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Bibliographie

MIHAI IORDACHE, *Ethics, Spirituality and Ecumenism*, Bucharest (Editura Universitară) 2020, ISBN 978-606-28-1146-4, 295 pp., € 7,50.

The present volume consists of a series of essays originating in papers presented by the author, a Romanian orthodox ecumenist, ethicist and priest, based at the University of Bucharest, specializing in particular in protestant theology and ethics. The book is truly wide-ranging and witnesses to the author's ecumenical and interdisciplinary outlook. The essays cover topics such as nationalism, otherness (in relation to ecumenism), the orthodox understanding of catholicity, the contribution of the Eastern fathers to contemporary ethics of economy, the role of ecumenism in theological education, interreligious ethical common ground, the origins of the Reformation and the idea of freedom in the theology of Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, faith, grace and human freedom in the theology of Karl Barth obedience and human freedom in the theology of Emil Brunner, the understanding of nature as a divine gift, and ethical and historical dimensions of the Europeanization of Romania under the rule of King Charles I of Romania.

Although some might find this collection, largely written in English (with one German exception), eclectic, one can also understand it as the fruit of a

consistent attempt to theologize from within the orthodox tradition (and with an eye to its further development) in dialogue with “others,” whether this other is the ecclesial other (ecumenism), the historical other (church fathers), the natural other (ecology), or the cultural other (migration), and to do so with the intention of understanding one's own tradition better by allowing it to enter into a conversation with these various others. In doing so, the author certainly lives up to his own call to be “daring and predictive” (283), stating that “We need to ask not merely ‘What did the Fathers say a long time ago’, but, rather, ‘What would they say if they were alive today?’” (283). That this is no mere slogan becomes clear when Iordache argues, drawing on the theology of Dumitru Stăniloae, that “the genius of Orthodoxy is its openness to the others. The Church Fathers teach us that any self-enclosure can lead to the denial of our nature and ends in suffocation and depersonalization” (282). This is a theological position reminiscent of Ioannis Zizioulas' concept of an “ethos of otherness” and a voice that is sorely needed in a world that seems to be characterized by polarization and the withdrawal into “bubbles” or spheres of influence politically, ecclesially and socially. Can this kind of Orthodox point the way out of such a ghetto – and can Western theologians develop such a principled open understanding of their tradition as well?

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