

Book Reviews

Konrad Raiser, *Religion, Power, Politics*, trans. by Stephen Brown. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013. 168pp.

Recent decades have witnessed the return of religion to the public sphere. Many critics have deplored this trend, citing religious differences and tensions as contributing factors to the civil conflicts and hostilities that fracture human societies today. Their view that religion has a destructive influence in the political sphere has led them to conclude that religion has no place in the political process.

It is against this background that Konrad Raiser, in this closely argued book, explores the questions whether and in what ways religions can actually play a constructive role in the formation of a new international order. He argues convincingly that this question is urgent insofar as the emergence of a globalized and interdependent world has demonstrated the limits of the “state-centred paradigm of the international order,” which has been historically bound to a “particular understanding of religious practice and to demands for legal and institutional separation of religion and politics” (3). Raiser insists that our age demands a global order conceived not exclusively to balance the interests of sovereign states, but above all to secure the rights and needs of all peoples and nations.

Such an order, Raiser contends, will gain legitimacy only if it both “respects the values transmitted through the cultural and religious traditions of humanity and translates them into general rules of human coexistence” (3). For the second of these two tasks, Raiser appeals in more than one place to Hans Küng, whose “Declaration of a Global Ethic” at the Parliament of the World’s Religions (1993) proclaims on the basis of his prior research into the various religious traditions the “Golden Rule” as the basic norm for human coexistence (5, 134, 141, etc.). In this light, Raiser believes, the modern concept of human rights and human dignity is shown to be compatible with the understanding of the order of human life in society held by the world’s religions. Indeed, recent inter-religious dialogue, especially Christian and Muslim, has shown that the religions can achieve consensus on human rights despite differences of religious traditions (88–93).

In these terms, then, Raiser makes a plea for a global “rule of law” grounded on the universal recognition of human rights. Since its realization depends on the creation of a “public space” in which both religion and politics are free to use their “distinct but interrelated power” to bring it about, Raiser must clarify the relationship between religion and politics and demarcate the roles they are to play in society. To set the stage for this ambitious

Palestine in particular, Rehab's book represents a convincing plea for peace and justice for all. By extension – and not diminishing the authorial intention – *Faith in the Face of the Empire* shows that all human life takes place in a context of the empire. We are to thank Mitri Raheb for clearly showing us scriptural insights to resist its power and control creatively.

Pavol Bargár, Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, Prague

Rebecca Todd Peters, *Solidarity Ethics: Transformation in a Globalized World*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2014. 141pp.

Rebecca Todd Peters wants to transform the thought and actions of the privileged of the first world – which means most of us. Part of the problem of injustice is that the privileged think they are deserving of everything they have while presuming the disadvantaged must have something wrong with them or they would not be in the predicament they find themselves in. A preliminary task of an ethics of solidarity is acknowledging what privilege is, and for most, learning that they are privileged (70). When this is the case, they do not see their well-being as a result of social structures that perpetuate inequality (45).

As Marx stated in his *Theses on Feuerbach*, “The point is, to change things.” Peters wants to accomplish nothing less than to

change the direction of “neoliberal globalization” (3, 7, 56). She describes *mutuality*, the major principle in an ethics of solidarity, as people acting “out of the understanding that the well-being of creation is interdependent” (40). It requires developing “relationships of partnership and respect that contribute to the well being of both parties” (41). In defining solidarity, Peters indicates what the relationships are: “Solidarity is a way of describing the actions of persons and communities who seek to enact social justice in the world” (62). It denotes two communities – one privileged, one oppressed – that develop a bond based on an interest, value or goal. Solidarity develops a new model for working across differences (3). Instead of “people doing *for* others,” mutuality is people “doing *with* others” (45).

Take unemployment as an example. Unemployment causes families to fall into poverty, lose their houses, and a host of other problems. Not having a job is often part of a larger injustice – not only the injustice of poverty itself, but of racism, sexism and ageism. Assume we had relationships of mutuality in place – perhaps church groups as one and groups of unemployed as the other. One strategy that has been shown to be effective for both employees and employers is subsidized jobs programmes. This strategy is politically advantageous, as both progressives and conservatives support these programmes. There is ample evidence that these programmes work. If we had

thousands of church groups as advocates and thousands of unemployed in partnership, we could literally save lives, not only for those without jobs, but for the small businesses in communities, too.

Changing social injustice requires understanding the social factors that give rise to it in the first place. Replacing social injustice through a socially just, intelligent and responsible solution should include as many voices as possible. Sometimes those who are privileged and powerful disempower, rather than empower, those who are disadvantaged. The author maintains that differences are a value and uniformity sometimes a cover for the status quo.

Peters traces the history of the terms she uses – solidarity, moral intuition, mutuality, transformation, globalization, neoliberalism. She explains why *sympathy* and *taking responsibility* are necessary steps in moral agency, but are not enough. Jesus' urging us to "sell all you have and give to the poor," for example, shows compassion for the poor but, according to Peters, is "inadequate because it does nothing to change the structures of our social order that are oppressive" (88). She lifts up the veil covering the social order, so to speak, and reveals what is beneath it – advantages, benefits and privileges for some, and unjust policies and procedures for others.

Peters rightly criticizes the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World

Bank for their harsh social policies, lending conditions and protection of the interests of capital owners (87). However, the IMF and the World Bank both have new directors who bring new perspectives to both institutions. Jim Yong Kim is the first non-American to lead the World Bank. Former president of Dartmouth, Kim is an anthropologist and a physician. One would hardly have thought that the motto of the World Bank would be to "fight poverty with passion," but Kim's first stated goal upon becoming president of the World Bank was to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030. He has spent his life serving the poor. The stereotype of the IMF, also, is far from that of "Protector of the Most Vulnerable in the Global Crisis." The new IMF's managing director, Christine Lagarde, is the former French Minister for Economy, Finance, and Industry and the first woman to head the IMF. Although she is not known to have as compassionate a pedigree as Kim, in 2000 the *Financial Times* ranked her the best finance minister in the Eurozone. Now perhaps these two individuals will help change the direction of globalization.

This book is motivated by a very personal question: as Peters states, "How do we live with integrity when so many are suffering . . . ?" (xxiii, 1). We could finish the sentence by adding ". . . and we are indirectly to blame" – or be completely honest and conclude, ". . . and we, as the first-world privileged, are directly to blame." What food do we buy? Who makes the clothes we buy? The shoes?

Peters is an ethicist who seeks radical transformation of the global economic structures (xx). This transformation is of two kinds. First, there is the transformation of our ways of thinking and acting (46, 60). This is an existential, intellectual changing of who we are, creating in us a new vision and a new worldview. People can change: of that, Peters is confident. Disaster is the only outcome if we continue our current ways. Second is the transformation of our world. Structural injustice can be changed given time and effort in the long-range analysis of the problems and the factors that cause them. If people can change, there is nothing inevitable or necessary about the human communities they construct. The way we have institutionalized injustice can be changed (81).

The imperative for change underlies both forms of transformation. Our future depends on it. The current direction has been unduly influenced by the dominance of neoliberal economics – “supply-side economics.” Neoliberalism minimizes the effect of colonialism and exploitation. Peters refers to this as “sin” (65). It is hard to believe that following apartheid in South Africa, the FW de Klerk Foundation rejected the notion of white privilege as a meaningful tool of social analysis (72). That is like 19th-century New England Catholic bishops calling slavery a political problem, not a moral one.

Peters writes that the biblical principle *tzedakah* has the combined meaning of

justice and charity. It gives an image of God calling the Israelites to order their social and economic relationships to reflect these values (58). Jewish scholar Ross Kramer reminds us, however, of the justice missing for Jewish women. Their characterization as property of men is well known. Further, exemption from the law – because of maternal and domestic duties – was, in fact, exclusion. The right or denial to observe the law creates, Kramer writes, “separate and unequal spheres for women and men” (*Her Share of the Blessings* [Oxford, 1992], 105).

“A different world is possible,” Peters claims – a world marked by social justice and sustainability. With self-confidence she writes, “An ethic of solidarity offers just such a pathway” for a new direction in globalization (13). Her book is a solid resource for the classroom as well as the general reader; my basic evaluation of it is that we should all have a copy.

Tatha Wiley, a New Testament scholar and theologian, lives and writes in Geneva.

Mark Thiessen Nation, Anthony G. Siegrist and Daniel P. Umbel, *Bonhoeffer the Assassin? Challenging the Myth, Recovering His Call to Peacemaking*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2013. 250pp.

In February 2001, the WCC central committee launched the programme Decade

to Overcome Violence (DOV) during its meeting in Potsdam, Germany. On 4 February, the meeting transferred to the centre of Berlin and a torchlight vigil was held at the Brandenburg Gate. Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the WCC, pointed out that this day was the 95th anniversary of the birth of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, one of the great cloud of martyrs for the cause of peace and justice. Bonhoeffer is well known for his dramatic call, made at the ecumenical conference at Fanø, Denmark, in 1934, for the churches to renounce war: "Peace must be dared. It is the great venture." But Bonhoeffer was put to death, not on account of such speeches but because of his involvement in a conspiracy to overthrow the Nazi regime, a plot that involved attempts to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Bonhoeffer's name was invoked several times during the days of the launch of the Decade. Which Bonhoeffer, one may ask, was in mind? During the central committee discussion, if this reviewer's memory is correct, a Norwegian participant pointed out the ambiguity of any call to renounce violence. A member of his family had been involved in the armed resistance to German occupation during the second world war and paid the price. Were there to be any distinctions made in the kinds of "violence" addressed and their motivations?

For his part, Bonhoeffer hovers ambiguously in the background of all such discussions. Over the years, a consensus has grown that during his earlier ecumenical

involvement, from 1931 until the start of the second world war in 1939, Bonhoeffer was certainly a pacifist, but that faced with the enormities of evil being committed by Hitler's regime, he came to believe that responsibility before God and knowledge of the plight of the victims of Nazism required involvement in political resistance for an overthrow of the regime with all the moral ambiguities – including that of violence – which this entailed. Whether one admires Bonhoeffer for making this transition or regrets it as a fall from grace, there has been general agreement that he did so change.

The authors of this work challenge such an interpretation, and on any reckoning it is good to be asked to take a fresh look at such a revered figure and to revisit some acquired assumptions. Bonhoeffer, they argue, maintained his rigorous pacifism to the very end. Their argument is on two levels: the first requires a rereading of the history of Bonhoeffer; the second, a considered analysis of his theological development. Although it is the latter part of the book that deals with this theological aspect, I will treat it first since, while I do not wholly agree with the conclusions, the argument is serious and thorough and I have fewer questions about its methodology.

The authors take issue with such well-known interpreters of Bonhoeffer as Larry Rasmussen and Renate Wind, who allegedly assert that Bonhoeffer moved from the absolutist peace ethic set out in

his *Discipleship* to a more utilitarian notion of responsibility during the wartime resistance and the writing of his *Ethics*. The chief culprit in encouraging such an interpretation is said to be Reinhold Niebuhr. The authors do make a strong case for the view that there is greater continuity between *Discipleship* and *Ethics* than is sometimes assumed, but whether it is quite the continuity that would support their overall view of Bonhoeffer the permanent pacifist is another matter. In the final chapter of *Discipleship*, for example, Bonhoeffer states powerfully the consequences of a theology of incarnation: “The incarnate one transforms his disciples into brothers and sisters of all human beings.” Is that incompatible with a final decision for tyrannicide in order to save the most vulnerable of those brothers and sisters? Such arguments about Bonhoeffer’s theology may never be settled, but it is good that the authors have given opportunity to look at them again.

But now to their historical case. Basically, it is that while Bonhoeffer accepted a role as a double agent within the *Abwehr* – the German military intelligence department within which much of the resistance was camouflaged – he had nothing to do with any of the actual attempts to assassinate Hitler, his role in the resistance was very marginal, and his main motivation for involvement was the exemption from the military call-up that *Abwehr* service would provide. Much in this is true, but the fact that Bonhoeffer was not

himself involved in any of the actual attempts on Hitler’s life is not disputed by any serious student of his life. It is also beside the point, which is whether by his participation in the resistance he knowingly and willingly accepted *complicity* in such attempts as the moral price to be paid for a successful overthrow of the regime. There is much evidence that he did, especially in his close relationship with his brother-in-law Hans von Dohnanyi, who masterminded much of the collaboration between the military and civilian wings of the resistance. But the authors make strenuous efforts to downplay the significance of memories of conversations between Bonhoeffer and Dohnanyi, in which, according to Bonhoeffer’s closest friend, Eberhard Bethge, the plan to eliminate Hitler was an agreed necessity. The authors claim, “We do not really *know* what Bonhoeffer and others said in these conversations. To truly know, in any meaningful sense, we would have to have the context for each given conversation – knowing the nature of the subject matter, the occasion for the conversation, Bonhoeffer’s tone of voice and facial expressions, the nature of the person with whom he was speaking, and the nature of their relationship . . . We simply do not have that information” (89). But we do. Here, for example, is Eberhard Bethge, interviewed in 1985:

“I remember an evening in Sakrow, where the Dohnanyi family lived, early in the war. We were just sitting together at the fireside, and Hans von Dohnanyi, who had certain

elements of piety even then, asked Dietrich, ‘What about Jesus’ saying, “Whoever takes up the sword will perish by the sword”? What about us – we are taking up the sword.’ And Dietrich answered, ‘Yes, that’s true. And Jesus’ word about whoever takes up the sword will die by the sword is valid. It’s still valid for us now. The time needs exactly those people who do that, and let Jesus’ saying be true. We (*sic*) take the sword and are prepared to perish by it. So, of course, taking up guilt means accepting the consequences of it. Maybe God will save us but first of all you must be prepared to accept the consequences.’ He meant of course it needs exactly those people who accept Jesus’ word – the truth of it and so the consequences of it, of perishing. That Germany needs at this moment of its history these kinds of Christians, and that is what being Christian means.” (K. Clements, *What Freedom? The Persistent Challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* [Bristol, 1991], 37).

Or what about George Bell, in 1945 recalling his momentous meeting with Bonhoeffer in Sweden just three years earlier: “Deeply committed as he was to the plan for elimination (*sic*), he was not altogether at ease as a Christian about such a solution. “There must be punishment by God . . . We do not want to escape repentance’” (Sermon at Bonhoeffer Memorial Service, London, July 1945).

Bonhoeffer’s chief worry evidently was less about the act of elimination as such than the possibility that it might be seen as an attempt by Germans to stave off the full judgment of God incurred for the crimes of Nazism. Can there really be any doubt as to what Bonhoeffer meant in these testimonies? Further, so

anxious are the authors to distance Bonhoeffer from the ultimate act of treason that they attempt to minimize the significance of what Bonhoeffer actually did undertake for the resistance, namely his visits abroad to convey information to church and allied government circles. This shows a serious misunderstanding of the resistance, for which foreign contacts were not a sideline but a core part of the strategy. Only with allied support – in the end not forthcoming – could the conspiracy hope to succeed in its full aims of achieving not just the end of Hitler but the installation of a new, non-Nazi government recognized by the world. No accident, perhaps, that the classic study by Klemens von Klemperer, *The German Resistance against Hitler: The Search for Allies Abroad, 1938–1945* (Oxford, 1992) nowhere features.

These are but some instances where actual testimony and history do not fit the narrative that the authors wish to construct. This is not to deny that the theological and ethical issues they raise are of first-rate importance. But theology should not co-opt a selective reading of history. Bonhoeffer remains a vital figure in our continuing Christian and ecumenical journey precisely because he is too discomfiting for all of us and cannot be compressed into the idealized portrait that we, whichever theological stable we come from, would like to admire.

Keith Clements is a former general secretary of the Conference of European Churches.

Keith Clements, *Ecumenical Dynamic: Living in More than One Place at a Time*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013. 240pp.

This is a book about the ecumenical movement that only Keith Clements could have written, and I am glad he has. He has given himself time to reflect on much that he has previously published about Bell and Bonhoeffer, J. H. Oldham, as well as “the Moot” – a group that many of us may never have heard of and to which T. S. Eliot and sociologist Karl Mannheim once belonged. Oldham, who played such a formative role in the Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 and the Oxford Conference on Church and Society in 1937, was the subject of Clements’ 500-page biography *Faith on the Frontier*, published in 1999. Few of us will have access to Clements’ skilful editing of *The Moot Papers: Faith, Freedom and Society 1938–1944*, still available for a mere £175 and first published in 2009. But in *Ecumenical Dynamic*, for a fraction of the price we have Clements’ own masterly summary of intense and high-level “Moot” discussions between some of the foremost Christian and Jewish thinkers of the day. If, like me, you are Clements’ contemporary, you will have heard of Alec Vidler, John Baillie and Daniel Jenkins (best known now as the father of *The Guardian* columnist Simon Jenkins), Kathleen Bliss (originally Congregationalist but here labelled as C of E), Eric Fenn and others. But Clements is aware that there is a whole generation that has never heard of

Barmen or Bonhoeffer, let alone Baker or Neufville, and never read that one-time bestseller *Honest to God* by Bishop John Robinson – best known for telling us, if we did not already know, that “God is not a daddy in the sky.”

As a skilled writer and reporter on numerous conferences, and a former general secretary of the Conference of European Churches, Clements brings all these people to life so that we too can invest our lives in what he calls “the ecumenical dynamic.” We need to draw on the past to live fully in the present, and if we are truly to live ecumenically we have to inhabit and enjoy more than one place at a time. This is his simple message, and he draws on his own experience to make the point. He was born in China but lived in England for most of his life. He is loyal to his Baptist roots, but learned to love Choral Evensong at Cambridge and, especially through his work in Geneva and the Conference of European Churches and its lively partnership with the Catholic Bishops’ Conference, to appreciate what the Orthodox and Roman Catholics have to give us.

Keith Clements sets out to address three audiences: ecumenical enthusiasts like me; diehard opponents (whom many of us will know); and those who have simply lost interest or who find interchurch discussions frankly boring. Anyone with a social conscience will find this book not only interesting but challenging because the author has been and is so deeply committed to Christ and our life together

in him and has a faith that is big enough to embrace more than one issue and help us live in more than one place at a time. If the book has one fault, it is that Clements covers too much ground – but perhaps that is inevitable with a dynamic writer in a hurry to engage us in the exciting adventure of meeting friends from other places we never knew we had and enjoying their creative company as God’s loving gift that makes our lives more helpful and “our” world a slightly better space.

Donald W. Norwood of the United Reformed Church researches and writes in Oxford.

Felix Wilfred (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 657pp.

The radical changes taking place in developments within the Christian tradition are often referred to as “the center of gravity of Christianity moving to the south.” No doubt, while the hold of Christianity on the traditionally Christian nations in the West is loosening, there is considerable growth of the faith in the global South. This has led to the evolution of new courses in seminaries and universities on “World Christianity,” “Christianity in Asia and Africa” and the “Future of Christianity.” The interest, however, has often been more in the growth of Christianity in the South than in the long and fascinating story of early

expressions of the faith in these regions, the socio-political and cultural struggles the churches face in the midst of many religions and cultures, and the contributions these churches have made over the centuries to the understanding of the Christian faith in different contexts. Anyone who attempts to teach Christianity in Asia, as I have sometimes done, has to search for resources in order to try to do full justice to the subject.

The Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia, edited by Felix Wilfred, one of Asia’s outstanding scholars and thinkers, will therefore be received with great enthusiasm by those working in these fields of study, as well as by anyone who wishes to have an informed understanding of Christianity in Asia. The editorial board and the contributing scholars have been drawn from all parts of Asia and from those who have had extensive scholarly engagement in Asian studies. Drawing on the scholarship of persons from over 20 countries, the book lays out the manifold expressions of Asian Christianity in worship, theology, spirituality, inter-religious relations, missions, and the political and social processes that have shaped, and continue to shape, Christianity in the extremely complex and richly diverse land mass designated as Asia. The volume has also been successful in taking account of the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Charismatic expressions of Christianity in Asia.

The major strength of the volume is that it does not conform to the normal genre

of encyclopedia or dictionary that attempts to be exhaustive, giving facts, figures and explanations related to each Asian country. As its editor puts it, it is a volume that “has a *perspective* and its own *opinions* on various questions and issues concerning Asian Christianity, and they are held together by an overall vision and architecture. To put it differently, the Handbook is *hermeneutical* in nature. Its principal aim is not so much to inform the readers on Asian Christianity as to help them follow its journey of many encounters, analyze and interpret them in the context of global Christianity as well as in the context of other disciplines of humanities and social sciences” (5).

The main strength of the volume lies in its considerable success in realizing this stated goal. The contributors provide not only a scholarly account of the subjects dealt with but, more importantly, their own analyses and interpretations, with which the reader may or may not agree. Further, the main emphasis is not on the reality of the Christian communities, but more on the social processes that have affected and shaped their existence and the Christian encounters with the socio-political, cultural and religious contexts of Asia. In this sense, the work does not pretend to be an authoritative handbook of facts and figures, but is rather a research tool and a comprehensive guide for anyone who wishes to study an aspect of Christianity in Asia. In the same spirit, the last part of the volume has a number of essays on possible future trajectories of Asian Christianity.

The volume is divided into five parts. Part I, which is predominantly a historical portrayal of the presence and spread of Christianity into Asia, has chapters on the roots of Christianity in the five sub-regions: West Asia, South Asia, South East Asia, Central Asia and East Asia. The analytical input that accompanies the historical accounts in these chapters gives important insights for even those already familiar with the history. Parts II and III provide significant contributions and pointers for those interested in Asian Christian studies and research. The seven contributors of Part II deal with developments, movements, and trends in relation to the evolution of Asian theology; cultural and linguistic issues in translating the Bible into Asian languages; Asian contributions to the global ecumenical movement; global and inter-Asian missionary movements; Pentecostal and charismatic movements in Asia; Indigenous Christianities; and Asian feminist movements.

Part III in many ways is central to this volume, dealing with Christian social engagement in Asia. Topics include Asian Christian responses to colonialism, nationalism and modernity; the processes of political democratization; and Christian responses to the challenge to social engagement. This section also carries insightful perspectives on Asian Christian contributions to education, the search for peace, and the cause of women.

Part IV takes on the question of Asian Christianity in interaction with other major

Asian religious traditions. A comprehensive look at the changing paradigms of Asian Christian attitude to other religions is followed by more specific examinations of the relationship of Asian Christianity with Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism, which are written by reputed scholars from these religious traditions. This innovative approach gives us the opportunity to read insights into the issues, dimensions and levels of Christian relations with these faiths as seen from the “other side.” This part of the volume also, rightly, carries an essay on the sensitive and vexed topic of conversion, which analyzes two models of understanding the process of conversion, as well as a well-researched essay on Christian art and architecture in Asia.

The concluding Part V presents several articles dealing with issues related to the complex features of Christian identity in Asia; its engagement with the sacred texts of other religions; Asian forms of worship; music and spirituality; and the challenges brought by migration and new cosmopolitanism in Asian Christianity. Part V also contains two significant essays relevant to discussions on the trajectories of World Christianity. One, on revisiting historiographies, brings in a much-needed corrective to the practice of looking upon the Western Christian historical narrative as the universal history of Christianity. The author identifies some contemporary developments in historical sciences that put forward methodological challenges for the Christian churches, so that the story of

Christianity in Asia might be constructed based on experiences at the local levels. In the author’s view, this reconstruction of the history of Christianity in Asia involves serious discussion of methodological issues that are yet to be undertaken in Asia. Of equal interest is the editor’s article on the interplay between Asian Christianity and public life, which addresses the all-important question of the impact and contribution the small minority Christian communities of Asia can make within and for the larger community of which it is part. Based on a careful analysis of the many issues related to religion and public life, the author argues that a much more meaningful Asian Christian presence will only be realized when Asian Christianity begins to develop “public theology” – theology not by the church for the church, but theology at the service of public life. This would be a theology that addresses the social, economic, ethical and moral issues in Asia along with other relevant partners. The volume ends with some pertinent observations by Francis X. Clooney, SJ on what the volume sets out to do, its contents and its limits.

The introductions provided for each part of the volume set out the foci of the essays contained in the section, which both are helpful to the reader and give coherence to the volume. Also welcome are the appendices, which carry a statistical table of the comparative numbers of religious adherents in each of the Asian countries, and the extensive select bibliography on Christianity in Asia.

Any volume that ventures to be a handbook of Christianity in Asia is bound to receive criticism about the nations, issues and concerns that were not covered or sufficiently dealt with. No doubt, many might disagree with the analyses and perspectives offered by the authors. The editorial board appears to be well aware of this problem, but was courageous in selecting the topics and limiting the parameters of the discussion. Given this necessary limitation, this book provides an accessible, readable and thoroughly scholarly presentation of Christianity in Asia that deconstructs some widespread misconstructions and misinterpretations, and highlights areas that should rightly occupy any attempt to understand the subject. Perhaps the term “Handbook” is a misnomer; what we have here is a well-thought-out volume that is invaluable for those who wish to explore not only Christianity in Asia but the trajectories of World Christianity in our day.

S. Wesley Ariarajah, ecumenist and theologian, lives and writes in Geneva.

Geoffrey Wainwright, *Faith, Hope and Love: The Ecumenical Trio of Virtues*. Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2014. 64pp.

Ecumenical leader and systematic-liturgical theologian Geoffrey Wainwright re-anchors and re-orientes the quest of the modern ecumenical movement to

that which is common in our collective DNA and which offers transformation and renewed direction towards visible unity in the body of Christ and commitment to justice for the broader human community.

In his characteristic trinitarian fashion, Wainwright links the 1 Corinthians 13 *charismata* of faith, hope and love to baptism, the Lord’s Prayer, and the eucharist, respectively. This volume, a compilation of the three lectures he offered as the 2012 Leo and Gloriana Parchman Endowed lecturer at Baylor University’s George W. Truett Theological Seminary, spoke at one time to a largely Baptist audience in the proximate, and, consequently, more broadly to the global ecumenical community. In doing so, he reintroduced the 21st-century relevance and potential of the seminal Faith and Order document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)* (1982), of which he was a principal participant and contributor, seeing in *BEM* the foundational common articulation of baptismal and eucharistic theologies that cuts across ecclesial and ecclesiastical boundaries. Although the denominational affiliations of Baylor’s constituency were not part of Faith and Order, nor are they presently members of the WCC, Wainwright’s presence and lecture, both in spirit and in substance, signal the necessity for faith, hope and love to ignite and propel the next season and stages of the modern ecumenical movement, with baptism, the Lord’s prayer and the eucharist as the lodestars.

On the matter of baptism, Wainwright connects the content of faith (*fides quae creditur*, “the faith that is believed”) and the act of faith (*fides qua creditur*, “the faith by which we believe”) with conciliar and ecclesial acts of bilateral or multilateral mutual recognition of baptism, with the outstanding differences in theologies and practice around “infant baptism” and “believer’s baptism.” As the Apostles’ Creed and Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed have been used as preparation for baptism, Wainwright lifted up the question that *BEM* put to churches: “What is the role of the church in the economy of salvation?” That is, because faith is a gift from God, what part does the church have in imparting that faith, teaching the faith, and inviting persons to faith so that people can believe, trust and confess the faith? Baptism both incorporates people into faith and prompts the community of believers to share the faith and invite persons to the eucharistic table.

On the matter of the Lord’s Prayer, Wainwright sees Jesus’ prayer and our prayers joined to him as a grounded trust in present-future hope. Linking Romans 8, insights from St Cyprian of Carthage, Jesus’ priestly prayer in John 17 and Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, Wainwright asserts that we have a living, constant “martyrology.” Whenever we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we are joined to Jesus Christ, and the hope of giving bread both now and at the eternal banquet, the fulfillment of God’s will be done on earth now as it is already and will be in heaven,

the hallowing of the Lord’s name now and in eternity, the forgiveness of sins for all time, and deliverance from evil now and in eternity. The power and potential of the Lord’s Prayer lies in its eschatological dimension that is at one and the same time encapsulating past-present-future as we are joined to the communion of saints, and to our living Lord.

On the final matter of the eucharist as the sacramental meal of love, Wainwright named the current state of ecumenical affairs and the seemingly insurmountable barrier of intercommunion and concelebration, while pointing to possibilities and opportunities. As the eucharist is the visible embodiment of God’s love for us in Christ, Wainwright reminds us of *BEM*’s assertion that visible unity among divided churches can be achieved through renewal of eucharistic celebration in teaching and in the liturgy, frequency of celebration and on Sunday, and a minimalist approach at collaboration and celebration between divided churches. Wainwright agrees with Pope John Paul II’s insight in the final parts of the 2003 encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, “The Eucharist creates communion and fosters communion” – to which Wainwright himself queried, “How far do we have to be advanced in the unity which the celebration of the Eucharist ‘signifies’ before we can draw on the sacramental grace to ‘effect’ the fullness of that unity?”

Wainwright’s volume is an essential read for all those committed to the unity of the

body of Christ. As an ecumenical trio of virtues, faith, hope and love are to be lived out not as theoretical concepts or theological doctrine, but in the life, flesh and blood of our churches. Such virtues are formed and sustained in us and among us, individually and as communities of

churches, in baptism, the Lord's prayer and the eucharist.

Neal D. Presa was moderator of the 220th General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Copyright of Ecumenical Review is the property of Wiley-Blackwell and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.