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Kenny: Christ Outside Christianity

Thomas J. O'Shaugnessy, S.J.

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Book Reviews

CHRIST OUTSIDE CHRISTIANITY: THE SUPERNATURAL IN NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS. By John P. Kenny, S.J. Melbourne: Spectrum Publications, 1971. viii, 64 pp.

Today people are conscious of the vast temporal and spatial dispersion of mankind. Probably not ten per cent of the human race has known Christ or His teaching. Ignorance of Christianity seems to be man's normal condition. Yet, since there is no salvation apart from Christ, God's universal salvific will implies His saving presence everywhere and in every age of human history.

This short work in its first chapter reviews the questions that these considerations raise. In three other chapters it looks for supernatural elements in the three most important non-Christian religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.

It is one of the best recent surveys of a problem that is urgent today and recognized as such by the Second Vatican Council. The treatment is theologically up-to-date, clear, and adequate as an introduction to a difficult subject. The readings suggested center on recent articles and books (publishers not always given) and go into questions beyond the scope of the four brief chapters.

A few of the remarks on Islam might be better put. The Qur'an mentions twenty-eight prophets, but Muslims hold that there were others. The impersonal notion of sin in Islam would seem to come from over-insistence on God's transcendence rather than from fatalism.

The book will be a valuable aid to the student of theology and to anyone who wishes to update his knowledge on a problem that has new dimensions in today's converging world.

THOMAS J. O'SHAUGHNESSY, S.J.