

BOOK REVIEWS

Jose Varickasseril and Mathew Kariappuram, eds., *Be My Witnesses: Essays in Honour of Dr. Sebastian Karotemprel SDB*, Shillong: Vendrame Institute of Publications, 2001, pages 300, ISBN: 81-85408-00-29.

The book *Be My Witnesses*, edited by Jose Varickasseril and Mathew Kariappuram, is a genuine contribution to the scanty literature available in the inter-disciplinary research in missiology and sociology. The book comprises of twenty four articles written by erudite scholars who are veterans in theology, sociology, and missionary work. Each article touches on the theme, giving due references to the biblical contexts. The articles of this book cover burning issues regarding theology, missiology, sociology, and contextualization.

“Trinity and Human Dignity,” by Angelo Amato, is a good example for an article in theology. Joseph Mappilaparambil’s “A Paradigm Shift in Church’s Outlook on Mission” comes under missiology. For sociology, we find an outstanding article in “When Upward Mobility Combines with Apathy,” by Thomas Menamparambil, which deals with the hierarchical changes happening in the present social scenario. “Contextualizing Theological Education and Mission outside the United States,” by Jonathan Bonk, is an article under the theme ‘contextualization’. Similarly, all other articles can be placed in one of the four disciplines mentioned above.

Even though we can classify the articles under four categories as missiology, etc., all of them are inter-related. There is, of course, an undercurrent connecting all of them. As we know, there are agonies and ecstasies in all walks of life. It will be there in religious as well as secular life. The only thing we can do with them is to analyze them and look for solutions, leaving the final resolution to God’s will. A missionary work will not bring any significant result without God’s involvement. When missiology proposes new perspectives, they would be enough to deal with the problems in the society. Theologizing and contextualizing would help us to do more systematic analysis. So, all articles in this volume are life-oriented and they do not present ivory tower or arm-chair discussions. The entire discussion contributes something to make Christian lives better.

Obviously, the articles in this collection are of disparate nature; some tend to be explanatory, some investigative, some reflective, and others are

contextual; yet, there are others making an attempt to trailblazing. All authors have a deep sense of loyalty and commitment to the Word of God and to the Christian mission.

Professor Dr. Sebastian Karotempel is a multifaceted personality, whose wide-ranging interests and involvements spread over biblical, ecumenical, international, and interdisciplinary realms. The title of the book, *Be My Witnesses*, is a maxim formed from Jesus' call to witness to the Gospel. A prayer composed by Karotempel, given in the foreword, reveals his deep-rooted Christian faith and fully accomplished spiritual life. Different articles together give out an invitation to become His witnesses wherever we live. It resembles the life of Sebastian Karotempel, who performed various tasks with the zeal of a missionary.

The world today is in search of a message that can never fail and binds us inwardly. That is where biblical traditions offer sure guidance and a rocklike assurance to a world of uncertainty. Holy Spirit is the guiding agent in all missionary undertakings; if we are not provided with the grace of God, as the authors establish, various mission methods and approaches would fail, especially when we encounter the harsh realities of the world. This is the essence of all the discussions presented in the book, which I hope would enlighten the present future Christian missionaries in their mandate of spreading the Gospel message.

Gregory Arattukulangara