

CEB offer a challenge to the Catholic church, and the Roman See, at the level of sociology, ecclesiology, theology, and mission. At the moment of writing, Leonardo Boff had been silenced. By now, he is speaking and publishing again. It is just a symptom of the church's struggle to clear her mind and take a stand: "What do we do with the 'option for the poor'?" It is a term used by the Vatican Council, which is to be translated into practice. Medellín, Puebla, Pope's visits, documents of the Congregation for the Sacred Doctrine, show a development of give-and-take, prophetic charism, and institutional cautiousness. "The Vatican is prepared to keep the charism of CEB within institutional bounds" (Introduction, p. xiv).

Critically: "The ambiguity of the Puebla document must be understood in the light of the power struggle within the Latin American Conference of Bishops – and a change in the Vatican" (p. 241).

The challenge for mission comes back to the "annunciation-denunciation dyad". "The proclamation of the gospel, in word and action, is both announcement of salvation and liberation in Jesus Christ, and denunciation of the structures that oppress and alienate humanity. It is both re-evangelisation of the masses of nominal Christians, and prophetic confrontation with oppressive powers" (p. 106).

The commitment of the author himself is felt all through, and clearly expressed on the last page: "My prayer is that the *comunidades de base* in Latin America continue to be the hope of the church and the expectation of the poor – but from within, not as a separate ecclesiastical institution, as a partisan political movement, not as a mere appendage to a traditional church. Ecclesiastical schism, degeneration into a mere political movement of institutionalisation, would spell the end of one of the most-significant ecclesial movements and social forces in the 20th century" (p. 251).

Tony Krol SVD, Catholic church, Wabag.

TABBERNEE, William, ed., *Australian Churches' Response to Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, Sydney NSW: Australian Council of Churches, no date, 87 pp.

This inexpensively-produced booklet should be of the greatest interest to those who are studying the World Council of Churches' Lima

text on baptism, eucharist, and ministry (BEM) in Melanesia. Of the Australian churches, whose official responses are collected here, almost all have close links with counterparts in Melanesia: the Anglican church of Australia; the Australian Episcopal Conference of the Roman Catholic church; the Baptist Union of Australia; the Canonical Orthodox churches in Australia; the Churches of Christ in Australia; the Lutheran church of Australia; the Salvation Army; the Society of Friends (Quakers); and the Uniting church in Australia.

The editor's introduction gives a brief, but clear, survey of the criticisms each church felt obliged to make of the document, and of the ways each felt challenged by it to rethink its position. Here (p. 9), and in his conclusion (p. 85), Tabbernee emphasises the step that must be taken from "comparative" to "ecumenical" ecclesiology, if the document is to be appreciated properly (the response of the Churches of Christ formulates its approach in these terms (p. 39)). In practice, however, a good number of the churches represented here still insist on doggedly asserting their cherished confessional positions in the face of the convergence suggested by BEM, before going on to admit – some grudgingly, some with the joy of discovery – that they might, indeed, be able to develop, in doctrine and life, while still remaining true to these positions. But, diverse as they are, and lacking the structures for reception and response, as some of them do (e.g., the Orthodox and the Baptists), all participate willingly and conscientiously in the process on what are essentially equal terms. This, in itself, is an ecumenical advance, whose consequence are still incalculable, even if the Catholic church still protests that the "centre of gravity" of Christ's church "lies in herself, and is a present reality" (p. 22), and the Salvation Army and the Quakers feel that their particular Christian witness is "ignored" by the theology of BEM.

Among the issues emerging from these responses, which might be further discussed in Melanesia, are the relative merits of infants' and believers' baptism, and the question of re-baptism; the status of Spirit baptism with regard of water baptism; the necessity of "outward forms", such as formal ordination to ministry; the meaning and necessity of the "apostolic faith"; the different churches' possibilities of receiving and responding to the document; and the markedly different ways the churches use the Bible, some assuming the existence of a "pure" gospel, while others take account of history and tradition. The diversity revealed in this range

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