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Cries of Victims - Voice of God

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for those involved in pastoral work and counselling, and for those who are struggling with the nature of the mission of the church.

David Pfrimmer

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Cries of Victims, Voice of God

Bishop Remi De Roo

Ottawa/Toronto: Novalis and James Lorimer and Company,
1986

pp. 172. \$9.95 paperback

Bishop Remi De Roo of the diocese of Victoria, British Columbia, is most well-known for being the architect of the controversial statement on the Canadian economy (1983) by the Social Affairs Commission of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. His book *Cries of Victims, Voice of God* is a welcome expansion of this earlier manifesto called *Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis*.

Although the book will have a more immediate impact upon the nation's Catholics, it contains vitally important information and insights for all Christians who hear God's voice of priority for the poor and oppressed. Some limitations of his work should be noted at the outset. The book is eclectic and disjointed in places since it represents a collection of the bishop's earlier articles and lectures as well as more recent observations. In addition, he uses frequent references to statements by John Paul II to lend authority to his position. Though the impact of the current pope is wider than the Roman Catholic tradition, his authority is not accepted to the extent that Bishop De Roo uses his words. Further, those of us in the evangelical tradition who have serious misgivings about John Paul's views regarding social justice, women in ministry and church reform may wonder how long the views of the Victoria bishop will be welcomed in his own church.

Nonetheless, in spite of these hesitations *Cries of Victims, Voice of God* is to be received with joy. It is a mandate for all Christians to take seriously the radical gospel of the Nazarene who had "nowhere to lay his head". Unlike so much of liberation theology which dwells on the Third World (however appropriate), this work concentrates on liberation in the midst of our own Canadian life. In response to the oft-repeated question, "What can I do?", Bishop De Roo points all of us in very concrete directions which he himself has walked. An economic system geared to megaprojects and quick profits via technology at the expense of human needs is subjected to a resounding critique in the name of the gospel. Beyond this he offers

signposts for an alternative future more akin to the ancient values of the Christian faith. He praises the ecumenical movement in Canada by heralding its two-decade pattern of interchurch coalitions designed to rectify the inequities of Canadian life. He applauds the rise to life and action of the laity—especially in the form of women and native peoples, and he links spirituality and social justice when he speaks of alternatives for our consumerist society. His seven-fold pastoral strategy to face these issues is a masterpiece and can be used as a blueprint for change by Christians of all denominations.

In our own new Evangelical Lutheran Church In Canada, God has given us a *kairotic* moment, an opportunity to let the Reformation gospel speak to and from the uniqueness of our own Canadian context. Ironically, it is the Catholic Remi De Roo who has pointed the way for us with such clarity. His book is both a gift and a challenge for us.

Oscar Arnal
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Quest for Better Preaching

Edward F. Marquardt

Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985

\$15.85 paperback

“Can we have better preaching in the church?” For Edward F. Marquardt, the answer is a firm and resounding, “Yes!” Although “good preaching” might be beyond many of us, all of us, Marquardt claims, can become “better” preachers. It is to this quest that he calls us; the quest to become better and more effective proclaimers of Christ’s Gospel.

This is a book written for the parish pastor, by one who is himself a parish pastor. The value of his contribution lies essentially in his skill as a discriminating gatherer of challenging material from the field of contemporary homiletical scholarship. For our common edification, the author went “diamond mining...” attempting “to gather as many homiletical diamonds as possible into one collection”.

This text, however, is much more than just another patch-work collection of pithy thoughts. Marquardt is also an able organizer and manages to weave the various threads of his sources into a tapestry of solid construction and very attractive lines. Whether consumed in a single sitting or in isolated snippets, Marquardt’s text makes for a very good read. This is no dust gatherer, but an inspirational sourcebook that readers will comfortably refer to time and time again.

It is in the chapter dealing with “The Preacher as Theologian” that Marquardt most clearly expresses the primary intent of his book, inspiring