

THE UNDERPRIVILEGED NATIONS, by Pierre Moussa, translated by Alan Braley; Sidgwick and Jackson; 30s.

M. Moussa has made a useful contribution to the discussion of ways and means of ending the poverty of the underdeveloped nations. He begins by looking at some of the difficulties facing them. There is some evidence for the belief that the prices of their exports of primary products have fallen relatively to those of manufactured goods, and have, moreover, been very unstable. Within the underdeveloped countries, there is need for agrarian reform, and for ending the exploitation of the peasant by the middleman. Finally, there is the tendency for population to grow rapidly. In some parts of the world, particularly Latin America, nutritional standards have been falling. World food production has more than kept step with world population, but it is chiefly the more advanced countries that have been enjoying higher standards of nutrition. Nevertheless, this is by no means conclusive evidence in favour of a birth-control campaign. It is equally evidence that the real problem is one of securing a proper distribution of the earth's bounty.

There follows a discussion of the means to promote economic growth in the underdeveloped countries, and of the wider geopolitical issues involved. M. Moussa suggests that with population growing at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent a year, the underdeveloped countries would need to devote the equivalent of 10 per cent of their national incomes to investment in order to maintain their present per capita income, and that to raise their per capita incomes by 4-5 per cent a year they would need to invest something like 20 per cent of their national incomes. M. Moussa stresses the importance of the underdeveloped countries making their own contribution through their savings towards this investment, though obviously there must also be help from abroad. This may take various forms: outright gifts, loans and investment by foreign enterprises. Investment by foreign enterprises will only occur if conditions are such as to give them confidence. Governmental aid may be bilateral, or multilateral (being channelled through various international organizations). The latter may have advantages in cases where bilateral aid might involve the risk of domination of the underdeveloped country (or be feared to involve such a risk).

The raising of living standards in the underdeveloped countries is not merely politically expedient: it is as Pope John XXIII has shown in *Mater et Magistra*, a moral duty for the wealthier nations. For this reason, we should give a serious study such as this the attention it deserves, even though there are inevitably points where we are bound to disagree with the author.

J. M. JACKSON

AFRICAN MISSION, a historical study of the Society of African Missions, by John M. Todd; Burns and Oates; 25s. od.

The Society of African Missions is to be congratulated on securing Mr John

Todd as its historian. He has not only produced a very readable account of the Society's work, mainly on the West Coast of Africa, since its formation in 1856, but he has given us a general review of missionary problems and procedures which makes this the best book on the missions which the present reviewer has encountered.

The author considers, for instance, the divergence between the enlightened policies of the Holy See and Propaganda, on the one hand, and, on the other, those of missionary congregations which operate very far from Rome with strong views of their own. He indicates the tensions that may arise between a Superior at headquarters and an Ordinary, with full apostolic powers, in the field. He has wise things to say about the overwhelmingly European image which the missions have hitherto presented and about the vital importance of a deep study of indigenous customs before judgment is passed upon them. In this connection he has some fascinating quotations from the writings of Fr Aupiais, of the Society, concerning aspects of African culture and custom, especially the dance, a sympathetic consideration of which might yet save the missions in other parts of Africa.

The Society of African Missions was founded by Bishop Melchior de Marion Brésillac in 1856 with two directives, the establishment of an indigenous clergy and the retention of all possible African customs. In the event, despite a very general fidelity to the founder's ideas, the Society only ordained its first African priest in 1920, while it is interesting to find one of its bishops postulating in 1926 that 'our mission men begin to learn what they were never taught . . . I mean missiology'.

Apart from the evidence in this book that the Society has never lost sight of its aims, its pupils, now to be encountered with some frequency in this country, attest its kindly and practical outlook (a point emphasized by Archbishop David Mathew in his preface). About the courage of missionaries in general there can be no question, but it is worth recording that not only Bishop Brésillac, but every one of his companions, died of disease within a few weeks after their African arrival in 1859, while for a long period one out of four missionaries died each year. Such persistence and stark heroism should surely earn for the Society the ultimate realization of the ideals of its founder.

PAUL FOSTER, O.P.

IN MY DISC OF GOLD, *The Itinerary to Christ* of William Congdon; Reynal and Company; New York; \$10.00

In My Disc of Gold is an important book on three counts. It is the first publication in book form of paintings by William Congdon, one of the foremost American painters of today. It contains stimulating studies by Jacques Maritain, Martin D'Arcy and Thomas Merton relating to Mr Congdon's life and work. And it is the artist's own account of his recent conversion to the Catholic