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heart, it comes to life for all of us again. For me, and I think for many of us here, hearing you read those words did that for us" (p. 57). Or again, the Dalai Lama hears in the text of Mk 3:31-35 ("Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" [Mk 3:35]) an affirmation on Jesus' part of the fundamental unity and equality of all human beings (p. 69). But he does not advert either to what doing the will of God concretely entails in the context of Mark's gospel, or to the implied criticism in this passage of Jesus' biological family.

Its excessive enthusiasm does not further the cause of ecumenical dialogue, neither does inaccurate presentation of one's own tradition. One of the Christian respondents noted: "But one of the missions of Jesus was to shift our way of relating to God from that of fear or mere doctrine to one of a relationship of love and intimacy" and "we are called to become one with the same consciousness that Christ had" (p. 78). The first point is wrong, if it means to suggest that devout Jews before and during Jesus' lifetime did not enjoy a relationship of intimacy with God; and the second point is deeply problematic, if it implies that one can somehow know the consciousness of the historical figure of Jesus.

The various responses to the Dalai Lama's remarks which followed during the question and answer period may indicate among the Christian participants for yet deeper engagement with their sacred texts on the Dalai Lama's part. Could he say more? The book teases the reader into wondering about the enormous possibilities within inter-religious dialogue, especially for those on the Christian side who share the contemplative sensibilities of their Buddhist counterparts. One would like to hear more from the Dalai Lama about his spiritual experience as he was drawn to pray in front of the image of Mary in the cave at Lourdes.

Finally, the fact needs to be continually underlined that while Buddhists meditate on and put into practice the Four Noble Truths without much preoccupation over the historical figure of the Buddha, Christians do not allow for the same detachment between the preaching and the person of Jesus. It would be a mistake to regard the figure of Jesus as an ascetic, a world-transcending contemplative, or a guide for deepening the interior life. Their respective stories reveal more contrasts than similarities, and the religious messages of their lives move in different directions.

In the end the book proves unsatisfying for two reasons, at least for this reviewer. First, the remarks of the Dalai Lama concerning the eight gospel passages are too impressionistic; they do not take into account current developments within Christian exegesis and scriptural study. The remarks miss the deep Christian engagement with history and the world. Second, dialogue is by its nature unfinished. When dialogue is fruitful, one always seeks more. Yet it sometimes appears that the desire for deep, lasting inter-religious conversation and the desire to learn about the religious other are markedly Christian than, say, a pressing concern among Buddhists. The Christian participants in the seminar appear to be more conversant with Buddhist teaching than the Dalai Lama is with theirs.

William Reiser, S.J. Department of Religious Studies College of the Holy Cross

Forthcoming Publications

Life and Death on Mt. Everest: Sherpas and Himalayan Mountaineering

Sherry B. Ortner, forthcoming fall 1999, Princeton University Press

Himalayan mountaineering has always involved the support of Sherpas, yet the Sherpas have always remained in the background. This book focuses on the relationship between the Western (and later other national) climbers and the Sherpas from the early 20th century to the present. Drawing on my various field trips since the 1960s, as well as the enormous literature of Himalayan mountaineering, I try to bring out the complex ways in which Sherpas and sahibs (the use of the term in this post-sahib era is justified in the book) have affected one another over time, transforming each other and the activity of mountaineering itself. Shifting on and off the mountains, and back and forth between the cultural backgrounds of both Sherpas and sahibs, the narrative braids together the perspectives of the two groups as they join and clash in these contexts of mortal risk.

Chapters address the Orientalism of the sahibs; the social and religious backgrounds of the Sherpas; various forms of Sherpa resistance on expeditions; the ways in which Sherpas cope with risk, accidents, and sudden death; the implications of the shared masculinity of Sherpas and sahibs; the impact of the counterculture on, and of the entry of women into the sport in the 1970s; the debates over whether the Sherpas have been "spoiled" by mountaineering; and the recent development of commercial climbing.

The book is meant as a contribution to newer forms of ethnographic writing; to debates over the impact of "modernization;" to theories of difference, power, "resistance," and social transformation; and finally to the question of the very future of ethnography in the wake of post-colonial and other critiques of anthropology.

“Anyone with an interest in contemporary Nepal should study this volume.”

Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom The Politics and Culture of Contemporary Nepal

Edited by David Gellner, UK, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, Switzerland and John Whelpton, Hong Kong

“This is a truly thematic collection with a well-defined focus on the important contemporary topics of ethnic identity and nationalism. The importance of the theme is self-evident in a world attempting to come to grips with such problems in virtually all modern states. Anyone with an interest in contemporary Nepal should study this volume.” — Michael Allen, Retired Professor of Anthropology, Sydney University, Australia

“This is an outstanding, massive scholarly study on nationalism, ethnicity, resistance, and change in Nepal.... It will undoubtedly become the standard study of political culture in Nepal.... Highly recommended for researchers, faculty, and graduate students.” — Choice

Taking a long-term view of the various processes of ethnic and national development which have occurred in Nepal, this volume examines the ways that different political regimes have framed and attempted to control them. It brings together twelve carefully chosen ethnographic and historical chapters covering the major ethnic groups and regions of Nepal. Two leading Nepali intellectuals, Prayag Raj Sharma and Harka Gurung, provide concluding commentaries.

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