

tion is probably more widely divided from the Reformed than in any other in the whole field of Christian doctrine and devotion.

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Oosterwal, Gottfried. *Modern Messianic Movements As a Theological and Missionary Challenge*. Elkhart, Ind.: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1973. 55 pp. Paperback, \$1.00.

The Institute of Mennonite studies has begun publication of a series of missionary studies of which this book by Oosterwal is the second. The author, who by academic training and field study of "cargo cults" in South-east Asia is well equipped for the task to which he has set himself, adds another work to the increasing number of books and articles on religious cultic movements that have appeared since Bishop Sundkler's classic *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (1948). The sympathetic attitude that Oosterwal takes toward the "messianic movements" says something about the distance covered by missiology since Sundkler's caution: "The syncretistic sect becomes the bridge over which Africans are brought back to heathendom" (one suspects that Sundkler himself would have reflected differently today). The attitude now is less cautious, more open, and, the reviewer thinks, probably more honest toward these movements, displaying a greater willingness to listen to what they are trying to say to the Christian churches.

The essay before us is divided into four parts, the first of which asks a great number of far-reaching questions about the eschatological motif in these movements, the ground of their "revelation" and the role of their "prophets," the extent to which so-called "parallels" to Christianity are in fact parallels and not distortions of or reactions against the Christian hope.

From where do they get their vitality, and what can Christianity learn from them? The questions are such that one could not possibly expect the next 35 pages to answer them. Nor do they entirely do so. But then, that is not necessary in order to legitimize the raising of the questions. The dynamics of the "messianic movements" are so intense, and the change from one such movement to another so considerable, that it would be difficult to find answers with any degree of universality. It is the *questions* that must be kept sharply in focus, and Oosterwal does keep them so in an admirable way in this study.

Oosterwal finds the eschatology (what he calls the "creative center") of these movements particularly intriguing. Both their widely held belief that the end will come suddenly and that it will come in our days, and, therefore, that evil habits of life that defile the body (smoking, drinking, and eating of some foods, e.g., pork) are to be abandoned, must have had a familiar ring to the author's ear. In being served this cross-section of a "common" eschatology, the reader cannot but ask questions about commonness in revelation and norms for verifying that commonness. While the author is not forthright on this point, he manages, nevertheless, to leave his reader under the impression that there is a distinct continuity in revelation between the

movements that he has in mind and Christianity. His questions about the causes for the break-away of these para- or post-Christian movements are important: "Why did these leaders reject the church?... Did these people perhaps hear or see something in a dream or a vision for which there was no room in the church? And, does not the Bible itself mention even false prophets who were inspired by God to reveal truth, ... to guide and direct His people?" (p. 35).

One could have wished that the author had suggested how *he* verifies any continuity in *revelation* between Christianity and "messianic movements." (That there are similarities and continuity in needs and functions and in the various ways in which cultures meet them, is not being questioned.) In appealing to Jesus Christ as the only norm, Oosterwal is on safe ground. However, the reader may feel that his application of that norm is vague and is in danger of disappearing into the existential "mist." He says that "to be a valid criterion, that norm must be a lived Truth," and "it is not doctrines or some Christian truth that are a valid criterion, but 'the Truth'" (p. 31). Is there any tension between truth and "the Truth"? (Notwithstanding the fact that the sum of a certain number of doctrines will never equal *truth*, the norm must nevertheless be such that the *mind* can come to grips with it.)

One final point: Oosterwal's study, which has been well received by a number of scholars in Europe, may be using the term "messianic" in a wider sense than these scholars commonly do. Hence he finds himself in disagreement with one scholar (Beyerhaus), but the reviewer suspects that semantics is partly to blame.

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Pawley, Bernard, and Pawley, Margaret. *Rome and Canterbury through Four Centuries*. New York: Seabury, 1975. xii + 419 pp. \$13.50.

The Malines Conversations in the 1920s and Vatican II's *Decree on Ecumenism* were not the first efforts at Anglican-Roman Catholic rapprochement since the Reformation. In fact, no generation has passed since that period without contacts between the two Churches, sometimes political, sometimes ecclesiastical, and all interesting.

Those who have followed the intricate maneuvers attendant upon this rapprochement during the last twenty years are familiar with the authors of this fascinating study. Bernard Pawley is presently Archdeacon of Canterbury. He was the first representative of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in Rome (1960-65), and was one of the official Anglican observers at Vatican II. Margaret Pawley, a trained historian, read history at Oxford.

The Pawleys are genial, remarkably knowledgeable and definitely sympathetic to all ecumenical endeavors. They give us a well-researched Anglo-Catholic overview of relations between Rome and Canterbury from the 16th century to the present day. They have compressed this vast amount of material into 18 chapters.