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Washington: Christians in the Corridor of Power (Book Review)

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objectivity is pure hockum. All articles are editorial products and should be signed.

Further, the widespread practice of having special editorials for the expression of "pure?" opinion as opposed to "objective" hard, factual is the result of a split of the event covered into something that happened without a human being there and something that is purely human, two wholly erroneous and even sinful ways of thinking about the creation.

...consider this. There are always three prime elements or "sides" to any event-article situation. There is the object considered by the subject which are both responsible to the Law which holds for that situation.

What one misses from humanistic reporting and interpreting (as if they were different!) is any reference to the Law, the very conditions which make human freedom (absolutized into autonomous human creative power) possible.

The duty of the Biblically directed journalist is to keep always that Law—with its structure and direction—in mind, whether implicit, explicit, or in open advocacy (p. 89-90).

Carvill is right, of course, that writers are rarely objective. But one would hope that they are often not only willing but eager to reserve judgment. After all, even a Christian journalist isn't omniscient. Hence a somewhat "objective" reporting, presenting the facts fairly and accurately, would often be preferable to "advocacy" journalism.

Kennedy ends his book by looking at the attempts of four journals to be radically Christian. Then he quotes Kuyper, Forbes, Olthuis, and Gerald Vandezande, who flesh out the theories advanced in the course of the book. Vandezande quotes 15 Canadian Senators who reported that journals are not selling content, but that content was merely a means of attracting an audience of advertisers. There is some truth to this. All of us have wished that newspapers would take responsibility for the products they advertise, for whether the products would enrich or destroy a life. So when Vandezande pleads,

Businessmen, let's end the rip-off!
Please quit pushing a consumption-oriented life-style that makes economic animals out of our neighbors and that entrenches the dollar-driven media—media which seldom, if ever,

have a truly Christian word for a world going mad for lack of real vision food (p. 128),

we can only applaud. The purpose of advertising should be to bring buyer and seller together and not to create needs that God never intended.

This compilation deserves to be taken seriously by all who seek to develop responsible Christian journalism.

Washington: Christians in the Corridors of Power, by James C. Hefley and Edward E. Plowman, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Ill., 1975, 200 pages, \$3.95 (paper). Reviewed by William Nawyn, Associate Professor of History and Political Science.

This book is at once comforting and disturbing. It is indeed reassuring to know that there are many "Christians in the corridors of power" in our nation's capital; it is disquieting that, in spite of this, there is so little fruit in evidence in terms either of a powerful Christian voice in national government or of specifically Christian views expressed in the debates and discussions leading to the policies and programs adopted. This book will serve to revive the spirits of those who have succumbed to a defeatist attitude and who have concluded, like Elijah, that Baal has utterly triumphed; it is good to know that there are yet many "prophets of the Lord" in or near the center of government.

In this brief volume, James C. Hefley, a free-lance writer, and Edward E. Plowman, the news editor of Christianity Today, have called attention to Christians in many offices and levels of the national government. Their information is the accumulation of personal interviews of many Christians in the Washington area. The book, consequently, is largely the compilation of names with bits and pieces of biographical information about the individuals thus highlighted, along with their activities as Christians. Much of this activity seems to be limited to participation in prayer groups. As a matter of fact, the book could almost be referred to as the story of Washington prayer groups. The surfeit of names and the almost gossipy chronicling of who-belongs-to-what prayer-group detracts from the general interest level of the book. The end result, nevertheless is an introduction to an extensive sampling of Christians in or associated with the national government ranging from one of the barbers in the House of Representatives' barber shop to

President Gerald R. Ford (whom the authors identify as "an evangelical on the issue of personal faith in Christ").

There is a disturbing question raised by the book, but not raised in it. The question is, to what extent is there an attempt by these many Christians to integrate their faith with their politics and their positions on the issues with which they must deal—and perhaps particularly with their approach to and rationale for arriving at these positions. Does Christian commitment mean anything in terms of position and policy? A few references are found in the book which would suggest that some individuals are sensitive to this issue. For instance, Representative John B. Anderson (R-III.) is quoted as saying: "...we are called upon by...God not only to acknowledge His being, but to serve Him by serving His justice and His righteousness. He calls us not only to respect justice, and not only to abstain from evil, but to actively pursue justice" (p. 144). Again, Richard Wiley, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, is reported as saying: "My faith affects everything I do, the way I treat other people, the way I handle issues" (p. 151). That concern with this question is not entirely absent from the religious scene in Washington is attested to by the fact that one item debated, according to the authors, is the "basic" question, "does being a follower of Christ make a difference in the way one votes on knotty issues?" (p. 11). Nevertheless, the over-all impression left is that there has been relatively little attempt to relate politics and faith, neither on the level of thinking nor of action. Further, the authors fail, either in their interviewing or in the book itself, to discuss how the Christianity of politicians affects their thinking and how the presence of all these Christians affect the the government? The authors would have done a real service by exploring this issue to some extent instead of confining themselves to the relatively superficial level of introducing name upon name, prayer group upon prayer group.

The book also leaves the impression that the real heart of Washington Christianity is found in the many prayer groups that exist in almost every department, agency and office. This raises another question: Where is the church? It would seem that the role of the church is a secondary one, at best. Certainly the voluntary, often unstructured, laymen-led and laymen-organized prayer groups are outside of and in addition to the organized churches. The authors seem to suggest that, in respect to the spiritual sustenance of the participants, and often in regards to the centrality in their lives, the prayer groups, indeed, are far superior to the

churches. If Hefley and Plowman are right in this, it is not only an indictment of the churches for their shortcomings, but also an indication of a disturbing tendency to ignore the church as a fundamental resource in the Christian life.

The authors state that their "central purpose has been simply to chronicle a remarkable God-centered movement portending good news in an important time and locale saturated with bad news" (p. 197). In terms of this fairly limited objective, they have, to a great extent, succeeded. The book is informative and does convey to the reader something of the extent and vitality of Christianity in government circles in Washington. The chief disappointment with the book lies not so much in what the authors have done as in that which they have failed to do. Those who wish to be comforted by the presence of so many Christians in the corridors of power in Washington will find this book rewarding; those who wish in addition to discover what these Christians are doing in these corridors, and what influence they are bringing to bear, or what effect they are having, will find it less than satisfactory.

Notebook of a Colonial Clergyman, by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. Translated and edited by Theodore C. Tappert and John W. Doberstein. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1959, 1975. 245 pages. Reviewed by Louis Y. Van Dyke, Professor of History.

Henry M. Muhlenberg, a Lutheran clergyman from Saxony, came to the New World in 1742 at the age of thirty one to minister to German immigrants in the Philadelphia area. Muhlenberg lived through the eventful years of the birth of the United States, and he died in 1787 just a few weeks after the Constitutional Convention had completed its work. Two of his sons played an active role in founding the new nation. Peter Muhlenberg was a Brigadier General in the Continental Army while Frederick Muhlenberg was the first speaker in the United States Congress.

Henry Muhlenberg kept a daily journal of his observations, written in German, which grew to a collection of two dozen volumes in manuscript form. The present work represents a distillation of those twenty volumes which fact constitutes a problem in trying to evaluate the author and his times. The book makes no reference to many significant events and the reader simply is unable to determine whether this is due to editing or to Muhlenberg's lack of interest in those occurrences. The diary fails to