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Review: 'Deepening Christian Life: Integrating Faith and Maturity'

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The focus here is "lay" style in contrast to "clerical." The "lay" opposition is "protesting against a narrowing down of Christian theology . . . and is demanding an understanding of revelation in the context of the history of the world and the actual present . . . their literary work stands in an immediate relationship to the vision and exposition of the biblical revelation and there is a fluent translation from it to theology."

The authors selected are united in their appreciation of the *sensibilia* of the form of Christ revealing the Father. In Dante eros is refined by an agape that leads through hell to the throne of God. Man and woman together stand seeing God. John of the Cross walks the same road, this time alone, through the night of hell in a mystical solitude with God. With John, after Luther, emerges a "modern orientation toward personal, experiential, and psychological categories." Although in the same Augustinian tradition as Luther, Pascal emphasizes the experience of faith rather than the assurance of faith. "This experience of faith is a verification, at once both subjective and objective, of the Christian mystery in the believing person and . . . stands in outright opposition to the light of reason." Faith has its own eyes.

The Protestant Hamann, on the eve of idealism, affirms that the revelation in the flesh is the entire meaning of the Word. He is the prophet of the kenotic Christ. The Russian Soloviev is a thinker of universal genius, anticipating Teilhard with a vision of the movement of the world-soul in culture and in history toward Christ, yet in the presence of the Antichrist. Hopkins, in a sharp contrast to Soloviev, builds "a bridge between poetic aesthetics and the Ignatian exercises." He represents the English turn to the imagination which captures *haecceitas*. In the absolutely unique, God's glory shines founderingly amidst shipwrecks. Balthasar concludes with a study of Péguy, who in the opening years of the twentieth century is a unifier of things that cannot be joined: Left and Right, Church and Socialism, Tradition and Modernity. Péguy is a shrewd peasant in awe of Joan of Arc: "A man humbled in every way has been granted the privilege of uttering words, beyond all fluency of theology to date, spoken as from the centre of God's fatherly heart, that reveals the glory of the kenosis."

Balthasar makes no system of these seven "lay" theologians. He cannot. But he can hear them make music together: "their mutual harmony proves that they all play from the same score (which both transcends and embraces them)." For Balthasar the truth and beauty of Christ are symphonic. These volumes certainly belong in a college or university library.

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DANIEL P. SHERIDAN

Deepening Christian Life: Integrating Faith and Maturity. By Francis J. Buckley, S.J. and Donald B. Sharp, S.J. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987. xi + 150 pages. \$7.95 (paper).

In their preface, Francis Buckley, professor of theology at the University of San Francisco, and Donald Sharp, professor of religious studies at Gonzaga University, state the purpose of this book. "It is an attempt to put the message of Vatican II into a new framework, one which will speak to all Christians and indeed to everyone interested in religion." This book, they continue, "is a new theological synthesis, an integrating of faith and maturity grounded in psychol-

ogy rather than philosophy. The whole of Christian faith, the principle of Christian moral and spiritual life, liturgical and personal prayer, and devotion—the classic creed, code, and cult—are interwoven with the themes of humanistic psychology.”

Could one imagine a more ambitious goal for a relatively short book? The attempt to achieve this purpose may be both the strength and the weakness of this volume.

In the eighteen pages that comprise part one of the book, the authors examine five basic human needs that have to be met in order for one to achieve human maturity: security, affection, acceptance, integration and growth. Acceptance includes not only acceptance by others, but also self-acceptance, and acceptance of others. Integration is of two kinds, interior (involving reflection on experience, freedom and self-control) and exterior (including horizontal and vertical integration).

Part two, on Christian maturity, takes up the rest of the book. In an introductory chapter Christian maturity is described in terms of wholehearted love and freedom. Each of the remaining five chapters takes as its heading one of the five basic human needs. A wide net of topics gleaned from the documents of Vatican II are then treated under the chapter heading.

The strength of the book is that it brings together many of the basic truths of the Church. These are presented in a clear way with documentation from scripture and from the documents of Vatican II.

The weakness lies in the fact that the connection between the variety of topics among themselves and with the chapter heading appear at times somewhat loose. So, for example, chapter five, “Acceptance and Christian Maturity,” includes a rather lengthy treatment of several traditional aspects of the Eucharist, and an equally long one on the four “marks” of the church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic. Chapter six, “Integration and Christian maturity,” discusses among other topics the sacrament of reconciliation, the role of the priest in the parish, the mission of the bishop, the sacrament of Holy Orders, and conscience formation.

This book serves as a basic review of many of the themes of Vatican II. Hence, it could well find a place in an introductory course on Post Vatican II Catholicism. To those with more sophisticated background it might appear as too much of a rehash. While the book does make some valuable connection between the basic truths of the Catholic faith and some of “the themes of humanistic psychology,” it might disappoint those readers and students looking for a tighter integration.

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WILLIAM P. ROBERTS

Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power. By Rita Nakashima Brock. New York: Crossroad, 1988. xvii + 130 pages. \$16.95.

Rita Nakashima Brock's *Journeys by Heart*, winner of the 1988 Crossroad/Continuum Women's Studies Award, brings together a number of themes which have coalesced in contemporary feminist thought: embodiment, relation, empowerment. Using the metaphor of “heart,” Brock develops an analysis of the human, Christ, and the Trinity which draws on psychoanalytic theory, espe-