categorial unity: there is, indeed, one world" (p. 243).

Raimundo Panikkar, like Gangadean, is aware that though a universal philosophy of religion is not available, "the human spirit seems unable to stop short of a certain unity which appears necessary, indeed vital, to it" (p. 40). But he locates this not in mystical insight but as a transcendent goal always beyond our reach. There is no neutral ground outside of the "dialogical dialogue" between specific traditions, nor can religions be fitted into a dialectical scheme: "among all the human events on earth, the dynamism of religions especially cannot be reduced to dialectical games" (p. 41). He seeks "the passage from a *de facto* plurality to a *de jure* pluralism" (p. 42).

Harold Coward points to certain limits of pluralism: the barriers to dialogue between people proceeding from different visions of the world, the impossibility for any thinker to survey the various religions or to attain a completely objective outlook. These limits throw us back on our finitude, and they also mean that "there is no longer any ground upon which a theologian can make absolute claims for a particular theological position" (p. 57); "all future theologizing in the sense of establishing ultimate claims to knowledge must cease" (p. 58). Troubling for the Christian here is that in the Bible it is God and Christ (not bumptious theologians ignorant of their own finitude) who are represented as making ultimate claims for themselves. Other religions are equally likely to find this curtailment of ultimate claims unacceptable. Can we not have a pluralism that respects the religions' conviction of being vehicles of ultimate truth? Coward grants that "in all religions there is experience of a reality that transcends human conception" and that this "particular experience" may "function in an absolute sense as the validating criterion for our own personal religious experience" (p. 59). But what is the meaning of "absolute" in this sentence? The word is "used simply to describe the felt nature of commitment to the transcendent through a particular personal experience" (p. 60). If it is only a feeling, it is not absolute; if a valid perception of the absolute is involved, then the finite, instrumental and perspectival status of religions is no barrier to the making of absolute claims.

New Directions in Mission & Evangelization 2: Theological Foundations

James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans, eds
New York: Orbis Books, 1994. 215pp.

Reviewed by John E. Schmidt, Kobe

New Directions in Mission & Evangelization 2: Theological Foundations is the second of the Orbis Books "New Directions" series, which offers collections of previously published articles and papers from a variety of sources dealing with the church's mission in the postmodern world. The intent is to provide students and mission scholars with convenient, inexpensive access to important, current missiological literature. In this I think it succeeds admirably.

This volume focuses on recent efforts to explore the theological foundations for the church's missionary efforts. The essays and statements are grouped into five general categories. Part I, The Nature of Mission, deals with the biblical, ecclesiastical, and Christological foundations of mission in today's world. This is the longest, and for me the most thought-provoking section of the book. In it are selections from Orlando Costas, Leslie Newbigin and David J. Bosch, among others representing Anabaptist, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic communities.

Repeatedly I found this section not only informative but also personally challenging. For example, in "Christian Mission in the

Americas," although it seemed to be one of the more dated selections in the book, Orlando Costas presents a theology of mission, with a forceful discussion of how it relates to the ecumenical mission ventures of North and Latin American churches. In a superb paper entitled "The Vulnerability of Mission," the late David Bosch tackles the issue of theodicy and the missionary significance of the cross. In "Thy Will Be Done," a reprint of a plenary address given at a 1989 conference sponsored by the World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, Bishop Anastasios Yannoulatos of Androussa explores the missiological meaning of the prayer "thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Viewing it not only in the context of the Lord's Prayer, but also in the context of Jesus' own use of these words as he approached the cross, he sets forth a contemporary understanding of mission, and powerfully exhorts us in our personal discipleship, as well. The style of every paper is not as obviously hortatory as these, but each contains elements that will stimulate serious reflection.

Part II traces the historical development of mission theology in various church traditions. Three articles focus on twentieth-century developments in missiological thinking in the evangelical, Roman Catholic and conciliar streams. Focusing on Lausanne, Vatican II and the WCC Assemblies, the authors give an analysis of the dynamic shifts that have occurred in our understanding of mission, especially in the last thirty years. Prominent in each article are the changes occurring in the understanding of the task of evangelism.

The third section focuses more on missionaries themselves. In "Missionary Myth Making," Anthony Gittins examines the "myths"—the explanations and rationalizations—that shaped the self-image of Roman Catholic missionaries before Vatican II. In a similar vein, Stephen Bevans gives us eight suggested images by which we can understand the role of modern missionaries. The two together contrast the implicit and explicit assumptions that have shaped our understanding of missionaries in the past and may be shaping a new understanding in the present.

Part IV focuses on the discipline of missiology itself. The single essay that makes up this section brings many issues to bear on the struggle to define missiology as an academic discipline. The fifth and final section presents us with two mission statements. The first, "The Whole Gospel from Latin America for All Peoples," is printed from the report of the Third Latin American Congress on Evangelism (1992.) The second is "The Verdun Proclamation," which grew out of the meeting of the Caribbean/African American Dialogue and the Caribbean Council of Churches in 1992.

In any collection as broad as this, there are bound to be authors, publications, organizations and even church conferences and consultations that are unknown to the reader. To help put these selections into context, the editors provide helpful notes that outline the main points presented, give some background on the original venue for the paper, and introduce the author. I found these to be indispensable.

A wide variety of styles are represented in this volume, ranging from easy to read chapters from larger works, the stylized confessional language of church statements and pithy, heavily footnoted essays first published in theological journals. Spelling, punctuation and reference styles differ among the papers, and this reflects a conscious choice of the editors to preserve the stylistic varieties represented in the original sources. The disparity in styles is quite noticeable, but since each paper stands on its own, this presents no problem.

What is more of a problem for me is the absence of any contributions from northeast Asian countries (although Bosch does make

extensive use of Endō and Koyama), or any countries formerly part of the Soviet Communist bloc. In addition, only one contribution was written by a woman. In any collection this brief there will be omissions, but I think a more careful representation in these areas would have made this helpful book even better.

Also, as I read through this book, I was surprised that there are not more obvious areas of disagreement among the positions presented in the selected papers. This may be because, as one of the authors put it, "'evangelicals' are becoming more 'ecumenical' than ever, while 'ecumenicals' are becoming more 'evangelical'." However, the absence of any selections with obvious Pentecostal or feminist agendas, for example, makes me wonder how narrow the scope of selection had to be to prepare a slim volume like this.

These are small problems, though, in what I think is a fine help to those who are interested in missiology. Particularly in an era when theology and missiology are being shaped by widely varied churches from six continents, the task of hearing and learning from church and cultural traditions other than our own is a pressing need. Yet the sheer scope of that task can be daunting. I know of no easier way of making a start than by reading *New Directions.*

Mysticism Buddhist and Christian: Encounters with Jan van Ruusbroec

Paul Mommaers and Jan Van Bragt
New York: Crossroad, 1995.
Bibliographical references and index.
302 pp. Cloth US$29.35.

Reviewed by Christina Tsuchida, Nagoya

The current critical investigation of the leaders of Aum Shinrikyō (Supreme Truth Sect) is offering Japan a teachable moment for making distinctions between true and false religion. A far more subtle distinction between true mysticism and a natural deviation has been made by Jan van Ruusbroec (1293–1381). This becomes clearer in the modern analysis of Paul Mommaers. Taking this clue into an exploration of Japanese Buddhism based on years and years of study and dialogue in Japan (but expressed in English), Jan Van Bragt finds both faithful and deviant models there as well. Non-mystics themselves, the authors appreciate mysticism, which can lead a willing reader into a challenging reading experience.

Ruusbroec is a foundational writer in Christian tradition, affecting St. John of the Cross and *The Imitation of Christ* (attributed to the one who rearranged it, Thomas a Kempis), among many others. The Flemish priest's discriminating division of true mysticism from real but wrongly directed mysticism is at once simple and complicated. Both are discussed in Christian and in Buddhist contexts by Van Bragt. Thus the book can serve to introduce Buddhist tradition and some of its Christian counterparts, to guide mystics or their directors or simply to entertain the sort of person who likes to resonate with mystical experiences.

The anti-mystical persons who can say "amen" to Martin Luther's rejection of mysticism should be dared to read this book through without changing their position (their opinion is noted). Non-mystics can identify with the authors if they are willing to explore a *novum*; mystics do well to follow St. Teresa of Avila in preferring learned persons to merely experienced persons as guides. Not every mystic is as gifted in analysis and expression as Ruusbroec, who was engaged in pastoral work.

The two authors give substantial thinking to issues not only of true and distorted mysticism but also to the dialogue of Christians and Buddhists. The matter of encounter versus identification as the primary mode of relating to Ultimate Reality is broached at the