

then and only then will things began to change. This is not to say that the churches have not made significant contributions in this area, especially in providing educational opportunities for women, but considerably more must be done. The comfort women and their stories serve as a tragic example of what can happen when women are treated as less than fully human and when political ideology, cultural traditions, and economic interests are allowed to obscure the God in whose image we have all been created.

Toward a Theology of Struggle

Eleazar S. Fernandez

Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994.

vi, 193pp.

*Reviewed by Casilda E. Luzares,
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I hesitated to accept the invitation to write a review of this book for two reasons. First, I am not a theologian nor am I a theologically-trained layperson. Secondly, I am suspicious of titles that begin with the word "Toward" or with the word "On" (as in "On Jane Austen," which promises everything but commits itself to nothing). However, curiosity got the better of me and after reading the first few pages I could hardly put the book down—I was committed.

After reading the book, however, I concluded that a more appropriate title would probably have been *Theologizing the Filipino Struggle* since much of the discussion is not really about the Filipino theology of struggle itself. The book also includes the author's critique of dominant (Western) theologies and ideologies, and much of it is devoted to the author's theological construction, taking the context of the suffering and struggling people, not only in the

Philippines but also in other settings where oppressive conditions and structures exist.

I think that the publication of the book is timely. There is a growing dissatisfaction with Western models of thinking, seeing, and being and new indigenous models are being developed. I hope that every seminary in the Philippines will make the book a required reading. Then, hopefully, our pulpits will become more relevant and our churches escape the judgment of the church of Laodicea.

The Jesus that the Western missionaries brought to our shores was a conquering Jesus, a friend of the rich and the powerful. Thus began the exploitation, oppression and cultural alienation of the Filipinos. Fernandez quotes a poem that sums up what he calls the "Filipino malady":

We are a brown race
with white gods
and whitened soul.
We are aliens
in our land
hostage by our past.

The churches have emphasized a kind of spirituality which the Filipino Bishop Labayen describes as "individualistic and vertical, historical, dichotomized and inadequate in terms of understanding human beings"—a spirituality that "legitimizes oppression." (Franklin Jayakumar Balasundaram, "The Theology of Bishop Julio Xavier Labayen, O.C.D." *CTC Bulletin* 11/2-3 (May-December, 1992, p. 55). Thus the development of a "people's theology" becomes necessary not only in reflecting the struggle that is part of the everyday reality of the people, but also in reconciling the people with their own cultural roots and historical past and in inspiring the struggle itself. To this, Fernandez says, "the act of struggle itself as an experience is an experience of God's presence, a foretaste of liberation in the making... a new spiritual experience."

Fernandez calls what he does in this book a theological journey or a theological navigation and it is precisely that. There are times when one is not sure where one is heading, but one thing is sure—the journey is filled with exciting discoveries and is never dull. Fernandez's use of language shows his passion and his enthusiasm.

The most exciting part of the book are the chapters that constitute Fernandez's theological construction, although these are also the parts that are most difficult to read. His vision of the new church, not as an institution, but as a *movement*—"a prophetic-critical movement," engaged in the "exercise of prophetic criticism, prophetic vision and prophetic solidarity"—is surely the kind of church that Jesus had in mind.

From the impressive list of references, one can conclude that a lot of research went into the writing of this book, which is based on the doctoral dissertation of the author. However, I wish a bibliography had been included at the end for the easy and quick reference of the reader. Also, the style used for reference citations is clumsy and inconvenient. For example, on page 16, footnote 39: *Kilusan*, p.11. It took me a lot of time to find the full reference—no wonder because it is "buried" in footnote 15!

**Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction.
Texts and Contexts of Global Christianity.**

Edited by A. Camps, L.A. Hoedemaker,
M.R. Spindler and F.J. Verstraelen
Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B.
Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995. 498pp.

*Reviewed by Aasulv Lande,
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One's first impression of this work is that it is an attractive and solid missiological contribution, rooted in a Dutch scholarly tradi-

tion that lends a distinct identity to its pronounced ecumenical perspective.

The twenty-one contributors, of whom two are women, constitute an ecumenically diverse group of missiologists, most of whom have a Dutch background or at least are closely connected with Dutch missiological milieus. A good third of the writers had, by the time of publication, retired from their previous positions and a few have passed away. The remaining two-thirds of the contributors represent the contemporary scholarly, missiological establishment. The book reflects a wide range of experience in Africa, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Americas and the Middle East. Nevertheless, owing to the fact that four of the writers had their missiological experience in Indonesia, a Dutch perspective is clearly evident.

This work is thus not the product of Third World theologians. Outlining the academic achievements of Western missions since the Second World War, it is a monument to the Western missiology of that period. A question to be considered is the appropriateness of a dominant Western perspective on global Christianity in the twilight of the second millennium.

The reader does not find an "objective" description of missiology in the book: "The movement of Christianity in the world is studied on the basis of a specific interest arising from (a Christian) faith perspective....That tradition views 'all the generations of the earth' as the object of God's redemptive will and plan of salvation. Or, in New Testament language, it regards the message of God's 'kingdom' made known in Jesus Christ, as intended for 'all nations'." (pp. 3ff.) As this quotation shows, this ecumenical missiology is clearly concerned with questions of systematic theology.

Such a dogmatically well-defined starting point might, however, invite a number of questions. The editors are, nevertheless, keen to counter possible charges of aprior-