

## Book Review

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***Rural Christian Community in North West India***, by Vidya Sagar J. Dogar, Delhi :

ISPCK, 2001 for The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society. pp. xvi + 335.

This book is part of the initiative of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society to investigate the ingredients of dalit ideology and theology. Though data on cast background was not specifically collected it is assumed in the study that the vast majority of Christian in the rural areas of North West India are at the same time dalits.

The study covers the whole of the states of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir. Conducted in a statistically sophisticated way, the study (carried out in 1993) involves the use of samples from 80 villages spread over 15 districts of the above 4 states. Its results, therefore, carry an exceptionally high degree of credibility and are statistically accurate.

The study has a very wide canvas and attempts to bring out the true picture of the condition of rural Christians in North West India, firstly, as regards their economic status, education attainments, social status and self-image. The political understanding of the situation in which they find themselves, as well as their opinions about how they can redress their grievances are also studied. The study also attempts to evaluate the impact of Church programmes, its institutions, the Pastoral Care ministry being provided to rural Christians as well as that of the ministry of the Word.

According to the study, the economic conditions and educational attainments of rural Christians in Northwest India are very poor and a source of deep concern. A little over 80 per cent of them could be said to be living in poverty. This weak economic position has its impact in the educational field since as far as educational achievement is concerned only 10 per cent of them can be considered as educated by the definition used by the author. Further, some 54 per cent of them are illiterate. Also, the social status of the rural Christians is very low since they are economically poor and looked down upon by the other communities. In spite of this poverty and educational backwardness, it is, however, somewhat surprising but at the same time encouraging that the rural Christians do not have a correspondingly low self image. As the author points out, this indicates that the Christian community in the area is coming out of its former low self-understanding, the finding of the study is that the rural Christians are now much more political aware than they were even a decade before this study was done. Some 95 per cent of the Christians are in favour of the political organisation of the Christians and the same number are in favour of positive discriminatory benefits for dalit Christians.

As regards the religious practices and beliefs of the rural Christians, the finding of the study is that while they do have knowledge and understanding of basic Christian beliefs it remains a rather otherworldly understanding (especially of sin and salvation) and that does not see the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ as liberative. In the absence of such an understanding, there is a tendency to find comfort and strength in superstitious and magical practices as well as a vulnerability to oppression and exploitation. It is also the finding of the study that the Church, especially the mainline Churches, have not been the positive influence that they could have been. The pastoral ministry, according to the author has not had a purposive focus and has often been a waste of energy and resources. It is also noted that the dalitness of the rural Christians does not seem to have been contradicted by any strong theological expression or pastoral efforts. The Church also seems to have exhibited an urban bias which has led to neglect of the church in the rural areas.

It is clear that if the Church is interested in its own health it must exhibit a bias towards the rural Christians and attempt to redress the weakness that are found in rural pastoral ministry. At the same time the study also points out the perhaps, rather unrealistic expectations that people have of the Church as regard provision of facilities for education and employment. The provision of these opportunities are the responsibility of the government and it is better that rural Christians demand their due rather than depend upon the Church.

Vidya Sagar Dogar and CISRS have really filled the gap that previously existed by providing us with such a comprehensive and reliable study. The book should be required reading for all Church leaders of the North West region as it clearly describes, with solid figures, the state of the rural Christian community in this area. It clearly diagnoses the problem which it is the duty of the Church leaders to begin to address quickly. It will also give them enough insights into the way in which dalit theology and dalit ideology should be worked out.

It is further an important book because it provides us a very clear snap-shot of the rural Christian community in North-west India in 1993. Researchers can in future years conduct a similar study again and thereby generate interesting data about the process of change among these people.

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## Book Review

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***The Origin and Nature of Religion. Tracing the Common Origin and Nature of Religion behind the Multiplicity of the Beliefs and Practices*** by Augustine Permulil, Delhi : ISPCK, 2001, pp. xii + 316.

The suggestion of this book is to depart from the traditional emphasis on the externals on religion, namely, beliefs, institutions and practices, and instead look into the human nature and human experiences which would reveal that religion emerges from and feeds on the experience of awe in the presence of something experienced as extraordinary, eliciting an attitude of surrender and worship. Religion is a way of responding to a longing in the human spirit for a richer, fuller life, for liberation, by mitigating the negativities of life such as fear, anxiety, and guilt on the one side, and on the other, by promoting and strengthening positive experiences. Thus all religions can be seen as emerging from similar goals, though conceived differently due to the differences in historical, cultural, linguistic and conceptual categories. The exhortation is that we emphasise the essential and not the externals, the experience and not the interpretation, the purpose and not the method, the striving and not the doctrine, and the liberation and not the institutions. Use of the inclusive language which has not been done in the book would have been desirable.

Each of the proposed classifications of religion such as genuine and false, primitive and advanced, Natural and ethical/spiritual, Natural and Supernatural has its drawbacks. The author confines himself to Natural religion studied in terms of experience. An attempt is made to explain the classical theories of religion. There has been negative assessments of religion as priestcraft, statecraft, as human response to insecurity and fear. Some attributed psychic factors to the origin of religion. Thus imagination, religious instinct, religious faculty and religious sentiment, reason, immediate self-consciousness and the numinous mind were posited as the possible sources of religion. Instead of the question 'what caused religion', others asked what religion is and came to the answer such as it is psychological disorder and illusion, it is knowledge and morality as well as it is belief in God. The observation that in humans there is a religious sense on account of which religion has deep roots in the human psyche, along with the fact that religion undergoes change and development, following definite laws and the intellectual growth of people, suggests, according to the author, a natural origin and growth of religion. These suggest that given human's nature *i.e.* psychic make up, experiences, needs and aspirations, and the environment in which one finds oneself, religion will be a natural outcome. Therefore he is inclined to consider religion as a normal product of human nature interacting with the life-world. He seeks to describe the nature of religion in terms of human experiences, desires, fears, anxieties, capacities, tendencies and needs, especially the need for love, security, integration, self-transcendence and communion with

the ultimate reality.

Therefore there is an attempt made in the book to study the nature of human person, the nature of human consciousness which produces religion. It is shown that human beings characterized by finiteness and freedom and gripped by various concerns have a compelling need to reach out to Being-Itself. This compulsion is not merely psychic but rather existential. Humans are compelled to create symbols in order to organise life and give meaning and orientation to it. In the human need to reach out to Being-Itself with the help of symbols, we may recognise the first impulse that develops into various religious expressions. The author also takes up certain distinguishable components in human nature in so far as they bear on the eidetic structure of homo-religious such as the human vulnerabilities and the search for answers; estrangement and the search for New Being; freedom, ambiguity and the search for certainty; the experience of separation and the search for communion; alienation and the need for reconciliation; powerlessness and despair and the need for help; self-actualization and the need for values and meaning; emptiness and the need for well-being; fear and the need for assurance, thinking and expressing in symbols. Here are the human needs, aspirations and experiences that contribute to the emergence, growth and perseverance of religion.

More than these, it is the contention of the author, that religions would not have become a reality if humans were not endowed with what we may call a religious sense, that is, certain mental tendencies and dispositions that make the religious outlook and attitude possible. The existential position of human person is that of an experiencing subject whose experiences tend to get constituted in two different layers namely, the positivist and the religious, the secular and the sacred. Human consciousness has two dispositions causing existence of two ways of perceiving reality and of assuming two types of attitudes toward it. These perceptions and attitudes find expression in pairs such as sacred/profane, religious/secular, thou/It, control/submission and detachment/participation. Thus we get the two layers of the life-world: the sacred world of religion created by imagination, myths and stories, on the one hand and the profane world of day-to-day living on the other.

Further, the author shows that the numinous experience has its object, the sacred. Human person enters into a relation with the highest power, the noblest ideal known. The divine is experienced as an Absolute Being, powerful and holy. Humans have an immediate awareness of the sacred embedded in their consciousness and an intense desire to relate to it. Religion is human's way of being-in-the-world, living in the presence of the sacred and the holy, seeking personal integration and self-transcendence, so as to participate in the beatific life of that which is experienced as the Holy. Religion is human quest for self-transcendence, for overcoming one's finitude, oriented to the fullness of being, bringing about transformation and newness in life. Symbols are means by which abstract ideals are made concrete, so as to help human person in the process of self-transcendence. Knowing, purity of heart and loving have the potentiality to mediate transcendence. Religion is an attempt toward the sacred. Internally religion is constituted of two experiences namely the numinous experience and the experience of the inner drive for transcendence. A useful book which can promote harmony of religions.

**Reviewed by K.P. Aleaz**  
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## Book Review

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*A Christian Response to the Hindu Philosophical Systems* by Nehemiah Nilkantha Sastri Goreh, Compiled and Introduced by K.P. Aleaz, Kolkata : Punthi Pustak, 2003, pp. xvi + 344

As a pioneer Indian Christian apology written as early as 1862, this work previously titled differently such as *Hindu Philosophical Systems : A Rational Refutation* (1862), *A Rational Refutation of the Hindu Philosophical System* (1911), is rated as scholarly as Krishna Mohun Banerjea's *Dialogues on the Hindu Philosophy* of 1861. (This now forms the first part of the book *From Exclusivism to Inclusivism : The Theological Writings of Krishna Mohun Banerjea (1813-1885)*, Delhi : ISPCK, 1999, compiled and introduced by K.P. Aleaz.) In fact the Hindi original of Goreh's work *Shaddarshana Darpana or Hindu Philosophy Examined by a Banares Pundit* was already published in 1860. The preface to the English translation, written on Christmas 1861 says that the book is meant for fellow-evangelizers as well as for Hindu students of English who may wish to acquaint themselves with the abstruse matters of their ancient religion. The book has three sections. In the first section the focus is on Sāṅkhya System (and implicitly Yoga as well), though it also briefly deals with the Mīmāṃsā system as well as the teachings common to all the systems and those peculiar to each. The second section examines the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika systems, while the third and final section which is the longest, is exclusively on Vedānta. Apart from these, the present edition has a preface and a 46 pages Introduction by K.P. Aleaz. The Preface provides information about the life of Goreh and situates him in the context of other Indian Christian philosophers. The Introduction is a detailed summary of the work. For an evaluation of the pioneer works of Goreh and Banerjea we may look into the article of K.P. Aleaz "Two Pioneer Christian Responses to Hindu Philosophical Systems : A Comparison and Evaluation" in *Bangalore Theological Forum*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, December 2002, pp. 116-38.

We should note that Nehemiah Goreh and Krishna Mohun Banerjea were the pioneer Indian Christian Philosophers who responded to the Hindu philosophical systems as early as 1860s. Of course their approach to the philosophical systems was negative and is not acceptable to Indian Christians any more. After them came a number of outstanding thinkers such as Brahmbandhav Upadhyaya, Raimundo Panikkar, K. Subba Rao, J.G. Arapura and K.P. Aleaz who followed a positive approach to Hindu Philosophy. R.V. De Smet, Abhishiktanda, A.J. Appasamy, Sara Grant, S.J. Samartha, Anand Amaladass, Vandana, Francis D'sa, John Vattanky and Ignatius Puthiadam are some of the other Indian Christian scholars who have responded more or less positively to Hindu philosophical systems. But when we compare all these later people to the two pioneers, one thing which stands out in the case of the pioneers is, they have provided a Christian response to all the six systems of Hindu philosophy,

where as the later people were focusing on one or other school of Indian philosophy only. For the later Indian Christian scholars to follow Inclusivism or Pluralism or Pluralistic Inclusivism in theology of religions, somebody had to start at the school of Exclusivism and the two pioneers undertook this task and that is the merit of their contribution.

But unfortunately the Indian Christian community has not yet taken seriously the contributions of these two their own pioneer philosophers. It should be noted that in the last one hundred and forty years nobody undertook a detailed study of the responses of Goreh and Banerjea to Indian philosophical schools. Krishna Mohun Banerjea's work is only recently republished after a gap of more than hundred years. Nehemiah Goreh's work under review was out of print for the last ninety years and when the compiler and introducer K.P. Aleaz approached the ISPCCK who republished Krishna Mohun's work, they refused to undertake its publication, stating that there will not be any market for the work as their motive is profit-making. That is shocking specially when we recall the fact that the second (1897) and third editions (1911) of Goreh's work were printed at SPCK Press, Vepery, Madras and published by the Christian Literature Society for India. An extra-Christian Mr. P.K. Bhattacharya of Punthi Pustak had to come forward to publish this pioneer-Christian apologetics and therefore the Indian Christian community is greatly indebted to him indeed. It should be further noted that Christian theological students are not given ample opportunity to study these pioneer responses to Indian philosophy, rather emphasis is given to study Krishna Mohun Banerjea's interpretation of Christ as the True Prajapita and Nehemiah Goreh's apologetics against Brahmoism. Even in the consultation of recent times, where Christian contribution to Indian philosophy was the subject of discussion and the papers of which are now published (cf. Anand Amaladass (ed.), *Christian Contribution to Indian Philosophy*, Madras : CLS, 1995.), surprisingly Goreh and Banerjea were completely forgotten. The Christian philosophers who met there were blissfully ignorant of the contributions of these two pioneers.

When we consider the gist of Nehemiah Goreh's response to the six systems of Hindu philosophy as discussed in the book under review we see that according to Goreh the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika which are closely connected, are the most reasonable of all, if we study together their sūtras and the later interpretations because they acknowledge God. Great is the error of Sāṅkhya in denying the existence of God. In Goreh's view their perspective which denies cognition, will, activity, happiness, and misery as qualities of the soul and holds them to be affections of the internal organ which is an evolute of prakṛti, is unreasonable. In dealing with Sāṅkhya, Goreh was implicitly dealing with the Yoga system as well. Goreh thought that greatly do the Mīmāṃsā err, in not acknowledging God and at the same time believing in virtue and vice. Throughout Goreh's work, it is taken as a postulate that with the Vedāntins, Brahman excepted, all is nihility. Advaita wishes to make out the soul to be Brahman, and the world to be false, whence it would follow that Brahman solely is true. He was interpreting Advaita in terms of Post-Śaṅkarite writings.

When we analyse the life of this pioneer Christian apologist we note that Nehemiah Nilkantha Sastri Goreh (1825-1895), a Maharashtrian Brahmin, a scholar in Sanskrit and Hindu thought, was born in Jhansi, brought up in Banares, and came to accept Christian faith through his contact with a CMS Missionary William Smith. He worked as lay missionary to educate Hindus first in Poona and then in Banares and Cawnpore. It was in this period he

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wrote a *Christian Critique of the Hindu philosophical systems*, in Hindi in 1860 and later the English translation, which is the work under review, came out in 1862. In 1870 he was ordained a priest of the Church of England, prior to which he spent some time in Bishop's College, Calcutta both studying and teachings. He also brought out a number of booklets controverting the Brahma claims, while continuing his work among educated Hindus in many parts of India with the Society of St. John the Evangelist in Poona as his base.

K.P. Aleaz's effort to bring to light this pioneer work of Nehemiah Goreh is well appreciated. First he brought to light Krishna Mohun Banerjea's work. And now Nehemiah Goreh's. This work is going to inspire and help all the students of Indian philosophy as well as Christian theology.

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## Book Review

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**Religions in Christian Theology** by K.P. Aleaz, Kolkata : Punthi Pustak, 2001, pp. 363.

The role of other religions in Asian/Indian Christian Theology is an issue that concerns not only theologians but all Christians enormously today. Here is presented a collection of papers with the contention that Christians will have to evolve a more comprehensive role for other regions in Christian Theology than what has been envisaged in the past. To reduce the role of religions to liberalational praxis is a reductionism. To reduce the interpretation of religions solely in terms of Folk tales again would be reductionism. Of course our focus should be the people, as has been emphasized by some of the Asian theologians; but people centered on a comprehensive religious life. According to the author how the comprehensive religious life of the people of other faiths is related to the gospel of God in Jesus is the basic question to be answered in the third millennium. The book makes a preliminary attempt to raise this question, if not provide an answer, in terms of supplying some highlights on religions in Part I as well as discussing a possible relation between religions and Christian theology in Part II. The view expressed is that all the religious resources of the world are the common property of the whole humanity; a relational convergence of religious experiences is possible; and richness of religious experiences can grow by mutual giving and receiving.

The first part of the book has six chapters. The first chapter is on Advaita relation. As per Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta the Ātman as Pure Consciousness and Witness pervades, illumines and unifies the whole world, the whole of history and the entire human personality, giving significance to world and history as well as meaning and purpose to human life on earth. The second chapter discusses the theology of religions of the Hindu reformer Sri Narayana Guru (1854-1928). The Guru's 'One Religion' was centred on the Non-dual Supreme Reality, Brahman-Ātman and he upheld pluralism in theology of religions. The third chapter indicates a few aspects of the religious renaissance in the 19th c. India. The focus is one the Brahmo Samaj and the Prathana Samaj which were open to other religious experiences as well as social reform. Chapter four gives some highlights on select dynamic features of Religion. Syādvāda of Jainism is presented as an ancient Indian theory of Pluralism for harmony. Bhakti or total love and devotion to God is another important feature of religion studied. Manilal C. Parekh (1885-1967), the Liṅgāyats, Cārvāka philosophy and E.V. Ramaswami Naickar are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter V takes up some religious concepts for interpretation such as Śakti, Ātman, Image and it also discusses the human predicament. Methodological issues in the study of religions is the focuses of the sixth chapter. Historical, Phenomenological and Comparative approaches to the study of religion are taken up for analysis. Also discussed is an Indian perspective in the study of religions including Primal Religions.

The Second part of the book begins with a study on the role of Asian Religions in Asian Christian theology. It is the author's view that the outcome of the study of religions in terms of an integral approach may have to be integrated in Christian Theology in terms of a perspective in theology of religions called Pluralistic Inclusivism in order to arrive at a more comprehensive role for other religions in Christian theology. Chapter VIII examines some Indian reflections on Gospel and culture. The Gospel is always available along with a particular cultural embodiment alone. The chapter demonstrates that the gospel of God in Jesus emerging from the Indian religious culture or rather the Indian heremencultural context in reality goes beyond the scope of the previous Christian theological endeavours such as indigenisation or inculturation. The contributions of Advaita Vedānta to the Indian Christian theology are examined in the IXth chapter. Theologians who are positive in their approach to Advaita are studied under the reception model of Pluralistic Inclusivism. Another group is put under the Reinterpretation Model of Inclusivism. Yet another group is studied under the Rejection Model of Exclusivism. Some Indian theological and missiological insights are provided in chapter X. It supplies some highlights on Indian Christian theological developments in the 20th c. Indigenisation which has a theological basis in the doctrines of creation and incarnation, is also studied. The last two sections of the chapter are on an Indian perspective on Mission and Missiology. There is a growth envisaged from Christian mission to the one mission of the One God. Chapter XI is an evaluation of the gospel as interpreted by Lesslie Newbigin. The gospel of God in Jesus, can evolve into something which is not the gospel through the hands of a conservative missionary theologian and the thought of Newbigin is a typical example of such an evolution. Globalisation and the gospel is the topic of discussion of the final chapter. It has been pointed out that if globalisation along with economic growth achieves Globalisation of poverty, the globalised gospel is a poverty-stricken gospel as it perverts the gospel of God in Jesus for the whole humanity into a sectarian expression of it. The book is a welcome addition to creative Christian theology in terms of extra-Christian religious resources.

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## Book Review

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***Women's Walk*, by Winifred Irene Paul, Delhi: ISPCK, 1999. pp. 72.**

The author of this book has served God as a teacher, Head Mistress and Principal in various schools and institutions. The book is dedicated to her parents and hundreds of God's servants who were a blessing to her. Through her writings she continues to contribute her services to the growth of the church even as an old widow.

This book is about women walking with God since the beginning. Women came into existence because of God's will. The author convincingly establishes from the Bible that woman is God-created as is man. She possesses God's life as man does. Her first step in life was with God. Eve did the wedding march with God, how privileged, how unique and how wonderful is wedding as God's choice. Young woman has to be brought to the man by God. It is not furniture or dowry that beautifies a home but it is good qualities of the woman that decorates a home and her husband's lack and deficiencies are covered up and made-up.

The author points out why separation between a man and his wife is unhealthy. Satan takes advantage of the absence of the other partner. Eve was tempted by Satan saying "you shall not die." The word "not" was sufficient for the downfall of humankind. By saying "you shall not die" and "you will be like God", Satan arose Eve's thinking, her promotion to be like God, without any delay. She did this independently and she forgot God and her partner Adam with whom she should have consulted. The author says one should tackle Satan with the word of God. Eve began with the word of God but then it was distorted. She was tempted in a threefold manner, lust of flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life. Here at this point the author differs from the modern interpreters of the garden narrative who take this story as a saga of human rise in civilization and associated basic human problems for the establishment of humanity.

The author shows women as helper, showing that God created woman to be a helpmate for man (Gen. 2:18). The author points out that man needs the help of woman, so God ordains marriage. Indeed, God created them because they need one another. Some people wrongly thought that marriage is a hindrance to spirituality. Marriage is based on that which is holy and sacred. It is not a game to be played but a life to live.

Woman's right: the author points out that woman has equal right with God as has man. She goes on to say that the ministry belongs to her too, only the office differs. At this point the author should have taken more seriously Genesis 1: 26 where we see that both man and woman were given same responsibility. Perhaps woman can serve God equally well by holding the same office as man. Taking example from Numbers 27: 1-8 the author says that the daughters of Zelophehad fought for the inheritance to be possessed by them to preserve

their father's name as there were no sons. Moses brought their cause before the Lord. The Lord said that the daughters spoke right. These ladies fought for their rights and helped themselves. This is an apt example, the author has brought for our contemporary search for women's rights. Likewise, today women should stand up to raise their voices for their rights.

The woman's role as mother: According to the author, the very word 'Mother' is very comforting to the human race. Pregnancy is an important time for the mother. She has to maintain her physical, mental, emotional and spiritual balance. The world's destinies are within the womb of the mother because the devoted mothers leave the Christian marks upon their sons and daughters. Maternal influence goes a long way to sustain the spirituality of our off-spring and Timothy's life is given as an example where we see that, all that he knew, was what was taught by his mother. (2. Tim. 1:5)

Besides being wives and mothers, women were elevated to high positions. Athaliah was one among them. While God favours one with leadership and honor, they should be conscious to do justice. But Athaliah displeased the Lord and reaped its consequences. On the other hand, Esther as queen risked her life to save her nation. The author therefore says that people who are in high positions have special gifts, wealth or any other special blessings, which should be utilized for God's kingdom.

The author has pointed out that God has always cared for women in distress. The example on hand is Hagar, who had to go through a bitter situation in life. However, God was with her and her son. How comforting it is that God knows everyone by name and cares in our distress. The author says women have been faithful to God as men would. Hannah was one among the many notable women in the Bible who kept her promise. Generally, once people enjoy relief and tears have ceased they forget their vows, but not for Hannah. She was eagerly waiting the time, when she could offer her child to God. But the author acknowledges that there are women with beauty and knowledge who many a times do not use them in a proper way. The author points out Abigail who used her pleasant personality and wisdom to please David and save the situation for her husband. (1 Sam. 25: 3, 18, 19)

According to the author the greatest moment in life is the moment when one has the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is personal encounter with Christ. The Samaritan woman had that moment at the Jacob's well. When the woman confessed her sin, Christ was revealed to her and that Revelation led to responsibility. In haste, she started testifying her faith in Christ. She began with an invitation 'come'. She invited people to personal experience.

The author shows that a woman possesses greater quality in giving witness to God's power in the Bible. Even as a widow, a woman whose life is with God, can blossom. Anna the prophetess is given as an example that made the best use of her widowhood. (Luke 2: 36) A woman is created with special ability to help. Women are wives, mothers, they are the climax of creation. Women are God created and God breathed. Yet, she seems to be inconsistent to keep up the great idea of their equality with men, for she portrays man as superior to woman, saying that Adam was created first and God granted him dominion over the earth. (p.8) It is a misreading of Genesis 1:26 where we see that God created both male and female in God's image and granted them equal responsibility to take care of the creation. She is again inconsistent in establishing women's equality with men for while acknowledging women as the climax of creation, she succumbs to Paul's derogative comparison of woman to a 'weaker vessel' (p.29) The author's interpretations of Genesis 1-3 are based on traditional dogmatic

theology and not on biblical evidence, for example she says, Eve was tempted by Satan whereas biblical evidence is that Eve was challenged of her knowledge about the tree of knowledge of good and evil by a serpent, a creature created by God (Gen. 3:1)

Nevertheless, this book is a source of knowledge and encouragement to women who have lost their sense of human dignity and importance in human community due to the oppressions and restrictions perpetuated on them for centuries. This book makes a significant contribution towards building up woman's importance, indispensability and dignity in God's creation and in particular in human society.

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## Book Review

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*Value Orientation and Modern Society* by Dr. Prabhakar Bhattacharyya, Serampore : Mrs. Swagata Bhattacharyya, 2002, pp. viii + 119.

Dr. Prabhakar Bhattacharyya has brought out yet another book this time on value orientation and modern society. Along with his teaching philosophy in Serampore College, he is very much involved in the Post-Graduate and Doctoral programmes of the North India Institute of Post-Graduate Theological Studies. He has specialised in Social Psychology and Comparative Religion. His field of interest includes Practical Ethics, Values Education and Cultural Anthropology. Some of the earlier English publications of Dr. Bhattacharyya are *A Socio-philosophical Approach to the Problem of Fanaticism* (1993), *A Critical Survey into Hare's Views on Fanaticism* (1993), *Modernity and Indian Heritage* (1994), *Methods of Value Orientation : Traditional and Proposed* (1995), *On the Bane of Fanaticism* (1998) and *the Problem of Fanaticism in Value Education* (2000). He is the author of some seven books in Bengali as well.

The book under review has four chapters. First chapter (pp. 17-42) discusses the meaning of 'value' as distinguished from 'norm' as well as the meaning of modern society. According to the author the modern society is rationalistic and the dominant values of it are power, wealth and respect. The second chapter (pp. 43-66) is on value orientation and social change. Value orientation relates value change with social change. It directs the interest of people to the values which are continuously changing and can thereby contribute substantially in regulating social change. There are many methods of value orientation. The method of value orientation varies with the attitude and intellectual ability of the person towards who value orientation is directed. Chapter III (pp. 67-9) deals with value orientation in detail. The author's proposed method of value orientation seeks to (1) make the individual aware of his/her own self and the environment around; (2) help him/her to reach conviction and (3) develop strength of will to surmount obstacles in course of implementation. Philosophical studies on value orientation are rare and therefore the IVth chapter (pp. 92-115) attempts to analyse the philosophical problems relating to value orientation. There can be conflict between values of two antagonistic societies, but orientation of humanitarian values can minimize these conflicts. Awareness of values, which is the first criterion of author's proposed method of value orientation, enables one to realise the relative importance of all values, be it humanitarian or sectarian. The second criterion, the logical understanding of values, leads one to the relative merit of humanitarian values. Strength of will, which is the third criterion, helps to translate the conviction into action.

The book is going to enlighten all the students of Social Psychology and Dr. Prabhakar Bhattacharyya deserves our congratulations.

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