

only humbly recognized the limitation but also recommend future studies in this direction.

I highly recommend *Christians in South Indian Villages* to every reader interested in learning more about Indian Christian history. The book will elucidate the life, rituals, beliefs, and challenges of Christians in South Indian villages particularly in the Wadiaram pastorate in the Telangana state. The quality of the publication's content makes it worth the purchase price.

Koberson Langhu

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

Grassroots Asian Theology: Thinking the Faith from the Ground Up, by Simon Chan. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014. 216 pp. ISBN 978-0-8308-9. Softcover, US\$22.00.

Simon Chan (Ph.D., Cambridge) is an earnest Lau Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Theological College in Singapore. He is the author of *Spiritual Theology*, *Liturgical Theology*, and *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*. He is also the associate editor of the *Global Dictionary of Theology*.

As the title indicates, this book is focused on Asian grassroots Christianity. The author begins the preface of this book with the following statement: "Much of what the West knows as Asian theology consists largely of elitist accounts of what Asian theologians are saying, and elitist theologians seldom take grassroots Christianity seriously. Yet it is at the grassroots level that we encounter a vibrant, albeit implicit, theology" (p. 7). Then, at the end of the preface, he clarifies that his work "is not a systematic theology" and his goal is "to force a rethink on the way Asian theology is currently undertaken and in so doing show the distinctive contributions of Asian grassroots Christianity to the wider church's theological endeavors" (p. 8).

This book consists of six chapters. In the first chapter, the author discusses several methodological questions. First of all, he stresses the role of tradition in the formation of theology. He observes that "church doctrines are not the result of Scripture alone" (p. 12). For him, Scripture is the "given script for the drama whose director is the Holy Spirit" (p. 13). This dramatic script, he says, is not only to be translated but also to be interpreted in the local context. For this reason, secondly, he emphasizes that

ecclesial experience is to be the foundation for church doctrines. For him, ecclesial experience is the very grassroots from which a theology arises (p. 41). Chapters 2 to 6 are allocated for discussions of God, Humanity and Sin, Christ and Salvation, the Holy Spirit, and the Church, one by one.

In the beginning of his discussion on the Asian concept of God, the author observes that while the issue of the Western church is whether God exists or not, Asian Christians are concerned about God's identity and nature. According to Chan, this different concern arises since in Asia "in most religious traditions and especially in the world of primal religions, God's existence is never in doubt but presupposed" (p. 48). From this generic discussion, Chan then proceeds to examine the concept of God in the Islamic context, Indian context, Chinese context, and primal religious context. In conclusion, the author states that in Asia "Christianity is closer in many respects to primal religions than to the axial religions" and that "this contiguity between Christianity and primal religions is designated the *vestigia dei* (the footprints of God)" (p. 62).

In chapter 2, the author discusses the Asian concept of humanity and sin. Regarding the nature of man, he emphasizes that it is to be defined in one's relationship to others. The two most basic relationships in Asian culture are the family and the male-female relationships. These are the basic elements in Asian Christianity as well as in most Asian primal religions. In relation to the nature of sin, the author observes that in Asian honor-and-shame culture sin is defined as "offending the honor of other person of the community" and as "pollution that can be removed only through purification" (p. 83). Thus, while sin is the loss of honor, righteousness is the restoration of honor. This concept of shame and honor, the author insists, can be found in the biblical teachings.

In his discussion on Christ and salvation in chapter 3, the author raises the question, "How do ordinary Christians experience Christ?" In answering this question, he observes that Christ is understood in primal religious contexts of Asia as healer, liberator, and victor. Based on this understanding, in Asian Christianity conversion is regarded more frequently as "the experience of freedom from bondage to fear, evil powers or the caste system" than that of the transformation of one's heart (p. 123).

Chapter 5 is allocated to the discussion on the Holy Spirit and spirituality. In this chapter, the author insists that the Holy Spirit is "the bond of the unity of the Trinity, between the church and the Trinity, and between the church and creation" (p. 156). This means that he is the very bridge between the church and non-believers. This function of the Holy Spirit is essential in Asian primal religious contexts, for "in Asia the world of spirits is very much a part of everyday life" (p. 156). Thus, the church's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the very barometer of how the church can engage this world.

In chapter 6, with regard to Asian ecclesiology, the author states, "The chief ecclesiological problem in Asia is how to be church in the midst of more ancient family-based religious communities" (p. 201). The elitist approach of ecclesiology, according to Chan, is not fully recognized because it ignores the contribution of grassroots Christianity. The author observes that several indigenous concepts of Christianity have found answers for these issues and introduced in Asia concepts such as churchless Christianity, Japanese Indigenous Christian Movements, Pentecostal Church, and Watchman Nee's family-based local church. Among these indigenous Christian movements, he insists that the Pentecostal Church has the most adequate response to the Asian context.

In this book, the author argues that the ecclesial experience should be the basic source for Christian theology. This means that the formation of theology should be founded on grassroots Christianity. The question that needs to be addressed concerns the primary source of Christian theology: Should it be God's revelation or the church's experience? Despite this question, I think this book is a very useful material for those who are interested in studying the cultural backgrounds of Asian theology. It is also a good source for those who study the indigenous Christian movements in Asia.

Kyungho Song

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design, by Stephen C. Meyer, New York: Harper One, 2013. 540 pp. ISBN 978-0-06-207148-4. Hardcover, US\$19.99.

Darwin's Doubt is the most up-to-date comprehensive and rigorous argument based on fossil evidence against the neo-Darwinian theory and for intelligent design. While a rigorously made argument is always useful, the truly amazing thing about *Darwin's Doubt* is that the rigor does not render the book unreadable. In fact, Stephen Meyer's writing is amazingly clear, elegant, and understandable to any generally educated reader sincerely interested in understanding the arguments he makes. It belongs in the library or anyone serious about understanding the origin of animal diversity.

One outstanding aspect of *Darwin's Doubt* is the way in which Meyer clearly and respectfully lays out counter arguments to his own. This is es-