

BOOK REVIEWS

Virginia Woolf Meets Charlie Brown, by David H. C. Read. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969. 225 pages. \$4.95.

The Vacuum of Unbelief, by Stuart Babbage. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969. 152 pages. \$3.95.

The title sermon of the first book of sermons examines three fools in the contemporary American scene—the two antagonists of Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and Charlie Brown, the unheroic hero of Charles Schulz’s comic strip “Peanuts.” The two plays speak about the two worlds we inhabit, one ruled by our own wisdom, the other by what Paul calls “the foolishness of God.” The one is a world of cleverness without compassion, of passion without values, of fantasy unredeemed by faith. It knows all the answers provided by the wisdom of this world. Its devotees descend with it into hell—the hell of alienation, lovelessness, and hopelessness. “Virginia Woolf” impels us to ask what saving virtue there is for us who think ourselves wise after the wisdom of this world. The whole is a frightening exposition of original sin, with almost no provision for redemption. Charlie Brown is much like the fool Paul speaks of—the fool each of us must become to attain to the higher wisdom. With a kind of divine simplicity and with a steadfast honesty he deals with the complexities of human relations, the metaphysical problems, and the ethical dilemmas of our day. He is the fool of Christ in our sophisticated society.

This is one of twenty-eight sermons by the minister of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, one of today’s most articulate preachers. This “title sermon” sets the tone of the book: The Church can speak to our tensions only when we receive the kingdom as a little child and let the ultimate simplicities come to the surface. If a sermon is the Word of God immersed in the contemporary situation, this volume has arrived.

The author’s perspective in *The Vacuum of Unbelief* is that Marx’s Communism is ready to take over because of the spiritual emptiness in the lives of today’s students. The universities are credited with casting out the devils of ignorance and superstition, the devils of darkness and error, but

nothing has taken their place. The house has been left clean but empty. In this book of "essays" (not always clearly distinguishable from sermons), Dr. Babbage, president of Conwell School of Theology (Temple University), explores such themes as "The Enigma of Death," "Beggars Before God," "The Fires of God," "The Pressure to Conform," and "One of the Crowd." Here profound Christian truths are illumined from the author's encyclopedic reading and from his experience not only as educator but as former Dean of the Cathedral, Melbourne, Australia. Solution to the moral and spiritual vacuum? "If the Lord Jesus occupies the citadel of our hearts, the evil spirits of this age may peer in at the window, but they will not find an entrance" (p. 18).

James D. Robertson

The Centrality of Preaching in the Total Task of the Ministry, by John Killinger. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1969. 123 pages. \$3.95.

The title of the book indicates its nature. This work gives "an integrated view of preaching and living . . . of how preaching is interrelated with all other activities of a minister and his church."

The six chapters focus on preaching as the "center of the center" in worship, pastoral care, Christian education, church administration, the person and life of the minister.

The author holds attention with his vivid and picturesque style, his shock techniques, and his relevance to the contemporary scene. He wraps his long sentences around significant ideas. He hammers on his anvil thesis: preaching is the crux of ministry. As professor of preaching, he almost pounds the pulpit with his accent, his needed emphasis in our day of double talk, preaching decline, and innovative experiments in worship.

"Ours is the extremest sense of contemporaneity any age has ever had. It is almost as if we were separated by some major surgery from all the institutions and beliefs of the past.

"The minister especially has suffered from this phenomenon of disjunctiveness. Megalopolis, technocracy, nuclear fission, interplanetary probes have all conspired to date him, to relegate him to the past, to make him the most singular anachronism on the professional scene. Shifting nervously from one foot to the other under the sombre robes of his uneasy office, he seems more a ghost from the past than an inhabitant of the present. He reminds men more of candlelight processions and chilly

cathedrals and wheezy old organs than of anything in the modern world of nylon and plastic, and they put a coin in his hand for the sake of their nostalgia and the days of long ago.

“Many ministers have consequently become quite busy about little things. . . .”

Ralph L. Lewis

The Multiple Staff Ministry, by Marvin T. Judy. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969. 287 pages. \$6.95.

Marvin T. Judy is professor of sociology of religion and director of The Center for Research and Planning at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, in Dallas, Texas. His sociological studies of American churches are familiar to a wide readership. He is also the author of *The Cooperative Parish in Nonmetropolitan Areas*.

The Multiple Staff Ministry is the result of extensive research involving more than 2,500 people in one or more phases of the study. Research and publication were made possible by the Lilly Endowment, Inc.

Three major objectives were written into the research design: (1) to produce a major book in the field of the church staff; (2) to develop a course for use in theological seminaries to train persons in staff relationships; (3) to develop short-term in-service training for church staffs. The research design consisted of: (1) accumulation of data from church staffs; (2) personal interviews with church staffs in 120 churches in 22 cities in the United States and Canada; (3) auditing a course in personnel management in the Graduate School of Business Administration at Southern Methodist University; (4) personal interviews with authorities and scholars in the field; (5) a “Consultation on the Appropriate Functions and Relationships of the Church Staff.”

The book may be divided into four major sections. The first section, consisting of four chapters, contains basic background material on the doctrine of the multiple staff ministry, the principles of leadership, personnel management, group dynamics and inter-personal relationships.

The author bases his doctrine of a multiple staff ministry upon the New Testament doctrine of the church. “The multiple ministry is composed of persons under the call of God in the universal Christian church who are selected by a congregation or appointed by a denominational official to be its chosen leaders. It is constituted of ordained and

unordained persons, both men and women. It has its mission in sharing of responsibility, of mutual concern and support of one another as it assists, directs, and participates in a local congregation of Christian believers as they assemble for worship and nurture and are dispersed for work and service in the world.”

Careful and extremely practical discussions of leadership, personnel management and inter-personal relationships are presented by the author. The requisites for leadership and the “musts” in personnel management are outlined in detail. There is no substitute for satisfactory inter-personal relationships in the life of an institution.

What I call Section II in the book is devoted to discussions of the various professional ministries in a multiple staff. Chapters are devoted to the senior minister, the associate minister, the church educator, the church musician, the church business administrator, and the church secretary. The author’s format is similar in all of these chapters. He gives an accurate description of the particular function and a summary of data secured in his research. He points out the practicality and the potential of each professional assignment. He indicates problem areas and he is extremely helpful in his suggested solutions.

The concluding three chapters deal with miscellaneous subjects which include the relation of the multiple staff to the cooperative parish, suggestions for making the staff a creative force in the life of the church and dealing with stress. The book reaches its conclusion in a chapter entitled “The Church Reflects the Staff.” The ancient saying “Like priest, like people,” to a large degree can be applied to the church staff.

At the end of the book there are three appendices. Appendix A presents various statistics gathered in the research. Appendix B presents detailed job descriptions of the various functions of the multiple staff. Appendix C presents in a one page outline the representative theories of learning. The book also contains an excellent bibliography and index.

The Multiple Staff Ministry is an extremely valuable book for the seminarian, the minister in charge of a church, and the members of the church staff. The seminarian may read it merely as a textbook or collateral reading. But the minister in charge of a church and the members of his staff will find it an indispensable handbook for daily guidance and helpfulness.

I also recommend this book for any executive, whether he serves in the institutional church or in a church-oriented institution or in the world of business. Here are presented the fundamentals for effective administration.

Frank Bateman Stanger

Personal Renewal Through Christian Conversion, by W. Curry Mavis. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1969. 165 pages. \$3.50

The search for meaning in life continues to occupy the attention of many authorities on mental health. In his latest book, Dr. W. Curry Mavis presents Christian conversion as the answer to this search.

Dr. Mavis approaches this topic historically, psychologically, and biblically. Historical documents from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the writings of British evangelicals, provide the basic data of the text. These resource materials were chosen because of the deep piety of those Christians and their careful descriptions of their spiritual pilgrimages. The biblical orientation is noted throughout, not merely in the reference to and quoting of passages, but primarily in using the historical and psychological emphases to give insight into such important doctrines as sin, faith, guilt, repentance, confession and justification. Chapter titles such as the following indicate the psychological thrust of the writing: "The Constructive Use of Guilt," "Renewal Through Release from Guilt," and "The Sense of Belonging." Here is a fine integration of accounts of personal religious quests, psychology, and theology.

An underlying assumption of the author is that the needs and desires of the twentieth century man are basically like those of the man of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The reader may ask whether such experiences as are presented can and do occur today. Many would not have difficulty in finding contemporary expressions in their own or others' experiences. Some would have more difficulty in bridging the century gap.

This volume on personal renewal is recommended for those with diverse reading interests. As a devotional book, it will help a Christian offer praise to an unchanging God. A more serious reading will provide a deeper understanding of the Christian life. For a minister, it can be a resource for illustrative materials for sermons dealing with renewal and conversion.

William Conrad Cessna

Ferment in the Ministry, by Seward Hiltner. New York: Abingdon, 1969. 222 pages. \$4.95.

From the analogy of the title to the conclusion, this book is filled with thought-provoking ideas. Hiltner acknowledges that the ministry is in "ferment," that is, in a state of unrest, agitation, and commotion. On the

other hand, by applying this analogy of wine-making to the ministry, he affirms that "if the proper moment of arrest is seized . . . the intermediate stirrings and agitations may be seen as necessary stages in the making of a better product" (p. 15). The book, while acknowledging the critics, is a positive, forward-looking defense of the ministry. It is a voice of both hope and challenge for the clergy.

This book is not scholarly in the usual sense, containing neither footnotes nor bibliography, but it is based on a lifetime of interest, practice and scholarship related to the ministry. Although some of Hiltner's personal viewpoints may not be acceptable, his analysis and defense of the ministry will challenge the thoughtful reader.

The main thrust of the book, found in Part II, is an analysis of the functions of the ministry. In Part I, Hiltner answers the critics and delineates the nature of the ministry. In Part III he focuses upon the theological and psychological unity of the ministry.

The functions of the ministry can be placed in nine categories: preaching, administering, teaching, shepherding, evangelizing, celebrating, reconciling, theologizing and disciplining. A chapter is devoted to each of these by creating an image, a cartoon-like verbal picture of the function. This image is used to objectify the inner conception of the function. For example, his image of preaching is composed of the preacher, the open Bible, and the pulpit. Although the creation of images and rejection of some unwanted ones becomes tedious at times, the technique is usually well employed.

This book is recommended for all ministers-to-be, for the minister who has listened too long to the critics, and for all who are in any way deeply interested in the "work of the ministry."

William Conrad Cessna

Exposition of Isaiah, Volume I (Chapters 1–39) by H. C. Leupold. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1968. 598 pp. \$7.95.

The author of this volume is professor of Old Testament at Capitol University, Columbus, Ohio. From 1922–29 he was professor of Historical Theology at the Martin Luther Seminary and since 1929, has served at the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary at Columbus.

After a rather brief introduction in which the author leans rather heavily upon such Hebrew scholars as Prosksch, and R. B. Y. Scott, together with older commentators, including Delitsch and George Adam Smith, the author provides us with an excellent analytical outline of the first thirty-nine chapters of the Book of *Isaiah*. Then follows the exposition, which includes the English text of the King James Version and a verse by verse exposition within the analytical outline of the book. Hebrew terms are transliterated so the English reader is not at a disadvantage. Each section is followed by a series of notes on technicalities of special interest to scholars. Occasionally the author includes an excursus in the tradition of German scholarship.

The exposition is that of a careful, competent, conservative scholar. The author lacks the imagination and felicity of expression of a George Adams Smith but this is compensated for in some measure by his fidelity to the text and his more discriminating use of contemporary scholarship. His independence and fidelity to the Biblical text is apparent, for example, in his treatment of Isaiah 7:14 in which he concludes, with good reason, that, reversing the policy of the R.S.V., the term "virgin" should be inserted in the text and the term "young woman" replaced in the margin.

In spite of the verse by verse treatment, perspective is maintained by inserting the analytical outline throughout the text. This device enables the author to combine a verse-by-verse with a paragraph-by-paragraph exposition. On the whole, the volume makes a very worthwhile contribution to the study of this important prophet. One gets the impression that the author's primary concern is to understand Isaiah, rather than defend a previously established posture or simply to add another volume to the studies of this prophet.

George A. Turner

Communication-Learning For Churchmen, Vol. I, edited by B. F. Jackson, Jr., Nashville: Abingdon, 1968. 297 pages. \$5.95.

The importance and skills of communication are being increasingly recognized in church work today. In fact some believe that the future of the church depends on the ability and willingness to make better use of the processes of communication.

This volume is the first of a series of four devoted to the subject of communication as it relates to work in the church and church school. The series as a whole is designed to give churchmen a better understanding of

communication and learning so that these processes may be used to greater advantage.

Here the authors discuss the meaning of communication in the church, the learning situation, and the use of printed and audio-visual facilities and resources. Future books will be devoted to discussions in detail of radio, television, films, audio-visual facilities, and skills for creative imagination. The various media are evaluated in terms of strengths and weaknesses and possible uses in a wide variety of situations.

Part One is devoted to the matter of communication for churchmen. The general principles of communication with their effect on society and individuals are noted. Chapter Seven discusses the relation of communication and education; Chapters Eight and Nine deal with implications for the Church. "The task of Christian education in terms of communication theory is to relate to people's commonly understood relationships, both in terms of the real world (rather than a world described by religious vocabulary) and in terms of the symbolic nonverbal acts which constitute meanings at deeper, nonrational levels, which we call worship."

In the chapter on "A Theological View of Communication" one notes definite existential overtones. "We can ask only what revelation means to *me*, rather than seek to generalize what it should mean for all." Here the author draws heavily on the premises of H. Richard Niebuhr in his book *The Meaning of Revelation*. Past and present data of experience are interpreted in personal terms. It appears that the writer implies that it is not possible to have commonly accepted meanings of the past "handed down" to the present in terms of "common understanding." This seems to deny the possibility of objective revelation. In the light of this premise the task of the Church would primarily be that of "communicating to persons an awareness of God in their lives." This is identified as evangelism. To the evangelical Christian this appears to be a watered-down concept of evangelism; it tends to obscure the true nature of the church as an organism whose head is Jesus Christ.

Chapter Nine sees the communication task of the church as that of confronting people with the alternative and necessity of choosing for or against the Christian faith. This means that the church will not "use" the media of communication but rather become involved with them.

Part Two of the volume is devoted to a discussion of learning and the Church. The author draws heavily on secular sources of psychology in surveying the various theories of learning. Since no one theory adequately explains all existing data in relation to learning, churchmen, it is said, must "function in a condition of incompleteness." The evangelical Christian will recognize the value not only of much secular data on learning, but also of a special approach to learning based on Christian

revelation of "the things of the Spirit." When man is conceived as a spiritual being, then learning becomes a product of the self-activity of the spirit of man, not merely a product of man's nervous system. In this sense the evangelical Christian will supplement secular psychological data with that of revelation.

Parts Three and Four are devoted, respectively, to the use of print in learning and to the use of audiovisual resources. Much of the data is accepted in most circles.

Aside from existential overtones and places where classical liberal theology shines through, the evangelical Christian will find this volume both interesting and useful.

H. W. Byrne

Masterpieces of Hebrew Literature, edited by Curt Leviant. Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1969. 571 pages. \$8.95.

This attractively bound anthology of Jewish literature includes excerpts from the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, the Mishnah, the Talmud, the Midrash and the Siddur (prayers)—the great extra-biblical classics of Hebrew literature. These constitute about one fourth of the total anthology. Each excerpt is prefaced by a concise and illuminating introduction, placing the literature in its historical setting.

This edition is based upon an anthology with the same title published several years ago by Rutgers University and prepared for courses in Hebraic studies. The anthologist is Associate Professor of Hebraic Studies at Rutgers. In addition to the better-known classics of the ancient period are excerpts from Hebrew writers of the Middle Ages down to the present century.

Probably the chief value of the anthology is the presentation "in depth" of the post-classical writings which include the travelogue of Eldad the Danite (880 A.D.), poetry from Spain, Rashi on the Pentateuch, Maimonides, the travels of Benjamin of Tudela and of Petachia of Ratisbon, "Yasher," "Joseph in Egypt," and many others, ending with Luzzatto, "Path of the Upright" (c. 1740 A.D.).

The selections are well-chosen, their content important intrinsically as well as historically, and the orientation provided by the editor constitute a volume important for Jewish readers and for non-Jews as well.

George A. Turner

Jesus of Fact and Faith; Studies in the Life of Christ, by Samuel A. Cartledge. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968. 160 pages. \$4.50.

The author, presently on the faculty of the Columbia Theological Seminary and author of *A Conservative Introduction to the New Testament*, has given us a strong, forthright volume to put in the hands of laymen. In these days of theological confusion, as well as frustration in the area of history, it is good that one will provide some light for our people.

In a series of brief but pointed chapters the author considers what modern scholarship is saying about such things as "Fact and Faith in the Life of Jesus," "The Miracles," as well as the virgin birth, chronology in a life of Jesus, the kingdom of God, the death and the resurrection of Jesus. But not only does he report what modern scholars are writing: he also suggests what a conservative posture ought to be in this context. Each chapter gives evidence that the author knows the literature in the field.

The author is no reactionary. He acknowledges the problems in the synoptic materials. He admits the possibility of minor contradictions in detail between the different accounts of the resurrection (p. 150). He seems to accept the priority of Mark and the use of Mark by the first and third evangelists. He knows we cannot write a "life of Christ" even though the material in the four gospels is historically reliable.

Yet there is something basically disappointing about the book. The book seems to breathe the atmosphere of the modernist-fundamentalist controversy of the twenties. At times the author uses emotional language ("gullible ignoramuses" — p. 14). Often this reviewer has the impression that the answers are too neat—perhaps superficial. It may be that the volume is too conservative and not sufficiently evangelical. By that we mean we are told too much about the kind of Bible we have and what kind of person Jesus was, and not enough about his redemptive work, the nature of our proclamation and the substance of our hope.

Finally, the jacket tells us the book is for both scholar and laymen. The latter, yes; the former, no. The book has no indices and very limited footnotes. There are whole chapters without a single footnote. In fact the last hundred pages has only three footnotes! This is not even a happy setting for the seminary student.

Yet when we have said everything of this nature, we may still be pleased that *something* of this type is available for the bewildered and buffeted laymen who look for a sure word.

Robert W. Lyon