

on God's creative act. God is *one* because there is no other being that simply 'is'. God is *good* and the source of all goodness; God is also *true* and God is *beautiful*. From this we can draw the conclusion that the death and resurrection of Jesus is as complete a manifestation of God and God's purpose as can be made in this world to us limited human beings.

It reveals that Jesus is God, one in being with the Father. It reveals that all existence depends completely on God, as does Jesus in his humanity and all those who are bent on destroying him. God holds them lovingly in existence, hating their sin but loving them as sinners. God is good because Jesus through his life and death reveals that God is on our side, acting for our salvation. God is true, with no secrets and nothing to hide but unfolding the meaning of the Godhead to us. And last

but certainly not least, God is beautiful and desirable.

When we come to know God in Jesus, we will come to know what is true and good for us. In thus knowing God and acting accordingly, we will also come to appreciate that Jesus has given himself completely for our sake so that we too may become one in Christ. In this way we become fully our true, good and beautiful selves, each one of us in the image and likeness of Christ who is God.

Hopefully these few reflections will be of some use to those who have listened to or read John's Passion Narrative on Good Friday this year. Because it is an integral part of the mystery of Jesus, no one can claim that any explanation of it is complete. There is always more than our limited perspective can see at any one time; it will continue to unfold its meaning throughout human history.

---

## BOOK REVIEW

*Encounter, The Past and Future of Remote Kimberley* by Brigida Nailon. Brigidine Sisters, Echuca, [2010], hard cover, 116 pages, illustrated, maps, ISBN 978-0-9579361 -7-1, RRP \$44.

*The author, Sr Brigida Nailon csb, included with the complimentary copy she sent us a good synopsis of the book by Cathie Clement from Boab Bulletin):*

'On 3 September 2008, the author of this book spoke to the Kimberley Society about what was then only a work in progress. An overview of her talk appeared in the *Boab Bulletin* in December of that year and is available on the Society's website.

'Sister Brigida's earlier works (as either author or editor) dealt with the encounter between Catholicism and Aboriginal peoples in

and beyond the Kimberley. Her new book draws on some of that material, delves into new areas, and ends with a philosophical look at the present.

'A 'Background' section introduces the author by way of her involvement with the church, education, and indigenous people. 'Beagle Bay Mission Stories' follow, telling something of life at the mission, leprosy, the taking of children from their parents, the Sisters of Saint John of God, and people's lives away from the mission. Author's comments on the individual stories clarify things mentioned in them, and, in some cases, explain how situ-

ations resulted from policies or legislation imposed on indigenous populations.

‘Chapter 2 discusses missionaries and their endeavours at Beagle Bay, La Grange and Balgo. It also mentions lay missionaries (male and female), Aboriginal workers, and Aboriginal girls who entered religious life. Some of the girls are shown in a photograph of Daughters of Mary Queen of Apostles, 1939-1951. A feature of this chapter is a long petition submitted to the 1934 Moseley Royal Commission into the condition and treatment of Aborigines. It concludes: ‘Again Sir we the Half-caste population of Broome ask you to give us our Freedom and ... release us from the stigma of a native and make us happy subjects of this our country.’ It is not the first time the petition has been published but, here, presented in its original handwritten form, it has a far greater impact than a closely typed transcript. It is through such material that Sister Brigida seeks to change not only how readers look at the problems faced by Aboriginal and mixed-descent people but also how they view those people in their own right.

‘The coverage of missions and missionaries continues in the post-war material in Chapter 3 where expansion into Wyndham, Halls Creek and other parts of the East Kimberley is mentioned. Here, too, there is discussion of parishes, communities and the significant social changes that took place in the 1960s and ’70s. The chapter concludes with a brief commentary on the limitations of academic analysis of both Australian missionary endeavour and the interaction and accommodation that occurred between the missionaries and those they sought to help.

‘Chapter 4 comprises an informative chronological commentary on Aboriginal legislation in Western Australia from 1829 to 1981. Self-determination is mentioned, and the discussion of social change continues in Chapter 5, culminating with a look at current di-

lemmas, aspirations and achievements, particularly in education. It ends with the following observation: ‘The Future lies with Education—It is in our hands to make it happen.’

‘The book can be purchased by sending a \$54 cheque or money order (made payable to Brigidine Sisters) to Sister Brigida Nailon, 1 Charlotte Street, Echuca 3564. That price includes postage within Australia.’

\* \* \* \*

The book is hard-covered and generous in size (12 in x 8 ½ in), handsome coffee table style, easy to browse through. The photos have been chosen for their historical content rather than for their artistic qualities – the complicated provenance of old mission photos leaves its mark on them.

The text is set in fairly small print: old eyes might have appreciated a point or two increase. As a producer of the now defunct missiological journal, *Nelen Yubu*, I must confess surprise at its absence from the bibliography or sources. I used to rely on the Kimberley missionaries to supply me with good juicy copy in the days when my fellow missionaries in the Territory found little to say—but of that rich missiological and sociological thought there is little sign. I think of the writings of Fr Dan Donovan in the area of spirituality and theological history; of the Josephite and Mercy Sisters as they laboured to help the people find the New Way in the East Kimberley and wrote about it; of Fr Noel McMaster’s densely conceived sociological analysis of the religious situation after the style of Liberation Theology; of Fr Kevin McKelson’s search for meaning embedded in custom and story; and of Fr Worms’ magisterial presentation of the lineaments of Aboriginal religion in the book some of us labored hard to make available to the English-speaking part of the Australian church.

—Martin Wilson MSC