PB's book is a really well-informed, remarkably comprehensive (one can think of almost nothing relevant which has not been touched on) and strongly sympathetic survey of Latin American LT as a movement — from its beginnings to the present. Without in any way concealing its decisively "pro-LT" stance, it attempts a "rather objective" presentation — in the sense of trying to give opposing positions fairly. Some features and theses of LT are evaluated and criticized, if from a more friendly stance. Novak and the Ratzinger texts are rebutted, as might be expected, from a pro-LT viewpoint.

Instead of footnotes, there is an excellent section giving references for each chapter, — really a select bibliography, and also a detailed and helpful index.

The present reviewer has not read all the many "pro-LT" introductions in English now in print, but of PB's book one could say, as the TV ad says of a certain beer, that this is "probably the best one" in the market today.

C. G. Arévalo, S.J.


The stated goal of G. Florez in this work is "to apply Fr. Lombardi's vision of the Church to the situation of the Church in Asia." In Part I a synthesis of the reality of Asia is presented under the heading "The Signs of the Times in Asia." Parts II, III, and IV deal with the actual mission of the church in the context of Asia; these three parts correspond to the three functions of Jesus as priest, prophet, and king-servant; in this framework they center around liturgy, evangelization, and service to man. One short chapter, entitled "Through 'Kenosis' to 'Apotheosis'," serves as the conclusion to the book.

Florez begins each chapter with a scriptural quote and theological reflection. He then attempts an integration of theology and the concrete realities of Asia. He concludes with pastoral applications for specific Asian situations. It should also be noted that a "Foreword" is presented by the respected Pietro Rossano, a man of many achievements in missiology and interreligious dialogue.

Looking at the work in greater detail, one sees that the first two chapters present "Asia" and "Christianity in Asia"; these make for an interesting contextualization. Here Florez depends heavily on two authors — R. Buultjens and R. G. Wilson — whose works date from the early 1970s; their data is updated through recent periodicals and magazines. Generally, the overview/context is well presented.

The bulk of the book (chaps. 3-11) is structured around the three-fold
function of Jesus as noted above; these Christological dimensions are transposed into an Ecclesiological framework to describe the mission of the church in Asia. Most chapters are heavily theological with only weak linkages to the Asian context; they reflect a more "universalistic" rather than "contextual" approach to theology. In short, one finds here a deductive rather than an inductive method; truly, the book reflects the stated goal: "an attempt to apply Fr. Lombardi's vision of the Church to the situation of the Church in Asia" (see inside of front cover).

The short conclusion is hortatory in nature — to actualize Lombardi's Christological-Ecclesiological vision within Asia. Florez quotes Lombardi to focus his exhortation; he notes: "These pages are AN APPEAL TO THE CHURCH . . ." (p. 200). The title of the conclusion, however, remains an enigma; no elaboration or explanation is presented of "Through 'Kenosis' to 'Apotheosis'" (p. 191).

One finds many fine insights in this book; a few examples will suffice: proselytism vis-a-vis authentic conversion (pp. 102-3), the role of Christian educational institutions throughout Asia (pp. 109, 114-17), war in Asia and the need for healing (p. 137), the necessity of actively applying the vision of Vatican II (p. 6), the use of Eastern Church liturgy in Asia (p. 68), and the entire chapter on missionaries (pp. 179-90).

Questions which remain with this reviewer are: Is contextualized, inductive theology to be preferred for the Church in Asia (rather than a universalist approach)? Is the author too close to Fr. Lombardi and the Movement for a Better World to offer a critical evaluation of its viable applicability in Asia? Should fewer subject areas have been treated so as to give more in-depth presentations? Is an internal unity lacking because some chapters were written separately and previously presented independently in journals? Why have two topic areas (interreligious dialogue and social justice questions) so important to the Church in Asia received such brief treatment?

Finally, and this comment appreciates that G. Florez is "a non-native English speaker" (p. xii), the entire book needed a CRITICAL EDITOR. Such a person would have revised the endless mistakes and inconsistencies found in the text, footnotes, and bibliography. There are incomplete and run-on sentences, misspellings, incorrect syllabication, unclear references, changes in tenses and person, double punctuation, convoluted and awkward sentence structure, mixed British and American spellings, uneven printing, non-parallel outlining, and no consistent format for footnotes and bibliography. The book contains no index which could have enhanced its usefulness as a reference tool.

It is with a sad note of regret that these deficiencies are cited. They are unfortunate, and readers may set aside the book due to these frequent irritants. Then, regrettably, the insights that G. Florez offers for church and mission in Asia will also be missed. Prospective readers should be prepared to
 overlook the shortcomings already mentioned in order to arrive at a balanced appreciation of this book about "Asian missiology."

James H. Kroeger, M.M.


This small book (73 pages in the Italian original) was first put together as a series of conferences at the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches at Bossey (Switzerland). The author's assignment was "to make known the Catholic Church in its various aspects to pastors and theologians of various Christian professions from every part of the world." What was asked was a presentation of "the Catholic Church's self-understanding deriving from the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council."

Bruno Forte, not yet 40 years old this year (1988), theology professor in Naples, has chosen to give this ecclesiological synthesis the framework of three basic questions: "Where does the Church come from? What is the Church (in the "in-between time")? Where is the Church going?" His work has a decided ecumenical perspective, which underlies both its considerable strengths and its few weak points. But without doubt, overall it is a remarkable achievement.

Part One, "Ecclesia de Trinitate," gives a rapid but excellent historical background to the ecclesiology which was worked out by Vatican II. The focus is on the Trinitarian "program." This first section summarizes the argument of the entire work.

Part Two, "Ecclesia inter tempora," is the substance of the synthesis, spelling out the Trinitarian pattern of the Church through the two great themes, People of God and Communion. The first theme enables Forte to sketch the fundamental structure of the Church in the doublet "community/charisms and ministries" instead of the more official "clergy/laity" and "religious/non-religious" doublets of Vatican II. The insistence on this new doublet is interesting in the new light it sheds on the laity and ordained ministry within the "total ecclesiology"-rooted in the "ontology of grace." Forte draws corollaries of his reconceptualization in a (rather difficult) section on "laicity" (secularity in the Church, of the Church, of the world). The central thrust here is to stress the "secularity of the Church," i.e., the "turning to the world" which was undoubtedly one of the axial shifts worked in the Catholic vision by Vatican II. Forte himself holds that his reconceptualization goes beyond