

celebrations. Rather than trying to enforce Latinization, Hanxleden immersed himself in the language and culture of Kerala as no other Western missionary before—and perhaps after him—ever managed to do.

A. offers a biographical overview of Hanxleden's life, while also offering brief insights into the activities of the Jesuit order in the region and the situation of the Malabar church in the eighteenth century. Of particular interest are the complex history of Hanxleden's Sanskrit grammar, as well as the discussion of his sacred writings, such as the devotional poem *Puthenpaana*, an epic retelling of the life of Christ in Malayalam verse, an excerpt of which—in English translation—closes the volume.

This is a compelling and ground-breaking monograph, which will finally introduce the English-speaking public to yet another great figure from the centuries-long history of Jesuit dialogue with Asian culture.

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Theology aus anthropologischer Ansicht. Der Entwurf Franz Oberthürs (1745–1831) als Beitrag zum dogmatischen Profil der Katholischen Aufklärung. By Michael Seewald. ITS 93. Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 2016. Pp. 348. € 34.

The habilitation thesis of the newly appointed chair of dogmatic theology in Münster, which Karl Rahner once held, investigates the contribution of Franz Oberthür to eighteenth-century Catholic systematic theology. Despite the fact that a number of publications deal historically with the Catholic Enlightenment, Seewald transcends the gulf between systematic and historical reflection. The result is a real systematic dialogue with Oberthür especially in the fields of theological anthropology and ecclesiology.

One of the most fascinating findings is that for Oberthür, ecclesiology—and he published his in six volumes!—is not only centered on biblical imagery but also is always a sacramental theology and theory of culture (39). Thus, he refutes the widespread myth that Catholic theologians did not develop ecclesiologies deserving that label before the twentieth century. Oberthür was in the nineteenth century a lonely fighter for an open-minded church (he was friends with Henri Gregoire) in the era of conservative church politics. His biblical anthropology is one of the first attempts to bring anthropology and modern exegesis together and to develop a practical, almost pragmatic, approach to theological reflection. The basic insight is not that the human being is the “hearer of the word” but rather is the one cherishing and observing the divine law (and here, Oberthür tends to overemphasize, in almost Kantian manner, the importance of ethics). Yet, Oberthür did not translate scholastic language into the vernacular but recovered their meaning with new imagery and style that anticipated the language of Scheeben, Passaglia, or Newman, though lacking their precision. Also because of his approach to dogmatic theology as an open process (318) between teacher and student, the comparison with Rahner is opportune.

S.'s thesis deservedly won the Karl-Rahner-Research-Prize and is an exemplary work of how the study of eighteenth-century theology can fertilize contemporary theological reflection.

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Simone Weil: Mystic of Passion and Compassion. By Maria Clara Bingemer. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015. Pp. xx + 146. \$21.

The fascinating life and thought of Simone Weil (1909–1943) is the object of the Brazilian liberation theologian Bingemer's book. Although Weil's life ended precociously, she left a significant intellectual production enriched by her sociopolitical activism and spiritual journey. There are several ways to approach Weil's work. B. chose to approach Weil from her mystical encounter with the crucified God that unified her love for the afflicted with her fight for justice. Leading the reader throughout the existential journey of Weil and presenting her as a "paradoxical testimony" of intellectual honesty, faith, and commitment to the afflicted, B. analyzes "some aspects of Simone Weil's life and thought that are illuminating and inspirational for today's world" (37).

Written in a passionate style, four chapters show Weil as a witness to those who search for truth between intellectual activity and service to the poor, inspired by Catholic faith, but in conflict with the institution. After a biographic chapter describing key parts of Weil's life, B. chose three aspects of Weil's experience and commitment to examine her life and ideas. First, in dialogue with liberation theology's development of the preferential option for the poor, B. examines Weil's encounter with the poor. According to B., Weil's identification of love and justice, and her attention to the afflicted leading her to join them in their reality, anticipated later insights provided by French work-priests and Latin American liberation theology. Second, B. shows Weil's path to her mystical encounter with Jesus and his cross. Weil's christological revelation confirms her love for the afflicted. Third, B. presents Weil as a "paradoxical testimony" to a concrete embodiment of her love for Christ, without fitting into usual norms, keeping herself as an unaffiliated mystic marked by a wounded intellectual and social praxis in obedience to the crucified God.

B.'s analysis of Weil's life and spiritual reflections fulfills her proposal, presenting a "paradoxical testimony" of a mystic of love in the midst of very difficult times and institutional conflicts. This book is an inspirational reading for our times, especially for those who seek faith, love, and justice with the poor, between social conflicts and personal distress.

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