is certainly more up-to-date than Franzen, and even Bokenkotter. Bokenkotter and Dwyer naturally take account of the pontificates of John XXIII and Paul VI in a way which Franzen could not, but Bokenkotter, though published earlier, is much more informative and thoughtful than Dwyer. Franzen's English edition is marred by all too frequent mistranslations of German terms, some of them seriously misleading, and for a non-European audience, the detail on early medieval Europe, especially Germany, is quite excessive. This is corrected in Bokenkotter and Dwyer, writing as they are for Americans, and neither gives excessive space to the American church, evidently presuming a special course or book on that topic for American students. None of the three works give much more than a chapter to the church in the third world; only Bokenkotter gives any treatment to 19th and 20th century non-western churches and the meaning of this development for the church universal. Only Bokenkotter gives any treatment to Social Catholicism. Of professed purpose, basing himself on a dubious ecclesiological premise, Dwyer gives little attention to the lives of ordinary Christians, or to spirituality and liturgy, unlike Bokenkotter. To sum up, Dwyer will be useful for the clear treatment of many theological topics, and could be a useful reference if it were not for the lack of any index. But the assertion of the publisher's blurb that "this volume represents the best and most up-to-date single volume history of the Catholic Church available to readers today" is certainly not proven in the mind of this reviewer. For overall balance and sufficient proportionate treatment of the whole history of the church, Bokenkotter's book is at present the most suitable textbook for colleges and seminaries in the Philippines or other English-speaking countries of the third world.

John N. Schumacher, S.J.

THE HOLY FAMILY OF FATHER MOON. By Joseph Fichter, S.J.

In this slim volume the author, an American Jesuit priest sociologist, examines one of the strangest religious groups on the contemporary world scene, including the Philippines. Originating in Korea where the Reverend Sun Myung Moon was born in 1918 it is officially known as "The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity." Universally the members are known as "Moonies" professing a syncretism of Christianity and Confucianism.

Young Catholics of the upper or middle class are often found to be vulnerable to the appeal of the Moonies even though they have to reject many of the most basic teachings and devotions of their Catholic faith. The Moonies deny the divinity of Christ, the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and, logically, the existence of the Trinity. For them there are no sacraments, no Mass, no
devotion to the Blessed Mother. Christ was merely a human messenger sent by God but he failed in his mission because the people killed him. He is still held in great reverence and the Moonies profess a personal and prayerful relationship with him without accepting his divinity. All spiritual devotion is concentrated on God, the Father to whom they feel they are very close as to a God who suffers and is torn by the evil in the world. He is a God who is subject to change, who knows sorrow as well as joy.

Because of their strange, unique understanding of original sin as an act of sexual impurity between Eve and the archangel Lucifer, the Moonies consider adultery to be the greatest moral evil in the world. From this flows their very puritanical code of morality and an exaltation of a "Blessed Marriage" as the bastion of morality and the channel of salvation which washes away original sin. For the Moonies marriage is a heavenly mandate with no allowance for bachelorhood or singleness, or "cold" permanent celibacy. Even Jesus, they believe, would have married if he had not been put to death.

Since a "Blessed Marriage" is so important for the Moonies, they want the Reverend Moon or his delegate to arrange their marriage, to select their spouse and, if at all possible, to officiate at the wedding ceremony. That is why they have such mass weddings as the one in Madison Square Garden in New York City in 1982 when over 2000 couples were married, with more than one third of the couples of mixed races. For them their common religious beliefs transcend all racial, ethnic and class preferences. A similar mass wedding was held shortly afterwards in Seoul. Such weddings emphasize their membership in a large extended family under the fatherhood of God. The prevailing belief among the Moonies in such weddings is that God has arranged the whole thing through the Reverend Moon, picking the mate who had been created just for them.

Add to all of this is a millenial prophecy, the Second Coming, with the new Messiah to be a Korean, someone who is already an adult in the world. The Reverend Moon is either that new Messiah or the one who will usher in the Messianic age. All the details will be revealed by God to Moon in a future revelation, supplementing and completing the first revelation found in the "Divine Principle" which was given to correct all "the mistakes and misunderstandings" of the Christian Old and New Testaments.

The big question for the Catholic reader is why this strange religious mix has such an appeal to Catholic youth. From his many personal interviews Fichter rules out discontent with the Church or reaction to some real or imaginary personal conflict. Likewise he rules out parental failure since most of the converts report a happy home life. Neither should we think of them as drop-outs or rebels. Fichter believes that a decade ago, these very converts would have been candidates for the seminaries or religious life. They are the idealists who want to be challenged. No sex, no drugs, limited freedom, a programmed way of life, a strong father figure, a feeling of belonging — these all appeal to a certain type of modern youth.
The contemporary emphasis on materialistic values, consumerism and the prevalent sensate culture leave these high-minded young people feeling cold and empty. They hunger for the transcendent, the sacred, as Fichter analyzes them, and they are willing to pour themselves into a life of sacrifice and even missionary zeal. They want to be challenged.

F. denies that these converts are victims of brainwashing. He sees them as undergoing a genuine conversion away from the secular culture that is identified more and more with industrialization and economic development.

One disturbing feature of this movement is its claim to unify all religions. For them no one renounces or leaves his or her original religious affiliation. Catholic Moonies say that they are better Catholics now than they were before joining the Moonies. They say that they did not really leave their Church but have enriched their relationship with it. They know there are differences but they say that the beliefs and practices they now embrace are an improvement — not a repudiation — of Catholicism. When visiting their families they even attend Mass and receive Communion!

Very recently there was much grave concern here because of the inroads of the “Children of God” cult with its blatant appeal to the baser instincts in unlimited sexual freedom. The Moonies are at the other end of the moral spectrum insisting on pre-marital chastity, marital fidelity, and condemning adultery as the greatest moral evil. Their belief that they can be Moonies and good Catholics defies all analysis since they have to deny the most basic and cherished Catholic beliefs. In this they are very different from the many Fundamentalists and Evangelicals who strive mightily to separate Catholics from all Catholic practises and devotions as soon as possible, especially devotion to Our Lady.

For Catholic parents, educators and religious leaders this work of Fichter will stimulate reflection on the proper approach to modern youth. Indulgence or watering down the teaching of Christ can be the worst possible approach to those who are hungry for the sacred, the transcendent. Helping them to material prosperity could leave them feeling cold and empty. Centuries ago St. Augustine put it very succinctly when he said that God has made us for himself and our hearts are restless until they rest in him.

Gerald W. Healy, S.J.


This book is actually a textbook on The Last Things. A glance through the Table of Contents gives one a good overview of the subjects treated. The