

is the interaction of reflection and action. Deciding how to live by reflecting on the Scriptures and living by those decisions makes our whole life prayer. Prayer is thought *and* action. Within this frame work asceticism, prayers and liturgy, etc., can all be rehabilitated.

These books are all witnesses to the developing sense of the Church's mission in the world. One aspect of this is a new theology of action, for priests and laity, which represents a triumph over a withdrawn and defensive spirituality and accords with one contemporary view of man as controller of his environment and destiny. But the other aspect of the Church's mission, namely the mission field, tends to be neglected in England. In France the new theology of

action was combined with an evaluation of the Church's sociological position and her alienation from the poor. This resulted in the poor being given a precise social and political identity: the workers. This judgment may have been simplified and it cannot be transferred as it stands to England; nevertheless, this definition of the field of action was essential to the vitality of the Church's mission in France. In England there is a flow of books on the theology of action, but the field of action itself is described in them only in the most general terms as a technological, urbanized, materialist society. Effective action requires a more specific assessment of the Church's actual position in this society and a clearer definition of the new direction in which she should go.

WILLIAM HALTON

ANNOUNCING THE WORD OF GOD, by J. A. Jungmann. *Burns Oates, 1967.* 174 pp. 30s.

THEMES OF CATECHESIS, by Marcel van Caster. *Burns and Oates, 1967.* 207 pp. 21s.

Jungmann and van Caster: both have done much for catechetics and we have come to expect a lot from them, perhaps too much. Unhappily I found each of these books a bit of a disappointment.

In *Announcing the Word of God* Jungmann attempts to give some theological reflections on the main themes which he highlighted in *The Good News Yesterday and Today* (1936). That book marked a turning point in catechetics. Broadly speaking, the catechetical movement had, until then, concerned itself with improving methods. Jungmann turned our attention to content and structure and took us back through scripture and liturgy to God's message as Salvation History. In 1962 an English translation was published in America and in recent years the ideas of Jungmann have been absorbed in this country through catechetical courses and literature.

It is a mark of Jungmann's earlier success that this recent volume seems to have little to say that is new or surprising. For this reason it is just a bit disappointing, but it is useful to have it, nonetheless. While we have to press forward to new insights in the wake of Vatican II we should remember that many Catholics are still in a theological twilight. As Jungmann puts it, 'our earnest care, however, must be directed to the great mass of those who are indeed within the Church into which they were born, but who have never given the slightest thought to what that means' (p. 9), and '... the fresh wind now blowing has

still to penetrate many neglected corners, so further study is still required; and most advantage will come from study that approaches the subject historically' (p. 19).

It is this historical approach that is often lacking in other works on renewal and which Jungmann is so well fitted to provide. He traces the preaching of the Word from its origins in the early Church through later periods and shows how heresy led to definition of disputed points which in turn has sometimes produced a certain imbalance. Such an historical approach is undertaken not from a love of archaeologism but because it enables us to see that the Church has changed, is changing and should continue to change.

One area of theology at present most vigorously debated is Christology. It is asserted by many that we have tended to stress the divinity of Christ to the detriment of an awareness of his humanity. Jungmann traces in detail how this has come about. Similarly, the way in which devotion to Mary has developed is examined and this illuminates the chapter on Mary in the Second Vatican Council's decree on the Church. Other topics include the Church; Grace; the Eucharist; religion in the world; prayer. Catechists and teachers will find a lot in this book to meditate on and to give a solid background to their experiments in making religion living and creative for their pupils. It will not give them material that is immediately of use in teaching or preaching. The German original was written in 1963 and,

for this reason, it seems at times rather dated since it could not take into account the later work of the Council and subsequent catechetical writing. It consolidates the present territory rather than explores new frontiers.

Van Caster's *Themes of Catechesis* on the other hand is concerned with the present and the future. It claims to be a sequel to his *Structures of Catechetics* (1965) and deals with many of the same themes as Jungmann—God; Jesus Christ; the Church; the Eucharist; morality; sin and penance; faith; hope; charity; eschatology. One wonders for whom this book is intended—surely not for teachers. For, although these themes are of vital importance to them I cannot imagine many teachers being able to get much from it. It is far too academic and abstract for their needs. It might be of use to compilers of syllabi or professors of catechetics. My main complaint is that it is too foreign. The approach is so analytical with each topic discussed under the rigid headings of Bible, liturgy, life witness, reflection and formulation, psychology, sociology and communicating the message. For most of the subjects the biblical and liturgical sections are thin and allusive and generally the psychological and sociological parts are more rewarding. There are some valuable ideas embedded in the book, but they are very deeply embedded. Most people, I fear, would be hard put to it to persevere to the end. The chief obstacle is the obscurity of the language. This may be partly van Caster's fault or that of the translator. Words such as 'statementive' and 'thusly' have an odd ring in English ears and one has to stop to wonder just

what is meant by 'Jesus presented himself in a very kerygmatic manner in Palestine' (p. 33). This obscurity of language continues throughout the book, e.g. 'the application of the theoretical point of view in our Christian lives is necessarily derived from a kind of "overview" approach' (p. 60), and what is 'the axiological point of view'?

All this is a pity since van Caster obviously is a leader in catechetical thought and has much to teach us.

Running through this book is the author's concern that while we may, and should, pay attention to earthly realities and real-life experience and start from these we must not fall into the trap of staying on the purely natural plane. He points out repeatedly the need for us to make the jump from human realities to an awareness of God's transcendence. This is a timely warning, for there are some people today whose concern for pre-catechesis seems to have made them afraid of ever arriving at explicitly Christian teaching. With Goldman they will explore themes of, for instance, shepherds and bread and never dare to speak of Christ and the eucharist. Conscious of the need to remain aware of the transcendent, van Caster gives a short but shrewd critique of the Bishop of Woolwich's *Honest to God* (pp. 186-190).

We in England need to benefit from the work of continentals like van Caster, but unless their thought can be made available in an understandable way we shall be denied it. Perhaps in a subsequent book van Caster might explore the theme Communication. DEREK LANCE

THE USE OF LATERAL THINKING, by Edward de Bono. Jonathan Cape, 1967. 157 pp. 18s.

The cuckoo, it is said, lays other birds' eggs in its own nest. And that is rather what I feel about this book. It's a fine collection of eggs, alright; but the author seems staggeringly unaware of their real parentage.

But then, that is partly what lateral thinking is about. Lateral thinking is defined by contrast with vertical thinking, which is the traditionally respectable approach to things; you take the most promising view of any situation and proceed logically, step by step, from there. Lateral thinking will rather start from the wrong end and work backwards, or will start from some random association, or mad brain-wave, or will toy playfully with six or seven more or less absurd ideas and see what happens.

There is nothing strange in this; this is how most new thoughts arise, how most inventions

have occurred. But what is new is the way in which Mr de Bono concentrates his attention on it precisely as a mode of thinking, as a technique to be cultivated, rather than as a weird though useful supplier of ideas, which become interesting only in so far as they are assimilated into the vertical system (though de Bono himself is keen that they should be so assimilated when they are ripe for it).

Now I think this is more important than is immediately apparent, and this comes out in two ways. First, practically, de Bono is preaching a gospel which, whether we like it or not (I do like it), seems to be saying something to the modern world. He has more fellow-preachers than he realizes, for example in the various publications associated with World Union and World Goodwill. And he has been accepted