

this position is taken seriously, it must surely lead us to see that the ministry does not spring from among believers, but is, in fact, Christ's gift to His church.

Paul Richardson, Anglican Bishop of Aipo Rongo, Lae.

COOK, Guillermo, *The Expectation of the Poor: Latin American Basic Ecclesial Communities in Protestant Perspective*, American Society of Missiology Series No. 9, Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1985, US\$13.95, 316 pp.

This book provides rich information on the situation in Latin America: oppressed Christians, who seek to understand and respond to their concrete problems in the light of scriptures. The author takes a firm stand. The study is a challenge to Cook himself, to Protestantism, to the Roman Catholic church, and for Mission. Cook calls himself an evangelical of very conservative stock (p. 5). He sees the Comunidades Eclesiais de Base (CEB) as a new reality. Keywords of this reality are poverty, alienation, marginalisation, oppression. "The poor are refusing to give up their own future. This is why I called the CEB 'the Expectation of the Poor'" (p. 7). The CEB are a challenge to Protestantism: "Protestantism is a creative protest", called the Protestant Principle (Foreword, p. xiii). He sees a similarity with "the revolt of CEB against institutional fossilisation – the systemic rigidity and theological sterility that gripped the Catholic church for more than a millennium-and-a-half of its history" (p. 3). The Catholic Comunidades are a "Protestant" phenomenon. But, ironically, the Protestant churches are not "Protestant" any more, because they have become institutionalised. The priesthood of all believers has become a theoretical doctrine, and, unlike, a church of the poor, they are a middle-class prosperous establishment. "The Saviour that was proclaimed . . . by Protestants . . . was not, in every case, the suffering servant of scripture" (p. 204). Therefore, the CEB are more "Protestant" than Protestant churches, and Protestant CEB have been institutionalised. "The spirit of prophetic criticism against every kind of absolutism . . . implicit in the 'Protestant Principle' is evident in the ethos of the Comunidades" (p. 236). "We seem to be passing the Catholic church – or a certain segment of it – but in the wrong direction" (p. 8). "We are passing each other in the night" (p. 235).

CEB offer a challenge to the Catholic church, and the Roman See, at the level of sociology, ecclesiology, theology, and mission. At the moment of writing, Leonardo Boff had been silenced. By now, he is speaking and publishing again. It is just a symptom of the church's struggle to clear her mind and take a stand: "What do we do with the 'option for the poor'?" It is a term used by the Vatican Council, which is to be translated into practice. Medellín, Puebla, Pope's visits, documents of the Congregation for the Sacred Doctrine, show a development of give-and-take, prophetic charism, and institutional cautiousness. "The Vatican is prepared to keep the charism of CEB within institutional bounds" (Introduction, p. xiv).

Critically: "The ambiguity of the Puebla document must be understood in the light of the power struggle within the Latin American Conference of Bishops – and a change in the Vatican" (p. 241).

The challenge for mission comes back to the "annunciation-denunciation dyad". "The proclamation of the gospel, in word and action, is both announcement of salvation and liberation in Jesus Christ, and denunciation of the structures that oppress and alienate humanity. It is both re-evangelisation of the masses of nominal Christians, and prophetic confrontation with oppressive powers" (p. 106).

The commitment of the author himself is felt all through, and clearly expressed on the last page: "My prayer is that the *comunidades de base* in Latin America continue to be the hope of the church and the expectation of the poor – but from within, not as a separate ecclesiastical institution, as a partisan political movement, not as a mere appendage to a traditional church. Ecclesiastical schism, degeneration into a mere political movement of institutionalisation, would spell the end of one of the most-significant ecclesial movements and social forces in the 20th century" (p. 251).

Tony Krol SVD, Catholic church, Wabag.

TABBERNEE, William, ed., *Australian Churches' Response to Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, Sydney NSW: Australian Council of Churches, no date, 87 pp.

This inexpensively-produced booklet should be of the greatest interest to those who are studying the World Council of Churches' Lima