

REVIEWS

THE CHURCH AND THE NATIONS. A study of minority Catholicism in England, India, Norway, America, Lebanon, Australia, Wales, Japan, the Netherlands, Vietnam, Brazil, Egypt, Southern Africa, and among the Lele of the Congo. Edited by Adrian Hastings. (Sheed and Ward; 21s.)

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH. By Charles Courturier, S.J. Translated by A. V. Littledale. Introduction by M. J. Walsh, S.M.A. (Darton, Longman and Todd; 10s. 6d.)

The mission of the Church, like that of Christ, may be summed up as redemptive incarnation; the body of Christ takes different forms in different societies; none of these is to be identified with the Church, but each makes its unique contribution to the fulness of her life. Opposite principles are reconciled in the Church—divine and human, eternal and temporal, unity and diversity—and each has to be given its due.

That, in brief, is the theme of these two books, but their approaches are different, and to some extent complementary. *The Church and the Nations* gives a descriptive account of the actual state of the Church and its relation to secular culture in fourteen countries. *The Mission of the Church* presents a synoptic view of the principles governing the Church's missionary activity; it is a work of synthesis, based on the many theological and sociological studies which have been published in France, and acknowledging a particular debt to Fr de Menasse, O.P. In both books there is a clear recognition that in most countries today Catholics are a minority living in a pluralistic society, governed by a more or less secular state. And we should perhaps regard this situation as a 'normal' one, if the Church's destiny is to be a stumbling-block, and at the same time truly universal.

Fr Hastings has collected some very able and interesting essays in *The Church and the Nations*. The writers vary in the use they make of the techniques of history, sociology, or even anthropology—there is a fascinating study by Mary Douglas of the Lele, a remote and primitive tribe to which Christianity has penetrated only in the last twenty-five years, with far-reaching effects on the structure of tribal life. The other essays are concerned with more sophisticated cultures: Egypt and the Lebanon, for example, received the Christian preaching in apostolic times, and their problem is that of having several ancient rites, some of them schismatic or heretical. In several other countries with a long cultural tradition the Church is regarded as a late intruder, alien to the national *ethos*. But all the writers are keenly aware that the Church can

and should be local as well as universal. Catholics, though a minority, should be integral members of their own society, free from the exclusive, inferior-yet-superior attitude of the ghetto, yet always aware too that 'we have an everlasting city, but not here'.

Fr Couturier's aim is that of 'clarifying the theological principles and sociological laws which combine to govern missionary action'. He outlines (most concisely) the part which 'mission' plays in God's plan; then he considers in turn the first approach of the Church to a new territory, the changes which inevitably follow the interaction between Christian teaching and the local cultural traditions (particularly in morals, family life and social relations), and finally the growth of the local church to maturity. The author's concern is to expose the underlying principles; concrete problems in particular countries are mentioned only by way of example, and that sparingly. This is an austere and closely argued book, less interesting for the general reader than *The Church and the Nations*, but more fundamental and systematic in its approach.

A.G.

MISSIONARY SPIRITUALITY. By Bernard J. Kelly, c.s.sp. (M. H. Gill & Son Ltd, Dublin; 15s.)

There are many good things in this book. Although containing only 165 pages, it is packed tight with matter, being closely printed—too closely printed for comfort, I should say, for any but the young.

For this very reason, however, as well as for many others, such a book should have had an index. At this precise moment I should like to have recourse to the index. For I want to say that the book will be frightening in its intensity to any but a saint or a young missionary; for there seems to be no respite in this exceedingly arduous life. Yet the author did mention the words 'relax' and 'recreation' somewhere, but exactly where would take me a long time to find.

Nevertheless, intense as the book strikes me as being, and unrelieved by any illustrations or anecdotes, amusing or otherwise, it is full of good things, and should be read slowly. The missionary's objective is the conversion of the pagan, the salvation of souls, and the glory of God, which is consoling doctrine for those who do not seem to have been very successful in converting anybody. The missionary has to learn how to deal with all types: among the laity, the *rudes* of St Vincent de Paul, or among the young native seminarists, the bumptious one; though Fr Bernard Kelly would not use so crude a word as that. The aspiring missionary would do better to read papal encyclicals, especially that of Benedict XV (the index would have given the page, and I, then, the title) rather than magazine articles on the missions,