

Orthodox or Anglo-Catholic worship than in many Catholic services. Surprisingly, neither of those traditions features in Boersma's study, in which non-Catholics are all seemingly classified as Protestant.

Some readers will no doubt approach this book hoping for a deepened understanding of sacramental ontology. Certainly, much historical material and summary of apposite texts is provided. Moreover, it seems that sacramental ontology is relevant to many diverse fields of *nouvelle théologie*. In the course of the book, all of the following are cited as aspects of such an ontology: sign–reality correspondence, reconnecting theology with life, love as mediating the natural–supernatural dichotomy, materiality as a locus for divine self-communication, the priority and ultimacy of the divine life, nature as supernaturally oriented, nature and the supernatural as closely connected, participation, analogical predication, recognising the transcendent in sensible things, experience as a source of theology, incarnational theology, spiritual exegesis, typological exegesis, an ecclesial conception of time, willingness to integrate pagan religions, accepting the psychological grounds of doctrinal affirmation, language as a vehicle for divine truth, pneumatological ecclesiology, and liturgy as a bearer of tradition. What is lacking, however, is any systematic theological assessment of the concept of sacramental ontology evinced in all these instances, or its relation to the equally diffuse concept of 'mystery'. As a result, no conceptual synthesis is reached. 'The Tradition' or even 'the great Tradition' is sometimes invoked as a normative source, but this gives a false impression of resolution because it is not made clear what hermeneutic should be used to construct this. Texts like de Lubac's *Corpus Mysticum* are inherently unstable, frequently diffuse, and predominantly descriptive, often leaving their concrete implications largely unstated. The authors of these texts acknowledge, through their silences, the range of possible interpretations of the tradition out of which they write. The future for theological engagements with *nouvelle théologie* surely lies in constructive efforts to understand key terms such as those which Boersma introduces in this readable overview, and thereby to speak into some of these silences.

DAVID GRUMETT

HUMANITY AND THE MYSTERY OF GOD: THE THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF EDWARD SCHILLEBEECKX by Jennifer Cooper (*T&T Clark* London and New York, 2009) Pp. xi + 217, £65.00 hbk

Edward Schillebeeckx turned 95 in November of 2009 and died the following month. By then, he was the last surviving of the great Catholic theologians of the twentieth century. He was also extremely prolific in his writings which range over a vast field of disciplines such as sacramentology, Mariology, Christology, hermeneutics, ecclesiology, soteriology and eschatology. In these Schillebeeckx often assumes that his readers are as familiar with the history of theology and philosophy as he is. He can, at times, be difficult to decipher, and anyone who is able to interpret and explain his ideas to those who do not read him in his original writing language of Dutch accomplishes a useful and enviable task.

Jennifer Cooper is such a person. In her latest book, *Humanity and the Mystery of God*, she demonstrates that she is not only an able exegete of Schillebeeckx. She also shows that she can contribute originally and creatively to the fields of enquiry that preoccupied him so greatly. Her book is pitched at an advanced level of research, and is the product of years of engagement and close reading of Schillebeeckx's output in its original language. It is also a beautifully written book – lucid and coherent in what it says about Schillebeeckx and his historical context.

The originality of this work is twofold. First, it expounds Schillebeeckx's theological anthropology, which has not been as well investigated as most of his other interests. Second, it attends to the much neglected writings of Schillebeeckx in the earlier phases of his long career as a pastorally engaged, yet professorial theologian. In secondary literature, these writings are frequently dismissed and ignored as dogmatic and outdated, even though they contain the seminal ideas about God and humanity that inform all his work.

The core thesis of Jennifer Cooper's book concerns Schillebeeckx's understanding that to be human is to be a 'situated freedom' (personal, contingent, temporal) in response to the divine initiative of creation and redemption. The whole of Schillebeeckx's approach is governed by his understanding that the *Deus revelatus* is the same as the God who creates and saves (*Deus salutaris*). This means that it is possible to understand history as disclosing God's dynamic salvific intention to be God 'for humanity'. The human person is thereby situated first within this dynamic that constitutes the primary relationship characterized as 'address and response'. God discloses Godself in such a way as to reveal a redemptive intention of entering into a relationship with humanity. Cooper's book explores how such a process is controlled by Christology, together with major epistemological and metaphysical implications that are central to Schillebeeckx's understanding of both theology and his own theological method. Schillebeeckx insists that a unity obtains between creation and redemption and that this unity is already present within God's act of revelation. He concludes that it is critical to grasp the way in which God is known both in similitude and dissimilitude. Such a perspective suggests the possibility of a 'non-conceptual' knowledge of God. God is known as 'cause, transcendence and difference' (the interplay of immanent/transcendent, finite and infinite). This preserves the reality of God as saving mystery and underscores the relationship of *theologia* and *oikonomia*: God is known in the economy, but the divine nature is never exhausted in it. As created, humanity knows that it is grounded in an absolute dependence (the relationship of created nature to God as cause, transcendence and difference). The author has elaborated Schillebeeckx's early theological anthropology more fully than other writers, and to this extent has produced a substantively original and perceptive work.

The first two chapters of the book, on revelation and grace, examine the notion that intimacy with God is constitutive of humanity. The third and fourth chapters, devoted to the themes of incarnation, death, resurrection, and glorification explore the nature of intimacy with God as Schillebeeckx interprets it. The author vividly demonstrates that Schillebeeckx's early writings laid a foundation for his theology that has sustained and informed everything he has subsequently written. The thesis performs the useful service of elaborating Schillebeeckx's theological anthropology, a topic to which he has never devoted a sustained monograph. The author describes Schillebeeckx's Dominican education very well, and rightly highlights that Thomas Aquinas remains his theological master.

Hence, a strength of *Humanity and the Mystery of God* lies in its clarity of exposition of the unity in Schillebeeckx's theological vision and of the way in which it is developed in and through his theological anthropology. It places him squarely within the debates that shaped Catholic theology before and immediately after the Second Vatican Council. It is careful to locate the core of Schillebeeckx's theology within the concerns of the *nouvelle théologie*, and offers an excellent account of the thought of Marie-Dominique Chenu, as well as the tradition of Le Saulchoir in which Schillebeeckx was formed.

The book identifies several important features of Schillebeeckx's Christology with regard to his anthropology. From his early work on sacramental soteriology and Christology, Schillebeeckx understands the mystery of Christ as one that 'grows' so that the divine is fully disclosed within a fully human history. The

author correctly acknowledges that Schillebeeckx's subsequent works *Jesus* and *Christ* stand in continuity with this insight and are misunderstood if they are not read within this context.

Were the ambit of the book's discussions to be extended, it could also engage Dominic De Petter's publications on metaphysics and his lectures on philosophical anthropology, as well as the philosophies of Husserl, Heidegger, and especially of Merleau-Ponty. These thinkers collectively gave Schillebeeckx much of his intellectual equipment in his thought on philosophical anthropology.

In the eyes of some, Schillebeeckx is a theologian of controversy. It is well known that he was called to Rome more than once to explain his ideas on ministry, hermeneutics, historical Jesus research, and Christology to the satisfaction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. As a result he was never, and has never been, canonically censured. Jennifer Cooper succeeds in showing that Schillebeeckx, while engaging with his contemporary addressees, remains a theologian deeply rooted in a rich Catholic theological tradition.

PHILIP KENNEDY OP

GOD IN POSTLIBERAL PERSPECTIVE: BETWEEN REALISM AND NON-REALISM by Robert Andrew Cathey (*Ashgate*, Farnham and Burlington, VT, 2009) Pp. 233 + xii, £55.00 hbk

This book adds to the growing number of works assessing a movement which has had a major impact on theology in the West since the mid 1980s. In contrast to the 'Chicago School' which, under the influence of David Tracy and others, was at that time more classically liberal, 'postliberalism' is sometimes known as the 'Yale School' of theology owing to its origins there under the formative, though certainly not exclusive, influence of Hans Frei and George Lindbeck. Different though these two figures were – in the influences that shaped them, their denominational allegiances, and their theological outlooks and areas of scholarship – the movement of which they were the originators might be briefly characterized as the collaboration of Lindbeck's Wittgenstein with Frei's Barth. Post-liberal theologians share many or all of the following concerns: to move away from theological liberalism and its accommodation with culture; to reconfigure the question of the church's identity in relationship to its cultural setting; to retrieve an ecclesial reading of Scripture; to return to the traditional tasks, themes and resources of dogmatic theology; and to understand afresh the distinctive intellectual vocation of the theologian in relation to the challenges of the secular university.

With hindsight, it can be seen that postliberalism was far more protean and amorphous than it was sometimes thought to be when its influence was at its height – that is, before the turn of the century. However, as Cathey shows in his interesting survey, though it embraced a range of opinions, it shared a rejection of the view that the only kind of theology that can legitimately be practised is one that has passed muster before the Kantian tribunal of neutral reason. In this court, the only argument that counts is that which is "rational" in the distinctly modern, anti-humanist sense of the word, and the only evidencemissible that which is "evident" to the most purblind offspring of the Dawkins school of village atheism.

Thus, insofar as this book is concerned with *God in Postliberal Perspective*, we should not be surprised that much of the discussion is not so much about doctrines of God as about the way in which postliberal theologians have responded to the philosophical challenges to that doctrine, as indeed the reference to realism and non-realism in the subtitle makes clear. The principal figures whose doctrines of God are surveyed are David Burrell (discussion of whose work is most