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Spiritual quest: an inter-religious dimension

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commissioned, or ordained. At the same time, it suffers from the problems of any single volume commentary on such a diverse history. Three short paragraphs on Aristotle do not really prepare the reader to appreciate his enormous impact on medieval theology. Later, Wogaman notes the significance of "the recovery of the Augustinian doctrine of grace" to Reformation theology and ethics (p. 109); yet, his discussion of Augustine does not allude to grace at all. Wogaman's reduction of the rich and troubling diversity of the biblical materials into the aforementioned six tensions flattens an important source for Christian ethics—and a source whose authority is increasingly debated, particularly in Protestant circles presently fixated on what the Bible says and does not say about sexuality. An historian lies awake at night wondering: are *our* questions really *their* questions? At times, Wogaman's six tensions get lost in his analysis as he looks at one period topically, at another period in terms of great thinkers and great ideas, and at another attending to the "spirit of the times".

These criticisms should in no way deter one from purchase and careful perusal of this volume; they are rather markings for an icy bridge or a slippery road. No single volume could begin to present comprehensively the breadth of Christian teachings on ethics, but must be used in conversation with a few other partners: H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*, Ernst Troeltsch's *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, George Forell's *History of Christian Ethics*, John Mahoney's *The Making of Moral Theology*, David H. Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology*, Thomas Ogletree's *The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics*, William C. Spohn's *What Are They Saying About Scripture and Ethics?*

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Spiritual Quest: An Inter-Religious Dimension

Hasan Askari

West Yorkshire, England: Seven Mirrors Publishing House
Limited, 1991

139 pp.

The author is a Shi'ite Muslim who grew up in the context of the pluralistic society of India. His acquaintanceship with other religions prompted him to find out more about the other religions, and in seeking a place for himself in this context, he became a spokesperson for dialogue among the peoples of the Abramitic faiths. He, then, became a teacher and lecturer in several universities in India, Lebanon, Germany, Holland, Britain and the United States. As a result he has been one of the Muslim respondents

to the Christian Initiative to dialogue and contributed extensively to a recent study by Charles A. Kimball (Harvard Divinity School 1987) entitled "Striving towards God".

If you are having some concerns about the vast information gap that you find in your knowledge of the pluralistic religious world in which we live, you may choose to read this book. The author introduces us to the problems of our time with the recognition of his own journey in the pluralistic environs of India.

By his own analysis this book presents:

1. Essays that represent the author's formulations on "inter-religion" leading to implications for worship and prayer. This was my reason for picking up this book. The context for this interest lay in the fact that on any university campus today all the world religions are represented and the need for "politically correct" prayer and worship arises. You may not see a need for this and never be involved, but there is a need in our context to *know* something about this topic.

2. A collection of essays offering a reflective exegesis of certain major themes in various traditions. This section provided a lot of very helpful information in bringing analyses of the various faiths with which some acquaintanceship may be necessary.

3. A reflection on spiritual quest leading to one's self perception as a seeker. This section gave me a personal space for understanding which I found most helpful.

I found the book a slow reader; by this I mean that the philosophical style and long sentence structure did not lend itself to the reading style to which I am accustomed. This was particularly true for the first part of the book. Nevertheless, I am more aware of the complexity of the inter-religious dialogue, and of the vastness of religious material of which I have much to learn as a result of reading this work. It has been a good introduction for me and it helped me with my need for information in the inter-religious world.

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