

theologians have been sharply criticised, especially the two documents published by the CDF in 1984 and 1986, and the responses they have made ('clarifications', as they are sometimes called) to such criticisms, generally to the effect that the criticisms are seen not to apply. What is made very clear is the *openness* of liberation theology to other theological models, rather than being narrow and exclusive as is sometimes feared. Where there are still problems, such as with the notion of an *iglesia popular*, in spite of the clear denial of liberation theologians that this term signifies an alternative body, this is openly admitted and the need for 'clarifications' is acknowledged. The section on Christology discusses the work of Sobrino, including what looks like his retraction of an apparently Adoptionist view in his *Christology at the Crossroads*. It's a pity that this work was selected as 'the most developed' Christology on the Latin American scene, as Sobrino is in fact a European, did much of this work in Tübingen, and is more influenced in this work by Moltmann's writing than by anything else. However urgent and necessary the praxis from which and about which he writes, his case is not helped by his contemptuous dismissal of metaphysics.

The last chapter discusses other Third World theologies from Africa and Asia which are confirming many of the insights of Latin American theologians, and the book concludes with brief interviews with Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff.

Apart from its usefulness as a study of many of the meatier bones of contention in the debate, the book will serve well as a general introduction to liberation theology, and for those who have already read much of the more readily available SCM/Orbis stuff its end-notes will point towards some harder-to-come-by material from many parts of the world.

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SEXUAL INTEGRITY: THE ANSWER TO AIDS by Jack Dominian, *Darton, Longman & Todd, 1987, Pp. vii + 149, £4.95.*

In this book Dr Dominian says some important things about christian attitudes to those with Aids:

It is vital to make the patient feel acknowledged and accepted and loved as a person received by both man and God unconditionally. (p.10)

Everyone, but particularly the Christian community, has a duty to show love and compassion to the infected and those with the disease. We need to ensure that the infected person remains our spouse or friend, colleague or employee. (p. 11)

Simple, basic truths like this have been said often before, but need to be said again and again. From that point of view, this book is to be welcomed. But beyond that, Dominian does little to advance our understanding of Aids or our ability to cope with it.

The title is misleading. From it one might expect the book to look closely at some connections between sexual ethics and Aids. In fact beyond the first few pages it is hardly about Aids at all. It is devoted mainly to outlining Dr Dominian's views on the place of sex and human development and human relationships. He says early on:

Prevention remains the best and only 'cure' we have at the present time. Since the infection is most commonly transmitted sexually the best form of prevention is to confine sexual intercourse to one partner within marriage. The whole of this book will examine the implications of such an attitude which is familiar to the Christian and other religions but has become unfashionable in recent times (p. 10).

This amounts to a declaration that the book will be about the promotion of marriage as a hygiene measure: the way to stop deaths from Aids is to have sex only within marriage: this being so, it has to be shown that ordinary human development leads to marriage and that sexual relationships outside marriage are unsatisfactory. The rest of the book is largely devoted to carrying out that programme. There is a chapter on homosexuality and Aids. This is natural, since in our society male homosexuality is particularly closely associated with Aids, and there is much good sense in this chapter. But then it is a little odd, given that association, that the rest of the book is concerned with heterosexual behaviour and marriage. There follows a review of

recent sexual behaviour in the west, and then Dr Dominian's own views on sex and marriage are set out and applied. Some of what Dominian says in these chapters too is sensible, but still this approach does not seem very satisfactory. Of course if Aids is sexually transmitted, then if we all confined our sexual activity to our marriage partner all would be well. We might ask whether we need a whole book to tell us so, or whether our ability as a society to cope with Aids is much enhanced by being told about the place of sex in marriage.

In all this Aids rather gets left behind. It, or the virus that causes it, generally gets a mention at the beginning or end of each chapter, but it is never integral to the argument and generally has the look of an afterthought. Overall the book gives the impression of having been written without much concern for the problems raised by Aids. This is true even where they touch on Dominian's thesis. For example, he nowhere talks seriously about education in safer sex practices. He denounces the government campaign to promote the use of condoms, and comments: 'Good health needs more than condoms: it requires appropriate attitudes. Sooner or later these have to be rediscovered by society. (p. 77) It may be true that we need to revise our sexual attitudes, but there are plenty of alternatives to Dr Dominian's vision of sexual integrity, among these, the cultivation of non-penetrative sex techniques and taking a lot more care in our choice of sexual partner. (The latter, by the way, has also formed a part of the government campaigns.) No doubt these alternatives to confining sex to marriage would be repugnant to Catholics on theological grounds. But Dominian is not writing as a theologian: here he is recommending his view on health grounds, not as a way of doing the will of God but as a way of avoiding disease and death. From this perspective there is another serious problem he fails to address. 'Sooner or later' we will have to change our attitudes. But attitudes change slowly. In the time that it takes we may all hope that a cure for Aids will be discovered. And it is not a merely pious hope; much effort is being put into the search. If one is found, that will render Dominian's argument out of date. There will be no need to reform our attitudes in the direction he advocates. There is of course a great deal of sense in urging sexual restraint on people meanwhile, but this is a different matter from trying to inculcate a new permanent sexual ethic. Once a cure is found, it will be easier to stay alive by taking a pill than by reforming our behaviour, and many will sigh with relief that they can go back to their old unchristian ways. This is a danger with all attempts (and there have been a number recently) to promote traditional sexual ethics on grounds of hygiene. There may be much to recommend Dominian's theory of 'sexual integrity' but it is hardly credible to put it forward as an answer to Aids. Though we may want to say that christian ethics are connected with human well-being, yet the connection must be a broader one than that it helps us to avoid disease.

One point specifically related to Aids should be mentioned. A repeated inaccuracy in the book is the name given to the virus responsible for Aids. This is throughout referred to as HTLVIII/LAV, whereas for some time now, certainly since before the book was written, the internationally agreed name is HIV. This kind of inaccuracy does not inspire confidence in Dr Dominian's familiarity with the subject.

Theologically, too, the book leaves a lot to be desired. Apart from the rather odd notion that the unity of the Trinity is a sexual one (p. 148), there is some disturbingly insensitive language about Aids. For example, on p. 13 we find:

Each successive generation has to exercise love and compassion and realise a little bit more of the kingdom of God. And this is precisely what I believe Aids is meant to achieve.

It is surely verging on blasphemy to suggest that God sends us such dreadful diseases, at mortal cost to the sufferers, so that we can learn compassion (and also more about the meaning of sexuality, as he goes on to say). Again, on p. 14 he says:

For too long Christianity has relied too heavily on biology for its sexual thinking. The time is now appropriate to move from biology to person and love and I believe Aids is God's way of acknowledging this transformation.

We can surely do without that kind of divine acknowledgement.

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