

Book Reviews

Men and Gods in a Changing World: by Judith M. Brown. SCM Press, London, 1980. Pp. 182. Price £ 5.95.

Judith M. Brown begins her erudite and fascinating study of educated Hindus in India and educated Christians in Britain with the statement that "books, like people, have biographies." Primarily an academic historian, she is known as a student of Indian politics with a special interest in the role, character and outlook of Mahatma Gandhi (*Gandhi's Rise to Power. Indian Politics. 1915-22; Gandhi and Civil Disobedience. The Mahatma in Indian Politics. 1928-34*). In her Introduction she explains how she came to develop an interest in the religious experience of Hindus and Christians through being asked to deliver radio talks for the BBC and her visit to India as the Teape Lecturer in 1979-80.

These involvements made her aware of several problematic aspects of religion in the midst of a changing world where the faiths of mankind have begun to meet each other in new ways. It led her into enquiring as to what are the differences and similarities in the manner in which two great religions like Christianity and Hinduism are reacting and responding to the impact of social and economic change. Transcending her desire to investigate these mainly sociological dimensions was her hope "to open a door into an area of human experience which is of more than academic interest" (p. 2). Judith Brown has succeeded admirably in doing so by making her book a sensitive and understanding exploration of what the religious traditions and contemporary experiences of Christianity and Hinduism can offer each other for their mutual enrichment and a personal testament, a finely written perception, of how one person's exposure to another faith illuminates the value of the encounter.

A refreshing feature of the book is the attempt, limited though it is, to be empirical and pragmatic in dealing with religious phenomena. Her interpretation of the changes in outlook visible among educated Indians (mainly college teachers and students) is based on secondary sources and personal observations recorded in 1978 when she visited the four cities of Varanasi, Pune, Bombay and Delhi. Dr Brown says she deliberately avoided the South, though her reasons for doing so are not at all clear. She hints that the South has been studied in depth by American scholars, but her book would certainly have been more comprehensive had she taken the trouble to travel to an area where, perhaps, the response to change has been most marked among Hindus. Where Britain is concerned, she conducted two surveys in Manchester but relies more on the ample material descriptive of the changing religious scene in that country.

Dr Brown's methodology enables her to avoid fuzzy impressions and vague generalizations. But what is even more striking is that she is not so wedded to the scientific method that she only describes religious phenomena without the ability to enter intuitively into the inner reality of what she has observed. Though science is evolving a humility of its own, it is still rather surprising when a social scientist penetrates beyond outward appearances to the inward essence of religious experience with the delicate touch of a mystic! By opening herself to both knowledge and experience Dr Brown has acquired an evident measure of "Indianness" in her approach.

In the first two chapters she deftly sketches the salient features of the milieu of the educated Hindus using as a yardstick the affirmation that "all major religious traditions have, piecemeal and over time, modified their messages, their institutions and their lines of communication, in order to retain adherents and buttress the faithful in a changing world" (p. 7). While there is no such thing as an "unchanging" religion, there are, however, problems of comparison as to how different faiths undergo change and transformation which the author discusses in relation to Christianity and Hinduism. She examines the nature of the evidence and the generally held belief that Indians are more "spiritual" than their western contemporaries; stresses the need to evaluate critically the processes of secularization and the functioning of the secular state; and discusses the problems of "orthodoxy" and "authority." The role of caste is carefully studied. She reaches the inevitable conclusion that, while such analysis can be enlightening, there can be no easy comparison of the features of the reaction and response of Hindus and Christians to the modern world.

In the chapter which follows entitled "The Hindu World" the main thrust of the discussion is the extent to which educated Hindus feel any sense of crisis or hope as they seek to understand and meet the challenges confronting their beliefs and ways of life. The manner in which Hindus either retreat into conservatism or advance towards a radical reordering of society to meet a variety of challenges is treated sympathetically, showing that in Hinduism "there is still much vitality and potential for a creative response to change..." (p. 54). It is an absorbing chapter in which Dr Brown traces how the Hindu vision of man and his world is being transformed to meet modern needs. All this may, of course, sound to Indians like carrying rice to Thanjavur, but the way in which the picture is drawn provides material for further study and reflection.

The capacity Dr Brown shows for dealing effectively with stereotyped assertions about the nature of the Hindu response to change is used even more significantly in her analysis of the experiences of educated Christians in the United Kingdom today. While accepting that "social change in Britain has hammered the churches as credible and relevant institutions" (p. 69), she indicates that the interaction between them and a changing society is not as clear and as simple as one might imagine. After examining many facets of the religious situation in Britain she claims that "from the mosaic of evidence emerges a picture of a society which is not peopled with some new

breed of 'secular man' " (p. 82). She finds that most people are not necessarily "totally out of touch with religious institutions, uninfluenced by religious traditions, or devoid of a sense of awe, fear and aspiration at the mysterious and the unknown in human experience, which lies at the heart of religious awareness" (p. 83).

Her thesis about the state of religion in Britain and her suggestions as to what could be done about it are in striking contrast to earlier pessimistic prognostications of the "Towards the Conversion of England" variety. She argues that the sense of the numinous survives in spite of the deadness of the churches. It sounds harsh but merits further study when she asserts that "far from *enabling* religious experience, the churches now appear to be a positive barrier and hindrance to such experience" (p. 83). It contributes to the deeper sense of crisis felt by British Christians compared with the intellectual ferment among Hindus who have no institutions comparable to the churches. But in another sense the situation in Britain also holds out the promise of greater hope for the future as Christians grapple with the problems of change with a new and exciting openness to intellectual and spiritual influences from many sources, secular and religious.

Chapter 4, which examines the nature of religious authority and communication against a background of change, illustrates the new approach in the comparative study of religions in which historical and sociological concreteness replaces the older, abstract metaphysical method. The social reality rather than dogma and doctrine dominates the discussion, making it more meaningful. Dr Brown's study of the differences in the Christian and Hindu concepts of authority and how the means of communication are understood and used by the two faiths is valuable not only for comparative purposes, but also in terms of what each can learn with profit from the other. However, Dr Brown makes two suggestions which are both creative and controversial. First, she points out that Christians may learn from Hindus to understand the authority of the Scriptures "as a continuing process of revelation and awareness of the potential for religious understanding at different levels of personality" (p. 102). Shades of Karl Barth and the theory of "discontinuity"! Second, she sees "the contemporary stress on experience as a key authority" as an area of fruitful discourse between Hindus and Christians because, both in India and Britain, "the spiritual journey is increasingly felt to be the mode of religious experience for this age; a mode in which searching and doubt rather than dogma and acceptance of authority are dominant" (p. 118). As a historical situation and a sociological assessment it may be largely true, but can "experience" really provide the framework of "authority" for holding together the strands of rationalism and mysticism found in both Catholicism and Protestantism? It is certainly easier in Hinduism where "authority" is not institutionalized but diffused throughout the caste structure.

The fifth and last chapter ("A Spirituality for the Twentieth Century?") is a fitting climax to this closely reasoned and carefully

documented comparative study because it is not so much a conclusion reached as it is the beginning of a pilgrimage towards a closer understanding and relationship between Hindus and Christians. We have studies of the impact of Hinduism on Christianity in India (R.D. Immanuel; Sigfried Estborn). But here is an arresting statement based on urban intellectualism rather than on village cults, free from the romanticism that is unable to see the weaknesses even in the higher reaches of Hinduism, and yet vibrantly aware of its potential for a creative contribution towards the deepening of the spirituality of western Christians, a position which the author sums up as follows: "For both educated Christians and Hindus some experience of death and loss is the precondition for the birth of an authentic religious vision and response to the contemporary world" (p. 144). This fluid situation is further amplified in an "Epilogue" that makes some very practical suggestions for the renewal of the churches and the spiritual life of Christians in Britain through lessons about religious institutions based on "experience" rather than "authority," non-institutional religious leaders like *gurus* and *sadhus*, and techniques for deepening the interior life which are intrinsic to Hinduism.

It takes both courage and humility for a western Christian to write a book which is not so much an epilogue as it is a prologue to an adventuresome pilgrimage to where (in the words of Tagore which she quotes) "the old tracks are lost, new country is revealed with its wonders." As it did for Albert Schweitzer the ineffable mystery resolves itself for her also in a far distant country in the unmistakable presence of the Galilean. In memorable words Judith Brown says, "I have found in journeys to India not only a deepening awareness of such mystery but its clear crystallization in the person of Jesus, as I have become more aware of the riches and strivings within the Hindu inheritance, and as I have been forced to understand him in a universe of faiths and diversities of revelation. He increasingly becomes the transparency of God in the world of men. His life enacts the contradictions of light and dark, humanity and inhumanity, grief and joy. His way of dereliction and death points to their resolution in fulness and resurrection and, in so doing, becomes the incandescence of the mystery beyond words at the heart of being" (p. 152). She emerges from her highly competent comparative study as a Christian scholar with a testament that is profoundly moving both for its depth and beauty of spirit. It is a rich offering over which we can ponder until we too are willing to enter into a similar creative experience in a spiritual fellowship with kindred spirits of other faiths.

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Do Sacraments Change?: by M. Amaladoss S.J. Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1979. Pp. 151. Price Rs 12.

Church law prescribes that, for validity, wheaten bread and grape wine be used for the Eucharistic sacrificial meal. If the gifts for the sacrifice are to be the natural offerings of the local people, an anomalous

situation would arise if wheat flour and wine were not the staple food of the people of the place. A pastor would share intimately the life of the people, eat their food and enjoy their hospitality. But this natural sharing would come to a jolting halt exactly at the moment when it should find its highest expression in the communal liturgical celebration. The gifts of food most natural to them cannot be accepted because the Church has established signs that are entirely foreign to them.

In *Do Sacraments Change?*, M. Amaladoss endeavours to straighten out this abnormality. His endeavour will benefit those who adopt his proposition. Biblical actualism contends that Scripture is concrete: the life of Christ, his actual words and actions reveal his intentions for all time, including his decision of establishing the essentials of the sacraments. But Scripture scholars remind us that the Scriptures are historically and culturally limited. Thus the book reinvestigates the meaning of the sacraments and their essential elements in terms of what could be the ultimate factor of the substance of a sacrament. In summary, substance is due to signification, and signification in turn is from the interpersonal event. This last is the symbolic action of the community that is lived and experienced. This symbolic action can be ritualised in various ways according to the demands of the time, place and circumstances.

This basic conclusion of the author is preceded by a scholarly analysis of semiology's application to the constitution of a sacrament, in spite of the limitations of that science *vis-à-vis* the Christian sacraments. If we adopt the author's idea of signification, the local community could supply the elements of the sacraments from its native resources. This is certainly being done for the sacrament of matrimony. Why not for the other sacraments, especially for the Eucharist in which the local community and its natural environment are assumed into the great self-offering of Christ to his Father. It is known only too well that Jesus did not refer to himself literally as bread but as divine-life-giving nourishment. The perceptible sacramental "elementation" could be relative to the ethnic understanding of nourishment in daily experience as long as the symbol of the banquet is preserved as a universal human symbol. After all, the bread and wine used by Jesus were only points in the historical reference of a particular people. So runs the book's line of thought, which, though backed by a study of semiology and an acute analysis of the sacraments of initiation, stops short at the problem of symbolism and actualism. One wonders how the book's claim will command the attention of the exegetes in this matter.

Further, the author's bold questions will have to stand the test of the changing patterns of society and of the mental/emotional habits of the community in a fast-paced, almost non-calculating world. It must face the risk of relativism and ambiguous significance amidst which the local Church authority will have to arbitrate with finality and competence. The Church authority's proverbial tardiness and vacillation will almost certainly be rewarded by its final decision com-

ing upon a community pattern that has long been dismantled to form another in the kaleidoscope of a fast-changing world. That this is accounted for, at least in theory, is not hinted at by the book which otherwise is commended for its brave challenge and assured popularity with realistic missionaries. The vast bibliography bespeaks the scholarly undertaking, and the index is precise and most helpful to teachers and students. The cover design is prosaic and does not make for attractiveness, though the title is more optimistic than if it were "Can Sacraments Change ?".

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The Holy Spirit and Charismatic Renewal: by R. H. Lesser. Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1978. Pp. v+274. Price Rs 11.

It is refreshing to find a book printed in clear type and well set out, and moreover one that avoids, as far as possible, theological jargon, and can be easily understood. The subject of the book is vast, but the arrangement of the argument is clear and logical. The author's aim is to present a balanced view of the Charismatic Movement in the Church. To this end he considers the whole work of the Spirit in the Church, both in the sacraments and formal worship, and in what are known as charismatic gifts. The book is written by a Roman Catholic for Roman Catholics; but there is remarkably little in it which any Protestant could not accept. Its argument is based firmly on the Bible. Papal utterances and decisions of the second Vatican Council are quoted more as expressions of what has already been shown by Scripture to be true than as evidence on which conclusions are to be based. There were parts, especially in the earlier chapters where your reviewer rubbed his eyes and asked himself whether this was the writing of a Roman Catholic or of a Conservative Evangelical. Simple statements are made, based on verses of the Scripture without any further explanation. We should have preferred it if he had shown how his statements also conformed with common sense as indeed they do. There are other passages, especially in the earlier part, where the writer speaks very much as the priest speaking to his flock, and expecting his words to be accepted without question. But these are minor blemishes, largely due, one may suppose, to the need to keep the book from being too long.

I found the first few chapters less interesting. In chapter 6 his exposition of Romans 8 was illuminating, and from there on my interest increased. Up till chapter 11 he is speaking on the level of ordinary Christian life as it should be lived under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in the consciousness of Him as being the living and active spirit of Christ in the believer. From that point onwards, he deals specifically with the Charismatic Movement in the Church. Chapter 12 contains an account of its growth, giving particular attention to its growth within the Roman Catholic Church, but with side glances at the Pentecostal movement. In the following chapters there is much

sound advice which will be found useful for all, and especially for those who have pastoral responsibility. His distinction between the major gifts of the Spirit and the extraordinary "charisms" is valuable. The major gifts are those mentioned in Isaiah 11: 2-3; they are gifts of character which are common to all who have the Spirit; whereas the "charisms" are not universal, but are those of which St Paul in 1 Cor. 12 says, "There are varieties of gifts."

Two other useful points are his criticism of some charismatics for their neglect of social service. The gifts of the Spirit are not for personal enjoyment, but are given to make the believers more useful instruments in the service of Christ in the world. The second point was in his chapter on "Mary and the Holy Spirit" which may open some eyes to the meaning of the veneration of the Mother of our Lord. The example set by her has been followed, consciously or unconsciously, by many a holy lady who has made herself a loving mother to a whole Christian community.

It is a pity that there are so many misprints in an otherwise excellently produced volume.

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Theology and Economy of the Holy Spirit: by Petro B. T. Bilaniuk.
Dharmaram Publications, Bangalore, 1980. Pp. xi+218. Price,
paper Rs 25, hard cover Rs 35.

Some years ago I found that a man was spitting blood and took him to a doctor. The doctor informed me that he had haemoptysis. This was exactly what I had told him, only I had put it in English and the doctor had turned it into Greek. Professor Bilaniuk's book reminds me of that occasion. In the subtitle he calls it "An Eastern Approach," but there is little in it that is specifically eastern and his chapter on the Spirit in ecumenical Councils is almost purely western. Although in that context he explains the Russian idea of *Sobornost*, he does not make any use of it or point out the specifically eastern doctrine of the authority of such Councils. In the rest of the book his quotations from western writers are just as frequent as those from the eastern Church. But the whole is dressed up in a jargon taken from Greek roots — or sometimes from hybrid Graeco-Latin roots. The Spirit has to be "pneuma," the Trinity has to be "the triadic God," regardless of the fact that in English a triad is a combination of three separate entities, and is very rarely used of the Trinity and then to emphasise the three-fold nature as opposed to the unity (though the same does not apply to its counterpart in late patristic Greek). One cannot help wondering what a person who did not know any Greek would make of this book. To one who knows Greek, the mistakes and the misuse of Greek words are irritating.

To give the book its due, one must admit that there are points of illumination scattered here and there. But the general impression left by it is that the author is forcing what he has to say into a mold

that does not fit it. Some of the chapters bear little relation to the title. One also feels that for him God is more a triad than a trinity. In emphasising the distinction in the work of the Persons, he comes very near to dividing the substance.

The book is a labour to read, and the labour is made harder by the incredible number of misprints.

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Rich Man, Poor Man—and the Bible: by C. Boerma. SCM Press, London, 1979. Pp. vi+106. Price £ 2.25.

The author begins with the thesis that, "Poverty is not an accident; it is determined by the structures of society." The biblical writers, he believes, were concerned with the problem of unjust social structures and sought a variety of solutions to this problem.

The beginning of the problem in Israel appears to coincide with Israel's settlement in Canaan when previous communal solidarity was eroded and gradually a gap developed between the rich who came to possess land and the poor who remained landless. This brought about a change in human relationships. The poor were gradually treated as belonging to a lower order. This basic socio-economic structure survived the exile and persisted right down to NT times.

The author then turns to a consideration of some of the solutions to the problem of poverty to be found in the Bible. Generally speaking, there are three trends: a concern for social righteousness; a concern for solidarity and a concern for spirituality.

The Demand for Social Righteousness. The Book of the Covenant consists of legal regulations aimed at helping the poor. Of special interest are the laws for the sabbath year and the year of jubilee. Release from debt and slavery and some redistribution of means of production are demanded. Similarly, the prophets attack the rich as a group as oppressors of the poor. This is echoed in the NT—in Luke, James and Revelation. The basis of this attack is the righteousness of the God of Israel—and of Jesus. The Bible makes it quite clear that salvation is always bound up with possessions and society. The Kingdom of God is all-embracing and gives for—a new form of existence, founded on righteousness and love.

The Demand for Solidarity. There are other reasons for poverty than oppression and exploitation. The biblical writers do not discuss why one person is more fortunate than another but rather stress that in the face of disaster and calamity, the community ought to be concerned and care for the victims. God's people forfeit their right to existence when there is no longer anyone to champion the poor. Indeed, Israel's strength as a nation is in its inner solidarity. Sharing the Lord's benefits is a characteristic of the covenant.

Jesus' identification with others was unprecedented and the community founded by him and rooted in him was characterised by a very practical solidarity. The quality of the community was determined, not by social standards, but by sharing life together in the

grace of the Lord. Anyone who lives in the power of the Lord no longer depends on his possessions and can therefore put what he has at the disposal of the community with gladness and joy. In this way, the wealth of the rich is transformed into mutual help and support.

The Demand for Spirituality. One of the most wretched aspects of poverty is the contempt that the poor man has to endure. Poverty stigmatizes and humiliates. Therefore, it leads to despair and quenches the flame of self-reliance. The Bible is well aware that the poor man needs to be rescued from his feelings of inferiority and self-contempt. It asserts that the poor man is not dependent on any man but on God who is his guarantor, refuge and helper.

The covetous live on a very narrow basis. They have to have so much because they themselves feel so small. Moreover, they trust in possessions and power because their trust in God and in themselves is weak. In answer to this self-doubt, the gospel proclaims a God who is a loving and forgiving God, a God who liberates man to be himself. Unless he frees himself from his riches man will never learn to live by the grace of God.

The poor too must find in their reliance on God a basis for self-reliance. This is illustrated in Jesus' attitude to the poor. He met men on their level and urged them to find themselves by coming to him and learning to live from the grace of God.

This is the meaning of the beatitude in Matthew 5:3. Therefore, the gospel breaks the barrier of self-doubt and dispels the sense of hopelessness. It encourages the poor to recognize that they are in the centre of a movement towards change and have the means to bring it about themselves.

The closing chapter of the book has the provocative title "Can even the rich be saved?" "Poverty" and "riches" are relative terms but the crucial concept is that of justice. Charity has its place, but the covenant demands justice, solidarity of the covenant community and an integration of rich and poor. In the OT, the rich are pitied rather than envied. Their only hope is to respond to the prophets and work for the restoration of justice.

This book is an excellent study; it is refreshing in style, and written with passion and concern. However, its greatest value lies in the fact that the author's treatment of biblical teaching is not monolithic—he recognizes its variegated hues, and the book is in that measure all the more stimulating. At £ 2.25 it is a worthwhile buy.

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Shaking the Sleeping Beauty: by Michael Griffiths. Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1980. Pp. 207. Price £ 2.25.

Shaking the Sleeping Beauty joins its predecessor, *Cinderella with Amnesia* (IVP, 1975), in another attempt by the author to awaken evangelicals to the doctrine of the Church and to the realities of its

nature and purpose. This time the approach is through a study of mission, for, as Michael Griffiths, formerly General Director of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, told the students who first heard the six chapters of this book as lectures: "The study of missions brings everything into focus. You lose the sense of merely timelessly continuing the liturgical worship of the church: you move into a world where there is a sense of urgency, of limited time in which to work and achieve your goals" (p. 11).

There is however, a *lack* of urgency about mission among many Christians today, which the author traces to two popular but, he believes, practically and theologically mistaken trends of thought. In the first place, ecumenical theology tends to concentrate on "creation-incarnation-resurrection" to the virtual exclusion of "fall-atonement-judgement," and so it espouses a universal salvation which makes evangelisation almost pointless and restricts mission to social service. Griffiths devotes a whole chapter to the discussion and refutation of universalism, but he is equally disturbed by evangelicals and others who *are* concerned about Church growth, yet who fall into the trap of confusing quantity and quality.

Such a view may lead to superficial evangelism or to national churches abruptly dispensing with foreign missionaries as soon as some skeleton indigenous ecclesiastical structure has been raised. In both cases it is forgotten that the New Testament concept of mission is as much about the perfecting of churches as the planting of them. There is a need for continued partnership in mission in which both nationals and foreigners mature, not least in learning to transcend the "cultural captivity" of their respective outlooks.

The author indicates the relevance of New Testament teaching about the ministries and gifts of the Spirit to the perfecting of the Church, and, of particular significance to the Indian situation, argues (pp. 192 ff.) that cultural integration at the congregational level is a real possibility. McGavran and others may be right in asserting that "people like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers," but a local Church which meets in groups as well as a whole can provide for people's immediate need to maintain their cultural identity and also give them opportunities to grow into the larger fellowship at their own pace.

In two hundred pages, treatment of these and other topics must be suggestive rather than definitive, but the reader is invited to pursue his studies by the brief bibliographies and questions for discussion given at the end of each chapter. And if that is not enough, a brief appendix on "the biblical language of the pastoralia" encourages him to study the New Testament verbs for church planting, building and perfecting. All in all, this is a most useful book for stimulating thinking about the life and mission of the local Church.

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Come and See: by J. N. M. Wijngaards. Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1980. Pp. 254. Price Rs 15.

This clearly written and thoroughly positive book seeks to explain how people can have a "living experience of Jesus Christ" today. The first section discusses the Gospel (mainly Johannine) evidence that this is both possible and quite natural for every Christian. The second section considers the lessons to be learned from the experiences of half a dozen saints and mystics, and the final section, "You need to take steps" is unashamedly didactic: "have time for God"—"internalise Scripture"—"go beyond symbols"—"recognise the moment."

This last chapter takes seven incidents in the Gospels as paradigms of the various situations in which Christ may encounter us, perhaps to our surprise. This note of the unexpected is typical of the whole book, which brings together many insights and succeeds in combining a definite teaching purpose with a breadth of vision which encourages the reader to explore further.

The book is to be recommended for its imaginative and lively presentation, and especially for its demonstration of the ways in which Scripture can come alive. Wijngaards' treatment of Scripture shows both how the findings of modern exegetes can be used to illuminate the text (chs. 1, 4, 13) and how meditation on particular themes can also be profitable. The author traces the vital and abiding significance for Jesus of his understanding of the OT laws concerning loyalty to God and concern for the poor (ch. 13). Wijngaards also demonstrates the importance of scriptural images in the lives of such Christians as Symeon the New Theologian, Teresa of Avila, and Theresa of Lisieux (chs. 6, 7, 10), while offering his own thoughts on the significance of the theme of "glory" or "radiance" (ch. 5).

The reader is introduced to Christians besides those mentioned above. There are separate chapters on Francis of Assisi, Charles de Foucauld and Simone Weil, as well as glances towards Teilhard de Chardin, St François de Sales and Pseudo-Dionysius. It is a pity that there is no representative of Protestant spirituality in this group (whom would we choose—Luther, Calvin, Bonhoeffer, Barth?), but it is good to have an introduction to Simone Weil who does not easily fit into any familiar categories of sanctity.

The only disappointing chapter in the book is the one on Charles de Foucauld, in which the author seems to have been misled by the secondary sources he quotes into painting a picture which is far too simple. It is true enough that De Foucauld's life was based on his meditations on Scripture and in particular his understanding of the hidden life of Jesus at Nazareth. It is also true that he realised his contemplative dream during his stay in Nazareth from 1897-1900 (pp. 140 ff.). But this peaceful period was only an interlude between two periods of extreme conflict, the first when De Foucauld was discovering that he did not fit into the Trappist pattern, and the second when he began to experience a tension between his contemplative disposition and the demands of charity that he be active. De Foucauld

was uncertain for a long time whether or not he should accept ordination, and then when he did get to North Africa he experienced a constant inner tussle between his Nazareth vocation to an enclosed contemplative life and the evident needs of the people around him. This tension seems to have continued right up to the end of De Foucauld's life, although it was resolved to some degree in 1907 when De Foucauld realised that there was no distinction between love expressed to God in worship, and love expressed indirectly to him through one's neighbour.

Nothing of these struggles appears in Wijngaards' summary of De Foucauld's life, which is unfortunate on two counts.

Firstly, most if not all of the quotations from De Foucauld's notes come from the peaceful Nazareth period and so present a rather one-sided view of his thought. Secondly, the resolution of De Foucauld's problems is of central importance to Wijngaards' discussion of the value of scriptural imagery. For De Foucauld's experience shows that the "hidden life at Nazareth" theme was both a liberating one—helping him to move on from the Trappist situation—and a restricting one—making him feel cautious if not guilty about engaging in an active apostolate.

It would have been good for Wijngaards to consider this possibility that following a scriptural image too closely can be a negative thing and for him to discuss the significance of De Foucauld's own solution based on the belief in the primacy of charity and openness to God in prayer.¹ Charles de Foucauld was also helped to grow beyond his preconception of the limits of his vocation by spiritual obedience to his superiors. Such guidance was also important for St Teresa of Avila (cf. *Courage to Obey*, by D. Kanjiramukul, Pontifical Institute, Alwaye, 1979). But Wijngaards does not touch on these examples of the general principle of testing individual religious experience by the Christian *community*. Quotation of the Pauline and Johannine teaching on this matter is conspicuous by its absence from the otherwise helpful discussion in chapter two of the validation of religious experience.

Apart from a slip in the sentence near the top of page 221 which should surely read "All things are symbols as well as objects," there are very few misprints in this book. It is well produced in clear and attractive type on good quality paper, and does not really need the addition of eight illustrations which seem to have very little relation to the text.

But these are minor criticisms of a very good book. *Come and See* is a worthy successor to the author's previous handbook *Communicating the Word of God* (1979), and we look forward to his next one with expectancy.

PHILIP N. HILLYER

¹ Cf. "Imitation of Christ as a Christian Lifestyle...Reflections on the Life of Charles de Foucauld," *IYT*, Vol. 29, No. 2, April-June, 1980. Pp. 92-107.

Growing Together into Unity: edited by Choan-Seng Song. CLS, Madras (in association with WCC Faith and Order Commission), 1978. Pp. vi+194. Price Rs 5.

Sharing in One Hope: Faith and Order Paper No. 92, World Council of Churches, Geneva, n.d. Pp. xiii+290. Price £ 4.95.

In the six years which have passed since the Fifth Assembly of the WCC adopted the term "conciliar fellowship" as a description of the unity that should be sought in the ecumenical movement, there has been much discussion of its meaning and implications.

Interest initially focussed on the assertions that "the one Church is to be envisaged as a conciliar fellowship of local churches which are themselves truly united" and that "they are bound together because they have received the same baptism, and share in the same eucharist; they recognise each other's members and ministries." *Growing Together into Unity* is a collection of texts on these two issues, and as with much ecumenical literature the contributions vary in quality and usefulness. Some material seems to be included just for the record and a couple of the papers are narrowly specialised. The general reader may not gain much from Moltmann's discussion on the dialogue between eastern and western traditions of unity, or from the paper by Nissiotis on the significance of the invocation of the Spirit for church unity. But the book is so cheap that it is worth buying just for the contribution of Lesslie Newbigin on, "What is 'A local church truly united'?" (pp. 37-39). The latter, together with the summary of responses received from the churches (pp. 86-93) is a useful, if rather dry, summary of present agreements and disagreements—and it could provide a skeleton, if nothing more, for study and discussion.

There is rather more flesh and blood about *Sharing in One Hope*, the official report of the meeting of the Faith and Order Commission held at Bangalore in 1978. There the stress was on a third statement in the Nairobi definition of conciliar unity: the churches "are one in their common commitment to confess the Gospel of Christ by proclamation and service to the world." At the end of a fortnight's discussion the 160 representatives from more than 50 countries managed to agree, at least verbally, on "A common account of Hope" (pp. 1-11). This seems to combine the theological ("The church is a fellowship of those who hope in God") and the ethical ("The Christian hope is a resistance movement against fatalism"), although it must be noted that biblical reflection on Christ as our hope is allowed only eight of the 290 pages of the report.

Contributions from all over the world went into the making of the declaration. These not only came from official church statements, but also from the informal grass roots theology of poems, songs, letters and personal testimony; especially from Latin America (pp. 92-108) and women's movements in North America (pp. 154, 166-8, 179f.), as well as South Africa (pp. 176 f.) and Bangalore itself (pp. 161-3).

All this makes the substantial report "Towards fuller community of men and women in the church" refreshingly vivid and compensates for the pallid abstractions of some of the other chapters.

The last third of the book takes up the theme of "growing together into unity" again, but it is a rather disjointed collection of brief papers and committee reports. No one would read it unless they had to, but perseverance with this miscellany would be rewarded by the discovery of an authoritative comment from the Roman Catholic side by J.M.R. Tillard (pp. 223-32) and a draft "common statement of our faith" offered for discussion (pp. 244-6). For the rest it is to be hoped that the following recommendation is taken to heart for the future: "This effort should not be seen as a verbal ballet between concepts like 'conciliar fellowship', 'organic unity' and 'unity in reconciled diversity', but rather as a struggle to find a *way of presenting the vision that will give real hope to ordinary members of the churches* that the vision is, by God's will, both desirable and achievable" (p. 241—italics added).

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Communicating the Gospel: by William Barclay. St Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1978. Pp. xi+106. Price £ 1.25.

The bulk of this useful book comprises a series of "Laird Lectures." The last lecture was given to a joint audience of Protestants and Roman Catholics under the auspices of the extramural department of Glasgow University.

The last chapter analyses the methods of the Old Testament prophets in communicating the message of God. They preached against the background of idolatry and syncretism. To communicate their message they used the most vivid language available and adopted striking methods. Ahijah, for example, tore his mantle to illustrate how the kingdom of Israel would be divided (1 Kings 11:26-27). This is an enlightening chapter. The second chapter contains a clear and systematic analysis of the way in which the Kerygma was communicated by Paul and the early Church.

The third chapter comes to grips with the problem of "Communicating the Gospel today" by answering the questions, "How then can we best communicate the Word of God to men?" "What will be our approach to the Bible when we try to fulfil our task of opening its truth to men?" There is no one way in which this can be done. The author emphasises the importance of knowing the background of words, expressions and images. But even knowing background and meaning is insufficient: personal experience by the communicator is also essential.

The final chapter deals with three controversial questions which are relevant to the main theme of the book: the question of whether the Bible should or should not be open to all; the notion of the Bible as the supreme rule of faith and life over against the Bible as inter-

preted within the Church; the idea of the Bible speaking for itself over against the idea of aids to understand the Bible.

Dr Barclay was himself a master of the art of communication and the presentation is throughout clear, systematic and easy to follow. It is, however, open to doubt whether, in analysing the methods used by prophets and apostles, Dr Barclay has really come to grips with the problems involved in communicating the Gospel in our totally different situation.

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