

# philippine studies

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## **The Church of the Future, by Bühlmann**

Review Author: James H. Kroeger, M.M.

*Philippine Studies* vol. 36, no. 2 (1988) 267

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE: A MODEL FOR THE YEAR 2001.  
By Walbert Bühlmann. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986. xiii, 207 pages.

The name and work of Walbert Bühlmann are commonly known to contemporary Catholics, particularly ecclesiologists and missiologists. A Swiss Capuchin missionary to Africa, Bühlmann later taught at the Freiburg and Gregorian Universities; for several years he served as the secretary general for the Capuchin missions.

*The Church of the Future* attempts "a broadening of ecclesiastical horizons" (p. xi) and unfolds in two parts: Part One provides "an assessment and analysis of the present state of the world church," and Part Two sketches "a utopian response to this situation, a model for the church in the near future" (p. xiii). The author presents an overview of changes in the world and the church in the two decades from 1965 to 1985; then he projects trends and lines of development for the coming years. This "ecclesial futurology" outlines a model of church for the year 2001, a church incorporating much decentralization and pluriformity. Bühlmann proceeds by following his own dictum: "Constructive criticism out of love for the church is surely more helpful and more according to the gospel than is indifference or apathy" (p. 136).

This volume contains a wealth of information about the situation of the church in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; in this aspect, it echoes certain themes of Bühlmann's earlier works, particularly *The Coming of the Third Church* (1978). The data is presented through statistical tables (chapter 9), instructive anecdotes (pp. 108, 158-59), creative language (p. 68: Hiroshima/Euroshima/Globoshima), and theological insights (p. 143). The result is a comprehensive vision of the worldwide church and the task which lies before it.

A few individual chapters and themes are presented particularly well. Chapter 6 is built around the theme: "Mission in the Service of Peace." Chapter 8 proposes a model for the church's mission: "Francis, Brother to All." In addition the author is insightful on the role of missionaries: "Today they will no longer be merely 'sent out' as before, but must be 'invited in' by a local church wanting and needing them" (p. 78); "... missionaries will always be needed and they will be there, God's messengers to the peoples, messengers between churches and cultures, to exchange values, give hope, and build a unified human family" (p. 181). As a final point, it can be noted that the section on Interreligious Dialogue (pp. 47-54) is well presented.

This reader found a handful of deficiencies in the book. Buhlmann traced themes that are already common knowledge (Church/Mission in Six Continents). Some of his terminology is equivocal and outmoded ("pre-evangelization": pp. 8, 22, 72-73, 125, 127). At times, he can be very repetitious (*Mysterium*

... pp. 39, 53, 156). Some individual chapters are not well integrated into the flow of the entire book; they seem to be reworked material that possibly had appeared previously in another form. Finally, the author stated that the second part of his work was to be a "utopian response" (p. xiii) to church realities; this reviewer found a disproportionately large amount of negative comment (pp. 151 ff.) with few creative possibilities given.

Some short comments on practical matters of the publication are apropos. Layout and printing are well done; non-glare paper is appreciated by readers; the paper edition has a sturdy binding. The format is generally fine (exception: the text referred to Tables 2a/2b, but they are not found). Although the translation used inclusive language (humankind, p. 68) and is generally well done, certain words are not universal English usage (horried, p. 31; paradisal, p. 71; structuration, p. 131; milliard [billion]). Neither did the translator provide the English equivalent of foreign language materials (e.g. p. 95: Karl Rahner's *Schriften zur Theologie* = *Theological Investigations*).

Other publication deficiencies are: inaccuracies in the sequence of endnote numbers between pages 159-64; duplication of lines in endnote 149; lack of library classification data which is usually found in books coming from Orbis at Maryknoll, New York.

What then is the balance-sheet for Walbert Bühlmann's *The Church of the Future*? Certainly, the book is, in popular jargon, "a good read." It reflects the author's critical love for the church and his desire to see the church's mission of evangelization realized more fully. He expresses the urgency of the task as the close of the second millenium of Christianity approaches. The openness and optimism generated by Vatican II are not to be lost. Bühlmann has given us another work of mission animation and it is certainly appreciated.

*James H. Kroeger, M.M.*  
*Regional Major Seminary*  
*Davao City*

SUGAT NG SALITA. By Cirilo F. Bautista. Manila: De La Salle Publications, 1986. 93 pages.

The language is immediately noticeable in Cirilo F. Bautista's first book of poems in Pilipino. It is not the language as it is spoken in Bulacan and the other Tagalog provinces that ring Metro Manila. Neither is it the colloquial, street-wise lingo that Jose F. Lacaba wields so well in his poetry. It is a vigorous and vibrant voice, of which critic and poet Rogelio Mangahas says: "Malaking ambag sa estetika at sensibilidad ng modernistang panulaan ang