

Papua New Guinea. The majority of the writers use, in varying degrees, the methodology of theology, as variation on a sacred text, that is, reflecting on particular Asian situations as the dynamic equivalent of Israel's liberation. Some articles may also use theology as praxis. The article on Japanese Christology is one of the few contributions using theology as sure knowledge. Of the 20 contributors, only two are non-Asians. It shows that doing theology is for both locals and expatriates. The book includes a few poems, because poets, too, can be local theologians.

Since the conference was sponsored by the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) and the Tao Fong Shan Ecumenical Centre, it is understandable why the big majority of the contributors are Protestants. Two Catholic priests are included in the collection.

The quality of scholarship in the book varies from an outline to articles with erudite footnotes. In spite of the limited talent pool of Asian churches (1), the construction of local theologies is a giant task which has to be encouraged. ATESEA is, therefore, commended for encouraging young Asian theologians to write in the regular seminar-workshops. If Asian theologians continue in their efforts, they will eventually gain more expertise and confidence like their counterparts in Africa and Latin America.

Doing theology in future conferences should use other methodologies. For example, theology as wisdom may be used effectively, since wisdom is akin to the Asian mystique. I suggest future books of the series follow the standard reference for editing, *The Manual of Style: for Authors, Editors, and Copywriters*, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

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FERNANDO, Antony, with Leonard Swidler, *Buddhism Made Plain: An Introduction for Christians and Jews*, Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1985, ref. edn, paperback, US\$9.95, 138 pp.

There are a number of books that present Buddhism in relation to Christianity, and a few that mention Judaism in a comparative context. The

present volume represents an effort to present Buddhism in a way that takes into account readers whose thought patterns on religion have been moulded from birth by Christian and Judaic ideas. The authors are well qualified for this task. Antony Fernando has been deeply involved in the academic study of both Buddhism and Christianity, and has spent long period in Christian seminaries and Buddhist monasteries acquiring a practical knowledge of these religions.

In general, the study gives a thorough and accurate presentation of Theravada doctrine and philosophy. This is laid out under the traditional rubrics and schemas, such as the “Four Noble Truths”, “Eight-fold Path”, and Department Origination (*pratityasamupada*). The presentation of these is enhanced by focusing on how these doctrines impinge on the human condition. One point worthy of mention, though, is that the analysis of suffering downplays the significance of ignorance, and the view of substantial selfhood as the root of cause of human problems. In Buddhism, suffering is caused by desire and attachment, but these, in turn, are based in ignorance. The study is also weak in its presentation of the doctrine of karma, since it fails to specify that karma is *volitional* action. Further, karma is not a law: it is a psycho-dynamic principle. The account of the doctrine of non-self (*anatta*) is distinctly Theravada, and relative to other interpretations is somewhat extreme. There is, however, useful comparative material on attitudes to egoism in Christianity and Judaism. The significance of meditation is mentioned, but should have been highlighted more since this is a major practical difference between the Semitic traditions and Buddhism. The study is correct in emphasising that Buddhism is a system of human transformation, and in describing nirvana as a state of being, which is in the world, and predicated by personal freedom and altruistic qualities, such as kindness, gentleness, compassion, and equanimity.

The greatest weakness of the study is its restriction to the Theravada tradition of Buddhism, since the most fruitful comparisons and dialogues occur between Christianity and the Mahayana traditions of Buddhism, particularly Zen and Tibetan Buddhism. Another reason why the lack of mention of these Mahayana traditions is a serious omission is because they are more vital in the west than the Sri Lanka and Thai traditions. Given that there are good pragmatic reasons for making the framework of comparison Buddhism, as it appears in the West, the Mahayana traditions

should clearly be discussed. For similar reasons, one can question why the authors strive for maximum fidelity to the original scriptural traditions of Buddhism, since much that is of relevance in the contemporary context derives from later innovations and developments. It would, for example, have been illuminating to refer to the thought of contemporary Buddhists, such as Buddhadasa Thera, with whom Fernando has studied.

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CRAGG, Kenneth, *The Call of the Minaret*, Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books/Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1985, 2nd edn, x + 358 pp US\$13.95.

To have a completely new edition, after 30 years of Kenneth Cragg's classic Christian interpretation of Islam, is indeed a great gift, not least in Melanesia, where, under the shadow of Muslim neighbours, the presence of Islam is slowly but surely beginning to be felt in Papua New Guinea, as it has long been felt in Fiji. Both missionaries and Melanesians may be expected to react defensively, even with hostility, to this new presence: the missionaries, because they have had the Pacific field to themselves in the conviction that Christianity is the superior religion; the Melanesians, because of their age-old and deep-seated suspicion of outsiders. A careful reading of Cragg's book, at this early stage, might be just the right antidote to prevent another evangelistic disaster of the kind that has unhappily been so frequent elsewhere.

“Come yet to prayer, come to your true well-being. God is most great, Muhammad is his Apostle. There is none save God” – *la ilaha illa Allah*: the muezzin's call from the minaret of mosques large and small is addressed not only to that one-sixth of the world's population – 835 million people – who embrace the faith of Muhammad, but to all men and women, including Christians. Every word in it, taken separately, is familiar to us, yet its cadences are alien. How are we to react? Can we afford to ignore the call?

Cragg unfolds the meaning of the muezzin's call, phrase by phrase, with admirable sympathy, but he also explains its implications for the echoing call of the Christian evangelist, who offers “the restoration to Muslims of the Christ whom they have missed” (p. 220). The muezzin's