Within this general framework, the author frequently returns to three particular themes (spirituality, eucharist, and transformation); a number of variations are played on each of these themes. Effort is made to integrate spiritual insights into the realities of the human condition; this often flows from a stream-of-consciousness style of writing and presentation, which, at times, is difficult to follow.

This reviewer found many fine insights into the transformation and conversion process; correctly, the author writes that "Transformation, in both common and technical usage, is a central thread of this book" (27); the subtitle is an accurate description of the subject matter of the book. This is Gittins' strength; he constantly illustrates how transformation "is intrinsic to the missionary enterprise" (163).

In many ways this volume is a difficult book to read, although Gittins specifically intends it to be a "readin' book" (xiii). The approach is academic, analytical, and theoretical; it lacks the directly experiential ring of an engaged field missioner (except for sections of chap. 7). Chapter 4 on "Mission in Reverse" uses the term in a way that is no longer common among missioners and missiologists; this hinders communication on an important theme. The last chapter on "Mission on the Margins" uses an undifferentiated, homogenized description of mission which is not helpful for clarity. Constant comments on "Eucharistic famine" become tedious, when practical alternatives are not forthcoming.

Gittins' expertise as an anthropologist is clearly evident in his presentation; this will appeal to students preparing for cross-cultural mission. Anthropological insights linked directly to field mission experience will always be needed by those who engage in mission across the borders of faith.

*James H. Kroeger, M.M.*


The two vivid words in the title: "Living" and "Challenges," plus the "enthusiasm" that occurs four times in a two-page preface, indicate the atmosphere of this book.

It is a compilation of the thinking of the author in his various modern articles. For one example, he stresses the timeless theology of St. Paul's *mysterion* or God's plan for the world. He likewise summarizes and
interprets Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and John Paul II’s *Redemptoris Missio*, or reports on the religious situation of Asia, or explores the need to enter deeply into popular religiosity for explaining the faith, or interprets the nuanced relationship between dialogue and proclamation, or repeats the truth “that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the Paschal mystery.” He believes and declares, with John Paul II and Paul VI, that evangelization is “basically a matter of faith,” and that “the Church exists in order to evangelize.”

Fr. Kroeger possesses the experience of twenty years of actual service in the Philippines and Bangladesh. He earned a doctorate in Missiology at the Gregorian University in Rome, and a few years ago was elected Asia-Pacific Area Assistant on the Maryknoll General Council, which position now brings him into close contact with many Asian countries.

He writes clearly, specializing in shorter rather than longer paragraphs and connecting ideas with easily understood syntheses. His two chapters on the Holy Spirit in evangelization, namely, “Awakening to the Spirit” and “Led by the Spirit into the Paschal Mystery” are especially forceful.

Since the book is a compilation of the author’s articles, a certain duplication is inevitable. If that fact is accepted from the start, the repetitions are not annoying and helpfully emphasize certain truths repeated.

The drive of this book will not appeal, of course, to some theologians who today reject evangelization as a kind of imperialistic cultural imposition in Asia, and explore other diverse paths. Yet even they must admit that enthusiasm for making Christ known in the world is not linked only to the European period in Asia which our age has discredited, but is rooted in Matthew’s gospel (28:18-20) and in the multi-lingual and multi-cultural event of Pentecost itself.

The fact that Orbis Books in the United States and Claretian Publications in the Philippines are publishing the book simultaneously is a recommendation of its worth.

*Francis X. Clark, S.J.*


Vassula’s mysterious writings and locutionary experiences have led