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#### BOOK REVIEW

Lyman C. D. Kulathungam. *The Quest: Christ amidst the Quest*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012. xix + 272 pp. Pbk. ISBN: 9781610975155.

Dr. Lyman C. D. Kulathungam's first training and work were in Sri Lanka, where he lived in a culture pervaded by Buddhism and Hinduism. His further training and areas of expertise are in philosophy and religion. Currently he is Intercultural Dean Emeritus of Master's College and Seminary (Peterborough, ON, Canada) and an ordained minister with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. This depth of religious and philosophical exposure and knowledge make him the ideal person to write a book like this.

Part of the thesis of this book is that all human beings, whether religious or not, are searching for something. Everyone feels that this life lacks something important and that the world is not the way it should be. People are looking for something or someone to make life fulfilling and solve the world's problems, that is, for some kind of salvation. Chapter one defends the idea that religion is one way in which people conduct this quest.

Chapter two looks in general at how Jesus Christ fits into the idea of religion as a quest. Kulathungam concludes that although the founders and developers of many other religions were themselves searching for answers, Jesus was not. He is outside the quest, and therefore available to be a goal or solution for this quest.

Kulathungam realizes that not all people conduct this search in the context of religion. However, this book specifically examines the various religious paths that people have used in their quest for solutions to life's problems. The book examines, in a chapter devoted to each, the analysis of what is wrong and the

way solutions are sought by Confucianists, Taoists, Shinto followers, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, and those following Aboriginal religions. Kulathungam concludes that all are looking for some kind of salvation.

At the end of each chapter, Kulathungam takes the analysis of the problem and the solutions proposed by the followers of the religion being considered, and shows how Jesus Christ could be seen as the one who can bring about at least some of these solutions, and make the quest, as defined in this religion, successful.

The book appears to be primarily addressed to Western evangelical Christians. They are the ones who need to respect the aspirations of peoples of other religions and be made to see that within these religions themselves are truths that can be used to help people find Jesus as the true answer to their quest. There is no chapter on the quest in Christianity, although Kulathungam hints that there might have been. He says, "Christianity as a system cannot be the answer to the quest but Christ could be" (p. 260). Jesus Christ is the answer for all humanity, not just Christians. Kulathungam leaves unanswered the question of whether a person could find Christ as his or her solution in life without becoming a "Christian." But it seems likely he would say yes, if by "Christian" we have in mind a cultural rather than a spiritual category. Thus, the book is addressed secondarily to people in other religions. As Kulathungam says, "It is hoped that such a presentation of Christ would encourage people of other faith communities, and even those who do not belong to any such community, to give some consideration to this person who occupies such a significant place in the quest of humanity" (pp. 261–62).

This book has several useful qualities. It is a good introduction to the history, scriptures, rituals, and beliefs of the religions treated. It shows someone who would want to bring Christ to people in each religion some of the points of contact with the gospel that can interest people in Jesus. It suggests some ways the gospel can be enculturated or contextualized for people of non-Western cultures. It also defends the idea of the Trinity by an appeal to Pythagorean numbers, and interacts with prominent thinkers such as John Hick and Richard Dawkins.

However, at the end of reading the book I am not sure what will happen when, say, a Buddhist decides that Jesus is the answer to his or her quest. Will this person remain a Buddhist? Would they become a Christian, and if so, what would their Christianity look like? Would they not need a Christian community and how would it appear? These practical problems would have to be faced if the hopes based on the teaching of this book are to be realized.

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