

## Book Reviews

*Authority: Its Use and Abuse*, by C.P. Varkey, Mumbai: St Pauls, 1999, Pages 367, Rs.100.00.

It is a pleasure to read through the volume from cover to cover. That may not exactly be the purpose of this handy manual on effective leadership. Its format of chapters concluding with some Exercises suggests that it belongs to the genre of a Workbook

Among the topics highlighted are time management, delegation of authority, effective communication and animation of communities and apostolates. According to the author, the material in the Appendix is meant to complement and render greater credibility to the theme of the book. The experience of the author comes through the numerous anecdotes that have been narrated to focus on the themes. The language too is warmly conversational. Most religious leaders would find in this book some sort of a yardstick to measure the effectiveness of their leadership styles.

In the presentation, each chapter opens with a title page and the subscript is generally a quotation from the Bible. It looks quite impressive. There are useful psychological helps throughout the Volume.

The book is evidently not a digest on the theology of leadership as may appear at first sight from the title ? *Authority, its Use and Abuse*. The anticipated audience for the work who seem to be Church related religious leaders as were the participants of the initial Seminar may serve to enhance that notion. However, interspersed in the text one does find some remarks of a theological nature. They may lead to an impression that some form of quotable quotes of theology are relied on. In the Chapter on The Only Goal of the Church quotations from various sources are compiled to suggest that the leader should know the goal and work towards it. In the same Chapter there are quotes from various traditions with the subtitle: All religions teach the same truth (pp.38-39). No further elucidation is provided. In the Chapter to First Understand the other by empathic listening, the reason for incarnation is stated to be: "When God wanted to communicate to us for our redemption, he did not stand on his pedestal as I did when I spoke to the college lecturers. Rather he came down to our level; entered into our human culture and talked our human language" (p.132).

The manual is useful for training sessions on aspects of leadership.

*Rosario Rocha, SJ*

*What Does Jesus Christ Mean? The Meaningfulness of Jesus Christ Amid Religious Pluralism in India*. Proceedings of the 21st Annual Seminar (1998) of the Indian Theological Association. Edited by Errol D'Lima, S.J. and Max Gonsalves, S.F.X., Bangalore: The Indian Theological Association, 1999, Pages 186, p.n.a.

The Volume presents the Papers of the Seminar, the Workshop Reports on key questions about the significance of Jesus Christ in the multi-cultural and multi-religious context of India, and the Final Statement of the Seminar.

In undertaking a reflection on this key issue of the meaningfulness of Jesus Christ in the context of religious pluralism in India, the I.T.A. has highlighted that Indian theologians have now to address such serious issues. The Papers in general have dealt with the historical development of Christological thought. That effort is commendable.

The brief Introduction by Errol D'Lima is helpful to know the subject of each Paper. The clear tone to the proceedings of the Seminar comes from M. Amaladoss, S.J. The issue of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ is of a theological nature. Since the context for understanding the question: Is Christ the Unique Saviour? is multi-cultural and multi-religious, our theological language would have to be dialogical. If it is not so, then Christians would risk being misunderstood. The author rightly suggests that we must create a space for the other within our own perspectives? (p. 8). Different approaches to "uniqueness" form the major section of this short, introductory article.

Jacob Parappally, MSFS, maintains that Jesus' significance for the whole humanity and the world is determined by his identity (p. 20). The article provides a good summary of the historical development of Christology and the significance of Christ for the Jewish, Hellenistic, Syrian and Latin traditions. The last section on Indian Christological Reflection is valuable to understand the influence of the main Christological Traditions on the three Individual Churches in India. The author merely notes the paucity of effort among Individual Churches to articulate the significance of Jesus Christ (p. 39). It would have served the Seminar well, if an orientation was presented for Individual Churches to respond the challenges to Christological reflection in India.

In contrast to the observation above (p. 39) that there is no concerted effort among the Individual Churches of India to articulate the significance of Jesus in the context of religious pluralism, Jacob Kavunkal, S.V.D. provides a survey of the Indian views on the significance of Jesus Christ to illustrate amply that India has produced a vibrant Christology responding to our particular context (p. 66). Commendable is his up to date information a survey of various paradigms for Christological reflection in contemporary India.

Kuncheria Pathil, C.M.I. has presented well a catalogue of the self-understanding of the Church from its origins to the Roman Empire, the Colonial Period to the Democratic and pluralist world. The author is aware of the specific task before the Asian theologians, namely, to develop a 'new theology of religions' (p. 84). The reader wishes that the author had developed the concrete notion of the Church's self-understanding in a context of precisely such a theology of religions.

The article of Joseph Pathrapankal, C.M.I., provides a biblical critique to the topic of the Seminar. It deals with crucial biblical passages that speak of the universal significance of Jesus Christ. His stance of interpreting the Bible, the Word of God, in an historical, cultural and religious context (p. 110) that includes religious pluralism is in line with the quest of the Seminar.

The Final Statement of the Seminar could have been an attempt towards a Theology of Religions, which was a felt-need among some of the authors, in the context of which to understand the significance of Jesus Christ.

The Editors have been quite exacting in their work. The Volume is presented with an attractive cover too. Some minor points stand out before the reader. At page three Contents, the Final Statement of the 21<sup>st</sup> Seminar should be of 1998 and not 1999 as printed. A

couple of names are printed wrongly: Kavunkal as Kavungal (n. 17, p. 105), and as Kavunckal (p. 160). Saldana (n. 19, p. 105) ought to read as Saldanha. At p. 180, Jesus would be true *yogi* and not yoga. The reference style of Jacob Kavunkal, S.V.D., is quite different from the others.

The Volume can be a valuable Textbook on Christology.

The Bibliography of every author, as seen in the Endnotes, is a good indicator that smaller attempts have been made towards articulating a Theology of Religions in India. A more integral Theology of Religions in India within which to understand the significance of Jesus Christ is a need of our times.

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# *jnanadeepa*

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In spite of all the talk about secularisation, religion still exerts a lot of influence on the life of people in India. The way religion affects people largely depends on the kind of leadership it has. How are religious leaders of the future selected? And how are they trained? These are some of the questions which the next issue, July 2000, of *Jnanadeepa* will seek to answer. Its theme is *the recruitment and training of religious leaders*, especially priests and sisters.

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