

viction. St. Paul's appeal to the natural knowledge of God in Acts 17 and Romans 1 and 2 seems undeniable, and arguments to wish it away correspondingly lame. Barr provocatively claims that such natural theology has its source not in Greek but in Jewish thought (p. 51), and that features of the 'God of the Philosophers' are to be found in Scripture. All this seems to be well and convincingly argued.

Where Professor Barr is less convincing is when he presses his thesis further. For example, in a brief treatment of the prophets, he claims that they declare that God acts on the basis of the same principles as those which humans can discover by reason (p. 95). Even if this is true, this does not show that the prophets assume a natural knowledge of God in Professor Barr's sense. Or if it does, then almost anything does. The fact that the prophets reason with the covenant people no more shows that there are truths about God known, or capable of being known, by reason than the fact that the general use of, say, the subordinate clause, shows that this reveals something about God. Similar remarks could be made about his treatment of Jesus' parables (p. 190). The author seems to slide from arguing that there is a natural knowledge of God to arguing that there are truths naturally made known by God, but the latter is hardly disputable nor disputed. But this tendency to overstate things must not be allowed to detract from the importance and persuasiveness of Professor Barr's central thesis.

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Concise Dictionary of Religion **Irving Hexham**

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1993, 245 pp., £8.99, pb, ISBN 0-8510-645-5

RÉSUMÉ

Hexham a essayé, non sans succès, de réaliser le dessein impossible de réunir un grand nombre d'informations sous une forme très concentrée. Ce dictionnaire des religions se propose de donner 'des renseignements fiables et rapidement accessibles sur des milliers de sujets ayant trait à la religion'. Outre le christianisme, le judaïsme, l'islam, le bouddhisme et l'hindouisme, qui reçoivent un traitement abon-

dant, l'ouvrage contient de nombreux articles sur les sectes, sur de nouvelles religions, ainsi que sur des traditions religieuses moins connues.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Hexham verfolgt—und realisiert auch im Großen und Ganzen—das unmögliche Ziel, ein Forschungsmittel bereitzustellen, das eine große Fülle von Informationen in äußerst konzentrierter Form darbieten soll. Das Lexikon soll einen schnellen Zugriff auf zuverlässige Informationen zu tausenden von Themen ermöglichen, die einen Bezug zur Religion aufweisen. Zusätzlich zu der ausführlichen Behandlung von Christentum, Judentum, Islam, Buddhismus und Hinduismus finden sich zahlreiche Artikel zu Sekten, neuen Religionen und weniger bekannten religiösen Traditionen.

Hexham has attempted—and largely achieved—the impossible task of providing 'a research tool which brings together a vast amount of information in a highly condensed form'. The dictionary is intended to give 'quick access to reliable information on thousands of topics related to religion. In addition to extensive coverage of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, there are numerous articles on sects, new religions and less-known religious traditions'.

Having been in the business of teaching introductory courses in religious studies to undergraduates for 20 years, Hexham knows the need for 'a book which would be of practical value to the struggling student'. He holds a PhD from Bristol University, and acknowledges his indebtedness to two British scholars in particular, Ninian Smart and Fred Wellbourn. At present he is an Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

The comprehensiveness of the dictionary can be illustrated by noting the following among no less than 203 entries under the letter A: Abelard, Abortion, Absolute, African Independent Churches, Age of Aquarius, Ahmadaya, Amida, Amulets, Anselm, Aquinas, Arianism, Assassins, and Augustine.

Here are three entries which illustrate the admirable conciseness at which he is constantly aiming (the capitals indicate words covered in other entries):

A PRIORI: known by reason alone prior to sense experience; knowledge which

depends on reasoning and intuition and is not dependent on empirical observation or fact.

ELIADE, Mircea, (1907–1988): Romanian historian of Religion, whose original ambition was to be a novelist. He became professor of RELIGIOUS STUDIES at the University of Chicago in 1956 from where he exercised a vast influence on the development of religious studies. Eliade's early novels, only recently translated into English, are said to have a FASCIST tinge, raising doubts about some of his philosophical assumptions. His work reflects an interest in a highly MYTHICAL abstract spirituality which has been highly criticized by anthropologists and historians for its detachment from EMPIRICAL reality. It includes *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom* (1936), *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1954) and *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (1958).

POSTMODERNISM: There are various contemporary understandings of the meaning of Postmodernism, the most popular being a largely literary INTELLECTUAL movement strongly influenced by French PHILOSOPHY, especially the views of DERRIDA and FOUCAULT, which seeks to DECONSTRUCT texts to arrive at new insights into their meaning. A more general use of the term implies a movement which recognises the limitations of locality and ethnicity implicit in ENLIGHTENMENT and other forms of MODERN thinking such as MARXISM. In the latter sense postmodernism is an attempt to gain a HOLISTIC view of things which goes beyond the limitations of nineteenth-century and earlier forms of twentieth-century IDEOLOGIES.

Not many libraries can afford to buy the sixteen volumes of Eliade's *Encyclopedia of Religion*. But every Theological Library and many students of theology and/or religion ought to have access to this useful resource.

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Awakening to a World in Need. The Recovery of Evangelical Social Concern

Timothy Chester

Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993, 240 pp., £9.99 ISBN 0–85110–989–6

RÉSUMÉ

Il s'agit d'une histoire très complète et parfois détaillée de l'intérêt croissant pour les préoccupations sociales parmi les croyants évangéliques depuis les années 60 jusqu'à nos jours. Pratiquement seuls les Etats-Unis et la Grande Bretagne sont pris en considération. L'ouvrage est publié à l'occasion du 25e anniversaire de 'Tear Fund' (prototype britannique du SEL en France et en Belgique). Il n'y a guère de démonstration théologique; mais on y trouve une bonne présentation des débats sur les rapports entre les préoccupations sociales de l'Eglise et l'évangélisation.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Es handelt sich hierbei um eine äußerst umfangreiche und z.T. detaillierte Darstellung, die die zunehmende Betonung sozialer Anliegen unter Evangelikalen in der Zeit von 1960 bis heute dokumentiert. Sie befaßt sich nahezu ausschließlich mit Großbritannien und den USA. Das Buch markiert den 25. Geburtstag von „Tear Fund“. Es bietet nicht eine theologische Argumentation, sondern stellt die Debatte um die Relation von sozialen Anliegen und Evangelisation dar.

This is a very full, and in places detailed, history of the increase of an emphasis on social concern amongst evangelicals from the 1960s to the present day. It is almost entirely concerned with Britain and USA. It is well researched and well written, relying constantly on quotations from the main actors and conference documents.

Significantly, it shows that the resurgence of social concern followed to a considerable extent the exposure of evangelicals to the facts of social need. Television played a considerable part in this as is documented by the effects of major international disasters on giving to Tear Fund. Speakers from the Third World at international conferences were also important. Chester does not quite do justice to the already on-going social work before 1960.