

BOOK REVIEWS

KINNAMON, Michael, *Why It Matters: A Popular Introduction to the Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry Text*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1985, 72 pp.

THURIAN, Max, ed., *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry" Text*, vol 1 + Faith and Order Paper No. 129, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1986, 129 pp.

Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry, popularly known as "BEM" or "The Lima Document", has been under discussion by churches worldwide (including the Roman Catholic church) since it was published by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches in 1982. The document marks a turning point in the ecumenical movement, inviting us to "recover an integrated vision of what ecumenism is all about" (Kinnamon, p. 4), i.e., to see the ecumenical movement whole again, firmly based on continual renewal and growing unity in the churches' life of faith. BEM has engendered a new atmosphere of expectancy and confidence.

The two books under review are very timely in this auspicious new situation. Kinnamon's popular introduction to BEM is actually overdue, for such a comprehensive, and clearly written, treatment of the background and the main issues would have been appreciated by many a discussion group struggling with the demanding BEM text. By now, however, it is clear to the Faith and Order staff that the process of responding to BEM will continue long after the 1985 deadline for official responses has passed. As our Eastern Highlands Churches' Council study group in Goroka has found, the process is too important in itself to be constrained by deadlines!

Kinnamon explains, in simple and straightforward language, how BEM fits into the wider ecumenical movement, and the work of Faith and Order. His glossary of technical terms used in the document is particularly helpful. He warns against confusing the "convergence" achieved by BEM with the "consensus", which would provide the basis for real unity, just as the "response" to this

document is not yet the “reception” of it, which would, in itself, unite the churches. *How* churches respond will differ greatly from tradition to tradition, and the effort to do so will be an invaluable ecumenical exercise for many churches which lack a structured teaching authority. Kinnamon asks churches to use the document as a tool for ecumenism rather than a tactic for mission, if possible, in ecumenical groups, and with an eye to wider issues, such as the gospel in the face of different cultures and other faiths. The Lima Liturgy, helpfully reproduced in an Appendix, can assist in making the transition from doctrine to experience. Kinnamon’s little book is highly recommended for all who are interested in serious ecumenical dialogue.

For those, such as church leaders and seminary lecturers, who need more detailed and technical information on the process of responding to BEM, the volume edited by Max Thurian offers an initial selection from a wide range of responses. A comprehensive introduction draws out the theological riches of BEM in concentrated form.

The responses themselves afford a foretaste of the main trends that may be expected to emerge. Most of the churches represented are able to “recognise in this text the faith of the church through the ages” (BEM Preface), though the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland states: “We do not find this form of question particularly meaningful or significant.” In general, one could say: the more “reformed” the tradition, the more “catholic” the document is found to be. For some, such as Baptists and Disciples, the language of BEM is a difficulty in itself, and, together with some of the Reformed churches, they find it hard to accept the central role given the sacraments by BEM.

The most difficult section for virtually all respondents is Ministry, particularly the threefold structure of deacon-priest-bishop, with its hierarchical implications (Disciples, Baptists, North Elbian Lutherans). Many Protestant churches are not convinced that such matters even have to do with the “essence”, as opposed to the “interests”, of the church (North Elbian Lutherans), and they attach

correspondingly less importance to the question of apostolic succession.

From the perspective of our ecumenical situation in Melanesia, the responses to the section on Baptism are probably the most relevant, stressing the role of faith, and God's action in Christ, the status of infants' vs. believers' baptism, and the problem of re-baptism. The New Zealand Methodists, and the Cameroon Presbyterians, mention explicitly the need to see BEM in very different cultural contexts.

For those at present engaged in trying to formulate a Melanesian response to BEM, both these books will be invaluable resources.

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The Melanesian Institute, Goroka.

MILINGO, E., *The World in Between: Christian Healing and the Struggle for Spiritual Survival*, London UK: Hurst/Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1984, 138 pp.

For those who have now known of this controversial charismatic African prelate, Milingo, the former Archbishop of Lusaka, the introduction by Mona MacMillan presents an investigative profile of the events, and Milingo's own personal history; his early childhood and education, which led Milingo through seminary to the priesthood; Milingo's eventual appointment to the See of Lusaka in 1969, and the trials by ordeal of mind faced by the Archbishop in subsequent years, till Milingo's resignation in 1982. These trials I am apt to call "trial by ordeal" because of so much pain they caused Milingo morally and mentally, on account of the accusations levelled against him. These experiences are explained by Mona MacMillan in the epilogue.

There are four chapters in this book. The reader will be led by Milingo through the wilderness of the spiritual world that most of us