

and such pithy theological declarations as “the doctrine of deification presupposes the humanization of God” (71), “the deformity of humankind corresponds to the humanity of God” (95), and “the divine is paradoxically more human than humanity itself” (95). The “humanity of God,” of course, clearly suggests Bulgakov’s influence, but Vladimir Lossky, a strong but respectful critic of Bulgakov, had also influenced E. It is to E.’s credit, however, that he culls from and synthesizes the best theological visions of two of the most important Orthodox theologians of the 20th century.

E. adds his own unique voice to the contemporary Orthodox theological tradition of thinking about divine-human communion, and for this reason, even if written more than 50 years ago, *Orthodoxy* is well worth reading.

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ASIAN PUBLIC THEOLOGY: CRITICAL CONCERNS IN CHALLENGING TIMES.  
By Felix Wilfred. Delhi: ISPCK, 2010. Pp. xxvi + 236. \$18.

Wilfred’s volume collects papers presented at various seminars and conferences over a number of years, papers that, while not strictly theological, focus on the interface between theology and social realities. The papers are grouped under four sections. The first, “Subaltern Journey,” evokes the plight of the poor in a globalizing world—especially the Dalits, other oppressed castes in India, and women—and the role of affirmative action in empowering them. Section 2, “Pathways to Justice,” focuses on issues like good governance, democracy, ecojustice, and the prophetic and compassionate attitude toward evil in the world. “Theological Crossroads,” section 3, reflects on a variety of topics such as the changing fortunes of Christianity in the world, the church’s social teaching, especially in the Asian context, the traditions of religious tolerance in Asia, and theological education and the historiography of Asian Christianity. The final section, “Continuing the Common Journey,” covers inclusive catholicity and religious pluralism, as well as the need to be interreligious in reflection and action. It illustrates this with reference to ecology.

A long introduction provides a kind of hermeneutical framework for the papers that follow. The volume addresses concerns that affect everyone, since it is interreligious, inclusive, and involves transformative praxis with movements and ideologies. The public concerns are specified as “defence of freedom against state despotism” (xii), “defence of the poor from the tyranny of the market” (xiii), “creation of harmonious and non-exclusive communities” (xiii), and “protecting the environment” (xiv). W. also mentions two important presuppositions: in Asia religions have a role in public life, and all theology will be “inherently Public Theology” (xxiii).

W. has a good knowledge of the Asian and global situations. For a theologian, he is very familiar with social and political trends and reflections in Asia. His analysis of situations is sharp and clear, and his observations are incisive. His concern for the subaltern peoples is genuine. The tone is prophetic and challenging. He seems convinced that the dialogue between the church/faith and the world initiated by Vatican II's constitution *The Church in the Modern World* must be continued, and that the church needs to open up more. Theological reflection on social issues that concern life in the world and in community is more important than exploring the meanings of the Creed. People sometimes say that the church's social teaching is a well-kept secret, and that the time has come to unveil it to all people of good will. In the past, the churches in Asia seem to have been more concerned with increasing their membership than attending to broader social concerns, though care for the poor was always part of its mission. W. suggests that the former concern needs to change.

Since the book is a collection of occasional papers, each one reads like a well-informed introduction to important social issues without going deeply into any one of them. The papers, seemingly addressed to Christian audiences, though with an occasional reference to other religious perspectives, are only superficially interreligious reflections. The term "public theology" is a new term, though the reflections are not properly theological. "Social ethics" would probably do as well and reach out also to nonreligious people and movements. While religions in society should not be sidelined, as some secular groups seek to do, we need to be open to other ideological groups.

Although I applaud W.'s concern for making religion relevant to social problems, he cannot rightly claim that "all theology will be inherently public theology" (xxiii). The volume contains, for example, a paper on the problem of evil. W. is critical of the church's traditional theodicy, but his own reflection does not lead him beyond "prophetic anger and sapiential compassion" (165). Both are, of course, necessary but insufficient. The Buddha, after all, bases his whole religious reflection and quest on the experience of suffering and on a way to get out of it. Once one has reached the freedom of *nirvana*, one can be compassionate to others and help them free themselves. The Christian finds meaning in suffering in the light of the cross. The Hindu finds freedom through liberative insight and loving devotion to God. So we have to reach beyond ethical reflection to religious/mystical insight and experience.

Similarly we cannot engage in interreligious reflection at the ethical level without a convincing theology of religions that is open and positively disposed to other religions. For this very reason there are leaders in the church today who would like to keep social ethical reflection to a rational, philosophical level.

I recommend the book to all Asians and others who wish to become aware of some of the social situations in Asia and their challenges. Its insightful, informed, astute, and critical analysis of issues and problems can be very helpful in planning strategies and actions that, as a consequence, will take on an Asian feel.

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RETRIEVING NICAEA: THE DEVELOPMENT AND MEANING OF TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE. By Kaled Anatolios. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011. Pp. xvii + 322. \$39.99.

Fundamental and dogmatic theologians might easily overlook this important and provocative study. One of the great values of the book is precisely its careful work of historical theology. A. writes admirably well, sketching in the very helpful first chapter the trinitarian debates before and after the Council of Nicaea. Indeed, the bulk of the book is a careful analysis of the trinitarian work of three late-antique theologians: Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine of Hippo. Here A. is in his element as interpreter, especially of Athanasius. But while much of the book concerns historical theology, A. “rejects as simplistic any sharp distinction” between historical and systematic theology (1). Instead he insists that if we are to understand the development and meaning of trinitarian doctrine “we must creatively re-perform the acts of understanding and interpretation” that led theologians of the fourth century to formulate the creedal statements of Nicaea I and Constantinople I (1). This is no easy task, given the language referents used to express trinitarian doctrine in late antiquity. Still, A. argues, these referents had meaning for those who first articulated them. Our task as theologians is to reappropriate “their acts of meaning and judgment” and come “to affirm the things they said and mean them approximately as they meant them” (7). Whether that is possible and, if so, desirable, is another matter and the focus of what follows.

A. believes this translation is possible if we examine what these early theologians were doing. Borrowing from Gabriel Marcel’s distinction between primary and secondary levels of reflection, with the two levels separated by a break in the flow of experience, A. argues that the early fourth century occasioned a break in the common human experience of the church and its theology. Clearer thinking about the utter transcendence of God created tension with traditional notions of the primacy of Christ and his divinity, and caused a break in the flow of the church’s experience. Associated with this was controversy over the existence and significance