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## Book review: God's Spirit: Transforming a World in Crisis by Geiko Müller-Fahrenhol

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**JESUS, SON OF GOD, SON OF MARY, IMMANUEL.** By Donald J. Goergen, O.P. A Theology of Jesus Series. Collegeville: Glazier/Liturgical, 1995. Pp. viii + 278. \$19.95.

In the fourth and final volume of this series, Goergen attempts what he calls a "hermeneutical reconstruction" (viii). Having previously analyzed the Jesus of historiography (vols. 1-2) and the Jesus of faith (vol. 3), he now travels a familiar path in contemporary Christology by trying to account for Jesus as the incarnate Word of God without shrinking the full scope of his humanity.

The opening chapter provides a solid foundation on which to build any constructive Christology. It includes six useful criteria for doing Christology and an outright rejection of both docetic and adoptionistic approaches to the personhood of Jesus Christ. Tapping the work of Rahner and Schillebeeckx among many others, G. also offers a stimulating and instructive chapter on Jesus as a metapersonal symbol of God's presence. In somewhat random fashion, G. covers a number of hotly contested issues, one of which is Jesus' uniqueness. G. makes an extended and persuasive argument that Jesus' uniqueness consists primarily in his sinlessness, which symbolizes the singular and total integration of the divine and the human in the Word made flesh. Included in G.'s material on Jesus' sinlessness is a balanced discussion on the thorny question of impeccability, that is, the (im)possibility for Jesus to sin.

Whetting the reader's appetite on a range of topics such as Jesus Christ's preexistence, kenosis, self-knowledge, freedom, and relationship with the Holy Spirit, G. tends to summarize uncritically the work of authors who seemingly give expression to his own views. E.g., he explicates in an entirely sympathetic manner Schoonenberg's very disputable claims that the pre-incarnate Word is an apersonal mode of being, and that Jesus is a human *person*, the personal embodiment of the divine Word. Overall, G.'s "hermeneutical reconstruction" is

more like an initial sketch than a detailed portrait. It succeeds more as a string of commentaries on contemporary christological issues than as a systematic "theology of Jesus." The book is readable and occasionally provocative. Both eclectic and extensive, the bibliography is especially useful.

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**GOD'S SPIRIT: TRANSFORMING A WORLD IN CRISIS.** By Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz. Translated from the German by John Cumming. New York: Continuum, 1995. Pp. xiv + 176. \$19.95.

Müller-Fahrenholz explores the power of the Spirit to address the world's needs, via a theology of creation and the economy summarized by the notion of "ecodomy." He is most persuasive as an engaged observer of the problem, moving in short, impressionistic chapters to an analysis of the situation as a cycle of cynicism, fundamentalism, and violentism. He describes the manifold stumbling blocks between nations and peoples that result, using examples drawn from the general assemblies of the WCC in Canberra and Seoul, where the green agenda of rich nations is met with resentment by the subhuman living conditions and debt crisis of the poor nations.

Having drawn on R. J. Lifton's description of "psychic numbing" as the problem, M.'s description of the power of the Spirit as the power of truth, solidarity, and endurance is correspondingly psychological in orientation. While his borrowings from historical and systematic theology are somewhat scattershot, his pastoral sense emerges strongly in his suggestion that the consolation of the Spirit should not be seen as a privatized comfort and in his discussion of the social dimension of the forgiveness of sins. His considerable experience in the international and ecumenical context serves him well here, as he insists on the need for coordination in aid programs (and has no patience with those comfortable churches

whose global reach extends to the addition of a bit of "African" music or dancing). He is less persuasive in his broad analysis of the "postpetroleum age" to come, relying on assertions of a yet-to-be-seen increase in the importance of local and regional economies and decrease in international travel. Yet his "ecodominical covenant" remains inspiring, from his invocation of Hildegard's notion of *viriditas* to the recovery of the "primordial wisdom" of the Sabbath.

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THE CANON LAW, LETTER AND SPIRIT: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE CODE OF CANON LAW. Edited by Gerard Sheehy et al. Prepared for the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland. Collegeville: Glazier/Liturgical, 1995. Pp. xxv + 1060. \$99.95.

Relying largely on the 1917 Code (and its commentators as "a sure guide"), the Revision Process (completed in 1982), and the commentary of Luigi Chiappetta (Naples, 1988), the editors of this new commentary emphasize the Roman school and its agenda. This orientation apparently conforms to "the ecclesiological imperative" (454 n. 4) which thematizes the commentary. Given its pastoral objective, however, parish priests (especially in the British Isles) will find it a useful guide for assessing current practice. Yet a more systematic bibliography would have been helpful. Moreover, given the complexity of this collaborative enterprise, it is not surprising that the text misses out in several details.

The general reader coming upon this commentary could easily imagine that the Church has no problems or difficulties. The distinguished contributors present their remarks on each of the 1752 canons succinctly and persuasively; by and large, they combine current information with literacy. If the genre by definition means continual analysis, the footnotes reveal the underlying synthesis in the Roman primacy, another variation on legal positivism: "It is the clear view of this commentary that

the term *obsequium* of Can. 752 (with its corollary reference in Can. 753) is properly translated as 'submission' (419 n. 1). That other canonists voice other readings does not merit attention. Since the canons make no provision for dissent, questions like the appointment of bishops, the role of the Roman curia, the law of celibacy, the place of divorced and remarrieds in the Church, and the ordination of married men become non-issues. So the "submerged metaphor" which controls this commentary illustrates an outmoded ecclesiology associated with an *ecclesia docens* and an *ecclesia discens*.

Surely, if there were an "ecclesiological imperative" relative to the current *Code of Canon Law* (1983), it would be found in the ten principles of revision promulgated by the Synod of Bishops in 1967. Reflecting the broad ecclesiology of Vatican II, these principles act as norms rendering the canons both intelligible and credible. This commentary—with one exception (no. 2631)—does not refer to these principles in any recognizable way. This omission perhaps signals the unfinished business for the Church and the various canon law societies dispersed throughout the world. In the meantime, we are grateful that the editors of this handsome volume have enhanced our understanding of canonical practice. Their stance, inspired by confidence and dedication, reveals the canonist fundamentally as one who serves. They remind us once again that canon law is both a science and an art.

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"COMMUNION WITH THE CHURCH" AND THE CODE OF CANON LAW. By Robert J. Kaslyn. Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1994. Pp. vi + 297. \$99.95.

This commentary on canon 209.1, the obligation of the Christian faithful to maintain communion with the Church, recalls Pope John Paul II's observation that the Code of Canon Law reflects conciliar teachings, particularly the ecclesiology of the dogmatic and pastoral constitutions of



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