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Divine Pedagogy

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Book Reviews

DIVINE PEDAGOGY. A PATRISTIC VIEW OF NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS. By Chrys Saldanha. Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1984. 192 pages.

Readers of *Philippine Studies* may be surprised at first to find a book under review which deals with the attitudes of early Christian thinkers toward their pagan milieu. The topic seems to have so little relevance to the Philippines of the present. This surprise may be lessened, however, if the reader reflects on the growing social and political consciousness of the Filipino people. This consciousness is more and more concerned with political morality: what are the responsibilities of the courts in promoting justice? is it right for one man to hold on to power tenaciously for twenty years? what are the moral duties of legislators toward the public? The pagan society which the early Christian thinkers confronted was already in possession of an excellent theory of public morality and had good answers to the above questions, as anyone can easily find out by scanning the topics of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*.

Divine Pedagogy is an attempt to show how three early Fathers of the Church engaged the religious and philosophical views, political and otherwise, of the non-Christians of their time. Chrys Saldanha, a native of India and a Catholic priest, hopes that the results of his research may help contemporary church workers to relate in a beneficial way to the non-Christian elements in their own milieu. The book, I think, lives up to the author's hopes.

The three authors chosen by Saldanha are Justin, Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria. Justin was born in Palestine, presumably to a family of Greek or Roman colonists. Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. Clement was born either in Athens or Alexandria and received his education in Athens.

Justin stood in admiration of Greek philosophy "as a very great possession and very precious in the eyes of God" (p. 51). It is a knowledge of the real, a wisdom enabling those who practice it to live with self-control and good sense and even to search for and find God. Because of this Justin regarded Greek philosophy as being in a special way the work of God. For

Justin and for Christian believers in general Jesus Christ is the Word, the Truth, and His teaching is the word of God, the divine pedagogy, the truth. But in the pagan philosophers also who knew neither the old nor the new testament but who did arrive at significant truth concerning man and the good, a certain divine pedagogy was at work. This is what Justin called *Logoi spermatikoi*, seed-words. God was at work in the non-Christian philosophers leading them carefully to the truth about important questions that had a bearing on practical life in society. This cultivation of the pagans by God was another form of divine pedagogy. Justin's conversion to Jesus Christ led him to understand that in Christ and in the church of Christ God's truth is found in a far richer way. Christ is the Truth. But the Word who did become flesh at a certain period of time, was eternally existent and *at work* in people and societies even before being born of Mary in Palestine. Justin does stand out as an example for our time of a person passionately in love with Christ and His church, and delighted over the wisdom and truth that God has shared with non-Christians in His own way.

The challenge that faced Irenaeus was somewhat different from the interest of Justin, but Irenaeus' teaching was similar. The Gnostics held that only a few men, "the spirituals," could know and contemplate God, and this *only* because of the revelation given them by Jesus Christ "who alone knows the Father." Irenaeus corrects the gnostic position by teaching that the Word (God the Son) is "imbedded" in creation. There is a revelation in creation itself, just as there is a revelation in the Incarnation. This revelation "embedded" in creation, even prior to the Incarnation, is God's offer of self-communication. It is made to *all* men, not only to "the spirituals" who have been reached by Jesus Christ after His coming. This offer made by God is independent of and prior to man's acceptance of it. The Word who is God reveals through creation. This is divine pedagogy once again. Irenaeus wrote: "The knowledge of God that man achieves from the contemplation of the universe takes place under the direct and personal influence of the divine Word. It truly deserves the name 'revelation' inasmuch as it presupposes an impulse of the revealing Word on the human mind through the concrete order of providence" (p. 97). It is not so much that man can have a natural knowledge of God by reason, as that such knowledge is a *gift* of God calling for a response. Creation for Irenaeus is the first act of God's educating man and is a preparation for our accepting God-made-man in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Clement was almost certainly brought up as a pagan in Athens, was converted to Christianity there, travelled extensively to Italy, Syria, Palestine, and finally settled in Alexandria, "the New York of the East," as it has been called because of the variety of cultures and peoples, and because it was a great commercial and academic city. Clement's personality and intelligence brought him into contact with the academic ferment of the city and particularly with Greek philosophy. His enthusiasm for the word of God and for Christ the Word convinced him that philosophy is the "wisdom of God."

And at the same time he began to ask about the meaning and role of Greek philosophy before the coming of Jesus Christ.

Some descriptions of Greek philosophy are offered by him and each description is linked to Jesus Christ. And the further question is also tackled: if the above linkage is true, how did Greek philosophy come to be? One description of Greek philosophy was derived from the Stoics: the pursuit of right reason, but Clement played on the ambiguity of the expression to make it read the pursuit of the Personal Logos, Jesus Christ, as participated by human reason. Another description similar to the first is the pursuit of wisdom, and again Clement interpreted this to mean also a love of wisdom identified with God and shared with humans. Similarly the search for the truth is re-interpreted to mean the following of Christ the Truth. Philosophy will not remain in the order of knowing, but will also include the whole of human living. In this way "the one who practices the Christian life can philosophize, even if he be illiterate, barbarian, an old man, a child or a woman" (p. 118).

Clement was convinced that he was not forcing these interpretations since he was imbued, as Saldanha points out, with the belief in the divine activity in the world. Greek philosophy he saw as the work of divine providence. Good thoughts are produced by the action of God, and divine providence touches everyone. There is then according to Clement a kind "inspiration" which God gave to some of the Greek philosophers, though the inspiration which God gave to the sacred writers is far richer and holier. For this reason he proclaimed his radical belief that Christianity is the only true and whole philosophy since it is taught to us by the Incarnate Word.

Saldanha reports that the early Christian writers looked upon pagan philosophy and non-Christian religions as a kind of "pedagogy" preparing people for the more transcendent and fuller Christian revelation. Catholic teaching, he reminds us, declared in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in the second Vatican council that "divine Providence does not deny the help necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, but who strive to live a good life, thanks to His grace" (p. 153). A similar attitude toward the non-Christian world, the author proposes, moved the early fathers and the fathers of Vatican II. Hence the significance of his research lies in understanding the contemporary benevolent attitude of Catholic thought as continuous with the early thinkers in the Christian community.

Saldanha takes pains however to point out the transcendence of the Christian message for the early fathers and for contemporary thinkers. Christianity has something new and higher and specifically different that gives it a transcendence and absoluteness beyond the non-Christian religions and beyond pagan philosophy. Jesus Christ, unique revealer and revealed, is God. And it is faith in the Incarnate Word crucified that sets Christianity apart from all other religions and thought systems. And through Jesus Christ

crucified Christianity and the other religions and philosophies have been brought together in a preparation-fulfillment relationship. The fathers regarded the providential working of God as offering salvation through Jesus Christ even to those who could not know the Incarnate Word. Among the various systems and religions there is a sharing in different degrees in the one central reality which is Jesus Christ. God's will to save every man through Him is expressed by a variety of pedagogies even before the Savior came. But the non-Christian pedagogies are preparatory and partial, pointing toward the fullness of the revelation in Christ. And it is He who must be proclaimed to those for whom He came.

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URBANIZATION AND MIGRATION IN ASEAN DEVELOPMENT.
Edited by Philip M. Hauser, Daniel B. Suits, and Naohiro Ogawa.
Tokyo: National Institute for Research and Advancement, 1985.
496 pages.

This collection of twenty-one articles, by various senior academics from South East Asia, Japan, U.S.A., and Australia, represents one of the most recent comprehensive overviews of urbanization and migration, with reference to ASEAN development. The introductory chapter by Hauser sets the scenario for the book's theme and format: Part One deals with SEA as a region; and Parts 2-5 deal respectively with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. The first chapter also usefully summarises successive chapters, enabling one to turn to any matter of greatest interest—although I found something of interest in almost all papers. And each chapter, of about twenty pages each, can be read in a sitting.

Because of this format and the extent of subjects and areas covered, it would be unfair, as Hauser himself notes (pp. 30-31), to make direct comparisons between articles, and indeed between regions dealt with, for the state of knowledge varies considerably for each. Subjects and factors range from urbanization to industrialisation, government policies and trends, intra- and inter- migration, unemployment, socioeconomic models, current research, poverty, agricultural development, fertility, females, mortality, children, population trends and forecasts, resettlement, empirical evidence, theories, and methodologies, to name a few. Some chapters carry recommendations; some, but not all, are pessimistic in outlook.

I propose to suggest briefly, if the book as a whole, in its stringing together of key papers, (primarily from the ASEAN Conference on Migration