eschatology. It deals with a threefold eschatology; the personal (the hope of man), historical (the hope of history), cosmic (the hope of creation). I quote a paragraph from the last page of the book: "God is love, not the abyss of nothingness into which man has his final plunge. The concrete situations of the life disclose the dramatic dialogues of the self with itself with others and with God. This is the good life that now is and the eternal life that is to be. God is the ultimate mystery, hidden and revealed, the source of all life and immortality, to whom man may flee for refuge that he may not fall back into the empty void of nothingness from which he came. Life now is a decision-situation in which the choice is made between God and nothing."

This is where the "theological cathedral" of Dale Moody finally brings us. And we are grateful for such a spiritual vision of a theologian, who makes a conscious effort to bring together the insights of several disciplines and the visions of several master-pieces of theological thinking in a constructive harmony.

Dr. A. M. Mundadan

Donald A. Mc Gavran

Understanding Church Growth, Grand Rapids (Michigan): William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980. pp. xvi + 480.

In evangelization, the era of conversion and planting new Churches is over. Mission and evangelization today should not mean Church extension, but the creation of the "outposts of the Kingdom of God in all its perfect purity, love and power." Evangelization is simply the proclamation of the Gospel, the continuing of the mission of God in the world; it is a programme for human unity, racial harmony, economic, social and political justice, service to the poor and the oppressed, fight against diseases and global pollution, education of the illiterate, dialogue among religions and ideologies, and so on. Promotion of Church growth or extension should not be the primary motive of mission; ecclesiastical aggrandizement at the expense of other denominations and religions may be even more sinful. Donald A. McGavran's book *Understanding Church Growth* is a forceful, clear and distinct voice against these liberal views of mission and evangelization as described above. He challenges these liberal views and argues that mission and evangelization is nothing other than Church growth, nothing other than bringing all the nations into the redemptive relationship with Jesus Christ, baptizing them and making them members of the Household of God which is the Church.

This book, which is a completely revised edition of his earlier work in 1970, is a comprehensive study of Church growth in all its aspects : theological, sociological and practical. The book is divided into six parts. In part I, "Theological Considerations", the author argues that the right question is not whether Church growth is expedient to our present cultural and religious climate, or otherwise humanly desirable, but whether God wants it or not. And from the New Testament it is clear that Jesus wanted that the Gospel be preached to all the nations and that they all be baptized and united to his Body which is the Church. The Church is part of the eschatological order, part of the new order established by God. It is through the Church, through the Christian nations that God establishes a new social order. So the priority in mission should be given to planting new Churches, to "make disciples of all nations" and not ministering to the physical needs of mankind and to rectifying the basic injustices of the global social order.

In part II the author outlines the task that lies ahead, namely, the mission of discipling three billion people who do not yet believe in the Gospel, and these three billion will become five billion by the year 2000. So the era of mission is not yet over, but has only begun. The

western Churches cannot remain content with renewal programmes and neighbourhood mission, leaving the whole burden of reaching the three billion to the Churches of Asia and Africa. These three billion people is a marvellous mosaic consisting of small separate pieces or homogeneous units, people of different colours, castes, classes or tribes divided into various cultural, linguistic, and religious groups. Every piece of this marvellous mosaic is unique, and each must be reached by missionaries in unique way. This needs careful study and planning. And the first task is to study in detail the actual Church growth, to find the membership facts in each homogeneous Church unit or congregation, and to examine scientifically the causes of Church growth or decline. In part III the author elaborates the significance of understanding the causes of Church growth. A comparative study of Church growth in the different homogeneous Church units will be very illuminating and, in fact, the various examples or case-studies given by the author reveal the great complexity and dynamics of Church growth.

Part IV examines the sociological foundations of Church growth. Insights into the structure, functioning and customs of each society are the necessary components in planning and understanding Church growth. The fact that mankind is a marvellous mosaic is to be borne in mind, and the principle must be respected that each piece of this mosaic is unique and keen to maintain its own social, cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic and political identity. For becoming a Christian one does not have to cross the linguistic, racial and class barriers. Part V deals with a special kind of Church growth which includes the problems of the masses, the classes, the urban populations, people's movements, and indigeneous Church principles, and the six chapters in this part unfold the dynamics of these aspects of Church growth, and provide several insights and guidelines to the missionaries and Churches struggling with these problems. In part VI, which is the last section of the book, the author emphasizes that Church growth is not a by-product of a multifaceted Christian activity, but mission by definition is Church growth and it needs a careful and bold planning and setting out of definite goals as did the Apostles to fulfil the command of the Lord to disciple all the nations.

This book written by a veteran missionary who worked several years in India and has firsthand missionary experience in several other countries and has committed his whole life lately to the cause of Church Growth Movement, is a very important guide for understanding the

various factors and aspects of Church growth, and it is a useful tool in the hands of every missionary who is committed to Church extension by converting and baptizing people and thus planting new Churches. In concluding this brief review I wish to point out that this forceful presentation of mission theology and approach as adopted by the Evangelical wing of the Protestant Churches needs careful study and evaluation taking into account the other point of view which sees mission and evangelization in the context of the total activity of God in the world. This latter view would advocate that the final goal of mission and evangelization is the Kingdom of God and the Church's task is simply to be a humble instrument to help establish the Kingdom of God.

Dr. Kuncheria Pathil

A. S. Duncan, C. R. Dunstan and R. B. Welbourn (Eds)

Dictionary of Medical Ethics, London : Darton, Longman & Todd, 1981, xxxi + 459 pp., £ 12.50.

Ethics written as a dictionary might appear very alien to the Indian philosophy of life. But the above book being written for a predominantly western society is justified in its approach.

The Dictionary of Medical Ethics has reached out to all ethical issues of concern in the medical profession. Discoveries and inventions in the scientific field, and especially those related to medicine, have led to a spate of new procedures and options in the field. With these developments have also emerged fresh moral dilemmas and ethical problems, sometimes even very crucial.

This book has been able to cover a vast area of problems related to the noble medical profession. Some of the relevant important topics among others are : abortion, contraception, sterilization, euthanasia etc., which have been dealt with very systematically. There are few health problems without ethical implications. The *Dictionary of Medical Ethics* serves both as an informed guide for laymen seeking information and a broad and clear vision for a professional in the field. The description of the medical procedures and terms unfamiliar to common man makes it a reference book for him. The discussion of the ethical issues following the description makes the book, a ready guide for medical men.

The eminent authors who have contributed to this Dictionary are numerous. Their rich and teamed contributions have added depth to the book. The Dictionary has been very successful in covering the main International declarations, summaries of the principal ethical traditions and theories. Although it has tried to update all the ethical issues, the vast and enormous discussions and contributions still in progress in the various fields of ethics make certain issues seem incomplete.

This Dictionary can be used as an immediate guide to tackle most of today's problems and this could be a great help in cases of misunderstanding and confusion arising from ethical issues. However personal experience and intuition would still have to play a major role in solving individual cases. The Dictionary has given basic ideas on the scientific aspects of the problems together with a relevant ethical discussion. Dealing with abortion for example, it discusses spontaneous abortion, induced abortion and therapeutic abortion. It presents the abortion Act of 1967 of England with religious opinions and ethical considerations for a complete understanding of the problem. The discussions on alcoholism, drug dependence, psychotherapy, sexual deviations or variations, euthanasia and contraception are very enlightening. But putting together views of different religions on a variety of matters would confuse a casual reader in solving the problem or make it difficult for a person to make a decision when he finds good in the opinions of all religions, or for some one who has a wider religious perspective.

Apart from conventional topics the Dictionary has discussed controversial issues like artificial insemination, genetic engineering and sex therapy with a clear ethical foundation and a thorough scientific background. The Dictionary has succeeded also in throwing light on topics that might not seem to have any ethical issues involved in them but are, nevertheless, very revealing to a western reader, such as, "the Hindu medicine", which has a good old tradition in Ayurveda, the transcendental meditation, which is "the supreme awakening to the true nature of life" through simple mental techniques. The contributors and editors deserve special commendation for the production of this very useful Dictionary of Medical Ethics.

Jose K. Padayatty

Thomas Emprayil V. C.

The Emerging Theology of Religions, Rewa: Vincentian Publications, 1980, pp. xx + 212, Rs, 20.00 (\$5.95).

An Indian Theology to give expression to our Christian experience is the felt need of the time. Many Pioneers like Brahmabandhav Upadaya, Vengal Chackarai and Chenchaiya have been working towards this: Even non-Christians like Raja Ramohan Roy, Keshab Chunder Sen and Pratap Sunder Majumdar have made their own distinctive contributions to the Indian Church. Here, in this work, Thomas Emprayil makes a study of the non-Christian religions and the mission of the Church purely in the Indian context. He surveys the theological development and the attitude of the Church in India to non-Christians during the last fifteen years. He sees that the attitude which was once hostile is becoming more amicable filled with a deep sense of understanding of the richness in other cultures and religions.

Emprayil starts by giving a bird's eye view of the missionary activity of the Church through the centuries. The Biblical, Patristic and Magisterial positions that have influenced missionary methods are also touched upon: The Gospel of Christ had encountered various peoples, cultures and religions during the last twenty centuries. But the Church did not face the need to develop a theology out of these religions. Many of the Fathers of the Church saw salvation as a privilege of the whole of humanity, for God's infinite mercy and love are all embracing. But how this all embracing care of God revealed in Jesus Christ could be reconciled with the universal economy of salvation, was a matter of controversy and misunderstanding even in those early days of Christianity. The conditions created by the middle ages offering new opportunities to meet the non-Christian world did not fructify due to the alliance between the Church and the State in colonial enterprises. But today, when men are drawing together more closely, the Church examines with greater care her relationship with non-Christian religions.

This self examination has opened up new fields of co-operation and has affected the missionary Church at large.

Next he studies the progress made by the Church in India in the missiological field, basing his research on the four theological Seminars which took place after the Second Vatican Council. In the

“Bombay Theological Seminar” held on the occasion of the 38th Eucharistic Congress, a cross section of the intellectuals and theologians from India and a few experts from abroad took part. It rediscovered the forgotten and neglected aspects of what the Bible and the Fathers held. It was a missiological break-through which was pioneering effort in the formulation of a theology of non-Christian religions.

The all India Seminar on the “Church In India Today” was a historic event. It examined the failures and achievements in the field of evangelization and the relationship with other religions of India. It recommended that Catholics should work within the structures of society rather than create small isolated groups.

In the Nagpur Theological Seminar, theologians made a concerted effort to rethink mission theology from a Biblical, Patristic and Ecclesiological background. The experience of many revealed that the main obstacle to the mission, that is, to make Christ known, is the existing Church itself with its foreignness in life, dress, eating habits and behaviour.

In the Patna Consultation on Evangelization, the theologians felt that the Church was realizing that she was fenced on all sides by her own structures and institutions. The preconiliar Church prided herself on it. The earlier means of evangelisation far being a help have become stumbling-blocks. A pioneering experiment was proposed to use temple premises for social reform, dialogue and diffusion of Christian values through prayers and discourses.

Emprayil appreciates the slow but steady development and maturation of a positive attitude among the hierarchy of India towards the religions and cultures of the land. Some come forward as champions and protectors of adaptation and inculturation. But still some lag behind as passive recipients rather than active collaborators.

The contemporary outstanding theologians and their contributions to the construction of theology of religions are also presented. He draws inspiration from the thoughts of Raymond Panikkar, Amalorpavadas, Abhishiktananda, J. Dupuis, J. Neuner, J. B. Chethimattam, T. M. Manickam, Bede Griffiths, M. Dhavamony and others. God and His presence in non-Christian religions, Salvation and Salvific values of non-Christian religions, faith and Grace in non-Christian

religions, Revelation and Inspiration in non-Biblical Scriptures are the main themes of their discussions.

Finally, Emprayil presents his own assessment and conclusions on his study on non-Christian religions and the Church's mission. Before attempting any conversion of the non-Christians, he feels the greater need for the conversion of the Church and the missionary. What is the meaning of mission? Should we go and disturb a man who lives in good conscience? He plainly points out we should not have exaggerated the notion of rights and privileges of Christianity. Domination, arrogance and force will destroy the mission of the Church. The Church is the Sacrament of Christ's everlasting presence. Christ constituted a witnessing community to keep up the living faith, to hand on the same to others and to co-operate in the salvific plan of God. That is the mission in a nutshell.

Xavier J. Puthenkalam

Bernard T. Smyth

Paul : Mystic and Missionary, New York : Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1980, pp. xviii + 166.

Fr. Smyth, an Irish missionary, portrays concisely yet vividly, St. Paul the man, the mystic and the missionary. St. Paul, a man possessing somewhat conflicting traits and moods became the chosen instrument of God and God's message. The author analyses the personality of St. Paul as could be traced, both from the Acts of the Apostles and his letters, and shows how a man, perhaps possessing the most human qualities—both weak and praiseworthy - became a worthy vessel and vehicle of God's message.

This man possessing a wide variety of human qualities became an itinerant. His personal experience of the Lord, the Risen Jesus, and his personal relationship with Him became the background of his missionary activity. The core of his message was the Resurrection and his experience in which, the I-thou relationship is transcended and only the 'I' in which the sparkle of divinity is enmeshed resounds: ". . . it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2 : 20). The author emphatically shows the great importance given by Paul to the theme of "Cross", in addition to "Resurrection." The mystical experience of Christ became the backbone of his daily life. Thus, Paul the

man, the mystic-missionary becomes a glaring model for every Christian who bears in his person the message of Christ's Resurrection.

Another important characteristic trait which the author observes is Paul's attachment to 'Prayer'. The author carries the reader from the bottom of "petitions" to the apex of praise, gratitude and thanksgiving. St. Paul not only prayed and wondered at God's works, but also exhorts his readers to imitate him.

The final part of the book analyses Paul as a moral theologian in which the author brings out the two-fold Pauline principle of morality and its relevance in a world which demands an involvement on the part of the missionary to erase all forms of social injustice and discrimination. The author's attempt at a synthesis of Paul's ideas and Marxism is remarkable. He maintains a striking balance in the choice between the Christian message and the stringent demand for involvement, between this world and the other world.

The purpose and the importance of this work is two-fold. The first is its vivid picturization of the person of Paul; secondly, the contemporary relevance of Paul and his teachings. Its importance is again two-fold: it can serve as an introduction as it provides revealing glimpses of Paul; it can also give a tremendous impetus and guidelines to the missionaries. As such, the author has focused more on practical and pastoral orientations rather than on theological preoccupations: Paul, a man always in the street, always on the move, surrounded by all sorts of people of different temperaments and moods, is a visionary missionary, whose message has a lasting value and relevance.

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