

serious and multifaceted problem of poverty in the United States. Readers will also benefit from the solid biblical basis for his reasoning and proposed solutions.

Local churches have generally taken the alternative route of moving out of poor areas and wringing their hands over the high crime, unemployment, dropout, and pollution, which were caused in part by their abdication of social responsibility and an archaic insistence on purity of identity that prevents the needed partnerships. It could be wished that Sider's new book will contribute to stimulating a reversal of this trend.

Sider concludes with the "Generous Christian Pledge," which could and should be standard for all Bible-believing, biblical-practicing Christians.

This book should be welcome in college and seminary classes dealing with urban issues, economics, and ethics. It will also be useful in local church study groups.

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Spencer, Aida Besançon, and William David Spencer. *The Global God—Multicultural Evangelical Views of God*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. 281 pp. Paperback, \$19.99.

The wife-husband Spencer team have not only edited this volume, but also contributed three of the eleven chapters. Their stated aim is to "build a global theology" (17) which summarizes how "God is revealing Godself" (17) in this transmillennial period. They do this by posing a twofold question to each author. First, what attribute of God is most understood in your culture? In other words, what has the general revelation of God in culture predisposed people to see most easily and clearly about God? Second, what part of God's self-revelation of personal attributes needs to be apprehended more clearly in your culture? What does your culture tend to ignore or miss about God which needs to be supplemented by the balanced special revelation found in the Bible?

After an introductory chapter on the God of the Bible, five different countries or areas of the world are covered by two chapters each—the American, Hispanic-Caribbean, African, Chinese, and Korean. Each article is written by a person who is a part of the culture described. The book ends with a two-page conclusion, twenty-one pages of chapter notes, and subject and Scripture indexes.

The book is staunchly evangelical. Both Spencers are on the faculty of Gordon Cornwell Theological Seminary, and the authors with one accord go out of their way to pledge allegiance to the finality and supracultural validity of Scripture. On this basis they find a platform to critique the imbalance in their cultures. Examples are William Spencer's critique of America's use of power and the doctrine of manifest destiny and Tae-ju Moon's calling into question of the Korean (and Korean-American) overemphasis on God's material blessings.

On the other hand, the authors are definitely open to seeing the hand of providence at work to preserve truth in cultures. The almost universal African concept of a supreme God and the Chinese emphasis on ethical behavior and holiness are illustrations of this principle at work.

The balance I find here between the Scriptures as authoritative critique of culture and the valuable general revelation found in culture is at the heart of the

contribution this book makes. So often we see imbalance to one side or the other. This book will not accept an "either/or" answer but holds consistently and tenaciously to the "both/and" solution.

The book is remarkably unified and cohesive for a ten-contributor volume. The dual questions answered by each author create a sense of continuity; chapter length is uniform. For these reasons I give the editors high marks.

Most intriguing to me were the African chapters by Tokunboh Adeyemo and Edward John Osei-Bonsu. Adeyemo's explanation of the way Africans perceive God and Osei-Bonsu's distinction between traditional and indigenous religions were particularly insightful. I also found Grace Y. May's explanation of why it is hard for the Chinese to grasp God's grace very helpful. People attempting to communicate the gospel to these cultures will find them must reading.

One is led to ask at the end of each chapter, What does this all mean for practical communication, ministry, and mission to these people? While some hints are given, and Chuang (chap. 9) does speak in conclusion of missiological questions, by and large this issue is not discussed in a systematic way. While comprehensive answers may not be possible, suggestions by the authors would have been welcome. I wish the Spencers had added this issue as the subject of a third question to the original two questions that gave shape to the book.

Classes in non-Western theology and contextualization would find this book helpful. Even classes in theology of mission would find its insights valuable. As a missiologist, however, I see a particular use for this work. I am going to give a copy to the theology department of my seminary. Many books written from a mission or global perspective deal either superficially with theology or zero in on specific issues of theology that culture makes prominent. This book, on the other hand, deals thoughtfully and cross-culturally with one of the most basic issues of theology—What is God like?

It is high time Western theology considers such questions in a global context. In today's world, speaking about God only in the context of the Western theological tradition is inadequate and unfair. I see this book, edited by a theologian and a NT scholar, as a hand across the gulf to begin or nurture the cross-disciplinary dialogue which desperately needs to take place if the Western church wants to truly be part of a world Christianity.

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Thangaraj, M. Thomas. *The Common Task: A Theology of Christian Mission*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999. 167 pp. Paperback, \$22.00.

Thangaraj is a fourth-generation Christian from India. He is currently the D.W. and Ruth Brooks Associate Professor of World Christianity at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, in Atlanta, Georgia. He is the author of two other books relating to Indian Christianity in an interfaith context, *The Crucified Guru: An Experiment in Cross-Cultural Christology* and *Relating to People of Other Religions*.

In the 1960s Marshall McLuhan introduced us to the "Global Village." At the advent of the twenty-first century we have moved to the period of