
Christendom and Christianity in the Middle Ages: The Relations between Religion, Church, and Society. By Adriaan H. Bredero. Trans. Reinder Bruinsma. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994. ISBN 0-8028-3692-5. Pp. xiii + 402.

To what extent is Christianity medieval in its norms and values? How are we to identify those elements that accrued to the tradition during the medieval period simply because of the church's place in society? Having identified those accretions, how are we to distinguish between those which properly belong to the essentials of the tradition, and those which can be set aside as aspects of the process of acculturation no longer appropriate for the late twentieth century? These are the questions driving this broad-ranging series of studies. Adriaan H. Bredero is professor emeritus of Medieval History at the Vrije Universiteit (Amsterdam), and brings to his studies a lifetime of learning and teaching. As such he offers many challenges to our current understanding, both popular and scholarly, of the epoch.

Since it is an attempt, largely successful, to distill ten centuries within the intellectual and social life of Western Christianity, it is necessary to provide a description of the contents in some detail. The opening chapter provides a global perspective, which the author engagingly terms "no more than an audacious attempt" (10), on the relation between church and society from the Christianization of the Germanic peoples to the fifteenth century C.E. Here he clarifies the meaning of "Christendom" which, in its use during the Carolingian era, was co-terminus with Charlemagne's empire. To be Frank was to be Christian. Rather than understand Christendom to imply that the whole of the Latin West was Christian, Bredero offers a nuanced view of Christendom as "...those countries, people, and events that were—or were supposed to be—under the influence of Christ" (18).

The second chapter argues against modern misconceptions of the medieval ideas of *antiqui* and *moderni*, which underwent significant developments in the era. Bredero next addresses the importance of Jerusalem as a goal of both pilgrims and crusaders, and as a source for both relics and visions of a new Jerusalem. Bernard of Clairvaux, for example, was utterly convinced that "...in monastic spirituality the heavenly Jerusalem was the symbol *par excellence* of the final destiny of the human person" (103), going so far as to describe Clairvaux as the embodiment of that Jerusalem. This is succeeded by an examination of the "Peace of God" and "Truce of God" developments beginning in the eleventh century, by which clerical leadership tried to overcome the feudal tendency toward battle. Indeed, this was one of the reasons cited by Urban II in support of the First Crusade.

The author then embarks upon a succinct study of Cistercians and Cluniacs as reforming movements within the monastic tradition, including the pivotal role played by Bernard. Bredero next treats the role of saints within medieval antiquity, discussing the veneration of the saints, the nature of sainthood and the

growth in papal authority in determining who the saints were. Along the way he takes Jean LecLerc's study of Bernard of Clairvaux to task for his failure to take full cognisance of the historical context of the writings analyzed. Subsequent chapters deal with the church's treatment of heretics and their beliefs in that critical period from the eleventh to the twelfth centuries C.E., Peter Abelard, Francis of Assisi and the Franciscans, the anti-Jewish sentiment of the medieval church and society, and religious life in the Low Countries (ca. 1050–1384 C.E.). The whole is appended by a review essay addressing *reason* in the Middle Ages.

This English translation of the second Dutch edition includes some new and revised material, and is a welcome addition to the field. Bredero writes with a sure grasp of a wide variety of resources: legends, primary texts, and documents internal to various movements. As is obvious from the outline given above, the prism through which he views the era tends to be that of the monastic order. Yet one of the strongest chapters is his long excursus on the place of Jews within the period. Possessed of a legal status that was "unique and unfavourable" (274), Jews were isolated religiously and socially. The precariousness introduced by such status is manifested by the numerous instances of abuse and persecution which chroniclers of the time record. But, asks Bredero, does this anti-Jewishness stem from within the church or within society? Often an overlooked query, Bredero does not deny the culpability of the ecclesial community, "but does the guilt rest on the church as it manifested itself as a spiritual institution through the centuries, or mainly on the church in its concrete efforts to adapt itself to the medieval society in which it had to function?" (277). The balance of the chapter tries to establish the basis upon which such a distinction can be made.

Few will be in complete agreement with Bredero's assessments of other scholars of the era, such as G.I. Langmuir and Jean LecLercq, but he demonstrates an uncanny ability to provoke/evoke new questions, even as one is reacting negatively to one of his questions. Barbara Tuchman once described the Middle Ages as "a distant mirror." Bredero's contribution will allow us to see some things more clearly, while raising awareness of other elements which are yet distant and cloudy; surely, the mark of fine scholarship.

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Peter Martyr Vermigli: Early Writings. Trans. Mariano Di Gangi and Joseph C. McLelland. Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, volume XXX. Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0-940474-32-8. Pp. x+242.

The long-awaited first volume in the Peter Martyr Library appeared just in time for Christmas 1994. It is a beautifully designed, hardcover edition which sets high standards for the volumes to come within the next ten years or so. Joseph McLelland and John Patrick Donnelly deserve high praise for having masterminded the project—a task they would not have been able to achieve without the