

How can this book assist the theological process in Melanesia? The Black South African church, like the Melanesian church, is confronted with the need to show the relevance of the gospel for people handicapped in their thinking by imported theologies and ideologies. And, like South Africa, the recent history of the Pacific region also calls the church to stand against “racial capitalism”, even if it is not the same “African” monster. This book, then, is recommended for its showing the affinity we have with our African brothers and sisters, in addressing the problems of our broken world, with the radicalism, and the love, of Jesus.

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Can Spirituality Be Taught?, Jill Robson and David Lonsdale, eds, [Place of publication unknown]: Way Publications, 1989.

If spiritual growth truly means learning to live increasingly in response to the Spirit of God, this is a form of life, which, at least potentially, affects every dimension of personal and communal living.

The papers of this collection were written by members of a working party on the teaching of spirituality. The editors describe the contributors as “weighted in the Anglican and Roman Catholic direction”, but hope that the variety of views expressed, even within that circumscribed range, will facilitate dialogue and discussion. They claim that spirituality is, by its nature, “context-laden”, and the papers, both descriptive and analytical, reflect the personal experience of their writers.

The papers acknowledge a debt to set forms from the past, yet seek refreshment from the spontaneity of direct, everyday experience. So, when reflecting on his own experience of being spiritually “formed”, James Woodward first acknowledges the value of regular communion, and daily prayers, as “bringing-together” times, and then goes on to say: “I have a feeling that authentic spirituality happens unexpectedly, indirectly, in a non-authoritarian, “set” way: for example, listening to a piece of music, a Sunday afternoon walk, etc.” In itself, such a statement is one-sided, but it does remind us that our spirituality is, at once, unique to ourselves, yet in touch with what is common to all, unfettered, yet

focused. David Lonsdale refers to the danger of understanding “spirituality” as catering for the soul at the expense of the body, so he prefers to talk about “discipleship” as a term that can refer to every area of our following of Christ. He speaks of the need for social responsibility, and growth in freedom. He says we should try to nurture personal gifts, rather than to strive after pre-established models of perfection. Other articles deal with the political context of spirituality, evangelical spirituality, spirituality and the charismatic movement, spirituality and feminism, and training laity for growth and ministry. The article on “Evangelical Spirituality in the Inner City” even tackles the question of how culture affects spirituality in a way that may be useful in asking how to construct local spiritualities.

The concern of all the writers to combine form and vitality, belief in God, and engagement with everyday life, should make their work of value, far beyond their own background.

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Apologia: Contextualisation, Globalisation, and Mission in Theological Education, Max L. Stackhouse, ed., Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1988.

How is theological education affected by the modern awareness of the extent to which all thinking is influenced by the society in which it takes place? Do we have to give up the attempt to ground our teaching in the truth, itself, and be content with training people to be useful to their church and society? If we do that, we encourage them to reduce church and society to be whatever is going on in them at that place and time. They have no lasting frame, in which to build a consistent view of themselves and their society. They become patchers-up of passing problems. Yet, if we detach them from all changes of time and place, in order to search for a fixed view of perfection, do we leave them in a void, a never-never land? How can a priest or minister stand, at once, in the presence of God, whose truth never changes, and in the presence of human beings, who exist in a changing world? Max Stackhouse suggests that the modern dilemma is a continuation of the classic debate between “realism”, concern for what is universal, and “nominalism”, concern for what is particular and local. He says that the search is not just for appropriate