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Book Review

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BOOK REVIEW

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THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION: 1968. Edited by Donald R. Cutler. Boston: Beacon Press, 1968. xlvii and 986 pages. Cloth. \$15.00.

This is the first in a contemplated series of annual volumes designed to summarize the current religious situation throughout the world. It marshals resources from 52 outstanding writers in the humanities, social sciences, and religion in order to adequately present the world religious situation.

These writings depict a vital, changing religious situation, and give information on dialogues and findings rather than fixed conclusions. An effort was made to give opposing viewpoints a hearing. Presentations in areas where debate is lively are followed by supporting and dissenting commentaries. In editing a volume of this nature, criteria could be determined on the basis of significance, prominence, or novelty. It seems as though all three were taken into consideration in its compilation.

In the foreword, Reinhold Niebuhr is critical of the stance of those natural scientists who believe that they have a right to be skeptical of every theory that transcends natural causes. He invites intellectuals to examine the basic meaning of trust and the will to survive in human existence. He regards the belief that mystery is merely the realm of the unknown, which will gradually disappear as science enlarges its realm, as the chief error of modern empirical disciplines and insists that there is not only the unknown but also the unknowable. Both religious and secular components have a role in preserving the humanity of man.

Martin E. Marty's chapter presents a penetrating analysis of the contemporary religious situation. Until recently the intellectual community leaned toward the "necrological approach." Only peasants and simple

people still believed in God. Such people still have a historical interest in religion. Marty finds that there remains an all-pervading interest in religion in America's pluralistic society represented by sectarian aggression, agnostic self-defense, evangelism, ethnocentrism, and love of learning for its own sake. Students of the religious situation are skillful in seeing institutional change but they are also unwilling to let this dimension of religious life exhaust their definition of religion in the modern world. For them the religious situation implies an interest in the present, informed by a study of the past, and occasionally trying to project the future.

For review purposes only a random sampling from the other chapters of the book is possible. Vincent Harding shows that the basic thrust of Black Power is to teach the Negro to love himself and to build a community of love at the only place where it is possible to build such a community, namely among the blacks. Richard L. Rubenstein endeavors to make a case for sectarian Judaism. He sees in Auschwitz the final bankruptcy of religious, ethical, and psychological values of Jewish fideism. His views are critically debated, attacked, and analyzed in commentaries by Milton Himmelfarb, Zalman M. Schachter, Arthur A. Cohen, and Irving Greenberg.

Ralph B. Potter, Jr., gives a careful analysis of the current situation on the abortion debate. Arthur J. Dyck discusses birth control and population problems. He finds that church doctrines and church pronouncements have at best only a modest effect on the practice of birth control.

In his chapter on the new relativism in American theology, Michael Novak points out that no major institution in our culture has shown itself as willing as the churches to undertake radical reform. Theology, he

holds, must be a creative act and when it is not, it becomes academic not only in a pejorative sense but also in a dysfunctional sense. He finds four points of disintegration in the religious life of America: collapse of the shared meanings which characterize the American way; the increasing difficulty in supporting folk religion; the impossibility of simply affirming the secular world; the tension between the liberalism of Rudolf Bultmann and the neoorthodoxy of Karl Barth. The urban consciousness of our day is merely an empirical datum and not a standard of cognitive validity. Harvey Cox, Daniel Callahan, Thomas J. Altizer, David Little, and Brian Wicker write commentaries on the chapter of Novak.

This reviewer found the chapter by Emil L. Fackenheim on idolatry very interesting and enlightening. The preoccupation of Jewish theologians with Auschwitz has undoubtedly given them deep insights into the problem of idolatry and warned contemporary man not to dismiss it as irrelevant.

Thomas F. O'Dea gives a careful analysis of the contemporary Roman Catholic crisis, especially as it found expression at the Second Vatican Council. He holds that the kind of "updating of Christianity requisite for its survival as more than a marginal phenomenon in the West may depend upon the ability of the Catholics to confront modernity."

Robert N. Bellah gives an incisive analysis of civil religion in America, and his position is criticized and analyzed in commentaries by D. W. Brogan, Leo Pfeffer, John R. Whitney, and Phillip E. Hammond. John B. Carman analyzes the religious situation in South India. The reader may conclude that this has no relevance to Christianity until he meets a statement like the following: "The most celebrated doctrinal difference between the northern and southern schools of Sri Vaishnava concerns the doctrine of divine grace. The northern school accepts the analogy of the monkey: the baby is dependent on its mother, but it must still take the action of hanging on. The southern school accepts the analogy of the cat: the mother picks up the kitten without the kitten's having to do anything but cry out" (p. 421). Commentaries

are by Hasan Askari, M. Yamunacharya, and Eugene F. Irschick.

Richard Shelly Hartigan discusses the relation of the Christian to urban riots and guerrilla wars. He regards two principles as still viable in the just-war doctrine: Innocent immunity and the proportionality of likely damage to real injury. Robert T. Bobilin analyzes the tensions in Japan between peace movements and those who seek to create an independent nation and defend it in the contemporary world situation. Gonsalo Castillo-Cardenas finds that in Latin America the experience of unity that is beginning to appear among Christians committed to social change is revealing new aspects of the division of world Christianity and at the same time opening new possibilities for the expression of ecumenical unity. Also the revolutionary, Christian-inspired vocations to a kind of evangelical charisma with social and political content are giving hope for social change in Latin America.

The chapters on the Mormons written by David L. Brewer (commentary by Lowell L. Bennion) show that the Mormon can, if he wants to, separate his business from his religious life. The church tries to compensate for impersonal society today by an elaborate system of primary relationships. The Mormon church, like many others, is lacking in careful examination of contemporary social issues but concentrates on theological beliefs, religious history, Scriptural understanding, and the application of the Gospel to personal and family life.

Allen Lacy describes Marshall McLuhan as a serious prophet committed to the theory that languages or media of communication give us our world.

Huston Smith examines the trend toward a "secular" world today and finds that this can only be partially achieved if the secular designates a world which is controlled by man. He finds that the sacred is still very much in evidence in the unconscious and in life's evolutionary frontier. The various items which he marshals, including the hippies, are very interesting. This chapter is followed by one by Joseph Campbell who presents the case of the secularization of the

sacred: a penetrating and attempted scientific analysis which urges theologians to dehistoricize their mythology. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz finds religion useful as a source for general conceptions of the world and of "mental" dispositions. Talcott Parsons analyzes this point of view.

Another section of the book which was very interesting to this reviewer was the treatment of ritual by Konrad Z. Lorenz, Julian Huxley, Erik H. Erikson, Edward Shils, William F. Lynch, and Nikita Struve. Philip E. Slater analyzes the relationship of group members to their leader in the religious processes found in the training group.

Part Three deals with social indicators of the religious situation. Guy E. Swanson discusses modern secularism and concludes that organized religious communities no longer perform as the exclusive, or even the primary, interpreters of man's relation to the ultimate conditions of his existence. Old conceptions of the roles of the clergy and the laity are inadequate. Edwin S. Gaustad examines America's institutions of faith and makes these observations: 1. There is no close relation between denominational size and political influence; 2. while 36% of the general population is not affiliated with church or synagogue, that percentage drops sharply in the political world; 3. the political stratum of American life has not yet entered the post-Protestant era; 4. Lutheranism and Eastern Orthodoxy still suffer from cultural isolation; 5. Pentecostals have not yet left their mark on the political scene.

Demetry Konstantinov claims that the Soviet young generation who belong to the Orthodox Church are playing a decisive role in the country's spiritual renewal. Max L. Stackhouse examines Christianity and the new exodus in East Europe. Norman Birnbaum, in discussing Eastern Europe and the death of God movement, emphasized the persistence of alienated human conditions under socialism.

The volume concludes with a report on the results of investigation and thinking on churches and taxation—undertaken by the members of the Guild of St. Ives.

Needless to say, this study offers a wealth

of interpretive materials for classroom, library, pastor, theologian, and layman. Since the religious factor continues to be critical in the development of every society, an annual summary of this nature is very important.

Though it is, of course, impossible to agree with each contributor, the general impact of the volume is one of hope.

ERWIN L. LUEKER

THOMAS MORE AND TUDOR POLEMICS. By Rainer Pineas. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968. xi and 262 pages. Cloth. \$9.50.

Pineas is assistant professor of English at York College, City University of New York. He has written journal articles about William Tyndale, Thomas More, and John Bale in religious polemics. Now comes his major contribution, *Thomas More and Tudor Polemics*, a first-ranking study of the Tudor era.

The main chapter deals with the Tyndale-More controversy. Tyndale wanted to establish the Scriptures as the final arbiter in all matters of doctrine; More, the Roman Church. Tyndale set forth the theory of the necessity of the "right fayth" for correct Scriptural exegesis. Then, too, Tyndale was the first English reformer to make use of history as a weapon of religious controversy. The most striking feature of the language in his polemical works is its sarcasm, especially when aimed at the belief in purgatory. One feature to note about his style is his use of a modified dialog form. More, however, made greater use of dialog as a medium of controversy than did Tyndale, notably in his *Dialogue concernynge heresyas*. More also makes use of humor as a weapon of controversy, not least the "merry tale," which had as one of its functions to divert the reader from the real point at issue. More also used authority, logic, rhetoric, and history, as well as *ad hominem* argument on numerous occasions, especially his abuse of Luther. He reminded Tyndale of Luther's "lechery" and his "broken vows." More did not understand Tyndale and Tyndale failed to understand More.

More carried on controversies with Robert Barnes, John Frith, Simon Fish, and Christopher Saint-German. Barnes composed a *Vitae Romanorum Pontificum*; his use of ecclesiastical history was a very effective weapon, expertly analyzed by Pineas, in the religious controversy of the 1530s. More's controversy with Barnes seems almost like a vendetta. Less personal was More's attack on Fish's *A Supplicacion for the Beggars*. More spent considerable space on a rebuttal of Fish's charges about the case of Richard Hunne. Perhaps more important, he defended the doctrine of purgatory. The Eucharist was the doctrine which he attacked in the writings of Frith. The strife between the clergy and the laity was the point of contention between the two lawyers, Saint-German and More.

As indicated, Pineas presents not only the substance of the controversies but the rhetorical techniques used by the polemicists. His study is a penetrating, authentic, scholarly analysis for which historians, theologians, and students of English literature will be grateful. The volume centers on More, but the figures against whom More polemized are important and the context of the England of Henry VIII in which the controversies were carried out are dealt with in an authoritative fashion.

CARL S. MEYER

REFORMERS IN PROFILE. Edited by B. A. Gerrish. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967. vii and 264 pages. Cloth. \$5.95.

Later Medieval Reform, Humanistic Reform, Protestant Reform, Radical Reform, and Roman Catholic Reform are the captions of the five parts of the profile presentations edited by Chicago's church historian Gerrish. Luther and Calvin and Zwingli obviously had to be included. Perhaps Loyola and Wyclif, too, were obvious choices. Thomas Cranmer, Erasmus, and Menno Simons could not well be omitted. But what about Thomas Müntzer? Under the caption "Radical Reform" he has a place. Pierre d'Ailly could be replaced by any one of a half

dozen other figures to exemplify Later Medieval Reform.

However, Francis Oakley's essay on d'Ailly is one of the really worthwhile contributions among the ten essays. The subject is relatively unknown; the author has presented an excellent account of the man and his thought. It follows S. Harrison Thomson's authoritative essay on Wyclif. Thomson's scholarship makes his essay one that will take its place among Wyclif studies that dare not be neglected. One misses the expression of any relationship between the thought of Wyclif and d'Ailly, if indeed there was any, although both were part of the Later Medieval Reform movement. And what of Humanistic Reform? Perhaps Erasmus is the best example of this movement. Certainly Stanford's Spitz has given him a sympathetic treatment. Spitz fits Erasmus into the movements of his time without being able to show how deeply he influenced them.

Limitations of space also hampered the contributors of the profiles of the big four of Protestant Reform: E. Edward Cranz on Luther; Bard Thompson on Zwingli; Gerrish on Calvin; Geoffrey W. Bromiley on Thomas Cranmer. All of them have come up with interesting essays for the general reader that will also be stimulating for the specialist.

The last three essays deal with the two figures representing the Radical Reform: Menno Simons by J. C. Wenger and Thomas Müntzer by Hans J. Hillerbrand. Hillerbrand's essay is one we would not like to have omitted. Müntzer was a revolutionary, but he cannot be written off simply because of that. The tenth essay brings one lone figure from the Roman Catholic Reform, Ignatius Loyola by Robert E. McNally. It is a sympathetic account, but it does not tell how Loyola contributed to the reform of his church. Come to think of it, some of the other essays did not really tell about the reform activities as much as about the men. Yet, they are good essays to enable readers to get better acquainted with these men.

CARL S. MEYER