Why should the book be read? Because it inspires and allows readers to possess an insight of Mary. Through the stories, McKenna allows you to enter the heart of Mary, her compassion, her sensitivity to human needs. And as you do so, you hardly notice that you have also entered the heart of Jesus. Truly, Mary is a shadow of grace.

CHRISTIANITY WITH AN ASIAN FACE: ASIAN AMERICAN THEOLOGY IN THE MAKING
By Peter C. Phan
Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books
Reviewed by Aristotle C. Dy

This fascinating volume is a significant contribution by Peter Phan to the building up of a Church of Asia as opposed to a Church that is simply in Asia. This is a basic distinction that recurs in Phan's essays as he describes how the Church has tended to simply exist in Asia without becoming a fully Asian Church.

Composed of eleven essays, Christianity with an Asian Face is organized into two parts. The first part, containing three essays, deals with methodological issues. Chapter One, "The Experience of Migration as Source of Intercultural Theology in the United States," makes the key assertion that theology must be "inter-multicultural" in the context of recent immigrants. There are close to twelve million Asians in the United States, and they are less inclined to blend fully into American society. This reality makes the task of developing a contextualized theology even more urgent.

The second chapter expounds upon the socio-analytical, hermeneutical, and practical mediations that are necessary in this theology, while the third chapter is a dialogue with John Paul II’s Fides et Ratio as it impacts upon the philosophical heritage of Asia. The latter is very illuminating as Phan exposes the inadequacy of
seemingly harmless and sensible statements in *Fides et Ratio* when applied to the specific worldviews and philosophies of Asia.

The second part of the book has eight essays under the general heading of "Inculturation." Phan explores various dogmatic themes in the context of Asia, giving special attention to the kinds of Christology that have emerged from Asian theologians. Phan also gives serious attention to the challenges faced by Asian Christianity. For example, he asks whether the "Kingdom of God" is a meaningful symbol for Asians. Drawing from *Ecclesia in Asia* and the documents of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), Phan outlines a "new way of being church" in Asia, affirming accomplishments made thus far, but also recognizing areas for growth in Asian Christianity. The sub-title of the book refers to Asian American theology "in the making," and thus the book ends with an essay that specifically discusses the development of a Vietnamese American theology, a topic that the author knows well due to his personal background.

Each of the eleven essays in the book can stand independently, making the book a valuable resource for theologians, students, and Asian Christians who want to reflect more deeply on the Asianness of their Christianity. Seven of the essays have previously been published in various academic journals. The compilation in this book, however, makes it easier for students and scholars of inculturation to approach the topic more systematically. The first three chapters on methodology are especially valuable in this regard.

Phan displays depth in his understanding of Asian, especially southeast Asian philosophy, culture, and contemporary theology. He describes Asian philosophy, especially Confucianism in Vietnam and China, and then evaluates the ways in which these philosophies have interacted with Christianity. He presents the Korean, Chinese, and Hindu Christologies that have been developed thus far and assesses them in the light of current theological trends. He is very honest in
affirming progress already made and identifying *lacunae* that he has observed. Phan knows that Asian Americans must reflect on their faith in a “both-and” and “beyond” (both Asian and American, but beyond being Asian American) social and religious situation, to which he as a Vietnamese American also belongs. This book further establishes Phan as a sturdy bridge between the Asian context and theology.

There is “cutting edge” theology here as Phan examines the image of the “Kingdom of God” with its patriarchal and authoritarian connotations, especially in Asia. He suggests several ways of retrieving the symbol, calling special attention to the theme of liberation. In Christology, Phan develops the image of Jesus Christ as the eldest son and ancestor in the Confucian context and as the refugee *par excellence* in the Asian American context.

Understandably, there is some overlapping and repetition in the themes treated in each chapter. Much of the book focuses on the interaction (positive or negative) between Asian philosophy/religion and Christianity. As the subtitle of the book suggests, Asian-American theology is still a work in progress. This book offers many building blocks for the work to continue and prosper. Phan’s essays are very readable for the most part, with very few discussions that are technical in nature. Numbered summaries of his points or reflections are very helpful, and abundant footnotes make further research convenient.