

Virgilio Elizondo treats us to a story of the broad range of contextual theologies under the heading "Emergence of a World Church and the Irruption of the Poor." He swiftly handles the "decolonization" of the church and the appearance of Latin American, African, and Asian theologies. Bringing all of this to the very end of the century, Lee Cormie tells us of the "Genesis of a New World." This article is a helpful analysis of globalization "from above" and "from below." He describes an "emergent planetary civilization," warns of "social and ecological apocalypse" at the dawn of the twenty-first century, and speaks of renewed faith and hope in history. In a similar vein, Stephen Scharper writes about theological responses to the ecological crisis of the late part of the century. He describes the beginnings of the environmental movement, environmental destruction as a theological concern, and then the theological commingling of social justice and environmental concerns in political-ecological theologies.

Many of these articles are truly masterpieces of theological storytelling and analysis, written with an admirable economy of words. They will be useful seminar material for either basic or advanced degree students of theology, church history, or theological ethics. We can concur with Baum's concluding reflections when he says that this overview of twentieth-century theologies, marked as they are by such creativity, imagination, and passion for the meaning and power of the gospel, offers us hope that the "Spirit will continue to speak to the churches in the coming century" (249).

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*The East German Churches and the End of Communism.* By John P. Burgess. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. ISBN 0-19-511098-6. Pp. xi+185.

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Despite the secularization of the industrial societies in Europe and North America, the Churches often continue to play a dramatic role in the efforts of political transformation. This book deals with the role played by the Protestant Church in communist East Germany and the collapse of the communist regime in 1989. The book is a collection of John Burgess's articles, some of which written before 1989 and hence with no knowledge of the approaching collapse, and others written after 1989 when the author, aware of the outcome, looked back to the past.

Burgess does not offer a history of the Church during those years; other authors have done this. Instead, the articles in his book present careful and often imaginative studies of interesting details, such as the evolution of East German Marxist thought in regard to religion and the changing discourse of the State and the Church dealing with the "Day of Liberation," the name given to the 8th of May, the date of Germany's unconditional surrender in 1945. Sev-

eral articles deal with the critical and reform-oriented groups that found in the Church, the only non-aligned organization in East Germany, a place to develop their ideas and to build a nationwide network. One article discusses the accusations made against certain church leaders of having been spies or informers for the ministry of state security. Another article deals with the political perspectives pursued by Protestant theologians, in particular Wolfgang Ullmann and Richard Schröder. An article on Wolf Krötke offers an analysis of this theologian who, already prior to 1989, addressed Germans in the East and West and produced an interesting theology which the author compares with similar ideas proposed by Stanley Hauerwas and John Howard Yoder.

People—like myself—with a special interest in East Germany and the role played in it by the Church will find this book interesting and rewarding. I greatly enjoyed reading it. Indeed, it is one of the few books in English that introduces the theology of Wolf Krötke.

Despite its many strengths, there is, however, a puzzling omission, namely, the Church's stance regarding economic systems. While the author refers to the aspiration of the critical and progressive groups and thinkers as "democratization"—and identifies one aspect of "democratization" as the passage of East Germany into unity with West Germany—he does not mention how the groups and thinkers studied by him related themselves to capitalism. Communists in East Germany used to accuse the Christian Church of having become identified with capitalism and the market values associated with it. They denounced the Church as the chaplaincy to NATO. In reply the leaders of East German Church insisted that they were not representatives of the Western competitive system, but that they entertained, on theological grounds, sympathy for what they called "the humanistic ideals of socialism." The East German theologians, critical of the communist system in which they lived, often expressed their surprise that the Churches in the West remained on the whole uncritical of the capitalist system in which they lived. The reform movement in East Germany, organized by groups within the Church and supported by secular and Christian thinkers, did not advocate assimilation to Western capitalism—it hoped, instead, to create a free and pluralistic socialism, a socialism with a human face. These aspirations found public expression at the so-called Round Tables in the fall of 1989 and the early months of 1990, even though it soon became evident that these ideas were not supported by the majority of East Germans who opted for West Germany's higher material standard of living. The human drama of the shift from a communist to a capitalist economy receives no attention in Burgess's otherwise informative and insightful book.