

it has been called for redemptive purposes. And gone is any common ground on which Christians and non-Christians in a pluralistic society might engage in a meaningful ethical conversation or debate' (page 22).

When common points of reference have been set aside for the sake of certain theological emphases, the apologetic mandate loses its relevance and/or urgency. As Charles himself explains: 'This is not to say that Scripture has no place in our witness. It is only to illustrate that we must engage people where they are located in terms of their underlying worldview assumptions. Every unbeliever has a guiding set of presuppositions about ultimate reality that must be properly interpreted and then exposed for that unbeliever to come to Christian faith' (page 106).

Charles has provided an important work that needs to be seriously considered by everyone in the culture wars. Not only does he provide the reader with a crisp and cogent introduction to 'moral first things', he also demonstrates how these theoretical issues pertain to real-life debates, especially in regard to bio-medical ethics. This is precisely how *Retrieving the Natural Law* sets itself apart from so many published works on natural law and the virtues. For instance, he shows how natural law is relevant to social ethics and euthanasia. He addresses beginning-of-life, life-enhancement, and other end-of-life issues.

Always confident in the deliverances of right reason (*recta ratio*) under the influence of divine revelation, Charles has left the Christian community with plenty of food for thought. This book should be essential reading for every thinking believer who needs to discern the 'signs of the times' (Mt. 16:3) in order to provide an effective witness on behalf of the Kingdom.

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Kirchengeschichte Asiens (Asian Church History)

Klaus Wetzell

Nuremberg (Germany), VTR, revised edition 2010

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Translated from the Indonesian edition

Kompodium Sejarah Gereja Asia
Malang (Indonesia), Gandum Mas,
2000

Pb, pp 680

*Reviewed by Thomas Schirmacher, Bonn,
General Editor of Evangelical Review of
Theology*

This history of the church in Asia is unique, as it grew out of teaching the subject at an Indonesian school of theology, was first printed in Indonesian and then translated into German. The author now teaches the same subject at the Academy for World Mission in Korntal, the German branch of Columbia International University, besides being a pastor and chair of German branch of WEC International. This is a second revised German version which is updated to the present time from the latest Indonesian edition.

It is a pity that the language barrier between English and the rest of the world means that English texts have a wide acceptance in the whole evangelical world, but influential books in other major languages often stay virtually unknown and without influence. Also, when one reads evangelical works published in the USA, one rarely finds other than English sources in the footnotes. Therefore the chance that this important work will make its way from Indonesian or German into the evangelical world community is not very great.

But it should, as the compendium is evangelical scholarship at its best. It is ecumenical, giving due place to all churches in all ages from the early church through the high times of Oriental churches in Asia, the times when the Catholic Church was the dominating Christian force in Asia, until the remarkable growth of the Protestant churches stemming from mission work. And yet it is evangelical, not only by highlighting evangelical mission history, but by carrying the conviction that mission and church history is under God's providence and God still uses history to teach his church. Thus the author asks at the end of each chapter, what the central spiritual questions were in that era and what we can learn from them for today.

Evangelical at its best is also the combination of mission history, church history and the history and comparison of Christian confessions and churches. The author is convinced that one should not separate them into different disciplines, but research and describe them together.

What overall picture do you get by reading the book? Here it is: The Christian church in Asia has increasingly moved into global Christianity's field of vision in recent decades. Unexpected revival movements can be as easily named here as can much acknowledged theological studies.

In the meantime, leading personalities in Asia significantly shape international Christian associations. Christianity in Asia has become an important branch of Jesus Christ's church around the world.

A particular focus of the book has to do with diverse aspects relating to Asian Protestant churches' paths to independence in various geographic regions. From the first indigenous church leaders and clerics all the way up to large churches fully under local leadership, the book traces how churches which originated

through missionary work took various routes to become churches that are fully at home in their domestic cultures. An additional focus of the book, which to my knowledge has not been found in any other Asian church history up to now, is the important number of changes for church history that occurred in Northern and Central Asia as well as in the Caucasus Mountain region at the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s.

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My Brother's Keeper: Essays in honor of Ellis R. Brotzman

Edited by Thomas J. Marinello and H. H. Drake Williams III
Eugene, Oregon: WIFF & Stock, 2010

ISBN 13:978-1-60608-776-4
Pb., pp 287, List of contributors

Reviewed by Norman T. Barker, Brisbane, Australia

'My Brother's Keeper' is a collection of fifteen essays by scholars associated with the Tyndale Theological Seminary in The Netherlands. The title is an expression of their appreciation of Brotzman as a 'scholar with a pastor's heart'. The book has three sections, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral and Intercultural Studies. Its publication in 2010 also marks twenty five years in the life of the seminary.

As usual in such collections, the themes are very varied. The first essay is from the pen of Ellis Brotzman himself. In line with comparative studies of the Synoptic Gospels, Brotzman comments pertinently on three dimensions of Old Testament narrative relating to the crucial figure of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18-20, Isaiah 36-39 and 2 Chronicles 29-32). As with the