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Gracias: A Latin American Journal (Book Review)

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sacrificial death of Christ, is your notion or "acceptance" not ill-founded?

N. Douglas Meeks: Have you not limited the biblical concept of justice by defining it solely in terms of economics?

Jose Miguez Bonino: What is specifically Christian about solidarity in which "every human being" is involved?

Letty M. Russell: Would it not be preferable to speak about a "biblical" rather than a "feminist" concept of authority?

Charles S. McCoy: Will you explain how "covenant theology" helps us to relate to Khomeini's Iranian Muslims?

Stephen W. Sykes: You oppose Paul's concept of authority. But did he not lovingly exercise authority in the service of the early Christian church?

Susan B. Thistlethwaite: How does the "making right" which you describe relate to the justification provided through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Christopher Morse: Does not the declaration "All authority has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18) mean that God's word of promise was fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

By raising these questions, of course, I indicate how I differ with the authors of this significant publication.

Gracias: A Latin American Journal, Henri J.M. Nouwen (San Francisco: Harper and Row) 1983. 188 pp. \$14.45 Reviewed by Nicholas V. Kroeze, Dean of Students.

Knowing the will of God for one's life, to be able to discern from a multiplicity of influences, experiences, impressions, and emotions those that direct a person to his or her true calling, true witness — this is the motivation for Dutch Catholic priest Henri Nouwen in his six-month trek through Bolivia and Peru. My first impression of this book was that it is for people with a "Spanish" bent. But what initially seems solely a walk through Latin America is truly a walk through the Christian life.

Two main emphases of the book are (1) the importance of prayer and (2) a willingness to associate with the poor. As Nouwen observes the political, economic, and social inconsistencies and conflicts experienced by those with whom he comes into contact, he is led to a deeper conviction that prayer and lowly association provide an environment from which one can correctly view and act in any culture. This is the tying together of divine perspective and true human need.

The insights of Nouwen provide carry-over into the "state-of-the-art" society which many of us enjoy. He would make the reader sensitive to the fact that his points of emphasis are meant not just as observations

nested in Latin culture but as crucial for living a truly Christian life in the midst of peace and plenty:

One of the temptations of upper-middle-class life is to create large gray areas between good and evil. Wealth takes away the sharp edges of our moral sensitivities and allows a comfortable confusion about sin and virtue. The difference between rich and poor is not that the rich sin more than the poor, but that the rich find it easier to call sin a virtue. When the poor sin, they call it sin; when they see holiness, they identify it as such. This intuitive clarity is often absent from the wealthy, and the absence easily leads to the atrophy of the moral sense. (159)

Gracias is wonderfully bereft of political and theological bias. Picking up a book by a Catholic priest associating with the poor in Latin America, one might immediately conclude that it would be a book on liberation theology. This is not so. Nouwen presents the basic, simple Christian faith as it might be experienced and expressed by all believers. This book is worthy of recommendation not only as a text for study, but also, by nature of its format and content, as appropriate for personal and family devotions.

Hispanic Women, Prophetic Voice in the Church: Toward a Hispanic Women's Liberation Theology. Ada Maria Isasi-Díaz and Yolanda Tarango (San Francisco: Harper and Row) 1988. 123 pages. \$8.95. Reviewed by Anne C. Kwantes, Ph.D., Christian Reformed missionary to the Philippines.

Openness marks the opinions which are expressed by those who were interviewed and who offered material to support the theses of the authors of this volume. Plain talk also marks the explanations and claims of Ada Maria Isasi-Díaz and Yolanda Tarango in *Hispanic Women, Prophetic Voice in the Church*. In their prologue, the authors set the stage with their opening statement, "First and foremost we are activists—Hispanic Women committed to the struggle for justice and peace."

Who are the Hispanic Women of this book, and what is their liberation theology? *Hispanic Women* (HW) are here represented by a group of women who met for the purpose of discussing and compiling the infor-

mation on which this book is based. They belong to a culture within a culture. Living in the USA, they have their ethnic roots in Amerindian, African, and Spanish cultures and histories; the three main Hispanic groups in the USA are Cubans, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans (70). It is the deeply ingrained influence of Spanish culture in their lives which binds these women together. These *mestizas* all share a Hispanic understanding of basic issues and the meaning of life (5). And since Spanish culture of the 16th century centered on Christianity and the church, HW have a common bond of religiosity, even if that religiosity is expressed in various manners.