
BOOK REVIEWS

Modern Masters of Religious Education, edited by Marlene Mayr. Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1983. 323 pages, paper.

Reading this book is an excellent way to become aware of some aspects of the recent history of religious education. The book contains a collection of twelve autobiographical chapters representing a variety of traditions. As would be expected in a book of this type, there is also a variety in content and style.

The editor has given a careful explanation of the rationale behind the choice of contributors. However, it should be noted that different “modern masters” might have been substituted in some cases, to provide a stronger representation of the field. The book also could have been strengthened by the inclusion of biographical and bibliographical information on each of the contributors.

The real strength of the book, however, lies in the opportunity it affords to observe the integration of a particular religious educator’s philosophy, theology, and educational practice as a product of his own life’s history. Interestingly, only two of the twelve contributors are laymen and none of the twelve had set out toward the goal of becoming a religious educator. Most did not move in the direction of religious education until after the completion of seminary level studies. A general tone of openness and honesty is characteristic of the writers. This honesty provides insights into the (sometimes disturbing) patterns of ecclesiastical and academic institutions which continue to be a challenging part of religious experience.

There are dozens of places where theology and life meet, jarring the reader towards personal evaluation of goals — those moments at which one is prompted to say: “That’s true. What am I doing about it?” This is a book which explains why these twelve men found religious education worth the time, money and energy of their whole lives. It is worth reading.

Timothy L. Thomas
Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries
Asbury College



Book Reviews

Between Two Worlds, by John R. W. Stott. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982.

Between Two Worlds ranks as a first-rate examination of the “art of preaching in the twentieth century.” I cannot recommend it highly enough, for the message is not only timely and much needed, but written in an appealing style. Its powerful impact can help the one who preaches bring life and health to today’s generation by proclaiming effectively the Word of God.

John Stott hopes to restore preaching to its traditional position of prominence in the Christian church. It is his view that preaching has slumped from this position because preachers have failed to hold together two worlds. We either live in the biblical world but are not at ease in the modern world, or we walk comfortably in the contemporary world but neglect the Scriptures in our quest for relevance. “Such is the plight of modern preaching, living in either the biblical or modern world, but seldom in both.”

The solution lies in seeing clearly the refreshing image of the preaching ministry which Stott pictures. The preacher’s role is that of “bridge building.” If the preacher’s message is to be heard today it must overcome the “communication gulf” which exists between the two worlds, biblical and contemporary. The fervent plea of the author of this book is that we see the urgency of knowing both worlds closely, seeking to “explore the territory on both sides of the ravine until we become thoroughly familiar with both.”

Gene Maynard
Student

Asbury Theological Seminary

Doctors, Lawyers, Ministers: Christian Ethics in Professional Practice, by Dennis M. Campbell. Abingdon Press, 1982. 173 pp., \$7.95.

Dr. Campbell, now dean of Duke Divinity School, has written a stimulating book for both clergy and laity. After showing how the professions have come to be looked upon with increasing skepticism, he sets forth his formula to a renewal of professional integrity, i.e., a new concern for ethics by the professionals themselves. He then uses the Christian criteria of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as fundamental norms for establishing “a Christian ethic” in given situations. Dr. Campbell concludes his book by testing his model against two problems: abortion and severely handicapped children.

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The strength of this book lies in what it asks of us: to think deeply about the increasingly complex issues of our society. It will stretch you and provoke you, but hopefully it will also leave you convinced that Christians cannot afford to be on the *fringes* while the critical decisions of our time are being made.

Dr. Steve Harper
Professor of Prayer and Spiritual Life
Asbury Theological Seminary

Principles of Pastoral Counselling, R.S. Lee. London: William Clowes and Sons, Ltd., 1968. 135 pp.

Written by a noted churchman of England, this book is in its third printing. It is strongly oriented to the psychoanalytic approach in parish counselling. *Counselling* (with double l) tells us that the author sees the pastor as a sort of therapist in his role. His use of “client” rather than “counselee” supports his classical orientation. Sin is treated psychodynamically. Confession and counselling are compared to show that they serve different functions and not that one is superior or inferior to the other.

V. James Mannoia
Professor of Pastoral Ministry
Asbury Theological Seminary

Gaines S. Dobbins — Pioneer in Religious Education, by Austin C. Dobbins. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981. \$4.95 paperback.

This work records the life story of Dr. Gaines S. Dobbins, pioneer worker and leader in religious education of the Southern Baptist Convention. Not only is a biographical sketch of his life presented but a remarkable record of this man’s great achievements in church education is provided. Many lessons in good Christian education and Sunday School work can be learned from the reading of this book. Principles, practices and programs of good religious education are covered. This is highly recommended reading for pastors and laymen in the local church.

Herbert W. Byrne
Professor of Christian Education
Asbury Theological Seminary

Women and Their Emotions, by Miriam Neff. Chicago: Moody Press, 1983. 151 pp.



Book Reviews

Those of us in the helping profession recognize the frequency with which we must assist people in accepting their emotions. A specific feeling is neither good or bad, yet it can have either positive or negative effects on future behavior. Building on this premise, Miriam Neff has written that these powerful emotions need not paralyze, but with God's help, can energize. "The victory of changing those strangling tentacles into strong helpful arms is sweet" (p. 10).

Neff has chosen to share her ideas with a select audience — women. She has (1) hypothesized that women may feel more intensely, (2) noticed that women seek counseling more than men, and (3) suggested that women have greater changes of moods (p. 9). Although her stated reasons for choosing to write only to women are substantially weak, her book is definitely suited for females. As she discusses eleven emotions — anger, fear, empathy, envy, love, anxiety, discouragement, depression, grief, bitterness, and guilt — she draws examples to which this reviewer could easily relate. Each of these feeling has been given an entire chapter which closes with practical suggestions as to how to accept it and then control its effects.

Interspersed throughout the book are Bible verses. "We can search the Scriptures and live our lives by God's blueprint" (p. 82). Women can live directly under the authority of God (p. 151) and deny neither their emotions nor their personhood (p. 148). Apparently Neff's work might have been motivated by reactions to a charismatic teaching, but she has succeeded in creating a manual for the Christian woman who is new in the faith. This book could be an effective tool in some counseling situations.

Kathryn Clay Faupel
Assistant Counselor
Wilmore United Methodist Church

Coping With Your Anger, A Christian Guide, by Andrew D. Lester.
Westminster Press, 1983.

The Reverend Dr. Lester, professor of psychology of religion at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has written a book describing and evaluating the place of "anger" in the Christian's life. He describes it as a normal reaction, in fact, one that no one is without. His belief is, and this is repeated a number of times in the book, that all people get angry, including Christians, and that a great deal of unnecessary suffering is tolerated when Christians try to deny

this. Lester describes anger as “an emotional response when you, or those important to you, are threatened.” He sees it, as most psychologists do, as nature’s organizational response to threat. The body mechanisms gear up to respond to danger, excitement, or threat. Therefore, all the automatic response mechanisms to any attack on the personality or the person is responded to with anger. He describes the negative things that happen to people when they simply deny or suppress their anger and the experience “stays alive and active in your unconscious” (p. 53), and he tells us that it is the suppression, or technically the repression, that gets us in trouble with guilt, psychosomatic illness, depression and anxiety, and a great many other difficult things.

Dr. Lester searches through the Bible to find a particularly Christian response to anger and turns, of course, to Ephesians and the two most quoted phrases, which are “Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil” (4:26-27). Insisting on the normality of anger, he emphasizes a number of times in the book that the way to handle guilt is first to recognize it, then to evaluate it alongside one’s values and morals and the Christian faith, and then to redirect it on to helpful and wholesome activities. He also emphasizes that one should often share this anger; it’s called confession in the Christian church, and this can be done with the pastor, friends, or even if it becomes severe and damaging, with a counselor.

This is not a technical book dealing with stimulus response, goal cathexis, reinforcement theory, and sublimation particularly, but is a good common-sense solid book that deals with psychological concerns on an everyday level.

It probably would be excellent for a pastor in dealing with parishioners in counseling who have trouble in admitting or handling anger.

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