

people are alienated not only from the means of production but from their labour and from themselves as human beings and as individuals.

They are lonely in the midst of millions of their fellow workers. To this extent the collectivist feudal culture was certainly closer to socialism than the capitalist 'culture' of total alienation. However, somehow Brewster chooses not to understand this and seems to be blind to the degradation, misery and dehumanization of millions of people under capitalism.

Then from the sky Brewster pulls the Romans and their plundering empire into the argument. Because capitalism is 'the father of imperialism' it must (according to Brewster's logic) follow that since the Romans enslaved other nations they were therefore capitalist. There is a basic misconception here. Slavery as a system was based on the enslavement of nations — of human beings who became the property of their captors and lost their character as human beings. That was not and is not imperialism. Imperialism is capitalism at a particular stage of its development when capitalist countries colonize less-developed nations.

Again from the sky Brewster pulls out the Afghanistan question. All one can say is that the dispute in Afghanistan (pleasant or unpleasant) has no relevance to my book. How Brewster links it defies all logic.

Brewster distorts and misreads my call on the clergy to be partisan and be on the side of the people in their struggle against exploitation. To him this means that the church should have 'no other function than to support the current government'. There is nothing in the statement he quotes which remotely suggests that 'to criticize state policy is to oppose the people'.

I conclude by accepting that my book is not perfect and, as any author, I must bear the responsibility for any misunderstandings due to my failure (if any) to use clear language. However, my disagreements with Brewster do not lie on that front, in my view; they are purely ideological, because our positions represent opposed perspectives of the world.

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Old and New in South Shona Independent Churches: Volume III: Leadership and Fission Dynamics By M. L. Daneel. Gweru, Mambo Press, 1988, xix, 568 pp., ISBN 0-86922-4433, Z\$45.00, p/b.

This is a detailed description of leadership issues in a number of independent churches, based on the author's close involvement with the churches concerned. We are presented with accounts of the different types of organization to be found, the techniques by which leaders maintained their positions, and details of the problems of succession when church leaders die. It is an invaluable addition to the author's already substantial contribution to our knowledge of independent churches.

The book has more than academic interest. One of the aims was to write down the histories of the churches; and the author includes more detail than might

be necessary for an academic argument, precisely because church members will be looking to his work for such a record.

A further aim of the book is to present the churches as genuinely Christian, both in their leadership and in church doctrine and practice. The argument is against those who regard independent churches as deriving more from traditional culture than from Christianity. Daneel argues that the churches are fundamentally Christian. He also points to areas in which older churches might learn from them, in paying attention to dreams, for example, and how to cope with witchcraft.

There is, however, a lack of theoretical substance behind much of the arguments. The author speaks of church fission as following the cultural pattern of 'kraal splitting'. The process is more fundamental. The kind of personal control that Daneel describes so well can have only limited extension: as the size of a church increases beyond a critical point, fission occurs, whatever the cultural background. And at the death of the leader whose personal influence provided unity, one expects fission. The techniques by which leaders maintained their authority, denigrating potential rivals, trying to exercise personal control over subordinate officials, and so on, reflect the techniques of micro-politics to be found in any society.

There is a problem about what constitutes a Christian response as opposed to any other response. Simply using biblical symbols to replace older ones does not comprise any radical kind of conversion. Simply to refer to biblical stories does not make an argument theological. The fact that prophets are hostile to traditional healers could be interpreted as competition between equivalents rather than radical difference or inspiration by the Holy Spirit.

What are the defining characteristics of Christianity? One such characteristic is the central place of the life of Christ in the expression of ideology; and Daneel shows, against doubts that have been expressed, that the independent churches satisfy this criterion. Another criterion is the opening up of social boundaries, accepting obligations beyond the family, or ethnic, or national groups; again this criterion is fulfilled. Then the story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ introduces a new attitude to material misfortune, and to power, both over the material world and over other people. Here is an area which needs to be probed (perhaps in the older established churches as much as in the newer independent churches).

Daneel touches lightly on most of these points, and provides further data for those who wish to probe. He does present less attractive characteristics of independent churches, including struggles for power among leaders. But his approach is to try to understand rather than to judge. This must be right, both from the academic and the Christian point of view.

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