

Book Reviews

Silvia Scatena, *Taizé, una parabola di unità: Storia della comunità dalle origini al Concilio dei giovani [Taizé, a Parable of Unity: The history of the community from its origins to the Council of Youth]*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2018. xlv+876 pp.

Silvia Scatena, a professor of Contemporary History at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, has published the results of ten years of research into the history of the Taizé community in the *Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII* series. As part of this process, she examined the rich unpublished documents kept by the community, as well as documents kept in many archives all around Europe, both institutional and private. She has created a strong network of contacts with the many living witnesses whose lives have intersected with the experience of community brought about by the intuition of the young Roger Schutz.

The book opens with a preface by Christophe Chalamet (xv–xxi), one that is brief but extremely clear when it comes to highlighting the key aspects of the research and the importance it is likely to have in the future (“This volume . . . can be considered as *the* reference work when it comes to the history of the Taizé community” [15]). The preface is followed by the author’s introduction (xxiii–xlv). This volume is rigorous in terms of the process of reconstruction, through a clear division into periods, comprising the years between 1936 and 1970, that is, between the beginning of Roger Schutz’s studies at the faculty of theology in Lausanne and the eve of the opening of the “council of youth.”

The structure of the six chapters is clear and organized in chronological order: “Between Lausanne, Geneva and the War: The Origins of a Community Project. 1936–1942” (1–110); “The Beginnings of a Communal Life in Geneva. 1942–1944” (111–168); “*Notre unicum, unicum necessarium*. 1945–1947” (169–234); “A Protestant ‘Monastery’. 1948–1953”

(235–356); “On the Frontier between Churches, in the Heart of the Masses. 1954–1958” (357–446); “Unity, Hope of Life. 1959–1962” (447–492); “The Years of the Second Vatican Council. 1962–1965” (493–582); and “In Search of a New ‘Communal Creation’. 1966–1970” (538–750).

There are many themes that run through the entire volume, including the Taizé community’s positioning, first in relation to the Swiss and then to the French Protestant contexts; the peculiarities of the community experience within contemporary Protestantism; the relationship with the concept of authority and the role of the prior; an awareness of the great importance of Christian unity as the centre of community life; eucharistic theology and the question of hospitality; the relationship with Roman Catholicism and with the different Christian churches; the discovery of the world of youth and the activities of the community in terms of external ramifications – from the experience with the Marseilles workers to the experience with those in Algeria (aimed at decolonization), in Latin America, or in Eastern Europe.

The reconstruction of the life of the Burgundian community is carefully advanced without focusing exclusively on the founder and prior. Rather, much space is dedicated to the experiences and actions of individual brothers, particularly the theologian Max Thurian, and those who entered (and, of course, sometimes left) the community. There is great value in the careful analysis of the fractured framework of relationships between the community, its supporters, and its critics, who were present everywhere, both in the Protestant world and beyond. This highlights how the Burgundy hill was a crossroads and a focal point for many of the major actors of Christianity in the 20th century, something that is also apparent from the many significant names that appear in the volume (847–876).

The weight of the ninth and final chapter (“*Anticiper, Consentir, Élargir*: Notes on the Evolution during the ‘conciliar’ decade” [751–846]), in which the author outlines the guiding principles for the subsequent developments in the history of the community, cannot be overstated, in terms of what the book set out to achieve. This chapter, which is not intended as a conclusion or a summary of the work, offers the reader a first historical answer to the first questions about what kind of a movement Taizé will be during the years of the “council of youth” and the subsequent “pilgrimage of trust,” which the community is still going through. Thus it plants the seeds for many useful ideas that will lead to the birth of other historical research – now made possible thanks to this work and to the corpus of sources that it has brought to light.

Finally, it is important to note the supporting structure of the volume: its large body of footnotes – more than 3000 – constitute almost a book within the book. First, it presents the full citations in the original language of the sources, which in the text are presented in translation, to make reading easier. Later, the reader is referred to dozens of interviews undertaken in person, and to a wide and up-to-date picture of the available publications and research in progress – thanks to the special observations undertaken in the course of years of field research and with the help of the cooperative work of scholars on Taizé in Eastern Europe.

All that remains is to trust that translated versions will become available in order to widen as much as possible the impact of such an important work for research on this “unique *foyer* with worldwide ramifications” (Chalamet, xxi) in the coming decades.

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The Society of the History of Christianity in Korea, ed., *A History of Christianity in Korea Since 1945*, trans. Jeong-II Moon. Seoul: The Institute of the History of Christianity in Korea, 2017. 236 pp.

This book, *A History of Christianity in Korea since 1945*, was originally published in 2009 in the Korean language as volume three of *A History of Christianity in Korea*. The year 1945 in the history of Korea marks the end of the Japanese colonial rule and the beginning of the division of Korea between North and South. In this regard, the scope of historical research on Korean Christianity has been generally limited in a manner unduly reflecting the Cold War mentality. This book provides a holistic picture on the history of Korean Christianity after the 1945 liberation.

It consists of eight chapters. In each chapter, the editor follows the trials and growth of Korean Christianity not only in terms of the church structures, modes of faith, and theology, but also in terms of the relationship between the church and society.

Following the chapter numbers from Volume I (1989) and Volume II (1990), it begins with Chapter 10, “The 1945 Liberation and the New Beginning,” which describes the response of the churches in South Korea to the United States military government and to the establishment of the socialist government in North Korea. Chapter 11, “The Korean War and the Church,” also depicts the response of the churches to the Korean War. The churches in both North and South supported their government to carry out the war in various ways and prayed for their victory. In these two chapters, the editor of the book clearly explains how the church leaders of both North and South Korea became deeply involved in the realities of the national politics.