depict the superior attitude of the Christian relatives of Yongsul’s natural father.

A preliminary synthesis of this reviewer points to the book’s main value: the anthropological data presented here are important for the task of Christian inculturation among Asians. At a deeper level, a reader may ask if Kim Dong-ni intended the final tableau — of Eulhwa hugging the bleeding body of her son — to evoke the image of salvific sacrifice symbolized in the thirteenth station of the way of the cross.

It is interesting to observe some similarities between Kim Dong-ni and Michael Harner in their respective attitudes towards shamanism. Both include poetry and drama in their descriptions of shamanic rituals. Indeed it is a matter of general consensus that health and joy are somehow associated.

Harner elaborates this consensus with seven chapters fantasizing dream-like journeys, power animals, healing plants and ritual extractions. He is honest about calling them “fantasies” but less than honest by so relativizing the term as to make it hard for a reader to distinguish between his descriptions of facts and of fancies.

His division of the book into seven chapters gives the impression of being systematic, but they merely contain an unsystematic mishmash of “first-hand accounts” of “middleclass Americans from a variety of backgrounds” (p. 41).

One saving feature is his Afterword wherein he calls for “mutual respect” (p. 176) between scientists in the civilized West and shamans in primitive cultures. However he betrays a fundamental disrespect for scientific and religious groups tasked with alerting their members of the schizophrenic dangers of confusing fantasy with reality. The book and its blurb also betray a pecuniary motive in their reference to the sales of Castañeda’s book on sorceries.

For this reviewer, Kim’s theology fiction is a better guide to salvific healing than Harner’s anthropological posturing.

Vicente Marasigan, S.J.


These two books address a grave concern for world peace during this final decade of the millenium. Two distinct modes of communication are observed.
Though partly converging, they differ in emphasis depending upon the readers for whom the communications are intended. The first book is addressed to those immersed in popular piety and concerned with devotional practices to be undertaken in response to historical events. The second book is addressed mainly to theoretical analysts.

Haffert reports and reflects on events that happened in a convent at Akita in the diocese of Niigata, Japan, from 1969 to 1982. These principally concern Sr. Agnes Sasagawa, a nun of the institute of Handmaids of the Eucharist, and a series of events she and her community experienced in relation to a wooden statue of the Blessed Virgin. A chronology of twenty-six events are presented early in the book. Among these are the following:

On March 16, 1973, after two months of increasing difficulties with her hearing, Sr. Agnes became totally deaf. (Her deafness was later diagnosed by doctors as incurable, but its cure was also predicted by an angel.) On June 28, 1973, a cross-shaped wound appeared on her left hand which caused intense pain and bleeding. On July 6, 1973, all the sisters of the community saw a cross-shaped wound on the right hand of the wooden statue of Mary. On Oct. 13, 1973, Sr. Agnes heard a Voice (for the third time) saying: ‘... if men do not repent and better themselves, the Father will inflict a terrible punishment on all humanity.’ On June 4, 1975, there began a series of phenomena, first witnessed by the sisters in the community, of tears flowing from the eyes of the statue. When word of this spread outside the convent, people came in large numbers, including a television crew that witnessed and video-taped the shedding of tears. The last instance was on Sept. 15, 1981, after the statue had wept one hundred and one times by exact count. On May 30, 1982, Sr. Agnes’ deafness was completely cured as predicted by the angel. On April 22, 1984, on the occasion of his resignation as bishop of Niigata, Bishop Ito declared the Akita events supernatural. On June 20, 1988, a news agency reported that Cardinal Ratzinger had judged the Akita events and messages as ‘reliable and worthy of belief.’ (But this was denied by the apostolic nuncio Bishop Carew who, on April 2, 1990, quoted Ratzinger as merely saying that ‘there are no objections to the conclusions of the pastoral letter.’) Stefano M. Paci, ‘The Tears of Akita,’” in Ave Maria 6/3 [1990] 3-8, esp. 5.)

Even as stated in their stark chronological simplicity, the items mentioned above are quite dramatic. The drama may be seen as a tension between fidelity to factual accuracy in the ecclesia docens and an equally intense yearning for contact with transcendental realities among ordinary believers. This latter pole of the dramatic tension emerges from the anguished yearning for world peace seen these days as totally beyond human reach. Is world peace now impossible in this the final decade? Haffert offers some pious reflections on this topic.

Among the slogans of this decade, the phrase “theology of peace” may not
sound half as glamorous as, say, "Armageddon Theology." This latter reverberates with millenial adventure and triumph; the former bleats meekly like a lamb. But with or without the glamor, a theology of peace is being formulated.

The formulation is meeting with difficulties. The tendency to interpret biblical prophecies as signifying geopolitical events of the past five decades reveal biases against a theology of peace. It is well that these biases be taken very seriously, for geopolitical analysts are a very serious lot and exercise a powerful influence on contemporary history. Among its strategies is the manipulation of some Christian sects to accuse one another of being the Antichrist prophesied in the bible, thus justifying a policy of security through nuclear deterrence and low-intensity conflicts. Not all geopoliticians believe in the biblical Antichrist, but they have no scruples about utilizing this belief for their own vested interests. Geopolitical logic presently favors a tactical alliance with the Armageddon mindset in the hope of obstructing or at least delaying the disarmament that might result from a theology of peace.

Despite the immense power of the geopolitical logic, a five-day symposium towards a theology of peace was held in December 1987 at a seminary of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Budapest. Over two hundred delegates from all over the world participated, and some forty working papers were read and discussed. Of these, only three papers are classified by the editor as specifically theological. This review will focus exclusively on these theological papers without however undervaluing the theological relevance of the other papers.

In a paper entitled "Are There Any Signs of the End?", Roger Ruston, O.P., examines the immediate origins of the present apocalyptic trend and finds them in the North American premillenialist telecasts by right-wing fundamentalists. Their followers believe that before Christ returns, there will be great tribulations and persecutions by Antichrist, who will then be destroyed in the battle of Armageddon. Before the tribulations begin, born-again Christians will be "raptured" or taken up and away from the disasters. If all these prophecies were to be accepted in their strict literal sense, any theology of peace in these times would merely be disinformation spread by the minions of Antichrist.

Involved with this thinking are many hermeneutic problems that have been well-known since the nineteenth century. Newcomers presuppose that these problems have already been solved beyond reasonable doubt. Ruston does not bother with these. He merely indicates how this mindset influences discussions of geopolitical events in the latter half of this century, e.g. the re-established State of Israel, the military skirmishes preparatory to World War III identified as the biblical battle of Armageddon, the EEC as the re-
emergence of the Old Roman Empire under the reign of Antichrist, the Chernobyl disaster, and several others. These geopolitical aspects are admittedly sensational enough to convince some uncritical televiewers that the End is near, but Ruston finds geopolitical answers as less important than the theological questions uncritically presupposed as solved. Do their forecasts come from clairvoyant knowledge? How are we to regard biblical prophecies: as absolute predictions of the future or as conditional warnings relevant to the present moment? Without hesitation, Ruston chooses to affirm that they are conditional warnings, for this choice alone is consistent both with God’s control over history and with man’s responsibility for his free decisions. Geopoliticians can choose to ignore this option but at risk of being inconsistent in thought and counterproductive in action. Such are the fruits of ignoring the ambiguity of historical events, as Augustine and Aquinas perceived centuries ago.

Linguistic ambiguity also figures in the paper of Michael Hare-Duke entitled “The Church and the Language of Peace.” Linguistic meanings go through waves or cycles of nuances, especially words like “peace,” “security” and “change,” thereby misleading geopoliticians and the general public into erroneous decisions. Hare-Duke suggests that a theology of peace must start with a general awareness of this Babel situation. Is he proposing the role of facilitator for theologians? Well he might, for their other roles are mostly discredited as belonging to subtle imperialism, such that even the divine Word-made-flesh is preached to or heard by geopoliticians and televiewers as though it were a mere buttress to the battle ramparts that divide the world. A theology of peace has first to clear the channels of mass communication of all linguistic ambiguity.

Would a lexicon help to solve linguistic ambiguity? Yes, if the language is a technical language such as geopoliticians generally use. But besides a technical language, there is also an intuitive way of communicating theological insights. Such seems to be the literary genre used by Irene Brennan in her 26-paragraph collection of pious intuitions entitled “Mary: the Mother of Justice and Peace.”

This title hints that there cannot be peace without justice, that injustice evokes sadness in the mother of her warring children, that justice and peace are not conceptual abstractions but flesh and blood, living people who, even when not loving, are truly lovable in the eyes of God and of God’s mother.

Brennan presents some reflections on biblical insights like anawin, amaretz, and the ark of the covenant. The anawin, the meek, will be the survivors that will inherit the earth, all the macho superpowers to the contrary notwithstanding. The amaretz, the unlearned, will be given the wisdom that perceives the hidden variables in geopolitical calculations. The ark of the covenant of the Old Testament becomes the symbol of Mary as the bearer
of God’s promise of liberation. Hopefully, such insights will constitute the essence of a theology of peace.

Readers whose eyesight can manage to read an 8-point type of print and who can mentally correct the many typographical errors will find valuable insights in this hastily lithographed book. Other readers may prefer to wait for some future and better edited version even if they are left behind in a fast moving dialogue for peace.

Actually, the dialogue has to move even faster if it is to keep up with the accelerating flow of contemporary history. Authentic dialogue can increase the options that give man a measure of control over history and greater concern for future world populations than is being given by the geopolitical will of present superpowers and their macroeconomic oligarchies.

Then again, others may believe that history has gone completely out of control and, in their paralysis, now long to be taken up and away from historical involvement and passively wait for the Armageddon finish.

_Vicente Marasigan, S.J._


This latest, and perhaps the last book by the eminent Redemptorist moralist, Bernard Häring, is a cry from the heart for the whole Catholic Church to reflect very seriously on the spiritual suffering of divorced and remarried Catholics. He is not the only contemporary moralist to be very much concerned about this growing problem, but his worldwide renown after fifty years of extraordinary pastoral experience and prolific writing make his reflections especially noteworthy.

Häring believes that the Church could do more to help the divorced and remarried. Pope John Paul II had issued a call for “pastors and the whole community of the faithful to help the [remarried] divorced, and with solicitous care to make sure that they do not consider themselves as separated from the Church” (_Familiaris Consortio_, no. 84). In the same document the Pope admitted that circumstances, especially care for the children’s upbringing, could demand that the couple continue to stay together but with the obligation of complete abstinence from the acts proper to married couples (ibid.). Only then could the couple be readmitted to the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist (ibid.).

Häring would like to go beyond these requirements which most couples find too demanding. The practice of the Eastern Orthodox in admitting the divorced to a second Church-recognized marriage is proposed by Häring and