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Book Review: "Pilgrims of Dialogue"

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and also the consensus of believers. Even here it is not the content but a common horizon that determines the identity of this or any tradition.

So when one talks of a theological method, one has to take into account how the Hindu thinkers went about with their task of theologizing. It is true the six *pramāṇas* are used by the Vedantins. But they give their priority to perception, revelation and inference over the rest. The Vedantins also differ among themselves in the way they use the tradition they come from, and in the sources that are quoted by them. So when a Christian believer theologizes, he will also be discrete in the use of his own inherited tradition while being open to the models available in the Indian traditions. So there is no point in saying that "one cannot add more *pramāṇas*." "Tradition cannot be presented as one of the *pramāṇas*" (p. 119), "*śabhā* cannot be a *pramāṇa*" and so on. They are certainly factors that should find a place in any theological method whether one calls it a *pramāṇa* or not. And one need not, for example, press into service a *pramāṇa* like *anupalabdhi* (non-cognition) explicitly by its name in order to say that "the caste system in India and the consequent socio-economic injustice done to the dalits are the expressions of the non-existence of goodness and this we

know through the valid source of knowledge non-cognition." (p. 128)

The author draws our attention to make use of the various insights gained through the development of language studies in the Indian tradition. It is true that Indian tradition developed its language philosophy as an exegetical tool to understand the Scriptures. The function of the primary meaning (*abhidhā*) and secondary meaning (*lakṣaṇā*) and so on. Attempts have been made already to bring in *dhvani* theory to interpret the Scriptures in the Indian context, though it has not been further developed. (Cf. *Biblebhāshyam: An Indian Biblical Quarterly*. Kottayam. December 1979).

In fact Dr. Somen Das in his foreword to this book very perceptively points out some of the areas to which the author of this book should pay (or should have paid) attention. Otherwise publications on inter-religious or inter-cultural studies are bound to remain at the initial stage without further probing into the crucial issues that one would expect from the committed thinkers.

Anand Amaladass
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Pilgrims of Dialogue. A. Pushparajan (ed). Munnar: Sangam Dialogue Centre, 1991, 243p, Rs. 80.

FORTY SCHOLARS INVOLVED in interfaith dialogue have contributed to a Festschrift honouring Fr. Albert Nambiaparambil, CMI, Secretary of the CBCI Commission for Dialogue on the occasion of his completing 60 years of age. In Indian Shasthiaptha Poorthi is an auspicious event, worthy of public celebration. Since Fr. Albert has been engaged in promoting dialogue ministry in India, Dr. A. Pushparajan (Reader in Gandhian Studies, Madurai-Kamaraj Univer-

sity and Secretary of Madurai Diocesan Commission for Dialogue) thought it fit to bring out a book on Dialogue experiences.

There are five sections: Pioneers and On Pioneers, Organizational Dialogue, Ashram Experience, Personal Testimonies and Theoretical Reflections. It is not a strict division since practically all write from a context of personal experience, particularly having had some inspiration from Fr. Albert. The list of contributors gives a fair sample of persons,

religions, background, methods that are different and multifarious. It is a tribute to Fr. Albert's great involvement and at the same time a pointer of hope for the future of Dialogue. It is also a mini 'Who is who?' of the 'Dialogue' world.

Many have used the metaphor of pilgrimage for this attempt at communion and dialogue. A Pilgrim is a free person, the only controlling factor being the holy place or holy water constantly beckoning the pilgrim. It is not a triumphal march but a humble walking, sometimes alone and sometimes in company, accepting on the way what people share with them in their generosity and love. Many pilgrims find themselves having received a vocation within a vocation. While the Catholic Church with its organizational expertise has commissions for inter-religious dialogue there is no institutional back up for groups of other religions where individuals, because of their personal conviction and interest enter into dialogue. Dr. S.R. Jayavelu while critical of institutional or 'guided' dialogue acknowledges the difficulties in inviting the poor, the needy, the downtrodden, the orthodox and even the fundamentalist (195), in an open-ended dialogue.

Mr. C.N. Singaravelu understands dialogue as a meeting and exchange not only of knowledge but also of personal experiences of their own religions (150). Fr. John Peter is convinced 'The bonds that unite us are stronger than the barriers that separate us'

(68). Vandana Mathaji delights in dialoguing with Hindus and never with Hinduism (87). Fr. Bed Griffiths bemoans the lack of openness of the partners of dialogue ('what is there for us to learn?') and so the lack of depth (84). Fr. Gispert contends that 'dialogue is not an escape from the social concern but the means of promoting a just world in the only way it can be promoted in India, by the participation of people of many faiths.' He insists that dialogue is a real need even for the social activist (119). Fr. X. Irudayaraj demands to go beyond the integration of faith and justice to an integration of spirituality Buddhist, Confucian, Islamic, Gandhian, etc. (28).

Dialogue calls for breaking down walls that separate human persons from human persons; it challenges to break down any form of unjust discriminations. There is a poignant story of the conversion of Japanese Buddhists towards their untouchables while there is an insensitivity on the part of Indians to a similar problem (75-77).

While some elaborated practical ways of relating with one another, others have reflected at length on the theme of Dialogue. The fifth part 'Theoretical Reflection' deals with various theological and theoretical underpinnings of the pilgrimage of dialogue.

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Hindus and Christians: A Century of Protestant Ecumenical Thought. Wesley Ariarajah. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991, x + 244p. n.p.

THIS IS ONLY incidentally a book about Hindus and Christians. Its true title is the subtitle: it is a critical history of the approach of Protestant Christians to other religions from the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh up to the present. The author fo-

cuses on statements prepared at various World Conferences on Missions such as Jerusalem (1928), Tambaram, India (1938), Mexico City (1963) and Melbourne (1980). He also takes full account of World Council of Churches materials developed at meetings