

His chapters on “Being Orthodox” and “Staying Evangelical” (chs. 16, 17) should prove particularly helpful to those looking for guidance in a painful personal decision, rather than scientific analysis. Both Pentecostals and Evangelicals often fail to realise that there is no compelling reason why they should also be fundamentalists. Though it is understandable that many Melanesians, confused by the demands of modernity, and the variety of Christian groups, at first, feel grateful for the apparently simple solution offered them by fundamentalists, Barr’s patient explanation of the ways in which fundamentalism, in fact, falsifies the Bible, should bring them a sense of liberation.

John May, The Melanesian Institute, Goroka.

DONDERS, Joseph G., *Non-Bourgeois Theology: An African Experience of Jesus*, Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1985, 200 pp.

“Non-Bourgeois Theology” in this book refers to the largely unwritten religious experience and insights of ordinary people, as opposed to the formal, written work of professional theologians, based on documentary sources and religious experience of ages past (pp. 154f). Joseph Donders tries to put into words the informal theology that lives in African religious experience, and he does it very well. Whether his interpretations of African experience are authentic, this reviewer is not competent to judge. But in 29 short essays, of five or six pages each, he gives a vivid account of ordinary African life situations, and he brings out their theological implications in exciting insights. This book is African theology in action. It also is an apology for this kind of theology, although, presented as it is, it does not need much of an apology.

Having said this, I am still left with a few nagging questions. Is Donders not a bit too romantic about things African, and a bit too harsh on things “Western”? How much of this is due to insight into things African, and how much to thoroughly “Western” existentialism and 1960/1970s Western European counter-culture? Is African culture going to be an exception to the rule that each civilisation, as each individual, is in need of constant *metanoia*? And that each civilisation, like each individual, is

challenged by the gospel? The author chastises the invasion of Africa by “Western” values and ways of thinking. So far, so good. Do we have to right the wrong by having another one-way traffic, now in the other direction? Donders’ case would have been stronger with a little less romanticism and African chauvinism. Still, his book makes for valuable reading for anyone committed to the ideal of enculturating the Christian faith into the rich variety of cultures with which God has endowed mankind.

Jan Snijders, sm, Holy Spirit Seminary, Bomana.