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The Faith of the Adolescent:

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God's hands for the breaking down of barriers that at present seem insurmountable," but which God's mercy, in its own time, will surmount for us.

C. G. ARÉVALO, S.J.

THE FAITH OF THE ADOLESCENT

FAITH AND THE ADOLESCENT. By Pierre Babin. Translated by David Gibson. New York: Herder and Herder, 1965. 128 pp.

Anyone who has encountered the "couldn't care less" expressions common in a high-school religion or college theology class will appreciate the need for studies like Father Babin's. This work, based on the responses of 1800 adolescents to the question: "For you, what is God?" is (the author tells us) an attempt to cast some light on questions like, What are the major characteristics of adolescent faith and what causes them? How does the adolescent's faith evolve?—It is not an attempt to "go in their door and come out through ours"; rather, it is a careful synthesis of psychological, theological and catechetical analyses, and is designed to meet the needs of those charged with passing on the Christian message to young people. Fr. Babin's surveys show what is in fact the image of God characteristic of the mind of the French adolescent; furthermore he points out its roots in his particular level of religious and sociological maturity.

Condescension is avoided: it is made clear that since the experience of faith is a human experience, each "age of man" is more fittingly attuned to a different aspect of the rich mystery of Godhood.

The faith of the adolescent is found to be distinguished by the marks of naturation, egomorphism, and emphasis on the moral sense. *Naturation* is the tendency to form a concept of God which responds to the dictates of reason rather than to those of historical revelation. The term *egomorphism* is used to describe the adolescent's concern with those qualities of God he particularly feels the need of: simplicity and tranquil self-possession. Finally unlike the child or the adult, the adolescent heavily emphasizes the establishment of the *moral order* through creation. The teacher's task is to understand this idea and its roots that he may better relate religion to the present and future life of his students.

Father Babin's specific conclusions and recommendations can only be applied to the Philippine setting after an intensive preliminary survey has been made here.

CHRISTOPHER CONROY, S.J.