

creation and the nature of the world (Maya). This is important because the concept informs much in Hindu thought and practice and is not well understood in the West. With proponents of Buddhism, dialogue moves into the discussion of ethics, which is generally regarded as one of the most important contributions of Buddhism to world thought. Inasmuch as the Quran presents its own doctrine of Christ and this constitutes a significant frontier between Christianity and Islam, the dialogue with Muslims progresses to consideration of understandings of Christ and the incarnation.

The study is brought to a close with a brief "Epilogue"—perhaps "Conclusion" would be premature at this stage—in which Tennent makes three fundamental personal affirmations: first, dialogue neither implies nor necessitates a pluralistic view in which the distinctiveness of Christianity is lost; second, dialogue and witness are not mutually exclusive; third, dialogue stimulates and sharpens our own concepts of truth. Finally, there is a brief statement of the gains and losses inherent in postmodern patterns of thought and of the applicability of aspects of the latter to discussion at the religious round table.

This is a timely book. Most Westerners have little knowledge of the religious thought and practices of the Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist communities in our midst. This book provides not only the information necessary to understanding, but also thoughtful introductions to paths of discussion. On a more academic level, it is valuable on account of its distinctive approach to Christian dialogue and the vigorous clarity it brings to foundational theological positions on each side. Even fairly advanced seminary students are likely to find that it helps them define some Christian beliefs more sharply than is the case in general theological studies. It constitutes an invaluable tool in Missions courses dealing with world religions and the theology of religions, and an invaluable resource for missionaries relating to members of these religions. It is scholarly, without bias, and written from a conservative evangelical position. Whether this pattern will be followed to any extent by evangelical missionaries and, if so, what the results will be, remain to be seen. I, for one, will be keenly interested in further developments.

The book contains a Glossary of terms used, a fairly extensive Bibliography, and both Subject and Scripture Indices. Error noted: *homoiousios* on p. 155 should surely be *homoousios*. *Homoousion* on p.171 is correct.

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RUSSELL STAPLES

Ward, Pete. *Liquid Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002. 107 pp. Paperback, \$14.95.

Imagine church without conferences, unions, and divisions. Better still, can you imagine the church existing without local congregations meeting together each week? Yet this is precisely what Pete Ward is suggesting in this challenging book. Ward defines the present structural church as "solid church." This is the church all are familiar with—local congregations, sessions with regular boards, committees, and meetings; yet Ward points out the problems encountered by "solid church." The biggest failure is the inability of the church to fulfill the mission of Christ.

In contrast, Ward suggests what he calls "liquid church" as a possible solution. Liquid church is one that exists without all the organizational paraphernalia of the modern church. He envisions church as groups of people spontaneously getting together for fellowship and worship, as well as outreach. The liquid style of church, Ward feels, would better appeal to the postmodern mind.

In reality, Ward admits that such a church does not yet exist. The purpose of this book is not to describe the intricate details of such a church, but to help people begin

to dream of a new way of doing church. It obviously would be much more helpful if he had actually tested these ideas in the real world and recommended them because they worked. However, that does not seem to be his intention.

In fact, it appears that Ward really isn't suggesting that we totally abandon "solid church," but it seems that the principles he has dreamed of would be very helpful in enabling "solid churches" to become more "liquid." For example, he envisions church being "a retreat center, a Christian shop, a music group," rather than the weekly meeting of the congregation. Adventist café churches in Scandinavia would probably fit well into his definition of "liquid church." The modern "cell church" movement would also be an attempt to move in the direction of "liquid church." However, even these two examples do not fully display what Ward is dreaming, but in his view they would be important milestones in the right direction. They are headed toward "liquid church" but are not the complete fulfillment of the dream he is envisioning.

The last chapter helps put some flesh on the ideas he promotes throughout the rest of the book. Until one gets to that chapter, the ideas seem unrealistic, but the final chapter helps to capture what Ward actually has in mind. Even then, the idea of a completely liquid church still appears to be an unrealistic glimpse into the future.

The book is well worth reading for anyone engaged in attempting to find solutions to the limited growth of Christ's church in the Western world during the twenty-first century. A person will probably not attempt to implement a completely "liquid church," but there are many parts of "solid church" that can be made more "liquid." From that perspective, the book will be valuable to those who are seeking to find a contemporary approach to mission.

From my perspective, the biggest problem with the ideas expressed is the ability of the church to become a community of faith. Ward seems to recognize this when he suggests: "Liquid church will abandon congregational structures in favor of a varied and changing diet of worship, prayer, study, and activity" (89). Such a structure or nonstructure would mean that communities of believers would be in constant flux and change. Christian fellowship would not be lasting and enduring. It appears as if Ward is suggesting that the spiritual growth of an individual is the primary issue rather than Paul's strong emphasis on the church as a community (Rom 12).

This reviewer recommends the book not as the final answer to the problem of reaching the world for Christ, but to challenge our thinking and ability to move beyond the more structured way of doing church and to discover new ways to "liquefy" the church for the future, even if the church continues to maintain much of its "solid" nature.

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RUSSELL BURRILL

Warren, Mervyn A. *King Came Preaching: The Pulpit Power of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001. 223 pp. Hardcover, \$20.00.

Martin Luther King Jr. was one of America's most prominent twentieth-century religious and social leaders. The son and great-grandson of Southern Baptist preachers, King was raised in the church during an era of disenfranchisement for blacks. At the age of 15, he matriculated at prestigious, all-black Morehouse College in Atlanta before being granted a scholarship to Crozer Theological Seminary, and he earned a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Boston University. King began his pastoral ministry at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, moving on to become the associate pastor of Ebenezer