

## Book Reviews

**The Gift of Anger: A Call to Faithful Action.** By Carroll SAUSSY. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995. Pp. x + 160.

Anger is an emotion which is generally considered to be negative. How can then anger be a "gift"? Carroll Saussy, who is professor of pastoral care and counselling at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, shows in the book under review that anger can indeed be "creative". After an investigation into the complexity of anger (Ch. 1), she distinguishes between the *anger of despair* and the *anger of hope*. The first is a vengeful, hostile, sometimes explosive reaction to an interpersonal or social situation; it aims to injure persons or institutions and tears at the fabric of society by destroying relationships. This is the type of anger which is included in the traditional list of "capital sins".

But is there not a positive anger? S. calls it the anger of hope. It is a response to the experience of being ignored, injured, trivialized, or rejected, as well as an empathic response aroused by witnessing other persons or groups being ignored, injured, trivialized, or rejected. This "holy" anger is to be distinguished from "sinful" anger (Ch. 2).

S. points out that Thomas Aquinas while listing the eleven passions does not mention any passion as being contrary to anger. Following Mary Daly, S. identifies *dissociation* as that missing contrary. Dissociation is what happens when anger is expressed but because it is not accepted by the other comes back to the sender with increased force.

The author believes that the experience of anger reaches back to the early months of human life. The church's understanding of the origin and development of this human emotion and human experience has been inadequate.

S. explores the psychology of anger throughout the life cycle following the works of Erik Erikson, Carol Franz and Kathleen White (Ch. 3). The anger and wrath of God in the biblical revelation and the experience of anger by Jesus are explored in Chapters four and five. S. shows that people of faith can find ways to understand and use their anger as a gift of God and avoid expressions of anger that are sinful or destructive.

All too often people are aware of only a destructive side of anger. S. shows that healthy anger can be life-enhancing and justice-making. It is then a reaction to social evil. It is a signal that something has to change. Instead of letting oneself be destroyed by anger or suffering in silence due to injustice, one can channel it through a legal battle, organizing protest, etc. Can God's anger as portrayed in the Bible be a model here? S. believes that "when human beings are disappointed, hurt, and angry over injustice in their world, they experience something analogous to what God experiences as God continues to be with creation in its brokenness" (p. 8). Jesus' anger too shows us that we need to recognize, acknowledge, and use our anger well. We also need to hear the angry groan of the oppressed and to groan with them to bring about justice.

As a model for dealing with anger in the light of biblical insights, S. proposes three steps: *hear the call, discern God's lure, and strategize your response*. What Ignatius of Loyola has said about discernment in his *Spiritual Exercises* has been creatively used by S. in the second step. Through discernment one makes a decision either to move toward an expression of one's anger or to surrender one's anger as an unwarranted or unnecessary response at this time.

S. concludes her work by saying, "Every surge of anger has a message to convey: about oneself, about relationships, about hopes and dreams, about social justice,

about the lure of God in one's life" (p. 140). One should strive to "offer to the world a holy anger, enacted in faith, and hope and love".

*The Gift of Anger* is a very readable book with several case studies. The author is particularly sensitive to the anger of women. Whereas the psychological and theological aspects of anger have been studied elaborately, S. does not seem to pay sufficient attention to the *social aspect* of the *anger of hope*.

Fr V. Paul Leon

**Religious Hinduism.** *Fourth Revised Edition.* By R. DE SMET, and J. NEUNER (Eds.). *Bandra, Mumbai: St. Pauls, 1996. Pp. 402. Rs. 150.00.*

Ever since the first edition of the book under review appeared in 1964 it has served as a balanced and reliable guide on the important philosophical and religious aspects of Hinduism. This fourth revised edition will certainly be welcome as it appears almost thirty years after the third revised edition. Directed originally to the teachers in christian institutions to help them acquaint themselves with the background and religious milieu of the Hindu students, this book was found extremely useful by many more.

In his Foreword, De Smet lists the more important changes and revisions introduced in this edition. First of all there is a new Introduction by P. Fallon. The General Historical Survey appears in a much enlarged version. A section on Virasaivism by J. Gonsalves and a more elaborate treatment of Aurobindo by a specialist (J. Feys) have been added. The bibliographies have been added to each chapter and updated. The final Chapter titled *The Present Situation* is of course a thoroughly rewritten survey.

Although this reviewer has often made extensive use of the previous edition of the book in teaching Indian Philosophy and Hinduism, he finds a few shortcomings in the present edition inspite of its several excellent new features. The previous edition carried an *Index* which served a useful purpose. Such an Index is surprisingly absent in the present volume. Also to be regretted is the omission of *Later Ramayanas* in Chapter 19. One cannot surely think that this tiny section of 2 pages which briefly deals with the emergence of *Ramayana* in the languages of India such as Tamil, Malayalam, etc. and shows how there are variations in the different compositions is "less relevant" today when people from the North and the South of India are glued to the TV screen showing the serial *Jai Hanuman* and *Ram Ki Nam* week after week.

Also less appropriate is the change of the title of Chapter 24 from the original *Saivism* and *Saiva-Siddhanta* to the present one which has become simply *Saivism*. This reviewer feels that Saiva-Siddhanta is a sufficiently significant development within Hindu philosophy and religion which deserves an explicit mention in the title of the Chapter.

The above remarks in no way diminish the usefulness of the book under review. It is comprehensive, dialogical and written with clarity. What was given earlier as *appraisal* at the end of each Chapter has become *conclusion* in the present edition and as a result the tone now is less apologetic but more friendly and appreciative of the Hindu tradition from a Christian perspective. This work will continue to be a reliable guide on Hinduism and Hindu thought for a long time to come.

**Fr. V. Paul Leon**

**Jesus in the Gospel : A Biblical Christology.** By Rudolf SCHNACKENBURG. Louisville, Kentucky : Westminster, John Knox Press, 1995. Pp. xvi + 348.

An Internationally recognized biblical scholar and author of numerous books, R. Schnackenburg has after long hesitation, come out with what can be called his life's work (pp. ix-x), *Jesus in the Gospels : A Biblical Christology*.

First S. discusses the question of faith and history, namely the relationship between the 'historical Jesus' and the 'kerygmatic Christ'. Though the interest of the evangelists is the Christ of faith, nevertheless they provide, S. affirms, the foundation for the historical Jesus of Nazareth.

In the chapters that follow S. examines the activity of Jesus in each Gospel and against this backdrop makes a detailed and comprehensive study of the various Christological titles used, and tries thereby to capture all aspects of biblical Christology. As a result, there emerge several portraits of Jesus Christ, based on each evangelist's 'faith-view'. Is it correct, then, to speak of a biblical Christology as the sub-title of the book suggests? Is it not possible to think of many Christologies as presented by the four Gospels? Secondly, while describing Jesus' activity in each Gospel, S. does not take into account the community, especially its historical and sociological conditions out of which the Gospel grew. Consequently the figure of Christ as painted by S. is pale without flesh and blood!

In chapter two S. shows how Markan Christology concentrates on the two leading honorific titles *Son of God* and *Son of Man*. "Ultimately his Christology is oriented," S. concludes, "toward the 'Son of God', who at the same time reveals and conceals himself in the ministry of Jesus, and toward the 'Son of Man', who goes his way through suffering and death to the resurrection and will one day prove to be the one coming in power and glory" (p. 73).

Then the author proceeds to present the portrait of Jesus as depicted by Matthew. The Matthean Jesus is predominantly the teacher of a new and greater righteousness

who 'remains with his church, teaching, admonishing, and protecting' (p. 130).

The Lukan Jesus (in the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles) is the Saviour of all, Jews as well as Gentiles. Hence Jesus' humanity, his support for the 'poor and wretched, his devotion to women, and his deep piety are duly highlighted.

John sketches Jesus as the Lamb of God and the pre-existent and incarnate Logos which becomes a person of flesh and blood. "In this way he does justice to both claims, the divinity and humanity of Jesus" (p. 294).

In the concluding chapter S. makes a review of the picture of Jesus Christ in the four Gospels and concludes that the 'Christological profundity culminates in the Gospel of John' (p. 323), without showing, however, how the picture changes with time and circumstances, how it develops and differs from Gospel to Gospel, and what were the major factors that contributed to this development.

Although several books on biblical Christology have appeared in the recent past, S.'s is a magnificent and monumental work. As the author himself points out, "It (the book) seeks to be of service to believing Christians who today have been made insecure by scientific research and critical discussion, so that they may hold fast to faith in the person of Jesus Christ as the bringer of salvation and Saviour of the world" (p. x).

This book, originally published in German in 1993, has been so soon made available in English. The English translation by O. C. Dean, Jr., is quite clear and deserves our appreciation.

**J. Susaimanickam**

**Responses to 101 Questions on Psalms and Other Writings.**  
By Roland E. MURPHY, O. Carm. Mumbai : St. Paul's, 1996.  
Pp. xvi + 142. Rs. 50.00.

This book is the fifth in the *Responses to 101 Questions on* series. R. E. Murphy, an international authority especially on the biblical wisdom literature, answers, from forty years of teaching experience, questions pertaining to the 'Writings', the third and last part of the Hebrew Scriptures.

After some introductory questions about the Writings in general (Qs. 1-4), M. explains in detail about the *Psalms* - their literary types, liturgical settings, worldview of the psalmist, etc. (Qs. 5-16) In Qs. 17-23, he speaks about the *Proverbs*, particularly about the personification of wisdom. Responding to questions related to *Job* (Qs. 24-40), *Song of Songs* (Qs. 41-49) and *Qoheleth* (Qs. 52-65), M. treats about almost all the significant parts/characters of each book. Of course, *Wisdom of Solomon* and *Sirach* are left out here since they do not belong to the Hebrew Bible.

M. then deals with *Ruth* (Qs. 50-51), *Esther* (Qs. 66-69), *Lamentations* (Qs. 70-74), *1 & 2 Chronicles* (Qs. 75-80), *Ezra-Nehemiah* (Qs. 81-83), and *Daniel* (Qs. 84-97). By way of conclusion (Qs. 98-101), M. affirms that it is quite impossible to systematize all of them into a unit and to speak of a 'theology' of the Writings.

M.'s responses are brief and lucid; they reflect the best of contemporary biblical scholarship on a popular level as expected of the series. The reader can understand the responses better, if only he/she has already read the pertinent biblical work. This, obviously, is the aim of the book!

St. Paul's, Mumbai, deserves our special thanks for making such a valuable book available to readers in India.

**J. Susaimanickam**

**Religion and Medical Ethics: Looking Back, Looking Forward** Ed. by Allen VERHEY. Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996. Pp. vi + 152.

In his *Bioethics and Secular Humanism* (1990), H. T. Engelhardt Jr. discusses elaborately the difficulty of arriving at a rationally justified content-full moral vision in the postmodern world. This is all the more difficult in the realm of bioethics because of the varied problems it is faced with. Particular faith communities and their moral visions fail to convince the postmodern person to rationally arrive at any moral decision. In this sense most of them become moral strangers. Secular Humanism seems to Engelhardt as the only possible alternative that can enhance moral strangers to resolve moral controversies. The book under review, "*Religion and Medical Ethics*" directs its arguments in the opposite direction to find how far religion can still meaningfully contribute to the bioethical discourse today. This volume is an outcome of a seminar on bioethics and the essays are the contribution of eminent authors.

David H. Smith presents historically the prominent contributors to the emergence of bioethics as a theological discourse. The shifts in emphasis evolve concretely in his discussion where beneficence is replaced by personal autonomy. We find creative insights in his presentation of the three different models of love-equality, covenant-contract, freedom-happiness. An ever enduring principle we see here is that "a self perfected through acceptance of limit, suffering and service," (p. 17) is a transfigured self. His openness to secular critique seems to be the right way to integrate religious voices in the bioethical discourse.

Stephen E. Lammers literally laments over the marginalization of religious voices in the bioethical discourse. However, his concern indicates values that have been ignored by ignoring religious voices. The overtoning of pluralism and secularism has undervalued the feminist

voices. The absence of a prophetic role and corrective vision that can be provided by religion leads to a vacuum in the medical profession. The role of religion in framing public policies seems to be minimal. This, Lammers feels, can still be seen as freedom to the religious voices that can continue to be an objective critique of the medical profession. Lammer's essay ends with a note of constructive suggestion.

Karen Lebacqz rebuilds the unique tradition of Helmut Thielicke in the construct of 'alien dignity'. This concept which sounds very orthodox has immense value for the modern world. We humans receive a dignity from outside that renders even the most pitiful life of incalculable worth. Alien dignity promises equality both from the feminist perspective and human genome project. Lebacqz's conclusion sounds too generic when she claims Thielick's notion of alien dignity as a base for many recent concerns of bioethics.

The legacy of Ramsey to bioethics is recaptured in a meaningful framework of Stanely Haverwas. Neighbour's love seems to imply the protection of life as a necessary condition for civilization and this should not be understood as a survivalist ethic. Hauerwas' critique of Ramsey is quite justified when he remarks that a world that is preoccupied with the preservation of individual's consent could not be challenged by Ramsey whose only resource was neighbour's love.

The specificity of religious ethics as rules, as end purposes, as moral anthropology presents a new opening for an inclusive approach from the part of religious ethics. James F. Gustafson challenges religious ethics to present features of medical care and morality in a better light than other perspectives. It is not easy for religious ethics to revise their religious traditions in order to develop an inclusive ethical discourse. The territory of common human

interest can always ground us in a common morality and that sounds optimistic of the future.

While all other contributors have religion as the starting point, Warren Thomas Reich starts from within bioethics as a secular field of inquiry. The normative ethics of religions could not listen fully to the anxious secular voices that were groping to apprehend the right meaning of suffering, dying and illness. The only way out from such a gap between classical moral approach and modern approach is listening to "a moral language that can serve to articulate a web of socially shared convictions" (p. 167).

At the end of the volume we find the reports of the working groups which come out with meaningful suggestions for the revival of bioethics.

Without losing their specificities, prophetic voices and corrective vision, religious ethics desire to serve bioethics profoundly. The whole volume seems to plead that the religious voices should be heard in the medical realm, and its marginalization is only a loss to such an important discourse that decides life and death at a larger level. The postmodern atmosphere would perhaps prefer a faith-free moral vision where even moral strangers can easily negotiate with the others in bioethical discourse and policy making. However, the challenges presented by this volume are certainly a call to rethink the religious tradition which has always served the interests of bioethics from its inception as autonomous discipline.

**Fr. J. Xavier Ilango**