theoretical and practical development. In fact, one is ever increasingly led back to *Lumen Gentium* as the *fons et origo* of all conciliar and post-conciliar thought and as the clear voice of the Holy Spirit for our time.

The section of the present work which fascinated me most personally was Père Legrand's discursus entitled 'Un Nouveau Miroir de L'Evêque?'. Certainly, as a bishop, one finds in practice something of a dilemma regarding priorities. His responsibilities are no longer confined exclusively to the local Church (maybe they never were in theory) but he is called also very often into the collegial activities of the *conferentia episcoporum* on the national level and with increasing frequency on the international level also. Vatican II would suggest that he cannot abdicate responsibility on any level. But as a matter of principle, what is to be put first? Père Legrand asks revelant questions without giving any definitive answer. I believe, at the moment, most bishops are doing the same. 'Est il possible d'exprimer de façon plus radicale ce que doit être le service d'un successeur des Apôtres dont le ministère a été établi par Dieu dans et pour l'Eglise?'

✠ WM. GORDON WHEELER

A HISTORY OF RELIGION EAST AND WEST: an Introduction and Interpretation, by Trevor Ling, *Macmillan*, London, 1968. 464 pp. Student edition: price 30s.

With Dr Trevor Ling's book as an 'introduction' to the history of religions we have no quarrel. On the contrary, it is competently composed, critically written and, in so far as it is possible for one person to undertake such a task, reasonably complete. After sections on ancient far- and near-Eastern religions as well as biblical and extra-biblical prophetism (Zarathustra and the Buddha) come chapters on Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The concluding considerations are consecrated to the lot of the several religions in contemporary industrial society. Finally there is a brief but optimistic epilogue on the future of religious belief. An anthropologist would regret that the religions the history of which is in question are 'historical religions', since primitive religions are and have been of prime importance methodologically speaking. It is with the author's work as an 'interpretation' that we begin to raise objections—not with this author in particular but with historians of comparative religion in general or at least with those who appear to exaggerate the value of this discipline. To our mind it is unfortunate that not a few theologians and philosophers when they come to speak of religion have recourse to the historian of religion rather than to the more sociologically slanted specialist.

Logically such specialists should have nothing to fear from the historian of religion's generalizations and comparisons for, properly understood, abstraction does not lead to an impoverishment but to an enrichment of empirical data by pinpointing its essential structure. Psychologically, however, the fieldworker often feels that the broad definitions and categoric characterizations of the comparatist fail to do justice to the complexity of his findings. The empirically minded monographer finds it hard to accept that the theorist's archetypal patterns or basic structures lay bare a semantic strata more real and relevant than his own. He finds it even harder to account for the fascination such scholars—one thinks of Mircea Eliade in particular—seem to exercise over a certain type of theologian and philosopher. These latter appear to be labouring under a latent platonism in that they tend to locate the real at the level of overall trends and fundamental categories of which the existential is but an exemplification. (One thinks of the way the infinite variety of primitive creeds and cults have been dismissed as 'Nature religions'.) It is not that the historian of religion's statements are pointless platitudes or his categories so common-denominator as to be contentless. The comparatist has a useful if somewhat thankless task to perform of collating more specialized studies within a general heuristic framework. He functions as an interim stock taker. But it remains our conviction that for the philosopher or theologian interested in religion, a well-chosen monograph can be more rewarding reading than the synthetic summaries furnished by the historian of religions.

Lest we appear too critical of the author's efforts, let us reiterate our initial remarks: we found little to fault in his work. His book is a miniature encyclopedia of readable information, conveniently and coherently arranged. We appreciate especially the happy balance he struck between the consideration of social and psychological factors, space being given to both creative personalities and environmental forces. We endorse too his opinion that the

study of other religions at undergraduate level cannot but be beneficial in weaning the western Christian from latent ethnocentricity. Dr Ling's book is certainly among the best to start the student off on the study of other religions. One final comment, there are one or two odd lacunae in the bibliography: Mircea Eliade's *Patterns in Comparative Religion* is not mentioned, nor are the works of J. Wach and W. Stark; even Durkheim's *magnum opus* is not signalled.

M. SINGLETON, W.F.

CONFLICT IN COMMUNITY, by Robert J. McAllister. *St John's University Press*, Minnesota, 1969. 110 pp. $4.50.

This book deserves more than its un-American flyleaf claims: '. . . Dr McAllister's essays, while necessarily limited in scope, are more than merely beneficial'. Working knowledge of several religious communities encourages me to claim that no British religious house can afford to be without this book.

It is recommended not because it is totally original or definitive. It is American: to prejudiced British eyes, its rambling range, its flowery patches will give sufficient grounds for reacting to the book rather than reading it. It is American: this means it has little application to Britain. Anyone who can say that, is not resisting the gift of American learning; he is resistant to the plain evidence about British experience of religious life. The book is American: it offers jargon and psychiatry as bandwaggon and panacaea. The answer to that charge is *No*. First, compared with many American writings this book is commendably free of jargon. Second, Dr McAllister offers few easy solutions to problems. His contribution rather is to state problems more clearly, and to set them in a context. The context is two-fold: that of the individual, is her personal background; that of religious life, is the contemporary changing Church. Through Dr McAllister's sometimes bland and over-reassuring discussion runs a fairly consistent theme of caution. Religious, and those advising them, are warned that the tough central issues may be avoided in enthusiastic discussion of respectable but peripheral issues.

Anyone assisting religious communities in the present post-conciliar turmoil is faced with a constant dilemma. To communicate new ideas, new perspectives, one has to reassure one's audience by not questioning too much too soon. On the other hand, one is aware that honesty eventually requires 'too much' to be communicated. It is easy to trap Dr McAllister if one wishes the play of labelling him rather than the work of studying him. For example, he says, 'It is not likely that convent life can be made radically different' (p. 50). Yet this series of essays communicates much that is urgent for radical re-shaping of convent life. The book grew from lectures designed to help religious; in consequence, it understandably bears the marks of conflict between the ideal and the possible.

Not shirking the conflict for himself, Dr McAllister is able to probe the conflicts in religious life. He sets them in the background of human growth and development: for example, problems about religious obedience and superiors can be clarified in awareness of childhood experience of authority. He examines unhappy solutions to conflict in religious life: physical illness and mental breakdown, overwork and dishonest relationships. He explores constructive measures for facing and handling conflict: emphasis on self-respect, the expression of emotions, the treating of women like adults.

The first chapter discusses psychological and psychiatric screening for religious life. The discussion has value, but would have been better placed at the end of the book. The book is quite firmly not a handbook of new selection tools for superiors and novice mistresses. The book is aimed at understanding, not at techniques. One of its main arguments surely is that understanding of religious life is a task for all, within and without the religious communities.

Important contributions to understanding are Chapters II and III on the roots and realization of one's personality, and Chapters V to VIII on stress, anxiety, psychosomatic illness and anger in the religious life. I am less happy about the chapters on Community and on Love. Probably these two topics are the crucial ones; on them Dr McAllister and the rest of us must now do most work. About his last chapter, on feminine fulfilment, I, a male, have the same reservations as Sister Sarah who contributes the book's preface.

This book touches on many fascinating topics: the impact of determinism; the problem of those who leave; research into mental