

BOOK REVIEWS

Boberg, John T., and James A. Scherer, eds. *Mission in the '70s: What Direction?* Chicago: A Chicago Cluster of Theological Schools, 1972. 208 pp. Paperback, \$3.00.

Mission in the '70s is an anthology of the major papers presented at the Institute of Mission conducted by the Chicago Cluster of Theological Schools in Chicago, March 15-25, 1971. The Institute was conducted and attended by both Protestants and Catholics, and was a useful forum for the discussion of similar problems and issues in mission from the different vantage points of Protestant and Catholic theologies, administrative structures, and mission methodology.

There is no common theme—other than the issue of mission itself—and a broad range of topics is covered. There are papers on the Theology of Mission and several on the History of Mission; the largest number deal with a variety of practical concerns such as missionary consciousness in the home churches, universality with cultural diversity, indigenization and accommodation, and the development of national leadership.

Three papers are directly concerned with the Theology of Mission. "Some Theological Issues in World Mission Today," by G. Anderson, is an insightful survey of issues in current Roman Catholic and Protestant theological thought about mission. Anderson quotes with approval W. Frazier's statement, "Recent theological insights which are forming the basis of a new theology of mission seem to have produced little more than a crisis of confidence in mission" (p. 112), but is so neutral and does so little to suggest a constructive approach that his chapter is not very helpful. J. A. Hardon's paper is a response to the question, "Is salvation a meaningful term to describe our mission objective today?" He decides that salvation, more or less in the traditional sense, is the primary objective of mission today, and this is echoed in most of the papers that follow. I found Carl Braaten's brief (four pages) reaction to Pierce Beaver's paper on "Self Understanding of Church and Mission" the most stimulating piece in the symposium. With bold strokes and penetrating criticism Braaten uses Beaver's paper as a springboard for his own theological purposes. He is concerned, on the one hand, to lay bare weaknesses in current theological thought about missions, and on the other to stress the need for "a new theology of mission with a spine that can hold together the personal and the social, the existential and the political, the historical and the eschatological dimensions of the Christian reality" (p. 40). His own eschatological orientation is, of course, well known and he does not hesitate to score points for "the renaissance of biblical eschatology within the horizon of the new revolutionary ferment in the world today" (p. 40).

There are, side by side, Protestant and Catholic papers on the concern for a universality which is flexible enough to stimulate local initiative and accommodate indigenous forms of thought and expression. D. C. Flatt

creates immediate interest by mentioning that he moved into the house on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro soon after it was vacated by the famous missionary Bruno Gutmann. In rapid succession he describes three attempts at adaptation which illustrate varying degrees of success and failure. Stimulating as this material is, the reader is left with the desire to know much more about the situations described and the theoretical bases of the presentations.

Father John Connors portrays the brief and explosive history of the entrance of the U.S. Catholic Church into world missions—a movement that is staggering because of its speed and vast dimensions. He describes all of this as an “era that has passed” (p. 138), and points to Vatican II, “the greatest missionary council since Jerusalem” (p. 140), as constituting a new beginning. The primary task now, he feels, is to teach the fifty million Catholics in the U.S.A. that mission is no longer an heroic task in exotic places on the periphery of the world. Mission is integral to the nature of the Church and is the task of all members everywhere.

Three papers have to do with missionary consciousness in the home church. Roland Scott writes specifically of financial support, and M. Tack and R. Festle write more broadly under the title “Including the Local Church in World Mission.”

If the trio of papers just mentioned are of interest to Adventist laymen and pastors in the homeland, mission administrators should surely be interested in E. Dahlstrom’s paper on the “Developing Role of National Leadership in Younger Churches.” It is rather diffuse, but it does successfully delineate some of the issues in one of the most critical concerns of the overseas churches.

This is not a great book on mission. The papers were written for oral presentation and lack many of the qualities we look for in the “printed form.” In general, too much is attempted in each paper with too little supporting material and without a full development of the themes presented. But the issues raised are not trivial nor can they be lightly brushed aside, and besides there is an earnestness and an integrity about the collection that impress one favorably. Adventists who read this book will immediately recognize that many of the issues discussed are basically the same as those facing us in our own world-wide mission work.

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De Vaux, Roland. *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*. Translated by Damian McHugh. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1971. 284 pp. \$6.95.

The book under review is, after *Ancient Israel* (1961) and *Studies in Old Testament Sacrifices* (1964), the third of de Vaux’s works that has been translated into English, and this one saw the light of day only after the author’s sudden and unexpected death on September 10, 1971, at the age