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We Drink From Our Own Wells

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the biblical message of salvation was transmitted and which could be of value to modern evangelists; the direct proclamation of the Gospel, the prophetic challenge in both word and sign, the witness of authentic Christian living, and direct action on behalf of humanity precisely to liberate from death and injustice. The authors also suggest several current issues and problems that the Church needs to address. Among them, there is the continual dialectic between the pastoral needs of the community and the call to mission outside itself, the struggle of church leaders to be universal with courage in the face of opposition, the need of religious experience to appreciate the Church's solidarity with other traditions and cultures, and the understanding of pluralism as a basic view of Christianity that must respect local cultures as in mission lands.

Clearly the book contains a wealth of biblical material on the Church's universal mission, offered in a clear and engaging presentation. It should be of substantial help in fulfilling the authors' desire "to support a vigorous contemporary theology of mission." This work can be heartily recommended to anyone engaged in New Testament theology or in serious study of the Philippine church.

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WE DRINK FROM OUR OWN WELLS. THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF A PEOPLE. By Gustavo Gutierrez. New York: Orbis Books, 1984. 181 pages.

One of the great pioneers in Liberation Theology, now a household name, is Gustavo Gutierrez. In 1971 when he first published *A Theology of Liberation*, he already saw the need for a spirituality of liberation. *We Drink From Our Own Wells* is the fruit of more than ten years of his lived experience and continuing theological reflection on the spiritual experience of the poor and oppressed peoples of Latin America. Although a professional theologian, Gutierrez's fresh biblical and theological insights are authenticated and enriched by his direct contact with the poor of Rimac, a slum area in Lima, Peru, where he lives and works. The title of the book was inspired by St. Bernard of Clairvaux's observation: "Everyone has to drink from his own well" (p. 37). To drink from your own well is to live your own life in the spirit of Jesus as you encounter him in your own concrete historical situation. Gutierrez expresses the core idea of the book thus:

The faith and hope in the God of life that provide a shelter in the situation of death and struggle for life in which the poor and oppressed of Latin America are now living—they are the well from which we must drink if we want to be faithful to Jesus (p. 32).

In the light of the Christian faith, the poor and powerless peoples of Latin America are historically and collectively experiencing a new awareness that in the midst of the death-dealing forces of poverty, misery, injustice, and repression, God does not want them to die but to live fully. *We Drink From Our Own Wells* describes, like the Book of Exodus, the spiritual journey of a people from slavery to freedom, from death to life.

In Part I, the author provides the historical context of massive poverty and structural injustice, in which a new spirituality of liberation is being born in Latin America. In a context in which the peoples of Latin America have become strangers in their own land, in which oppression and repression cause the physical, mental, and cultural death of individuals and peoples, traditional Christian spirituality which is privatized, spiritualized, and practiced by only a minority can no longer respond to the concrete historical situation in Latin America. The critical situation is more than just social, economic, and political: "It affects every dimension of the human" including a people's "collective, ecclesial spirituality" (p. 29). Traditional Christian spirituality cannot adequately provide what Christians committed to justice and to the poor need today: A spirituality that will integrate prayer, reflection and social action. Gutierrez's challenge to rethink traditional Christian individualistic spirituality is most relevant to the Philippine context of private devotions and charismatic prayer. Gutierrez sees the Latin America context as a time of solidarity in suffering, a time of prayer, a time of martyrdom, and yet also a favorable time (*kairos*) of "salvation and judgement, a time of grace and stern demand—a time above all, of hope" (p. 25).

In Part II, the author develops the main characteristics of this new spirituality of liberation from a scholarly study of the Bible especially St. Paul, and in dialogue with past spiritual traditions like those of Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila, and in particular, John of the Cross. With one eye on the Bible and the other eye on the changing historical situation, today's spirituality of liberation must be both continuous and at the same time discontinuous with the spiritualities of the past. All spirituality is "a distinctive way of being Christian" (p. 37) in this particular place at this particular time.

"Encounter with Christ," Gutierrez writes, "Life in the spirit, journey to the Father. . . are the *dimensions* of every walking in the spirit according to the Scriptures" (p. 34). Like the people of God in Exodus, the spirituality of the new people of God always begins with an encounter with Christ, without which there can be no spirituality. In responding to this encounter with the Lord, a people must decide, in St. Paul's own words, either to "walk in the

spirit" or to "walk in the flesh." To walk in the flesh is to live in sin which leads to death; to walk in the spirit is to live in grace which leads to life; in short, to walk the way of Christ in the Holy Spirit to the Father. To recognize Jesus as the Messiah among the poor is to encounter the Lord and walk with the people the way of freedom and love. For Gutierrez, it follows that action on behalf of the poor and justice is based on a theology that is rooted in a spirituality. Different spiritual experiences lead to different theologies. According to Gutierrez, "Talk about God (theo-logy) comes after silence of prayer and after commitment" (p. 136). In the author's view, the spirituality of the Latin American people that is born out of their suffering and death, is emphatically both *Christ-* and *community-*centered. An individual's spirituality cannot be separated from Christ nor divorced from the spirituality of the people of God or the Christian community.

In Part III, the author draws from the testimonies of Latin American Christians who have lived or died for the liberation of the poor, the marks or qualities which are the necessary requisites for a Christian spirituality of liberation; namely, 1) conversion, 2) gratuitousness, 3) joy, 4) spiritual childhood, and 5) community out of solitude. Firstly, conversion from sin and idolatry of false gods is the necessary condition for solidarity with the poor. Secondly, liberation from sin, injustice, and every form of oppression does not depend on human effort alone; it is a gratuitous gift of God. Thirdly, it follows that even in the midst of suffering and martyrdom, there is joy born of hope that in the end God's justice will triumph. Fourthly, spiritual childhood or poverty of heart, is a necessary condition for commitment to the poor. Finally, the new Christian community can only be born out of the solitude of the desert and the dark night of injustice—the symbol of a people's purification and maturation in their faith. Again, Gutierrez's focus and emphasis is that "spirituality is a community enterprise."

We Drink From Our Own Wells is indeed the ongoing spiritual exodus of oppressed peoples everywhere—from a land of slavery and misery through the desert of suffering and oppression, where death threatens from all sides, a journey of God's people as community to the promised land of freedom and life.

This latest book by Gustavo Gutierrez is very timely for all those in the Philippines who are struggling on behalf of justice and the poor, and whose prayer and spiritual wellsprings are all but dried up. Filipino Christians committed to the liberation of the people, and who search for a spirituality for justice, will find in this book a refreshing oasis of strength and hope. The Filipino people are a nation in deep moral and spiritual crisis, not to mention the present economic and political crisis. It is from this well that we must drink. The affluent and more privileged can learn much from the poor and powerless—how to pray, how to have faith and trust in God, how to suffer, how to die. It is this gift of the poor that makes it possible for all of

us to become truly a people that does justice to the faith, a faith that does justice. Hopefully, a mass-based Filipino spirituality of liberation might unite all opposition groups not only against the present repressive regime but, more importantly, on the side of the poor. One thing is clear from Gutierrez's timely book—the spiritual and paschal experience, that is, the suffering and death of the Filipino people at this time in their history, is the well from which we must draw a Filipino spirituality of liberation.

We Drink From Our Own Wells is not just another book for spiritual reading. Although very readable and refreshing, it is a serious theological work with thirty-four pages of extensive scholarly notes, with scriptural and author -subject indices. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell from the original Spanish, (*Beber En Su Propio Pozo: En El Itinerario Espiritual De Un Pueblo*), it contains a foreword by Henri J.M. Nouwen, which first appeared in *America* (15 October 1983).

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EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FUTURE. Edited by Rolando R. Dizon, F.S.C. Quezon City: Phoenix Publishing House, Inc., 1983. iv, 274 pages.

What will education be like in the twenty-first century? The fact that no one can give an accurate answer does not mean that it is a foolish question. As Bro. Dizon says in his Preface: "it is important that an attempt be made . . . and certain conscious choices [made] to help shape" the future.

Educational Alternatives is a collection of sixteen articles written by prominent Philippine educators from both the public and private sectors. It divides into four sections: first, an introductory article that provides a perspective in searching for alternatives; second, a series of five articles on innovative basic education programs; third, another series of five articles concerning teacher education programs; and finally, a third series of five articles describing various management models and strategies.

Aside from the glimpses into the future, several articles are accompanied by helpful tables or figures, and followed by bibliographies that indicate the papers were carefully researched and not simply transcriptions of faculty room chit-chat. It would be impossible in a brief review to give an adequate evaluation of each of the articles. What follows is more descriptive than judgmental.

In the introductory article entitled: "Education in the Philippines for the