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How Long, by Gaspar

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invites Christians to see Islam in the light of the faith by which they themselves live. "Minaret and Christian" has the special merit of showing Christians how far they have departed from Christ's teachings in their relations with Muslims.

In Chapter Five the crier's invitation, *Hayya 'alā l-falāh*, is translated "Come unto the good." The first meaning of *falāh* is success, which the author earlier on explained as "spiritual prosperity" (p. 27). But in the mind of the average Muslim it would seem to mean also, and especially, material success and prosperity in this present life. The manuals used for religious instruction in Egyptian secondary schools in the sixties emphasize this point: "The Islamic religion is the religion of honor and glory." "The Islamic religion wishes for its children glory and honor." The Qur'ān itself (e.g., 2: 189; 23: 1; and 28: 67) in referring to Muslims used the radical *f l h* in the sense of "those who are successful."

This may seem a small point, but the notion of success and prosperity in the present life is important in Islam. The ordinary Muslim cannot understand lack of success except in terms of having been unfaithful, either as an individual or as a group, to genuine Islam—so closely are "success" and "Islam" identified in his mind. Dr. Cragg implies this when he cites Khālid Gouba's remark that "Muhammad was practical and successful." Islam as such cannot tolerate suffering or adversity. It denies the Crucifixion because it cannot conceive how God could allow a prophet like Jesus to suffer ignominy and failure as this-worldly standards estimate these.

The book is an honest evaluation made by a man of deep Christian faith of the hopes and difficulties in making Christ and His Church understandable and attractive to Muslims.

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HOW LONG? PRISON REFLECTIONS FROM THE PHILIPPINES. By Karl Gaspar, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986. (Original Edition, Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1984.) xx + 171 pages.

Karl (Carlito) Gaspar was one of the better-known figures in the religious opposition to the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines. After graduating from the Ateneo de Davao University in 1967 at the age of twenty, he earned an M.S. in economics from the Asian Social Institute in 1970. In the next twelve years, he employed his considerable talents — in socioeconomics, in the theater, and progressively as a lay theologian — in the work of social justice and liberation. While his base of operations was Davao City and its environs, he became more and more an international figure — travelling to and speaking in, among others, Ireland (1976), Sri Lanka (1979), Holland

(1980) and Australia and the United States (1981-82). Despite his wide-ranging contacts and interests, however, his primary concern was always the liberation of the Filipino, especially the poor and the oppressed. Because of this concern he was arrested and detained by the Marcos government twice: briefly, when Martial Law was declared in September 1972; and for almost two years, from 26 March 1983 until 9 February 1985.

How Long? is a collection of Karl Gaspar's letters and papers during his second detention. It is a moving testimony to the strength of the human spirit open to grace. That Gaspar is a real artist and a fine writer adds to the power of his witness — as does the expert editing of Sisters Helen Graham, M.M. and Breda Noonan, S.S.C. After a brief "Biological Chronology" of the important dates in Karl Gaspar's story, they have arranged his prison writings in eight sections or chapters. The first ("The Beginning"), along with the fifth ("Diary of a Fast") and the eighth ("The Course of Justice"), give a chronological account in Gaspar's own words of his arrest and early imprisonment, the famous hunger strike of the Davao prisoners in June-July 1983, and the long-delayed trial of his case in August of 1984. When taken together with the second and fourth sections ("Life in Prison" and "Discipleship Viewed Through Barbed Wire"), they provide a fascinating and yet horrifying account of the rape of justice which took place during the Marcos regime. All who complain today that nothing has changed after the February Revolution should read this book to realize how wrong they are!

But that is not the only value of *How Long?*. I must admit to a certain apprehension when I first opened the book. Wouldn't it be out of date now that the Marcos regime has fallen? Or would it be filled with the stultifying jargon of Marxist analysis which makes communist revolutionaries the most rigid and boring, albeit dedicated, reformers on earth today? Happily neither of my fears were realized. In one sense the book *is* dated, as may be seen from a now ironic note on the final page:

"Karl is now free but more than *one thousand* political detainees remain imprisoned in jails and military camps throughout the Philippines. If you would like to protest this violation of human rights, please write your protest to:

President Ferdinand Marcos
Malacañang Palace
Manila, Philippines.

However, Karl Gaspar's own reflections are still fresh and relevant today. They explain eloquently President Cory Aquino's passionate quest for dialogue and reconciliation. And they are a forceful reminder of what we were, and must continue to be, fighting for.

Moreover — and this brings us to my second apprehension — Karl Gaspar is clearly a man of the Gospel, not of Marx but of Jesus Christ. There are oc-

casional passages of ideological prose – especially when he is protesting that “The U.S. interests, IMF-WB loans, military bases, and TNCs protected by the puppet government continue to dominate us” (p. 53). And it could be argued (as I would argue) that such a view is simplistic and, at best, half-true. But such passages are surprisingly rare. Gaspar’s overriding concern is with the living out of the *Gospel* message of good news and liberation for the poor. He quotes liberally from, and reflects movingly upon, the scriptures, the statements of Popes and Councils, and such diverse figures as Pablo Neruda, Teilhard de Chardin and the Guatemalan poet Julia Esquivel. His fellow prisoners were blessed in at least one sense: They were exposed to a liberal Christian “education” such as few of us are privileged to experience!

Section 6 (“Liturgical Feasts and Celebrations”) and 7 (“Various Reflections and Challenges”) provide especially rich material for meditation on the meaning of Jesus Christ for our place and day. They also point up a problem with a book like this: how does one unify a collection of letters and occasional topics? How provide a focus to prevent centrifugal forces from tearing the book apart? While there are parts of this one which drag and seem repetitive, on the whole Sisters Graham and Noonan have succeeded admirably in their task of unification. I suspect, though, that it is really Karl Gaspar who solved the problem. Despite the extraordinary range of his interests and concerns and contacts, he is a man with an integrated vision of life. One passage captures it beautifully: “A church that refuses to be incarnated in the lives of the poor and powerless has no right to claim to be witnessing to the gospel. A church that celebrates the people’s struggle to be fully human by being in the center of this historical, creative process is truly Christ’s legacy for his followers through the ages” (p. 101). Anyone who resonates to that vision of the meaning of the Church will find Karl Gaspar’s *How Long?* a deeply moving and an enriching experience.

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A BANAHAW GURU, SYMBOLIC DEEDS OF AGAPITO ILLUSTRISIMO. By Vicente Marasigan, S.J. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1985. 190 pages.

A Banahaw Guru is a book about religiosity relating the author’s attempt to live and come to grips with the religious experience and world of thought of the members of the Tatlong Persona Solo Dios sect near Dolores Quezon, on Mt. Banahaw, in the Philippines. The purposes of this endeavour are to explore the gap between two cultures, namely, between the more Western-