

BOOKS

"Religious Belief in a Scientific Age," by Father Charles R. Meyer. The Thomas More Press (Chicago, 1983). 290 pp., \$15.95.

Reviewed by John F. Haught
NC News Service

Father Meyer, a seminary professor of systematic theology, argues that the traditional doctrines of God, creation, original sin, angels and devils, death, resurrection, heaven, hell, purgatory and the divine-human consciousness of Christ can be made plausible when viewed in terms of some interesting new scientific discoveries and conjectures.

For example, modern genetics renders feasible the doctrine of original sin as something inherited; or the speculation by some scientists that there are cosmic dimensions beyond yet interacting with those immediately obvious to us which can provide a fitting context for our appreciating the possibility of angels,

the resurrection of Jesus, the survival of the soul after death, and the conjunction of two distinct types of consciousness in Christ.

Father Meyer's book will possibly be titillating and even entertaining to some readers. It may offer some imaginative suggestions to those familiar with modern physics or biology.

I suspect, though, that it will have its largest appeal to those who are excited about UFO's, the Bermuda triangle, telekinesis, Kirulian photography and the like.

Although the author is familiar with more solidly established scientific material and at times makes valuable correlations, too much of the book is based on conjecture rather than on solidly established scholarly research. This is a strange way to retrieve the meaning and truth of Christianity in a scientific age.

That the image on the Shroud of Turin may, for example, have been imprinted as Jesus rose into another dimension could pique our curiosity, but it does nothing to evoke a religious response to the good news.

In spite of occasional displays of imagination this work falls into the genre of now largely discredited "concordist" attempts to harmonize science and religion.

"Life in the Spirit: Reflections, Meditations, Prayers," by Mother Teresa of Calcutta, edited by Kathryn Spink. Harper and Row (San Francisco, 1983). 88 pp., \$8.95.

Reviewed by Father Jay C. Haskin
NC News Service

The story of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, the order she founded (Missionaries of Charity) and her co-workers has previously been told by Kathryn Spink in "The Miracle of Love," which was first produced in Great Britain under the title "For the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God." In "Life in the Spirit" she presents a selection of 28 different aspects of Mother Teresa's work. Each segment begins with a quotation from Scripture followed by her thoughts written in bold type, and by passages and prayers written by people who work with Mother Teresa or who have been associated with her, written in ordinary type.

This inspirational work stresses themes central to the life and ministry of Mother Teresa, including prayer, silence, joy, holiness, the example of Mary, loving in deed, kindness and suffering. Her thoughts have a special poignancy for people in developed nations where she identifies the spiritual poverty as greater than the physical poverty of the people she assists directly. Consider, for example, the following, based on the Gospel passage of Matthew 25: 40, 42-43:

"The 'shut-in,' the unwanted, the unloved, the alcoholics, the dying destitutes, the abandoned and the lonely, the outcasts and the untouchables, the leprosy sufferers — all those who are a burden to human society — who have lost all hope and faith in life — who have forgotten how to smile — who have lost the sensibility of the warm hand — touch of love and friendship — they look to us for comfort. If we turn our back on them, we turn it on Christ, and the hour of our death we shall be judged if we have recognized Christ in them, and on what we have done for them and to them. There will only be two ways, 'come and go.'"

People in need are not seen just as "objects of pity" but as a true reflection of Christ himself. Recall, as Mother Teresa states, "Christ came into the world to put charity in its proper perspective."

People wishing to offer assistance or interested in the work of the Missionaries of Charity, Mother Teresa or the co-workers will find appropriate addresses listed on the final page.

The strength of this work arises from lived experience — goodness and faith rooted in God, lived, and then expressed in word. An index or table of contents arranged thematically would have been helpful for those seeking spiritual insight or nourishment in a particular area.

The spiritual treasures, however, contained in this short work are clear, succinct and conveyed by simple imagery.

Mother Teresa serves as a conduit for God's love and she, to use one of her practical images, shines brightly as a reflection of the light of Christ.

(Father Haskin is a regular reviewer for The Vermont Catholic Tribune and Best Sellers.)

Adoration

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will begin at noon, Thursday, Dec. 1 at Blessed Sacrament Church. The afternoon of devotions includes rosary at 12:15 p.m. and benediction of the

Blessed Sacrament at 5 p.m., preceding the regular 5:20 p.m. Mass. The intention this month is "That the incarnation take place in our hearts," according to Wilma Higgs, organizer.

WANTED: (KOY-NAW-KNEE-AH)

Families interested in becoming a part of "Kamp Koinonia" in '84 ... SAVE THIS ARTICLE.

"KAMP KOINONIA is a 296 acre tract of land, located between Canandaigua and Penn Yan. It has 21 buildings, main lodge, chapel, cabins, campsites, hookups, swimming pool. Many Diocese families have used and enjoyed the facility over the past 6 years. Now the '84 season is in the making. You can be a part of this project.

"Kamp Koinonia" is "our Center for Family Renewal" to participate — Send a self-addressed stamped #10 envelope TODAY. To: KAMP KOINONIA '84, Box 111, Honey Falls, N.Y. 14472-0111. Att.: Earle McIvor.

Questions/Comments call me @ 624-4631 after 6 p.m.
 We believe in Family Renewal and would like to be a part of KAMP KOINONIA in '84!

'It will have its largest appeal to those who are excited about UFO's, the Bermuda triangle, telekinesis, Kirulian photography and the like.'

Father Meyer is not a biblical fundamentalist, but there is an aura of dogmatic fundamentalism in his attempt to keep intact a rather literalist understanding of the doctrines of original sin, angels, eschatology, etc. And he finds in science and writings on the paranormal experiences a framework within which to enshrine rather than reinterpret these doctrines in a radical way.

As a result the religious depth and power of the biblical symbols that underlie these doctrines remain untouched. We are still left with the question: What do these symbols really mean in a scientific age?

(Haught is an associate professor of theology at Georgetown University and the author of "Nature and Purpose.")

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

World War II Memories

From Father Gerry Krieg, ex-army chaplain:

"What an unusual happenstance! I was thinking about you last week and resolved to look you up in the directory to drop a line, and here in my box is your letter. It was precious and heartwarming. How often I've thought of our visit to the Anglican church where we prayed so devoutly — and then realized! I've thought of it in connection with our own liturgists' removal of the Blessed Sacrament to a place 'on the wall.'"

I enjoyed the reprints of your articles in the Courier-Journal. What you wrote about loyalty to the Holy Father needs to be said over and over again...It's a long time since that day we mutually enjoyed the company of Bruce Marshall and Father Coughlin."

Comment: Father Krieg of Detroit was an army chaplain in a neighboring unit in England in 1944. We used to meet and go to a construction camp outside Cambridge, where he heard confessions and celebrated Mass for German prisoners in a stockade, and I for Irish laborers.

His letter smilingly recalls our stopping at a beautiful church, with an outside statue of a friar and a dog, which we assumed was a Dominican church. It turned out to be the Anglican church of St. Giles.

Thinking it was a Catholic church we were puzzled that the Blessed Sacrament was not on the altar, but in a wall-safe on the side wall, with a light burning by. We wondered was this a Dominican peculiarity, until we found a batch of prayer books with the Thirty-Nine Articles at the church entrance.

In 1951, Father Krieg was assistant to the famous radio orator, Father Charles Coughlin at the Shrine of the Little Flower, Detroit, and I was taking a year at the Basilian Assumption College in Windsor, Canada, just across the river.

The austere Father John O'Loane was the superior of the Basilian community. Father Stan

Murphy, brother of the late Father John Murphy, first president of St. John Fisher College, was director of the Christian Culture series, from Assumption College. He had as a guest speaker, the Scots convert novelist Bruce Marshall. The lecture was to be in Detroit.

Because I had an automobile, I was invited to be chauffeur for the Basilians, and for Mr. Marshall, who was anxious to meet Father Coughlin. Thanks to Father Krieg we met Father Coughlin at the rectory, and he invited us out to dinner: a party of six.

One of Marshall's books, "Vespers in Vienna," had recently been made into a motion picture entitled "The Red Danube," with a superb cast including Ethel Barrymore and Walter Pidgeon. It is a gripping story of the horrible Russian forced repatriation of displaced persons after World War II, and the ineptness of the Allies to save them from certain enslavement and often death. The heroine, in fact, committed suicide rather than be repatriated.

I asked, "Mr. Marshall, I saw your book made into a movie and liked it very much. Were you satisfied with the movie?" He sighed in contented reminiscence: "Just before the preview I had three martinis." "Yes. But the question is, were you satisfied with the way the movie was produced?" "Of course: I was!"

To this day I am not sure if he meant that anyone with three martinis would of course be satisfied, or that he was satisfied with the production, qua talis.

Marshall's books are still fascinating reading. I have read "The World, the Flesh and Father Smith" eight times.

Two novels I have been recommending, viz. "The Spike" and "Morinbo" both co-authored by De Berchgrave and Moss, demonstrate that Soviet espionage and ruthlessness of today are a consistent continuation in 1983 of the espionage and enslavement policies of the Soviets in 1946. I wonder do our pacifists realize what they are advocating.



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DO IT FOR CHRISTMAS

TIP FOR CHRISTMAS SHOPPERS

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