

of broader methodological issues relating to “historicization” (e.g. Thomas Großbölting, Peter Noss and Norbert Friedrich) and “contextualization” (e.g. Thomas Seidel and Markus Heim) that Gailus has in mind. When it comes to reaching out to “interdisciplinarity,” there is a striking lacuna. Although sociological data are sometimes incorporated, other approaches, like gender analysis, appear only in Rainer Hering’s piece on the church in Hamburg and briefly in Thomas Seidel’s contribution to Thuringia. Given the chronic underrepresentation of women in this field, and given the domination by men in the German (regional) churches, the absence of critical reflections on male discourse, male biographies, masculinity and the disappearance of women is regrettable.

It is fair to say that the framework of *Von der babylonischen Gefangenschaft* points to a new and welcome direction for re-conceptualizing contemporary German church history, but that the individual contributors do not yet fully realize the promise of such a refreshing approach. Still, the volume is a significant contribution to the field.

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***Gerechtigkeit im Dialog der Religionen*, ed. by Elmar Klinger and Francis X. D’Sa in co-operation with Thomas Franz and Jürgen Lohmayer, Würzburg: Echter Verlag 2006, 226 pp, EUR 19,90, ISBN: 3-429-02793-4**

This book, the first in a series entitled *Missionswissenschaft und Dialog der Religionen*, culminates in the “Würzburg Declaration on the Dialogue of Religions”. The conference at which this text was formulated in July 2004 inaugurated a foundation chair of Missiology and Interreligious Dialogue in Würzburg University’s Faculty of Catholic Theology, and the book contains the series of papers, each followed by a reply, on which the Declaration is based. Noting that more and more people are losing out as globalisation spreads, it calls for “a ‘globalisation’ of justice and solidarity”, inspired by a theology whose understanding of mission leads it “to intervene

in politics and economic matters". In the face of poverty and hunger, "the spiritual and religious character of our world and all its peoples has to be re-discovered, revived and furthered", but this cannot happen unless Christians learn to understand the religious values in which so many of the world's poor find meaning. This in turn means discerning the "workings of the Holy Spirit in all ethnic groups, cultures and religions". The concept of "structural sin" invites the Churches to engage with structural injustice, especially at local level, where they represent Church in the fullest sense. This statement suggests a significant re-orientation from an exclusively doctrinal to a praxis-orientated dialogue of religions. Preparing the ground for this, Dietrich Wiederkehr recalls both the strengths and the weaknesses of Karl Rahner's theology, which although it did not differentiate sufficiently between the world's religions was a first step towards overcoming "Christocentric" theology and placing concern for justice alongside the dialogue of truth.

Mercy Amba Oduyoye points out that European Christianities, too, have "ethnic" roots, but these need not be seen as "barriers" to dialogue any more than their African counterparts. In Africa, however, the ethnic is always religious and communal. Claude Ozankom deepens the concept of ethnicity further and relates it to both community and "ecclesiality", and Juvénal Ilunga Muya takes up the question of the "Africanisation" of the Church. He prefers to speak about "inculturation" as a "hermeneutic of traditions", but this can only be credible in the context of colonialism. Asserting that Africa is "a social construction of the Western logic of power", which leaves a legacy of "superiority thinking", Muya sees "anthropological poverty" as a problem which both Africans and Europeans can only solve together. Wolfgang Schonecke's reminder of the genocide in Rwanda as evidence for a "crisis of evangelisation" in Africa emphasises the point further. The papers on Africa, though very different in scope and style, deal with some of the main structural and intercultural problems between Africa and Europe, but they do not give much

indication of how a specifically interreligious dialogue could take place.

The chapters on India focus more on this question, but in an extremely interesting way prompted by Francis D'Sa's stimulating summary and further development of a thesis he has put forward previously: Western human rights thinking is "anthropocentric", formulated in the juridical context of *Jus* in terms that are foreign to the Indian worldview. This derives from *Dharma* and is cosmic in scope, embracing all beings and suggesting that the cosmos, as "God's body", has rights of its own. Inspired by the work of Raimon Panikkar, D'Sa sketches an "ecosophy" to which the dialogue of cultures would be integral. Thomas Franz replies that it is too sweeping to accuse Western thinking of anthropocentrism: the ordered universe and the parallel between micro- and macro-cosmos have always been important, though not sufficiently acknowledged by theology. Rights and duties, the human and nature are not clear-cut alternatives. Rudolf Heredia, arguing that in India pluralism is cultural rather than structural, submits a detailed examination of tolerance, pluralism and even secularity in Indian culture from A?oka to Akbar, seeing in Ambedkar's championing of the Dalits a test case for the inclusion of justice within the scope of interreligious dialogue. Further examples are the status of women and a "cosmotheandric" approach to the environment. Georg Evers asks whether the Western ideal of tolerance is appropriate for Asian cultures, suggesting that the recently elaborated concept of "harmony" corresponds better to the Indian conviction that truth is one (*ekam sat*) rather than a "systemic pluralism" based on rationalism. The caste system infects all aspects of Indian life, from gender to ecology. Evers' reminder that there are Muslim Dalits as well as Christian, and that the primal traditions of tribal peoples could make a contribution to a more "cosmic" concept of rights, is timely.

Paulo Suess expands on this theme in the Latin American context, proposing that it is indigenous local churches that represent the true universality of a "second modernity". Their

critique of what passes for civilisation is relevant to the whole of society. The Churches must show that they are not tied to any particular culture and do not regard evangelisation as the destruction of cultures. Mission would then become “interreligious dialogue with a long-term perspective”. Othmar Noggler tests these theses by examining concepts of God, sacrifice, the role of personalities, polygamy and the right of usufruct, while Alberto da Silva Moreira reaffirms the importance of the base ecclesial communities, even though they have been abandoned and betrayed by the official Church. For Franz Weber, these communities are the antidote to re-clericalisation and are the Church’s best chance of survival. What is missing, however, is an assessment of the significance of rapidly growing Pentecostal groups for the Church’s future.

The turn to Orthodox-Roman Catholic relations is a rather drastic change of key, for we are dealing here with ecclesiastical diplomacy at the highest level as Catholic authorities try to defuse accusations of proselytism. Vladimir Fedorov calls for a better missiological analysis of the task facing Christians in the Russian Federation, which could provide a basis for co-operation rather than parallel competing missions. Ernst Christoph Suttner has no quarrel with this analysis, but gives some excellent examples of what such co-operation could look like.

The paper-and-responses format gives the book a basic coherence, different as the contributions in both English and German are. The level of proofreading in both languages is poor, suggesting tighter standards for future volumes in the series. It is certainly valuable, however, to have the background discussions which led to the formulation of the Würzburg Declaration, whose forthrightness in addressing the problems of justice with which a credible interreligious dialogue must deal provides a mandate for the new Chair.

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