

ignored? Can the aesthetic side of American Christianity be forgotten, especially in such significant areas as hymnody and architecture? Is it true that Princeton is "the center of theological existentialism"?

Nevertheless this is a highly useful book, especially as a text for undergraduates. It is irenic in tone, ecumenical in spirit, competent in craftsmanship. A study edition for adult classes in the churches is available at a lower price.

HARLAND E. HOGUE.

Reviewed in Brief

MYTHOLOGIES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD.
Edited by Samuel Noah Kramer. Quadrangle Books, \$7.50.

★ THE TEN ESSAYS which comprise this volume (also published as a Doubleday Anchor paperback) were originally presented as lectures at the 1959 meeting of the American Anthropological Association. Each essay deals with a separate ancient mythology and is written by a specialist in the field.

The rationale for the book, states the editor, is the need to take account of recent findings and to make available interpretations of the ancient mythologies "based on the actual myths as contained in the written documents of the ancients." Each of the contributors has "devoted much of his scholarly career to the translation and interpretation of relevant texts" and has used "the most up-to-date translations which he himself controlled, verified, and if necessary corrected and revised." These valuable essays should prove fascinating not only to the specialist but to anyone interested in humanistic studies or in one or more of the ancient mythologies treated (Egyptian, Greek, Indian, Hittite, etc.). JOHN H. LAVELY.

THE SILENCE OF GOD. By Helmut Thielicke. Eerdmans, \$2.50.

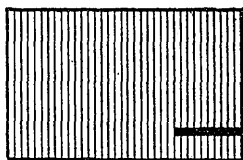
★ HELMUT THIELICKE, rector of Hamburg University, is a great preacher and a creative theologian. Such a triple-threat man deserves his triple outlet in America: Harper and Row, Muhlenberg, and Eerdmans all seem eager to print translations of his work. Thielicke often concerns himself with the emptiness of man; here he ponders the silence of God in the face of man's anxiety. Anyone who has ever been within hearing range of a Thielicke sermon knows that he will receive fortification, courage and light from reading these. Several festival sermons unrelated to the theme are also included in this translation by G. W. Bromiley.

CHARTER OF CHRISTENDOM. By John O'Meara. Macmillan, \$2.50.

★ IN THESE essays on *The City of God*—originally lectures delivered at Villanova University—Dr. O'Meara has produced a compressed and measured work of con-

siderable importance. Recent Augustinian scholars have looked for ways to do justice to the fact that while the ancient saint treated the City of God positively, he seemed to treat the City of Man both positively and negatively. This has led some of them to speak of three rather than two "cities." O'Meara argues against

this view, pointing instead to Augustine's view of a *natura* that has two kinds of potential in the City of Man. Many readers, long lost in the lengthy stretches of Augustinian historical philosophizing, may be inspired by O'Meara's really reliable guidance to begin their explorations afresh.



Letters to the Editor

Karl Barth's Impact

SIR: The event of Karl Barth on American soil will long be remembered and debated. My deep appreciation to you for bringing to those of us who could not hear him such lucid and sympathetic reports and impressions. Fr. Filas and Prof. Carnell (May 30, June 6) painted a vivid picture for me. And a general word of thanks for week by week bringing to my study strength and stimulation in the pages of the Century.

DONALD I. MACINNES.

The Presbyterian Church,
Placentia, Calif.

SIR: The burden of "Barth as Inconsistent Evangelical" (June 6) is that Barth's theology "is not entirely free of the hazards of subjectivism." In supporting his contention, Edward John Carnell utilizes the first person singular (pronoun and adjective) at least 66 times; [he] has not entirely avoided the hazards of subjectivity. If he is still searching for the "impossible possible," this is it—66 times in three and one half columns!

LANDO OTTO.

Fort Wayne, Ind.

SIR: The sentence in Prof. Carnell's article (June 6) he ought to cut out and paste in his hat is this one: "Sympathetic emotion may be interesting, but it should not be confused with objective truth." Carnell's Chicago affair with Karl Barth might be of popular interest, but his confusion regarding the objective truth of theological ideas and the freedom in which to express them is of more than casual concern.

Dr. Carnell has written much like a schoolboy, however precocious, whose admiration for his hero and impatience toward his brethren have deranged his critical sense. He even bungles Barth when he seeks to illustrate what is required by logic of the language of paradox by citing how his wife expects plain answers to plain questions, as of course any wife should. In an attempt to limit theology to what is commonly logical, Carnell restricts the possibilities of valid and proper theological idiom.

Of whatever degree of fundamentalist extremist Carnell himself might be, he plainly reveals undeniable kinship with fundamentalist hauteur when he proposes, no doubt seriously, that Cornelius Van Til ask God to forgive him for stating his honest and disciplined opinion as to what might be involved for Christendom in Barth's theology. Just how serious is Van Til's sin? Is what Van Til said worse than to suggest that the great dogmatist's way of speaking is in some cases "weasel-wording"? Carnell has a "feeling" theology of his own. . . .

WILLIAM DIXON GRAY.

Downtown Presbyterian Church,
Nashville, Tenn.

What Poetry!

SIR: For 30 years I have been an enthusiastic reader of *The Christian Century*. But what poetry you are giving us these days! The "Four Poems for Easter"—I kept thinking the next one would have some understandable thoughts of joy or hope. And now "Mountaineer" (June 6). I have been in the homes of the mountain people of our southeast and have seen their sullen women in their gray houses. By why the soapy words about this man being free, his ability to snap his leash?

HENRY T. MILLER.

North Webster, Ind.

Thanks to Frankl

SIR: Stanley Rowland's special report "Viktor Frankl and the Will to Meaning" (June 6) makes a real contribution in more clearly defining some of the issues which merit serious consideration in the field of religion and mental health. . . . The continuing influence of Sigmund Freud with his mechanistic, hedonistic approach is being widely questioned today. Mr. Rowland defines the issue in one of the clearest brief statements I have found when he states: "The major chasm seemed to be between those who took a methodological and mechanistic approach and those who took an existential ap-

Special Report

The Church in Asia

proach with special emphasis on life's meaning." Dr. Frankl's call for a new "height psychology," utilizing man's "will to meaning" to supplement traditional depth psychology, and his emphasis on the "existential vacuum" as a concomitant of our industrial civilization may offer an antidote for uncritical acceptance of Freud's emphasis on the id or libido as developed in his early study of animal psychology, which seems in too many cases to be used as a defense mechanism to enable us to escape responsibility both individually and socially for adjustment to a low level of values. . . . I shall look forward to reading the complete proceedings of the meeting when published and would welcome more articles dealing with these fundamental issues in *The Christian Century*.

JOHN C. LAZENBY.

Brookfield, Wis.

To Be Still Closer In

SIR: Since "SANE placards" are now "in" in Pen-ultimate's view (June 6), your readers might like to know that SANE has available two kinds of visual materials: a set of six large peace posters (drawings of leaders such as Schweitzer, Eisenhower and Kennedy, and appropriate quotations) for \$1.50 postpaid, and 350 assorted small cartoon stickers for \$1.00 postpaid. We invite readers to write in in order to be in.

HOMER A. JACK,
Executive Director.

SANE,
17 East 45th St.,
New York 17, N.Y.

Pro-Sallmann, Pro-Pew

SIR: If I understand the implications of Pen-ultimate (June 6), I wish to express my annoyance and disapproval. Specifically, if Sallmann's "Head of Christ" and Mr. J. Howard Pew are to be regarded as hopelessly old-fashioned and out of date, the writer of this column is out of touch with reality. Mr. Sallmann's "Head of Christ" has come closer to bringing the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches to an agreement on a particular subject than all of the columns in *The Christian Century*; I have seen it in the studies of Roman Catholic priests and of Protestant pastors. If the reference to Mr. J. Howard Pew is intended to be critical, I would invite you to name any layman in the United Presbyterian Church who has given more of himself or of his worldly goods to the church. . . . This is the kind of disrespectful treatment that tends to drive businessmen out of the larger denominations into the arms of the small sects, where they are welcomed for reasons that are not always unselfish. . . .

ROBERT KERMIT HILL.

Evanston, Ill.

✦ A PARTICIPANT in each of the three assemblies of the World Council of Churches has characterized them thus: "At Amsterdam the European theologians talked with each other; at Evanston the Americans joined in the discussions; at New Delhi the Asians said 'Enough of talk, let's get on with the job.'"

The enlarged committee of the East Asia Christian Conference at its meeting in Bangalore prior to the New Delhi Assembly decided to "go further with the job" by calling three "situation conferences" to consider the missionary thrust of the church in Asia today. These conferences, which will begin early in 1963 in Madras, Singapore and Tokyo, will draw upon three documents: *Upon the Earth*, a theology of mission prepared by the E.A.C.C.'s general secretary, D. T. Niles; *Joint Action in Mission*, a paper produced by the World Council's commission on world mission and evangelism; and *An Advisory Study*, produced by a 15-member committee of which Principal C. H. Hwang of the Tainan Theological Seminary was chairman.

These documents, together with the John R. Mott lectures and papers on world confessionalism read at Bangalore, stimulated the E.A.C.C. to propose a review of the total task in mission and the resources available to fulfill that mission in given geographic areas. The E.A.C.C. is urging that the three "situation conferences" be followed by decision-making consultations between churches and mission boards operating within geographically small areas and by an all-Asia conference on the theological issues involved in confessionalism.

The Madras, Singapore and Tokyo conferences will address themselves to these questions: What positions on the frontier of missions must be held at all costs? What growing edges of the church's work and witness must be encouraged and supported? What roles of the churches are now out of date and unproductive and should be discarded? What activities of the churches need to be handed over to other agencies? What new tasks should be undertaken? In what way can the overall mission task be thought out and carried out by the *total* people of God in each area? What are the implications of our denominational separateness and our involvement in our respective confessional families? What particular relationships and forms of administrative organization can best fulfill the need to execute together old programs which should continue and new ones which should begin?

As W. A. Visser 't Hooft told the E.A.C.C. at Prapat in 1957: "It is the responsibility of the Asian churches to point the directions. Ecumenism begins at home. Therefore it must be expressed between neighbors local and neighbors

national." The "situation conferences" will seek to persuade the churches and mission agencies to commit their resources to joint action.

The mission of the church in Asia requires not only the joint and strategic use of the total resources of all cooperating churches in specific geographic areas, but also an assessment of the effect of world confessional movements on the life and witness of the churches in Asia. The E.A.C.C. seeks to determine the definitive role of the younger churches in such movements and their influence on the church's task in Asia as a whole. The Asian churches recognize that the historic confessions are integral to their tradition and origins, but they realize that they have no confessional history of their own.

As the Asian churches express the historic faith in their own cultural situations they feel the need to reappraise the confessions in the light of the present Asian scene. Whereas theological differences contributed originally to the proliferation of denominations, serious theological differences exist today within each confession, and even within the denominations. While confessional families seek to define their peculiarity in relation to other churches, the younger churches seek to overcome these particularities so as to achieve union with adjacent church bodies.

Recognizing the values derived from their confessional origins and cherishing the ties which enable a church to serve without being dominated by the demands of the nation, the Asian churches nevertheless fear that the confessional loyalties may perpetuate and reinforce the patterns of paternalism and continuing control. They are convinced that only as the churches within a given geographic area utilize their total resources together can they properly serve and evangelize. Their witness through the confessions is confused with the commendation of a particular traditional understanding of the faith and an accepted pattern of church order. Within the confessional families the younger churches are destined to remain the weaker partners. They can be strengthened only as they achieve an increasing missionary consciousness, the success of which depends not so much on the available resources as on the missionary purpose's becoming dynamic within the actual life of the church.

The E.A.C.C. plans to call a conference following the decision-making consultations to consider the relevance of the Christian confessions to the life and growth of the younger churches, the pressures being exerted on them to formulate their own confessions of faith, and ways of participating more fully in the missionary enterprise.

WINBURN T. THOMAS.