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ni della esistenza umana e della sessualità”, corrispondenti alle diverse antropologie (p. 73-114). Di quella biblica viene posta in rilievo la collocazione “all’interno della *visione teocentrica* dell’intera rivelazione” (p. 110) e, per quanto riguarda il Nuovo Testamento, si sottolinea “l’originalità cristocentrica”, che “anche quando affronta problemi legati alla sessualità, è concentrata nella fondazione “nuova” della vita morale “in Cristo”, più che da motivi di ordine teoretico razionale” (p. 113).

Chiarificata l’impostazione teoretica, la seconda parte affronta le problematiche più concrete, raggruppandole “attorno a due nuclei principali: problemi riguardanti la singola persona e problemi specifici della coppia”, considerando ad essi “connessa la dimensione sociale e religiosa della persona” (p. 115).

Riguardo al primo gruppo ci si sofferma innanzitutto sui problemi concernenti la maturazione personale e l’educazione sessuale, in coerenza con la prospettiva pedagogica che sostiene tutto il discorso. Successivamente vengono presi in esame l’autoerotismo, l’omosessualità e le deviazioni dell’istinto sessuale, prima di trattare le tematiche della vedovanza e del celibato. Riguardo al secondo gruppo, si segue il cammino storico della coppia: preparazione, rapporti prematrimoniali, apertura alla vita e regolazione della natalità, fedeltà coniugale e problemi del divorzio.

Il quadro delle problematiche può apparire troppo ambizioso per il numero di pagine del libro. E questo soprattutto per alcuni punti più caldi, come l’omosessualità o la paternità/maternità responsabile. Generalmente però l’autore riesce ad evidenziare i punti nodali della riflessione, indicando una sufficiente bibliografia per l’ulteriore e necessario approfondimento. La franchezza, con cui viene presentata la posizione del magistero ecclesiale, è accompagnata sempre dallo sforzo sincero per individuare i passi che meglio permettono di comprenderla nel suo significato e quindi di farla incontrare costruttivamente dalle coscienze. Questa maniera di procedere rende il libro uno strumento valido anche a livello pastorale.

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**Lienkamp, Andreas**, *Theodor Steinbüchels Sozialismusrezeption. Eine christlichsozialethische Relecture*. Paderborn; München; Wien; Zürich: Schöningh, 2000, 803 p.

In the light of the slowly-healing wound inflicted on Europe by Soviet Realsozialismus it will understandably take some time before the myriad unresolved questions concerning the relationship between socialism and christianity get a new airing. A not uncommon reaction on the part of christians to the collapse of the Soviet system is a kind of complacent "told you so". This is understandable, particularly on the part of the victims of that system, but it is theologically and philosophically myopic if it implies a wholesale rejection of socialist thought and the challenges it poses to Christian faith and ethics. Such tendencies will not disappear easily, however, and in the meantime this "Relecture" of the question in an author of the calibre of Theodor Steinbüchel by a scholar of Lienkamp's competence is to be heartily welcomed.

The tense historical context, the attractive and interesting personality of Steinbüchel, the scholarly skills of Lienkamp and, most of all, the topical and controversial nature of the question itself combine to make this a genuinely readable piece of doctoral research.

A German Catholic theologian before, during (in so far as he was permitted) and after (Steinbüchel died in 1949 as Rector at Tübingen) the Nazi regime, who dedicates himself to the study of socialism in order to learn from it, is bound to provoke at least our curiosity. Several aspects of Steinbüchel's life enhance this interest: his academic background in economics, his pastoral experience with factory workers in the "rheinisch-westfälischen Industriegebiet", his deep intellectual roots in both the Scholastic theological tradition and the Idealist philosophical tradition. Given these credentials and given his genuinely moderate intellectual temperament, Steinbüchel's openness to socialism simply cannot be dismissed as naive or ill-informed. In fact, the more interesting tension in this book is not that between Steinbüchel and the Nazis but that between Steinbüchel and other theologians who were interested in socialism, or rather who were interested in refuting socialism (at times without seriously studying it!). Lienkamp's talent lies partly in his capacity to locate this rather acrimonious debate in its historical context and to bring out the particularity of Steinbüchel's contribution as a fruit of his learning and ultimately of his character.

While maintaining the focus on the selected theme, Lienkamp's treatment of his subject is so thorough that it is effectively an intellectual biography of the author in a particular optic. Steinbüchel (1888-1949) emerges as one of those Christians whose intelligence

and integrity lead him into honest dialogue with sources which at first sight seem unpromising if not actually anathema. In the course of almost 700 pages (apart from the elaborate notes and appendices), through Lienkamp's generous and effective use of quotations from the author's works, papers and letters one develops a certain familiarity with this voice from the past. It is a voice which speaks with an attractive and unusual combination of reasonableness, prudence, insight, criticism and intellectual passion. Rather cautious and agonized when speaking of socialism, it takes on prophetic tones when denouncing the aberrations of capitalism.

The depiction of the intellectual setting is extremely well done. Anybody who is anybody in German theological history (at least in the sphere of social ethics) in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is here to be found. Some of those who receive substantial treatment in that they are located by Lienkamp in his narration of Stienbüchel's reception of socialism are: Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, Heinrich Pesch, Leonhard Ragaz, Max Scheler, Oswald von Nell-Breuning, Victor Cathrein, Wilhelm Hohoff, Ernst Michel, Walter Dirk, Theodor Brauer and Fritz Tillman (Steinbüchel's "*Doktorvater*"). One of the most attractive sides of Lienkamp's presentation is the way in which his reading of these authors, and of Steinbüchel himself, is accompanied by extended references to major philosophical figures in the background (Marx, Engels, Hegel, Feuerbach, Kant, Nietzsche) and to more recent theological scholarship (Rahner, Grundlach, Metz, Auer, Haunhorst, Häring and a host of others). The cumulative effect of these many and varied references is not at all eclectic, however, because they are handled in quite different ways, as the logic of the treatment of the primary theme requires.

The key to Steinbüchel's reception of socialism is to be found, Lienkamp plausibly proposes, in the title of his doctoral thesis: *Der Sozialismus als sittliche Idee. Ein Beitrag zur christlichen Sozialethik* (1921). That is to say, one can only understand Steinbüchel's reception of socialism in general and of Marx in particular if one appreciates the philosophical nature of his intellectual quest. Knowing and appreciating the thought of his two great masters St. Thomas and Kant, Steinbüchel finds in Marx an additional philosophical resource, even when he does not share his presuppositions or agree with many of his conclusions. At this point the thorny question arises for Steinbüchel (and for all of us) as to how this particular philosophical resource is to be deployed in *theological* ethics. Lienkamp is

at pains to point out that Steinbüchel rejects and refutes many of the principle ideas of Marxism and yet insists that he has learned a great deal for his christian ethics from Marx. The ongoing theological and philosophical treatment of this question is of vast importance and the conceptual bridges which Steinbüchel was attempting to build in the twenties and thirties may prove to be still serviceable in this regard.

One clear conviction guides Steinbüchels project: to try to construct the history of Western society since the Enlightenment and to compose a theological (social) ethics which takes cognisance of this history, without coming to terms with the ethical issues raised by socialism is to condemn oneself to massive oversimplification. This by no means implies that he is blind to the historical horrors of Sovietism, or to some undeniable links between socialist theory and Soviet practice. Rather he sees both capitalism and marxism as children of philosophical liberalism, and christianity, with its inherent commitment to social justice, as an alternative vision, supplying (along with so much else) a critique of both political systems.

While the concluding section of the book allows Lienkamp to express his own views on the contribution of Steinbüchel to social ethics, it serves also to point out the value of Steinbüchel's thought for the ongoing discussion of the relationship between socialism and christianity. Apart from numerous thematic points that require more adequate answers from christian ethicists (neatly laid out on pp.455-464), it is perhaps the intellectual and emotional *attitude* of Steinbüchel to socialism which is most remarkable. In terms of mental openness, thoroughness of investigation, equilibrium of judgement and courage in articulating his convictions, Steinbüchel can serve as a model in studying this difficult question.

Lienkamp's book is the proverbial "must" for anyone interested in the relationship between christianity and socialism in the twentieth century and can be highly recommended to anyone interested in the wide range of historical, social, political and religious themes indicated above. Apart from expressing one's admiration for his remarkable academic *Gründlichkeit*, the best praise of Lienkamp is perhaps to say that he himself emerges as someone who has learnt a great deal from the one he has so carefully studied.

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