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Compassionate and Free, by Katoppo

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gical interpretations of personality development—merely, and dangerously, on the basis of child-rearing practices.

Although this study follows to some extent traditional ethnographic methods and format, and thus demonstrates the usefulness of anthropology in the study of urban phenomena, with a greater anthropological orientation the final analysis could have been a more valuable contribution to urban studies, cultural traits, and change, particularly had the data been placed in a wider cultural context.

Having passed through this barrio's area a number of times during 1986, it is interesting to note the further changes—at least physical and demographic, and in regard to communication and transport—since 1972. It is clear that, given the encroachment of urbanization on this 1958 rural barrio, the later (1972) research by Lagmay is useful in noting such changes as have occurred, and in giving an historical perspective to an attempted anthropological study; and subsequently, given all these factors (of change), a valuable opportunity exists now (in 1986), another fifteen years, or one generation, later, to pursue a consistent diachronic project. For here, at close hand, we are able to witness the development of an urban lifestyle and associated problems.

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COMPASSIONATE AND FREE: AN ASIAN WOMAN'S THEOLOGY. By Marianne Katoppo. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1979. Reprinted by Orbis Books, 1981. vi, 84 pages.

Ms. Marianne Katoppo's *Compassionate and Free: An Asian Woman's Theology*, is truly a woman's theology, although the author herself disclaims the term "feminist theology," saying it is "too loaded," too fraught with what would rightly be called political considerations. Feminist groupings are, after all, political, and Ms. Katoppo is not, but she is nevertheless deeply interested in women's problems and women's fate. And this on a very direct, practical level, as she writes of an old Javanese woman scavenging through garbage outside a first-class hotel, or a poor, young unwed mother, prostitute by trade, worrying over her baby who is covered with the incurable sores of congenital syphilis, or a Calcutta woman who gave birth to twins in the street and was too weak to defend them from the dogs who devoured them.

Yet the book is primarily theological, and is deeply Christian, although there is much evidence of the author's grasp of and basic sympathy with the traditional Asian religions, Hinduism and Buddhism. Ms. Katoppo is Indonesian, and although that country is primarily Muslim now, the Hindu influence is still very strong. Certain ethnic groups, including that of Ms.

Katoppo, the Minahassans, are Christian, Protestant, and these groups are, coincidentally, less restrictive of women than are the Muslim groups. Ms. Katoppo is a graduate of the Jakarta Theological Seminary, and has carried out church assignments all over the world.

Both despite her rather privileged education and career opportunities, and because of all the ways in which she has always been "different" from so many people around her, Ms. Katoppo sees woman's basic problem as lying in her being regarded as "The Other" in male society. "The Other" in this sense is the outsider, the threat to the stability of Church and society, the element which must therefore be contained, restricted, subjugated for the good of the whole. This attitude towards women as "The Other" makes it possible to exploit her in the most inhuman ways; it made it possible, for instance, for a band of Pakistani soldiers to rape an eight-year-old Bangladesh girl-child until she died. Woman is distanced, transformed into an object, put beyond the pale of human consideration, and of course, in the process, woman herself is stunted, limited, "bent and distorted"; (p. 47) like the woman Jesus raised up and restored to *her natural selfhood* in Luke 13. The restoration of woman to "her own full length", to the realization of her own personality and power, is, then, the task of this woman's theology, and should rightly be the task of the Church as well.

Ms. Katoppo sees the raising up of woman, or liberation if you please, as a process of redefining her "otherness" so that she is seen as complementing man instead of threatening him, thus fitting in with Javanese (and essentially probably Hindu) notions of harmony and balance. But traditional theology has thrown up at least two major roadblocks in the way of such an understanding of woman. The first block lies in the fact that God is understood as male, and this is not simply due to the fact that "He" is the most convenient pronoun for the asexual Being. God's maleness, says Ms. Katoppo, has been systematically exaggerated as the scriptures have been translated and modified, and at the same time the femaleness, the mothering, nurturing aspect of God, has been suppressed. But such imagery abounds in the Bible, for those with eyes to see it: in Deuteronomy 32, God watches over the world as the mother eagle over its nest, and He is called "the God who brought you to birth." Even in the New Testament, Jesus longs to gather his children "as a hen gathers her brood under her wings." The God of the Hebrews was clearly mother as well as father.

Particularly oppressive to Ms. Katoppo is the all-male Trinity, especially since the Hebrew *Ruach*, breath, or spirit, is definitely feminine, but was neutered by the Greeks, and then masculinized, "for good measure," by the Latins. Ms. Katoppo suggests more reflection is needed on other aspects of God seen by the Hebrews as feminine: *Hokinah*, or wisdom, and *Shekinah*, presence.

The overpowering maleness of the Trinity is at the expense of Mary, Mother of God, whom Ms. Katoppo sees as central to a woman's theology.

Largely ignored by the Protestants, Mary is functionally marginalized by the Catholics as the ever-virgin, in a sense, then, nonfemale. This concept, says Ms. Katoppo, hinges on a misconstruction or mistranslation of the word "virgin," which, she points out, has been associated in folk cultures all over the world with the term "Great Mother," and which has always meant, simply, an unmarried woman, a woman who was her own mistress, and who was therefore free, in the case of Mary, to submit herself totally to the will of God. This then is the sense of Mary's "virginity," and her holiness and givingness: she was a total person, a free individual who had "stretched her own full length" and was therefore fully human. For only within that context could she be freely and fully compassionate.

And that is what human liberation, and theology, especially woman's theology, are for: to enable "The Other" to realize herself fully so that she may enter into a complementary relationship with the male. Mother/father, day/night, light/dark, male/female, freedom/compassion—all two sides of the same coin. Here there is no alienated other, no other that is separate, threatening, so that it must be restricted, contained, and eventually turned into a nonperson. Javanese harmony and balance are thus restored in this Christian Theology which originated with a Third World woman, but which should speak to the God-ness of all people.

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A POOR MAN CALLED JESUS. REFLECTIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF MARK. By José Cárdenas Pallares. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986. viii+136 pages.

Of all the books on the gospels published in recent years by Orbis Books, *A Poor Man Called Jesus* is undoubtedly one of the best. In the preface the author explains how the book originated from a series of speaking engagements on various aspects of the gospel of Mark for diocesan lay workers, aspirants in a religious convent, basic Christian communities, and a National Biblical Encounter, and the further reflection and research they triggered off, throughout the years 1975-80. It was originally published as *Un pobre llamado Jesus: Relectura del Evangelio de Marcos* (Mexico City, 1982).

The seven chapters deal with important sections and/or aspects of the gospel of Mark. Starting from the affirmation that "Jesus' whole public career, from start to finish, is cast in a framework of disputes and confrontations with the intellectual and spiritual leaders of his people (Mk. 2:1-12, 12:36-40)" (p. 5), the first chapter on "Jesus' Conflicts" deals with Mk. 2:1-3:6, long recognized as a more or less artificially arranged collection of