

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Wing-Footed Wanderer: Conscience and Transcendence.* Donald E. Miller. Nashville: Abingdon, 1977. pp. 240 \$9.95.

Two terms are crucial, first is CONSCIENCE—what do we mean? Traditionally used in that sense of right or wrong: moral goodness or blameworthiness, it comes from the Latin *conscientia*, to know. We have an extremely interesting “personal quest for a new definition of conscience” by Professor Miller as he seeks to establish a “compact psychology of moral development.”

Miller stresses the “idea of conscience seems to have been born in ancient Greece” (p. 11) with Democritus (460-361 B. C.):

Some men, not knowing the dissolution of moral nature, suffer wretchedly throughout their lifetime from distress and fear because of their consciousness of the evildoing in their lives, making false speculations about the time after death.

Other giants of Hellenistic thought are cited—Epictetus—then, proceeding on the thesis “that the modern Western world has inherited [a notion of conscience] . . . was formulated by the Greeks and reinterpreted by Christian teaching,” Miller continues with reference to Paul, then to Origen, “Conscience is that spirit which, the Apostle says, is found in the soul as tutor, companion, and guide. Its function is to advise one about the best course of action, and to rebuke and chastise one for sin.” (p. 13). John of Damascus noted, “God’s law enters our mind and draws it to itself by stirring up conscience, which itself is called the law of our mind.” Of course there is Thomas Aquinas’ separation of universal moral laws (*synderesis*) and individual moral truth (*conscientia*).

It is Immanuel Kant’s view that “each person is able to intuit directly the precepts of the moral law,” (p. 13) that became a norm. Having sketched in a brief background, Miller uses Freud for “the psychological attack.” On Kant’s familiar “starry heavens and the moral conscience within” Freud retorted, “stars are unquestionably superb, but where conscience is concerned God has been guilty of an uneven and careless piece of work.” (p. 14). Miller proposes that “conscience is a dispositional unity of knowing, doing, and feeling wherein a person is joined together with other persons in a community [of] moral purpose and direction.” It is “a dispositional expression of human agency that develops as a mixture of human virtue and weakness within various communities of loyalty.” (p. 15).

Freud is the one who “seriously challenged the long-acknowledged authority of conscience” and insists “conscience is a manifestation of neurosis rather than of emotional maturity.” (p. 17). Voices of psychoanalysis continue with Erik Erikson’s “immature inhibitions of early childhood” (p. 70). Considerable attention is given Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, who “have attempted to avoid the rift between emotivists and intuitionists by conceiving a behavior as a structure that is invented by each person in an effort to resolve the conflicts within experience.” (p. 81). They are thus “in touch with the long ethical

tradition from Plato . . . to Martin Luther King [Jr.]" Using historical and modern psychoanalytic sources, the author records stages of moral development, quoting eminent figures in psychology. As an expert in Christian Education, he likewise employs Bonhoeffer, Bultmann, Heidegger and Tillich. He also applies a wide range of literary illustrations: Huck Finn and Jim, Alice and the Queen, Oliver Twist and Fagan along with quotation from Shakespeare, but not "conscience does make cowards of us all."

What is the Christian response? Drawing heavily upon scripture, Miller insists it does not add a different concern about the quality of life, instead "it intensifies and quickens the love of humanity, and it localizes love in a living, interacting congregation." It thus "sets the formal elements of value within the story of God's relation to humanity." (p. 117). Miller concludes his study with the second decisive term: TRANSCENDENCE, from Latin *transcenderer* "to climb over" traditionally implying passing beyond human understanding. He attempts to unite these universal concepts within the framework of psychological inquiry, asking, with Rollo May and the poet Yeats, about "a Will moving within us that reaches beyond our conscience, 'that dazzling, unforseen wing-footed wanderer . . . of our own being but as water with fire.'" In the end do "the hidden sources of human agency transcend our present judgments of conscience like fire with water?" (p. 185). It is Paul who rightly understands the relationship of conscience and transcendence. As the author has attempted "to examine concepts . . . in several contemporary psychological theories," he concludes, "it is incumbent upon us as believers in God as revealed in Jesus Christ to examine our experience for the evidences of his coming." (p. 226).

Among the queries: what of the Hebrew tradition in contrast to the Greek? Why no reference to Augustine who experienced *angst* as few Church Fathers have ever known? Each author must create his own *gestalt*, but would it not be valuable to observe Carthage, Alexandria and Jerusalem as well as placing stress on Athens, Rome and Vienna?

Miller has given us a worthwhile study. It will be useful to the layperson in psychology as well as to the seminarian and pastor.

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*Worship and Freedom: A Black American Church in Zambia.* Walter R. Johnson. New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1977. Pages 152. \$19.50

This fascinating book is a scholarly analysis of the work of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in the protectorate formerly known as Northern Rhodesia, now, the Republic of Zambia. Its author, Walter R. Johnson, a black American sociologist and social anthropologist, who spent about three years (1967-1970) studying in Zambia, wrote

from the perspective of a participant-observer. The author's basic concern is the penetration and the operation of this American-based Church as a social institution. The title, *Worship and Freedom*, suggests the distinctive role of the A.M.E. Church in the social changes that have taken place in that plural society. The ideals of worship and freedom are traced back to the beginning of the A.M.E. Church among black Americans during the last decades of the nineteenth century. The same ideals are shown to have been the dominant concern of this black denomination wherever it has taken roots.

In this penetrating analysis of the entrance and operation of the A.M.E. Church in Zambia, the author drew upon a wealth of primary and secondary sources. They include a long list of published books on Africa and the A.M.E. Church. They also include unprinted sources in the Lusaka Archives Files, handwritten histories, oral interviews, and minutes of A.M.E. Church meetings. The study is illumined by several maps and charts.

The book gives brief accounts of the processes and methods by which the A.M.E. Church expanded into the continent of Africa in general and Zambia in particular. Unlike other overseas religious bodies operating within the region, the agents for the spread of the A.M.E. Church in Zambia were not outsiders, but indigenous Africans. The list of African religious leaders, who blazed trails and planted the Church of their choice among their fellow Africans, is very impressive.

The book is not detailed history of the Church in the area. Yet it draws upon historical data to build and analysis of the distinctive role played by the Church in the Republic of Zambia. The Church's first appearance in Barotseland, Northern Rhodesia about 1900 was rather short-lived. The Church's permanent entrance took place in the 1930s. From that time until about 1950, the Church experienced rapid growth and expansion. The spread was in the towns along the railway line of the Copperbelt as well as into the rural sections of the northern, western and eastern provinces of the country. About 1970 when the study was being made, the A.M.E. Church had about 100 pastors, and about the same number of circuits. Its membership was reported to have been about 9,000. The Church in Zambia was administered as a part of the Seventeenth Episcopal District of the A.M.E. denomination, which, in addition to Zambia, extends into Rhodesia, Malawi and parts of Zaire and Tanzania.

How can the rapid expansion of this black American Church among the Zambians be accounted for? The answer to this question is found in the vivid delineation of several attractive appeals the Church had for the indigenous inhabitants. These attractive appeals are described as positive "attributes". One of these positive attributes was the fact that the Church was African-controlled. Unlike other missions operating in the area, the A.M.E. Church in Zambia was under the control of African clergy. Indigenous Africans served as pastors, presiding elders and superintendents. The African-controlled nature of the A.M.E. Church in Zambia makes it closely akin to the independent African churches which are very

prevalent in Southern Africa. Its general headquarters in the United States makes it a missionary church.

Another positive attribute was the support the Church gave to African Nationalism. The Church was regarded as a symbol of African nationalist ideal. It attracted African nationalists who held very high positions in the Zambian Government. President Kaunda, for example, was an active member of the local congregation at Lusaka. Local preachers and lay members linked the A.M.E. Church with the political parties, trade unions and welfare organizations. Officially, however, the A.M.E. Church avoided political activity.

Another positive attribute of the A.M.E. Church in Zambia was its tolerant attitude toward the traditional culture. The Church became an "adaptive Institution." It maintained an orthodox form of doctrine and ritual. At the same time it did not require a member to denigrate his African heritage. It allowed the continuation of certain traditional norms, values and social relationships.

Still another positive attribute of the Church in Zambia was the advantages it offered to members. For the clergy, it ordained Africans. With ordination African ministers assumed leadership responsibility for local congregations as well as for districts. This gave them authority, prestige and status. It was also a source of income. For the laity, membership furnished the emotional gratification of being a part of a church that supported African causes. It offered the opportunity of participation in civic groups, being elected to an office, and of exercising power and authority within the community.

The final positive attribute of the Church was its image of the Christian ethics of brotherhood. The A.M.E.'s did not encourage ethnic, tribal and national churches. A.M.E. congregations were multi-ethnic, and multi-national. They attempted to put into practice the ethics of brotherhood.

Exhibiting these positive attributes, the A.M.E. Church played a distinctive role among the Zambians. From time to time, the Church was confronted with strong opposition to its existence in the area. The opposition came both from mission churches and government officials in the pre-independence days.

In spite of its rapid rise and attractive appeal, the A.M.E. Church in Zambia suffered from two weaknesses. One was the failure to develop a trained ministry. The other was its failure to provide adequate social service facilities, such as schools, health clinics and recreation centers. In both of these aspects, the A.M.E. Church fell far short of what was being done by the mainstream of mission bodies operating in the country. Because of these weaknesses, after 1950, the Church's appeal and social importance began to decline.

Johnson has achieved marvelously in describing the work of the A.M.E. Church as a social institution. His analysis of the distinctive role of this black-American, African-controlled Church among the Zambians is most illuminating. The study has uncovered hitherto unknown history of the entrance and the operation of the Church. It fills a long overdue

need. The book is a valuable contribution to the general knowledge of the work of a black American Church overseas.

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### BOOKS RECEIVED

- BLACK REDEMPTION: CHURCHMEN SPEAK FOR THE GARVEY MOVEMENT. Randall K. Burkett. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978. \$12.50.
- PAULO FREIRE: HIS LIFE, WORKS AND THOUGHT. Denis E. Collins, S. J. New York: Paulist Press, 1977. \$2.45.
- SCRIPTURE AND THE CHURCH. Edited by Robert Heyer. New York: Paulist Press, 1976. \$1.75.
- BEGINNING A NEW PASTORATE. Robert G. Kemper. Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1977. \$3.95.
- SINFUL SOCIAL STRUCTURES. Patrick Kerans. New York: Paulist Press, 1974. \$1.75.
- THE TWENTIETH CENTURY PULPIT. Edited by James W. Cox. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978. \$8.95.
- FAITH WITHOUT PREJUDICE: REBUILDING CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD JUDAISM. Eugene Fisher. New York: Paulist Press, 1977. \$2.45.
- STAND FAST IN FAITH. Wallace E. Fisher. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978. \$4.95.
- MEDICAL/MORAL PROBLEMS. Edited by Robert Heyer. New York: Paulist Press, 1976. \$1.75.
- TOWARD A HUMAN WORLD ORDER: BEYOND THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRAIT-JACKET. Gerald and Patricia Mische. New York: Paulist Press, 1976. \$2.95.
- A SOCIO-THEOLOGY OF LETTING GO: THE ROLE OF A FIRST WORLD CHURCH FACING THIRD WORLD PEOPLES. Marie Augusta Neal, S. N. D. deN. New York: Paulist Press, 1977. \$3.95.
- ASSIMILATING NEW MEMBERS. Lyle E. Schaller. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978. \$3.95.
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- CHRISTIANITY AND ITS JUDAIC HERITAGE. Carl E. Purinton. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1961.
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- REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATION: King, Freire and Jesus. Bennie E. Goodwin. Atlanta: Goodpatrick Publishers, 1978. 136 pp. \$3.50.
- DREAMS: A WAY TO LISTEN TO GOD. Morton Kelsey. New York: Paulist Press, 1978. 104 pp. \$1.95.
- THE CHURCH AND RACIAL HOSTILITY. William Rader. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1978. 273 pp. DM 68.—







