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New Religious Movements in the Catholic Church

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Peer Reviewed

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State” in light of the council and especially the papacy of John Paul II. The most appealing article in this section for teachers is probably by John Sniegocki who boldly, baldly, and bravely explores evolving church positions on war, peace, and nonviolence.

Part III, “The Encounter with Other Christians and Religions,” is a mixed bag of work that takes as its touchstone *Unitatis redintegratio* and *Nostra aetate*. Elaine Catherine MacMillan identifies Vatican II as the Catholic component of a twentieth-century “conciliar renaissance” among other Christian churches; she offers an interesting context, although her discussion of conciliar history and related questions is imprecise. Paul F. Knitter’s gently provocative “Bridge or Boundary? Vatican II and Other Religions” is probably the volume’s strongest article. The next contribution, by Reid B. Locklin, is a refreshing and intriguing lesson from church history titled, “Interreligious *Prudentia*: Wisdom from Peter Lombard for the Post-Conciliar Church.” Elena Procaro-Foley’s “Heir or Orphan? Theological Evolution and Devolution before and after *Nostra Aetate*” will please teachers looking for a concise portrait of key developments in Jewish-Catholic relations shortly before, at, and since the council, although they will have to look elsewhere for a description of the Pius XII controversy. The final article does not quite seem to fit into the volume. Phillip Luke Sinitiere’s “Catholic Evangelicals and Ancient Christianity” is concerned with evangelicals interested in Catholicism, hardly a new story for CTS members, and its link with the council’s ecumenical impulse is implicit at best.

Anyone who has ever shepherded a collected volume knows that the only thing more difficult than editing one is reviewing it. When attempting the latter task, it is fair to ask if the volume achieves its stated goals and whether it hangs together in a useful way or is best taken in sections or single articles. This collection largely achieves its stated goals, with some articles succeeding more admirably than others, as expected. My sense is that the present volume would not satisfy a professor looking for comprehensive coverage, but that same teacher would be pleased by individual contributions that examine, apply, and push specific subjects forward in informed ways.

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New Religious Movements in the Catholic Church. Edited by Michael A. Hayes. New York: Burns & Oates/Continuum, 2005. 182 pages. \$25.95 (paper).

It is hard to argue with the claim that the rise of new religious movements in the Catholic Church testifies to dissatisfaction with the everyday experience of the community of faith. If an individual were fulfilled by the liturgy and at peace with the direction in which the universal church was moving, why take on an extra way of being a Catholic Christian? Membership in Sant’ Egidio or Focolare or L’Arche or Comunione and Liberazione are all signs, in their different ways, that some people at least are not content.

The “new religious movements” that are the focus of the essays in this

British collection are actually nothing new in the church. From the beginnings of monasticism to the flowering of women's religious congregations in eighteenth and in nineteenth century Europe, the Church has always seen new movements arising, each claiming a role for the Holy Spirit in the gifts of their charismatic founder and each clearly attracting individuals not adequately challenged or fulfilled by the previously available options. What must surely be in question, however, is whether the suspicion that met the emergence of the Franciscans or the Jesuits needs to be similarly extended to Opus Dei or the Legionaries of Christ (this last a somewhat scary and cultish example not mentioned at all in the present collection). Are the new movements truly a way that the Spirit is calling at least some to a deeper involvement in the Christian life? Or is their primary significance that they issue a challenge to a tired church to look to its laurels?

The nine essays that make up the present collection are a more or less upbeat set of offerings. After Charles Whitehead's cautious introductory chapter explaining the terminology and situating the movements in the life of the Church, the remaining chapters present, respectively, Sant' Egidio (Mario Marazziti and Austen Ivereigh), the Community of the Beatitudes (François-Xavier Wallays), Communion and Liberation (Javier Prades López), the Schönstatt Community (Bryan Cunningham), L'Arche (Christine McGrievy), the Neocatechumenate (Kiko Argüello), the Christian Life movement (Luis Fernando Figari) and Focolare (Chiara Lubich). While they vary in the degree to which they each move beyond a simple explanation of their movement's charism, all the essays are in some measure apologetic.

Inevitably in such a collection written by representatives of the movements themselves, there is little that is analytical, let alone critical. How you respond must depend a bit on your own tastes and persuasions. I found the essays on L'Arche and Sant' Egidio to be particularly interesting, that on the Neocatechumenate—currently suspected by the Vatican of seeking to set up an alternative church—to be the most intriguing, and the contribution from *Communione e Liberazione*, not surprisingly, to be full of neoconservative impulses. We are told, for example, that “when the Church loses the world, the world becomes depersonalized and alienated” (66). Poor world; I wonder whose fault it was and, by the way, does the world have an impact on the Church too? Or does it remain in its ahistorical ideality?

This is an important phenomenon to be reported on, and there are some interesting essays in this collection, but it is not the analytical study of the wellsprings of the new religious movements that we could really use. It might provide raw information for undergraduates, but it will not help much with developing an understanding of where these movements fit into the church, what their strengths and weaknesses might be, or how they reflect on the present day adequacy of the Church's liturgical life and catechesis. It would also have been helpful to have been provided with at least a word or two to identify the various contributors other than by name.