

of responses is indeed bewildering; yet the underlying concern for unity is equally apparent and – even more important at this stage – all the churches show that they are ready to experiment with new formulations and possibilities for convergence. The booklet may be obtained from ACC, PO Box C199 Clarence Street, Sydney NSW 2000.

John D'Arcy May, The Melanesian Institute, Goroka.

LAK, Yeow Choo, ed., *Doing Theology and People's Movements in Asia*, No. 3, Singapore: The Association for Theological Education in South East Asia, 1986, 259 pp.

This book is a collection of papers presented at the 1985 theological seminar-workshop held in Kyoto, Japan. If theology is commonly defined as faith in search of understanding (*fides quaerens intellectum*), then doing theology is reflecting within faith, and expressing that reflection. According to the editor, doing theology begins with people. Hence it “is quite a radical departure from the traditional way of theologising, which begins with books, not people” (p. 1). It means bracketing-off the European theological tradition and viewing the Asian situation from the biblical perspective. In short, a “leap from Israel to Asia” (p. 192).

Most of the contributors reflect about the oppressive situations of their respective people (Burma, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines), which the authors consider as the dynamic equivalent of the Jewish Egyptian slavery in the Old Testament. Since a major theme is liberation, Exodus is often quoted. If the situation of Asian women is oppressive, there are three contributions (one poem and two articles) on women's liberation. However, not all the articles deal with people's movements in Asia, as indicated in the book's title. It has an article on recovering theological meanings, another on the search for humanhood, some broader biblical commentaries, a bibliographical survey on Asian people movements.

If one were to read the various papers in the light of Robert J. Schreier's *Constructing Local Theologies*, Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1985, most of the writers use the contextual (liberation) model. Only one article uses the ethnographic approach, which is about the Numai tribe of

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.

Leonardo N. Mercado SVD, Catholic Mission Wurup.

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